



YEAR ONE REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.



On 16 July 2015, Australia's first Threatened Species Strategy was launched in Melbourne. This marked the beginning of a challenging and valuable journey to change the fate of Australia's threatened species.

This report to Minister for the Environment and Energy, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, captures the progress made during year one of implementing this ambitious plan. The journey has been rewarding, difficult and full of learning, but overwhelmingly positive.

The Strategy reinvigorates Australia's approach to protecting threatened species. It explains why we should care and outlines principles for prioritising Australian Government resources and effort. It establishes a five year Action Plan with clear, measurable targets for feral cats, mammals, birds, plants and recovery practices.

Australian Government programs and investments, like the National Landcare Programme and regional NRM organisations, have sharpened their focus on threatened species and are core to the outcomes we are delivering. From community feedback, I have seen a genuine shift in the interest and understanding of threatened species. Australia is now well and truly behind the fight against extinction.

I am pleased to say that we have met the majority of the Strategy's targets for year one and are delivering some great outcomes for so many of our threatened species.

We have a big two years ahead of us as we work towards delivering the year three targets in the Strategy. More action and effort is needed to make this happen, and it will not be easy. But it is a challenge I am up for and I know Australia is too.

I will be looking to grow the maturity of the Strategy by intensifying action where it is most needed, building the partnerships required to fight extinction and to applying knowledge gained in year one to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the Strategy. I am looking forward to supporting Minister Frydenberg in launching a Threatened Species Prospectus, with the aim of growing and leveraging investment from the private sector in saving species.

I encourage anyone who is interested in being involved in the conversation about threatened species, or who would like to learn more about how Australia is fighting extinction, to follow me on Facebook or Twitter. Details of the stories and projects mentioned within this report are on those sites or on the Department's website.

Everything we have achieved this year has been the result of partnership and collaboration. I would like to thank and acknowledge all the community organisations, Indigenous groups, zoos, governments, NGOs, scientists and passionate people that have contributed to the national effort to fight extinction. I am so proud and encouraged by the huge step forward we have made in just one year and I am looking forward to continuing this important journey with Australia, with the support and direction of Minister Frydenberg.

Gregory Q

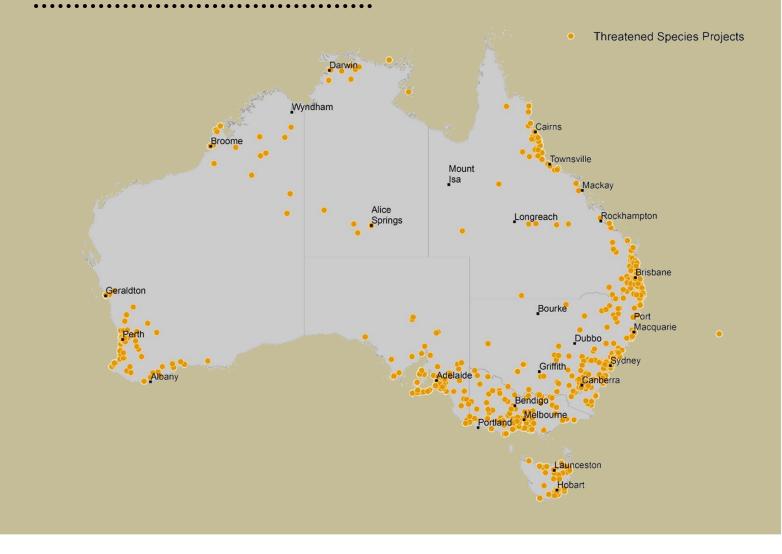
Gregory AndrewsThreatened Species
Commissioner



A YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

- \$80.8 million in funding mobilised by the Australian Government for
 432 threatened species projects in the Threatened Species Strategy's first year *
- 21 out of 26 year one targets met in the Strategy and seven overachieved
- Around 160 Western Quolls thriving in the Flinders Ranges after being reintroduced in partnership with state governments, the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species and community groups
- Norfolk Island Green Parrot numbers increased by over 200 per cent since 2013 thanks to joint efforts with Parks Australia, non-government organisations and the Norfolk Island community
- Funding of emergency baiting to prevent extinction of Gilbert's Potoroo and the Western Ground Parrot in Western Australia, and the Central Rock-rat in the Northern Territory
- Helmeted Honeyeater population in Victoria has more than doubled since June
 2014 thanks to partnership with Zoos Victoria and the local community
- Detector dogs funded to protect the Mountain Pygmy-possum in Kosciuszko National Park
- Eastern Bettong and Eastern Quoll now thriving on the mainland due to reintroductions at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve in the Australian Capital Territory
- \$30 million Threatened Species Recovery Hub delivering world-class science through the National Environmental Science Programme
- An estimated 211,000 feral cats culled across Australia due to national effort
- Construction commenced on Australia's biggest feral predator free area at Newhaven Sanctuary in partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Threatened species raised as a national issue with increased coverage on national radio, TV, print and social media
- Australia's threatened species stories shared with countless community groups, universities, high schools, environmental NGOs, zoos, scientists, farmers, journalists, local councils, state governments and international visitors
- The Threatened Species Commissioner visited every state and territory and two
 external territories to grow on-ground action for threatened species

WHERE WE ARE WORKING



21

TARGET TRACKING

Of the 26 targets to be completed in year one of the Strategy, we successfully delivered 21. Four targets were partially completed and only one was not achieved. All targets relating to the mammals, birds and plants were completed in full. We overachieved on seven targets. Further information about how we went against each target can be found on each target page.



The Threatened Species Strategy provides a national approach to achieve the recovery of our threatened plants and animals, based on science, action and partnership. It includes principles for prioritising our resources and effort, to support targeted species and allocate funding to projects.

The Threatened Species Strategy contains a five year Action Plan that sets out areas where the Australian Government will focus to achieve significant, positive results. The Action Plan areas are:

- Tackling feral cats Feral cats are one of the greatest threats to Australia's mammals and have contributed to at least 28 of the 30 mammal extinctions Australia has endured since European colonisation.
- Creating safe havens for species most at risk Safe havens provide threatened plants and animals with long-term protection. Within these areas species are able to thrive.
- Improving habitat Improving the extent, connectivity and condition of habitat supports threatened species recovery.
- Intervening in emergencies to avert extinctions allows flexibility for the Government to
 direct resources to species pushed dangerously close to extinction, for example responding
 to an outbreak of Pisittacine Beak and Feather Disease in Orange-Bellied Parrots.

The Action Plan also contains one, three and five year targets, which allow us to measure success. The year five targets include:

- **Feral cat targets** including culling two million feral cats, establishing 10 mainland feral-free fenced areas, achieving 12 million hectares of best-practice feral cat management and eradicating feral cats from five islands by 2020.
- **Improving the population trajectories** of 20 threatened mammals, 20 threatened birds and 30 threatened plants by 2020 (i.e. the targeted species).
- Improving recovery practices by ensuring common assessment methodology for species listing, ensuring recovery plans and conservation advices are in place for all targeted species and improving the governance and reporting of recovery teams.

The <u>Threatened Species Strategy</u> has a full description of the action plan and the targets. Its <u>four-page outline</u> has a complete list of the targeted species (also on page 19 of this report). This report describes progress against the Strategy's year one targets and outlines future directions as we move towards year three.



FERAL CATS YEAR 1 - HOW DID WE DO?					
Action commenced for feral cat eradication on five islands	Targeted islands for feral cat eradication have been identified. Action is underway on each island, including community engagement, eradication trials and culling.	√			
Action commenced on three mainland feral-free areas to secure threatened species and identify two more areas for action	Action has commenced for fenced areas at Newhaven Sanctuary and Mulligan's Flat. At least five additional fenced areas are planned nationally.	√			
Undertake feral cat management across one million hectares, using the best techniques for each location	We have overachieved on this target with 1.4 million hectares of feral cat management in Western Australia alone. Different techniques being used include aerial baiting, skilled shooting and trapping, detector dogs, exclusion fencing, cat squirter traps and Indigenous hunting.	/ /			
Identify priority locations on Commonwealth land and commence action for best practice feral cat management	Action has occurred in priority locations within Kakadu National Park and on Christmas Island.	√			
Curiosity® cat bait approved and deployed	This target was partially met. Assessment by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is ongoing and has delayed delivery of this target. Approval is expected in March 2017. A commercialisation strategy is underway.	•			
100 per cent of feral cats culled in Australia to be reported in Cat Scan phone app	This target was not met. <u>FeralCatScan</u> was launched at the Threatened Species Summit and much has been done to promote use of the app across Australia. It is raising awareness in the community and is being used strategically on Kangaroo Island. Due to limited ability to drive uptake, not all cats culled are reported in the app.	•			
150,000 feral cats culled at the national level	An estimated 211,000 feral cats were culled.	√			

The next challenge is creating more open landscapes where threatened species have a competitive advantage. Increased connection with Indigenous Ranger groups and the approval of Curiosity® feral cat bait will help grow open landscape action on feral cats and increase threatened species populations on the mainland.



