

Guidelines

The Wedge-tailed Eagle Research Fund

The Fund

The Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle Research Fund (“The Fund”) has been established using monies required from the operator of Cattle Hill Wind Farm in Tasmania’s Central Highlands. The purpose of these contributions is to offset potential mortalities of Wedge-tailed Eagles resulting from collisions with the wind farm’s turbines. The Fund is administered by NRM South and operates independently from Cattle Hill Wind Farm. It is overseen by an independent Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) tasked with reviewing and selecting applications for support from the Fund. The Fund will operate until 2029 and receive annual contributions of \$75,000 (CPI adjusted from 2014) from the operator of Cattle Hill Wind Farm. The TAC will be making an annual call for applications, usually in the first part of the year, with funds allocated approximately mid-year.

Objective of the Fund

The objective of the Fund is to support high quality ecological or other relevant scientific research on the Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle, *Aquila audax fleayi*, the results of which will assist with the management and protection of the sub-species. Support will be given to research that is scientifically rigorous, conducted by suitably qualified, knowledgeable and experienced scientists, and which is consistent with the objectives of the *Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan 2006-2010* or any subsequent eagle Recovery Plan.

Research priorities

Applications will be judged on merit, and should address at least one of the key research priorities identified by the TAC as follows:

- Wedge-tailed Eagle demography. This could include studies into the size of the state population, fecundity, survival of different age classes, and immigration and emigration intra- and inter-state. Such ecological data could be used to update a Population Viability Analysis (see Bekessy, S.A., Wintle, B.A., Gordon, A., Fox, J.C., Chisholm, R., Brown, B., Regan, T., Mooney, N., Read, S.M. and Burgman, M.A., 2009. Modelling human impacts on the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax fleayi*). *Biological conservation*, 142(11), pp.2438-2448).
- Collection of data that will allow or substantially inform an evaluation of the sub-species conservation status against IUCN criteria.
- Quantification of anthropogenic impacts to WTE, such as collisions with vehicles, powerlines, wind turbines (beyond what data proponents are required to collect), shooting or poisoning, and the development of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.
- Disturbance to nesting WTE. This includes studies into determining the anthropogenic factors that impact on breeding, and quantification of these such as the distance, duration and types of factors that result in impacts to breeding success.

- Novel techniques to monitor nesting behaviour of WTE. Nests are currently very difficult to monitor due to the need to limit disturbance to breeding birds, hence research into novel and cost-effective techniques to monitor nests without disturbing eagles is required.
- Studies into the factors that contribute to WTE colliding with wind turbines and strategies to reduce collision rates.
- Studies that monitor the effectiveness of current measures designed to reduce impacts of land-use activities on WTE.
- Other scientific studies that provide a demonstrable benefit to the sub-species.

Note that support will not be provided for studies on eagles required for commercial or private developments (e.g. avifauna surveys or trials required by conditions of a permit), or commissioned by local, State (including Government Business Enterprises) or Commonwealth Government.

Grants available

For the 2020 round, the total amount available in the Fund is \$75,000. Grants will not be capped or subject to a minimum amount.

Application process

Applicants should complete the Application Form – “WTE Research Fund Application Form” and submit a document detailing the following:

- Objective/s of the research
- Relevance to the priorities of the Fund and/or objectives of the “Threatened Tasmanian Eagles Recovery Plan 2006-2010”
- Methods
- Duration of the research
- Whether the research is part of a larger project (if so, include details of the larger project)
- Quantum of funds being sought and project budget overview
- Whether relevant permits have been obtained, or if not, when they are likely to be obtained
- Details of the researchers involved, including their qualifications and research background

Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback on why their application was not supported, but negotiation with the TAC about the selection process or its decisions will not be entered into.

The TAC reserves the right to not offer any grants if no suitable applications are received.

Successful applicants

Those receiving support from the Fund will be required to provide:

- Evidence of receipt of all necessary permits before project commencement e.g. Animal Ethics, Scientific, etc.
- A final report outlining the details of the research, including objectives, methods, results and discussion, within 60 days of project completion, for review by the TAC.

- An interim report if the research continues for greater than six months, within 30 days of the first six months of the project. This report will outline progress on the research and will be reviewed by the TAC.
- General article/s about the research to be published on the NRM South website and/or social media, within 60 days of project completion.
- Notification to the TAC as soon as reasonably practical if the research is substantially delayed or must be discontinued

Funding will be provided in the following stages:

- An initial part payment to commence the research (proportion to be determined by the TAC).
- Final payment upon evidence of successful completion of the project and approval by the TAC of necessary reports and articles.

If the project extends for more than six months a partial payment will be paid following the approval by the TAC of an interim report.

Termination of funding

If a project is determined by the TAC to be non-compliant with grant requirements, funding may be terminated. Grant recipients should raise with the TAC any potential issues with satisfying requirements at the earliest opportunity.

Further details

Further information about the grants can be obtained by contacting NRM South at:
wedgies@nrmsouth.org.au

Due date

Applicants should complete the and submit it and details of the proposed research to
wedgies@nrmsouth.org.au by end July 2020