

Highworth Bend Conservation Park

Resource Information

2026



Queensland
Government

This document is a compendium of park information and a supporting document for the associated management instrument (management plan or management statement). Management instruments are prepared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and include management direction for tenure which QPWS has management responsibility.

© State of Queensland, 2026

May 2026

This resource information does not intent to affect, diminish or extinguish native title or associated rights.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs and printed material that some people may find distressing.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.



Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.

You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

If you need to access this document in a language other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone Library Services on +61 7 3170 5470.

This publication can be made available in an alternative format (e.g. large print or audiotape) on request for people with vision impairment; phone +61 7 3170 5470 or email <library@detsi.qld.gov.au>.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Park overview	4
3. Resource information	6
3.1 First Nations people	6
3.2 Key value information	6
3.3 Other values	6
3.3.1 Vine thicket and brigalow	6
3.4 Ecosystems and biodiversity	6
3.4.1 Regional ecosystems	6
3.5 Species	7
3.5.1 Native animals	7
3.5.2 Native plants	7
3.6 Recreational opportunities	7
3.7 Post-contact cultural heritage	7
3.8 Fire	8
3.9 Pests	8
3.9.1 Pest plants	8
3.10 Mining	8
4. Bibliography	9
5. Appendices	10
Appendix A. Policy and management commitments	10
Appendix B. Regional ecosystems of significance	10
Appendix C. Species of conservation significance	11
Appendix D. Species listed in international agreements	11
Appendix E. Pests	12

1. Introduction

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), within the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), applies a contemporary management process that is based on international best practice and targets management towards the most important features of each park: their key values.

The Values-Based Management Framework (VBMF) is an adaptive management cycle that incorporates planning, prioritising, doing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting into all areas of our business. This enables the agency to be more flexible and proactive and to improve management effectiveness over time.

This document is a compendium of park information and a supporting document for key values and level of service assessment reports or management plans and management statements. It contains background information about a park's purpose, values, resources and legal and administrative framework.

2. Park overview

Highworth Bend Conservation Park is 28 kilometres south-west of the inland town of Moura and 22 kilometres north-west of Theodore. The Dawson Range is just one kilometre west of the park.

Palmgrove National Park (Scientific) is 50 kilometres east of the park and Isla Gorge National Park is 37 kilometres to the south. There are also several state forests within a 50-kilometre radius of the park, to the north and south-west.

The park lies along the outer bank of the Dawson River, which spills out into the park and surrounding properties during flood events. The Dawson River is an important water supply for Central Queensland, supporting agriculture, industry and communities.

Bekers Road runs along the western side of the park and there is a large freehold property to the north and south.

The broader surrounding landscape has been highly modified for agriculture (mostly grazing) and mining. Dawson Mine is located east of the park. It is one of Australia's longest established open-cut coal mines. The southern mining area is 13 kilometres from the park.

The following figure and table (Figure 1, Table 1) provide an overview of information related to the park, including locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

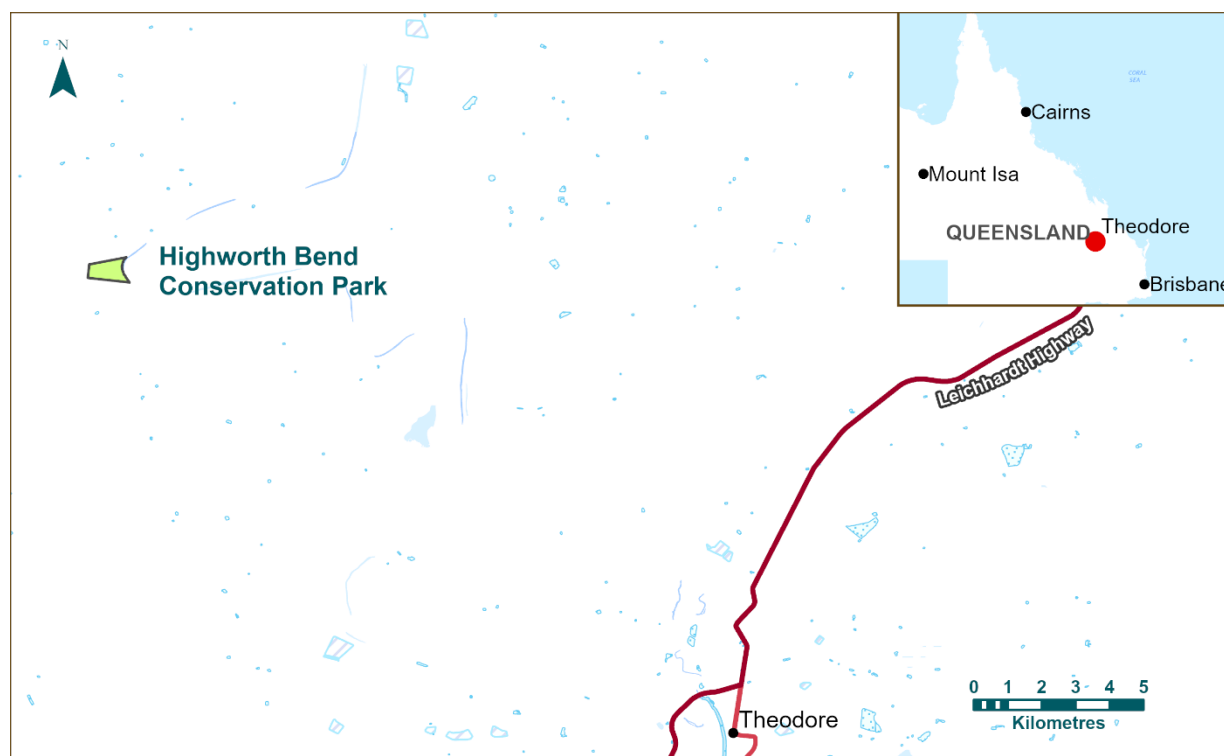


Figure 1. Locality of Highworth Bend Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Highworth Bend Conservation Park