WORKING SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Innovation is essential to reducing feral cat numbers in Australia, with 99.8 per cent of the country inhabited by feral cats.

In the last 12 months, Ecological Horizons has begun testing and trial deployment of the <u>cat squirter trap</u>, a cat specific robotic bait station that selectively targets feral cats. This technology will overcome some of the barriers to controlling feral cats in remote and regional Australia. Already, communities and land managers on Bruny Island, Kangaroo Island, western Queensland and South Australia are looking integrate this new tool into their feral cat control.

The Australian Government invested \$100,000 to help develop the prototype into a final product, creating another innovative, humane and effective feral cat management tool. Along with Curiosity feral cat bait, and guardian dogs, these innovative approaches are improving how we tackle threats and protect threatened species.



- OVER \$11 MILLION
 INVESTED IN
 FERAL CAT
 CONTROL ACTION
 AND RESEARCH
- CONSTRUCTION
 COMMENCED ON
 AUSTRALIA'S
 BIGGEST FERAL
 PREDATOR FREE
 AREA AT NEWHAVEN
- 211 000 CATS

 CULLED

 NATIONALLY



MAMMALS YEAR 1 - HOW	DID WE DO?	
Action commenced for at least five of the 10 identified mammals	We overachieved on this target. All 20 mammals identified in the Strategy have at least one <u>project</u> contributing to the recovery of the species.	//
Planning complete on actions for 10 identified mammals	We overachieved on this target. All 20 mammals identified in the Strategy have forward workplans established from now until 2020. These are flexible and adaptable to new knowledge and species needs.	/ /
Action commenced for Leadbeater's Possum and Central Rock-rat	The Leadbeater's possum Action Plan was released on 31 August and outlines action underway for the species. Two projects funded under the Strategy, West MacDonnell Ranges feral cat control and the Newhaven Sanctuary, are supporting the recovery of the Central Rock-rat.	√
Additional eight mammals identified for priority conservation, in consultation with partners	The <u>additional eight mammals</u> were annouced by the Minister on 22 January 2016.	√

Work is underway for all 20 mammals, but some species require additional targeted action to progress their recovery. Work plans established for each species have identified those most in need and we will be seeking to drive action for these species in the coming years. Some examples are the Northern Hopping-mouse, Kangaroo Island Dunnart, Brush-tailed Rabbit-rat and Western Ringtail Possum.

Many species we are targeting have large distributions and their recovery efforts are managed by multiple partners. Coordinating recovery efforts and measuring improvement in these species will be difficult, however we are working closely with Australia's leading scientists to establish meaningful ways to measure success. We are also seeking to streamline recovery efforts under the Improving Recovery Practices Target.



WESTERN QUOLL SUCCESS

Last year, the Western Quoll made its formal return to the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. It was the species' first time back in the area in over 130 years.

In May 2015, 37 adult Western Quolls were flown more than 2,000km from Western Australia to the Flinders Ranges National Park in South Australia. These were followed by 15 more quolls.

The quolls settled in well and have been breeding. Today, there is estimated to be around 160 Western Quolls thriving in the National Park.

An Australian Government grant to the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) contributed \$55,000 to return of the Western Quoll to South Australia. The project is a partnership between FAME, the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, the Western Australia Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Sporting Shooters Association. It is also the first public-private partnership of its kind in South Australia.



