

20 October 2017

**Glamorgan Spring Bay Council Prosser Plains Raw Water Scheme (PPRWS) Tea Tree Rivulet Dam**

Prepared by North Barker, 14 March 2017

Comments by Dr Eric J Woehler, Convenor BirdLife Tasmania  
19 October 2017

To whom it may concern,

I have reviewed the above document and offer the following comments on the potential impact to Swift Parrots:

1. The use of a particular area for breeding by Swift Parrots is highly variable inter-annually, but is confined to southeast Tasmania. The area selected by Swift Parrots for breeding is in close proximity to suitable feeding areas, primarily flowering Blue Gum *Eucalyptus globulus* and Black Gum *E. ovata*. Breeding success is linked to the intensity of flowering by preferred species, and feeding on alternative flowering species results in lower breeding success.
2. There continues to be a loss of breeding and feeding habitats for Swift Parrots in Tasmania through logging and illegal wood-hooking by members of the community. Extensive wood-hooking occurring in southeast Tasmania, with a known focal area around Buckland; several known Swift Parrot nesting trees have been lost in the last 2 years due to this illegal activity.

Combined, the result is (a) less habitat available for nesting and feeding for Swift Parrots in southeast Tasmania and (b) a concomitant significant increase in the conservation value of all remaining nesting and feeding habitats, such as the one under evaluation, with the ongoing loss of habitat.

3. In the face of the continuing loss of feeding and nesting habitats of Swift Parrots, all remaining habitat must be seen as critical habitat for the species, even if it is used only once in a decade or less. The remaining habitat must be protected for future use.  
Application of the Precautionary Principle is clearly warranted under the current circumstances.
4. The absence of Swift Parrot records between 10 and 19 January 2017 does not reduce the value of area under evaluation. Areas may not be used for many years between one breeding season and the next. Brief surveys are unlikely to obtain a true assessment of an area's use or value to Swift Parrots.
5. Any impacts to any Swift Parrot habitat may not be manifested in the breeding population for many years due to the ephemeral use of an area by Swift Parrots.

The absence of records during the January 2017 survey period simply reflects

**BIRDLIFE TASMANIA**  
GPO BOX 68  
HOBART  
TASMANIA 7001

[tasmania@birdlife.org.au](mailto:tasmania@birdlife.org.au)  
[birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)

ABN 75 149 124 774



the absence for the area in a brief window of the breeding season. It is important to note that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence – particularly true for high mobile and variable species such as Swift Parrot.

In summary, I concur with the report's conclusions that the area to be impacted is significant Swift Parrot habitat:

- I believe that the loss of the habitat is likely to cause a significant impact as *per* the EPBC assessment criteria,
- I believe that the loss of the habitat in the area under evaluation will disrupt the breeding cycle of a population and modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline, and
- I have no doubt that the habitat is an important feeding habitat that supports breeding in the area. The loss of habitat is identified as a key threatening process under the EPBC Act.

#### **Credentials**

Dr Eric J Woehler

- PhD (University of California, Irvine) 1995 from the Dept of Ecology & Evolution
- Convenor, BirdLife Tasmania 2001 to present
- Adjunct Researcher, University of Tasmania 1997 – present, teaching undergraduate classes and supervision of higher-degree students

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Woehler" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Eric J Woehler  
Convenor