- EASTERN BETTONG

 AND EASTERN QUOLL

 POPULATIONS

 THRIVING ON THE

 MAINLAND
- EXTINCTION OF THE

 CENTRAL ROCK-RAT

 PREVENTED BY

 EMERGENCY FERAL

 CAT BAITING
- TWO DETECTOR DOGSIN KOSCIUSZKO NPSAVING THEMOUNTAINPYGMY-POSSUM





BIRDS YEAR 1 - HOW DID WE DO?				
Action commenced for at least five of the 10 identified birds	We overachieved on this target. All ten birds listed in the strategy have at least one <u>project</u> contributing to their recovery.	//		
Planning complete on actions for all identified birds	We overachieved on this target. All 20 birds identified in the Strategy have forward workplans established from now until 2020. These are flexible and adaptable to new knowledge and species needs.	/ /		
Action commenced for Orange-bellied Parrot and Western Ground Parrot	Emergency actions for Orange-bellied Parrot and Western Ground Parrot have commenced, including emergency and scheduled predator control, and habitat augmentation.	√		
Remaining eight birds identified for priority conservation and planning in place for action, in consultation with partners	The <u>remaining eight birds</u> were annouced by the Minister on 22 January 2016.	√		

We have seen good progress in projects for many of our 20 targeted birds. But large habitat ranges, which in some cases stretch to other countries, and gaps in knowledge will be barriers to recovery.

Continued effort is required on all of the targeted species, however, particular focus on the barriers to recovery for species like the Eastern Curlew, Regent Honeyeater, Plains Wanderer and Australasian Bittern is required.

Recovery actions are often long term, with species improvements not realised until new habitat is matured. We are working closely with Australia's leading scientists to establish meaningful ways to measure success in nearer timeframes.



GREEN PARROT RECOVERY

In 2013, the number of Norfolk Island Green Parrots was estimated to be as low as 50 to 100 birds.

A combination of predation by feral black rats and feral cats, and nest competition from introduced birds meant the Norfolk Island Green Parrot was on a trajectory to extinction.

But the outlook has changed, thanks to a \$300,000 Australian Government grant to support direct, on ground action and intensified local community effort. A network of 1,800 rat bait stations now covers the National Park and 80 nest sites have been established in tree trunks, which are now regularly used by the parrots.

The number of Green Parrots has now grown to nearly 400. The next step is to establish another population on nearby Phillip Island, which is free of feral animals, and the rangers are working hard to prepare the island for its new inhabitants.

This is an excellent example of what can be achieved when scientific expertise supports on-ground action to protect threatened species.



- TWICE THE NUMBEROF HELMETEDHONEYEATERSSURVIVING IN THEWILD
- NIGHT PARROT
 PROTECTED WITH
 NEW RESERVE IN
 QLD
- EMERGENCY FERAL
 CAT BAITING FOR
 WESTERN GROUND
 PARROTS



PLANTS YEAR 1 - HOW DID WE DO?

Ensure at least 80 per cent of projects funded through the 20 Million Trees and Green Army Programmes support the recovery of threatened plants and animals by providing suitable habitat

This target has been achieved. More than 82 per cent of Green Army and 20 Million Trees projects funded since the release of the Strategy support the recovery of threatened plants, animals and their habitat though actions including planting trees, removing weeds and debris and controlling pests.



Recovery actions underway for at least 20 threatened plants

We overachieved on this target with recovery actions underway for 27 threatened plant species through 22 projects under the 20 Million Trees Program. This is in addition to over 100 threatened plant species benefiting from Green Army projects since the release of the Strategy.



Recovery actions underway for at least 20 threatened ecological community sites

We overachieved on this target with recovery actions underway through the 20 Million Trees Programme at 54 threatened ecological community sites across Australia.



Priority species and communities for on-ground recovery action and seed collection are identified

<u>30 plants</u> targeted for recovery by 2020 were announced by the Minister on 7 September 2016. Parks Australia and the Australian Seed Bank Partnership have identified priorities for seed collection to 2020.



Projects designed to fill gaps in collections and genetic representativeness and support on-ground recovery are identified for priority species and communities

All 30 plants targeted in the Strategy have workplans established from now until 2020. These include on ground recovery and seed collection. Recovery actions are underway in 19 different ecological communities through the 20 Million Trees Program.



WHERE TO NOW?

Work is underway for many of the 30 plants including on-ground recovery actions, seed-banking, and using plant orchards and nurseries to help grow plants to be returned to the wild. Partnerships with private landowners will be important for protecting species on private land. While almost 50 per cent of known threatened species are now protected in Australia's national seed banks, challenges exist for species that can't be stored using traditional methods. Scientists from the Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Parks Australia and CSIRO are working on new methods to guarantee these species can also be insured.



SAVING THE MAGENTA LILLY PILLY

The Magenta Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium paniculatum*) is a vulnerable rainforest tree endemic to the NSW coast. Its numbers declined as urban areas on the coast developed and habitat fragmentation, invasive weeds and grazing increased.

The Threatened Species Strategy has put in place multiple recovery projects across the Magenta Lilly Pilly's range.

With the help of the 20 Million Trees Programme, the Hunter Wetlands Centre will increase the national population of Magenta Lilly Pilly by over 33 per cent from the current known population of 1,200 wild plants. Volunteers are working with project partners to collect and grow trees from seed, and once suitable habitat has been established they will replant the trees back into the wild.

Four Green Army projects are also working nearby to improve habitat for the species through weeding and revegetation.

Further down the coast at the southern limit of the Magenta Lilly Pilly, Booderee National Park rangers are protecting the species habitat and growing plants in the nursery as well as increasing numbers in Booderee Botanic Gardens.



- MOSSMAN FAIRY

 ORCHID BACK FROM

 EXTINCTION AFTER

 REDISCOVERY
- 429 480 TREES

 BEING PLANTED TO

 ENHANCE THE

 LOWLAND

 RAINFOREST OF

 SUBTROPICAL AUST.

 ECOLOGICAL

 COMMUNITY
- NINE PROJECTS
 RECOVERING THE
 SILVER DAISY
 BUSH





RECOVERY PRACTICES YEAR 1 - HOW	DID WE DO?	
Australian Government and all states and territories agree to common assessment method for species listing	All jurisdictions have endorsed the Common Assessment Method.	√
All identified birds and mammals in the 2020 recovery targets of this Action Plan have up-to-date conservation advices or recovery plans in place	All targeted birds and mammals identified at the launch of the Strategy have up to date conservation advices or recovery plans in place.	√
Based on comprehensive review, a work plan is established and completed to ensure conservation advices or recovery plans are up-to-date for identified high-priority species and ecological communities	Forward work plan completed for identified high-priority species and ecological communities.	√
Database of all recovery teams made publicly available	This target was partially met. Public consultation is being undertaken to identify recovery teams to be nationally registered and their details will be included in a database to be made publicly available.	•
Australian Government, in consultation with the states and territories, publishes best practice guidelines for recovery team governance	This target was partially met. <i>Draft</i> Recovery Team governance and best practice guidelines were made available for comment on 7 Oct 2016.	•
Australian Government, in consultation with the states and territories, establishes method to allow recovery teams to report annually on progress, with a focus on recovery actions and outcomes	This target was partially met. Draft Recovery Team Annual Progress Report – Guidelines were made available for comment 7 Oct 2016.	•

Finalising the recovery team database, best practice guidelines and reporting mechanisms are immediate priorities for the year ahead. These will help improve recovery outcomes for the targeted species in the Strategy and many other threatened species. Key to delivering recovery outcomes will be the documents that guide on-ground actions for species. We are working towards all targeted birds, mammals and plants having up-to-date recovery plans or conservation advices in place by year three.

In addition, as the Common Assessment Method continues to be implemented across Australia, the efficiency of threatened species assessment processes will improve. Different jurisdiction lists will progressively become better aligned.



STREAMLINING SPECIES LISTING

For many years, threatened species have been assessed and listed by different jurisdictions using different categories and criteria. As a result, species can be listed in multiple jurisdictions under different threat categories. This can confuse their conservation status, hinder their protection and also increase business costs. It also duplicates effort as species can be assessed multiple times.

In July 2015, Environment Ministers endorsed a common assessment method for assessing threatened species. A formal agreement has since been signed by Western Australia, the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and the Australian Government. All jurisdictions, including those who are yet to sign, are involved in implementing the common assessment method.

Along with assessments of species not currently listed, the common assessment method will align the status of species which are already listed. An initial group of 20 endemic Western Australian species is being considered for listing, de-listing, or a transfer of category under the EPBC Act list of threatened species to bring them into line with their status under Western Australian law.

This project is a great example of the improved governance that results from cooperation, collaboration and good communication across jurisdictional borders.



- 22 SPECIES HAV NEW RECOVERY PLANS
- 171 SPECIES HAVEA NEWCONSERVATIONADVICE
- BEST PRACTICE

 WORKSHOP HELD

 WITH 30 LEADING

 RECOVERY EXPERTS



TOWARDS YEAR 3

This report has described the progress that has been made during year one of the Strategy. We are now turning our attention to scaling up efforts to meet the year three targets. We are aiming to commence additional recovery actions for targeted species and see more population trajectories begin to improve. Building partnerships will be critical to achieving these next targets and I will be championing initiatives that will facilitate further collaboration between governments and the private and non-profit sectors. I will also be looking to apply knowledge gained in year one to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the Strategy. A key way to do this involves annually reviewing the Action Plan to ensure it is still relevant and delivering positive outcomes. Feedback on the Action Plan has been positive and no substantial changes are expected to be recommended in the near future. We will, however, look to sharpen the focus of the feral cat targets to deliver better outcomes for the 124 threatened species across Australia that they threaten.

THREATENED SPECIES RECOVERY FUND

On 5 June 2016, the Australian Government announced a dedicated \$5 million Threatened Species Recovery Fund to support the excellent work undertaken by local community groups fighting extinction. Nine community groups have already been announced to receive support to recover species like the extremely rare Gilbert's Potoroo, the remarkable Eastern Curlew and the unique Ormeau Bottle Tree. The remaining funds will go to community groups working on projects that strongly align with the Threatened Species Strategy. Allocating the remaining funds to quality projects will by a key priority over the next two to three years.

THREATENED SPECIES PROSPECTUS

The Threatened Species Prospectus will contain a suite of project proposals that can support delivery of targets in the Threatened Species Strategy. This prospectus will provide an opportunity for the business and philanthropic sectors to partner with governments and conservation and community groups by co-funding critical work needed to recover our most threatened native animals and plants.

FERAL CAT TARGET

Our work to control feral cats will remain a key focus over coming years. Strong progress has been made on tackling the threat of feral cats, including establishing feral-free exclosures and identifying the five islands for feral cat eradication. This work will continue and ramp up. However, for the majority of threatened species, the long-term goal for recovery is survival in an open landscape. To achieve this, we must increase our focus on the open landscape target - managing feral cats over 12 million hectares. In recent visits to remote Indigenous Protected Areas, I have been impressed by the work of Indigenous rangers controlling feral cats, and threatened species are thriving on many of their properties as a result. I am keen to help others learn from these efforts.

MAMMALS				
Eastern Barred	Golden Bandicoot	Kangaroo Island	Western Ringtail	Leadbeater's
Bandicoot	Golden Bandicoot	Dunnart	Possum	Possum
Mala	Brush-tailed Rabbit-rat	Numbat	Eastern Quoll	Gilbert's Potoroo
Mountain Pygmy-possum	Eastern Bettong	Woylie	Western Quoll	Mahogany Glider
Bilby	Christmas Island Flying-fox	Central Rock-rat	Northern Hopping-mouse	Black-footed Rock-wallaby

BIRDS				
Norfolk Island Green Parrot	Eastern Bristlebird	Alligator Rivers Yellow Chat	Cassowary	Eastern Curlew
Malleefowl	White-throated Grasswren	Golden-shouldered Parrot	Western Ground Parrot	Red-tailed Black-cockatoo
Helmeted Honeyeater	Norfolk Island Boobook Owl	Plains Wanderer	Regent Honeyeater	Australasian Bittern
Night Parrot	Mallee Emu-wren	Hooded Plover	Orange-bellied Parrot	Swift Parrot
				Christmas Island Frigatebird

PLANTS				
Small Purple Pea	Magenta Lilly Pilly	Ant Plant	Southport Heath	Turnip Copperburr
Little Mountain Palm	Kakadu Hibiscus	Bulberin Nut	Morrisby's Gum	Matchstick Banksia
Vincentia Banksia	Central Australian Cabbage Palm	Whibley's Wattle	Shy Susan	Glossy-leafed Hammer-orchid
Mongarlowe Mallee	Purple Wattle	Silver Daisy Bush	Silver Gum	Black Grevillea
Caley's Grevillea	Ormeau Bottle Tree	Fleurieu Leek Orchid	Spiny Rice Flower	Fitzgerald's Mulla-mulla
Fairy Bells	Mossman Fairy Orchid	Blue Top Sun Orchid	Button Wrinklewort	Scaly-leaved Featherflower