Park size	Highworth Bend Conservation Park	51.6 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt South	
QPWS region	South West	
Local government area	Banana Shire Council	
State electorate	Callide	
Relevant legislation	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	
	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>	
	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth) (EPBC)	
	<i>Geothermal Energy Act 2010</i>	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cwlth)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	
Plans and agreements	<i>Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals</i>	
	<i>China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	
	<i>Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	
	<i>Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	

3. Resource information

3.1 First Nations people

There are no native title determinations or current applications for native title relating to the park.

3.2 Key value information

Based on an evaluation, the park's values do not reach the thresholds required to be considered a key value. The park, however, continues to contribute to the state's comprehensive and representative reserve system, providing protection for biodiversity, ecosystem services and connectivity within the landscape.

3.3 Other values

3.3.1 Vine thicket and brigalow

Endangered semi-evergreen vine thicket and brigalow *Acacia harpophylla* is present within the park. There has been extensive clearing of vine thickets and brigalow within the Brigalow Belt bioregions. While most of the park's vegetation requires fire to be healthy, the vine thicket and brigalow require protection from fire.

3.4 Ecosystems and biodiversity

Most of the surrounding landscape beyond the Dawson River has been highly modified, with very little remnant vegetation remaining. There is a large stretch of remnant vegetation along the Dawson Range, which is one kilometre west of the park. A State Biodiversity Corridor runs along the Dawson Range and includes the park; these corridors were identified to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity across the state. The park's remnant vegetation provides important habitat for native wildlife.

The park is within the Dawson River subcatchment of the Fitzroy catchment.

3.4.1 Regional ecosystems

The park has four regional ecosystems, one with endangered biodiversity status, two of concern (Appendix B) and one with no concern at present status. They all represent less than one per cent of that regional ecosystem remaining in Queensland or within the protected area estate. Regional ecosystems with endangered or of concern biodiversity status cover 22.69 hectares (43.27 per cent) of the park.

Semi-evergreen vine thicket or *Acacia harpophylla* with a semi-evergreen vine thicket understorey on fine-grained sedimentary rocks (11.9.4) has endangered biodiversity status and covers 18.03 hectares (34.39 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for threatened plant species, including *Cadellia pentastylis*, this species has not been recorded from the park. The Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD) fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is to provide protection from fire.

Eucalyptus populnea woodland on alluvial plains (11.3.2) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 3.26 hectares (6.22 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for the threatened plant *Homopholis belsonii* and suitable habitat for koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*, neither has been recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is to burn in the late wet to early season when there is good soil moisture, early in the storm season or after good spring rains, with low to moderate intensity, at 6–10 year intervals, and less than 30 per cent burnt in any year.

Eucalyptus tereticornis or *E. camaldulensis* woodland fringing drainage lines (11.3.25) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 1.40 hectares (2.66 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide important habitat for riparian freshwater turtle species, including the threatened freshwater turtle *Rheodytes leukops* in parts of the Fitzroy catchment, and suitable habitat for koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*, none of these species has been recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is for primarily early dry season burns of low intensity, with 3–5 year intervals.

Eucalyptus melanophloia +/- *E. orgadophila* woodland to open woodland on fine-grained sedimentary rocks (11.9.2) has no concern at present biodiversity status and covers 26.06 hectares (49.71 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) listed plant *Solanum elaeagnifolium*, it has not been recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is the same as for 11.3.2.

There is 3.68 hectares (7.02 per cent) of non-remnant vegetation within the park.

3.5 Species

3.5.1 Native animals

There are 153 native animal species (1 spider, 2 fish, 8 mammals, 11 reptiles, 25 insects and 106 birds) found within the park.

Four species of conservation significance have been recorded from the park — vulnerable white-throated needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus* and diamond firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*; and special least concern platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* and short-beaked echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* (Appendix C). Sighting records in the department's WildNet Database indicate just one or two sightings of these four species.

The vulnerable diamond firetail is a small finch, with striking, spotty plumage. It is sometimes described as one of the most stunningly coloured birds of the finch family. They are typically found in open grassy woodland, heath, grassland or farmland. They are only found in south-eastern Australia, from the Carnarvon Ranges in Queensland to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia (Birdlife Australia).

The vulnerable white-throated needletail is a migratory species that is widespread in eastern and south-eastern Australia. They are generally gregarious when in Australia, sometimes occurring in large flocks of hundreds or thousands. They are occasionally seen in mixed flocks with other aerial insectivorous birds. They are sighted more frequently above wooded areas, including open forest and rainforest. In mid-March to April, they migrate to breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere, returning from September onwards. While predominantly an aerial bird, they have been observed roosting in trees. (Department of the Environment 2018, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) 2009).

Six of the 106 birds found in the park are migratory birds listed on international agreements, including the vulnerable white-throated needletail (Appendix D).

3.5.2 Native plants

There are 73 native plant species found within the park. Three plants of conservation significance have been recorded — broad-leaved bottle tree *Brachychiton australis*, *B. rupestris*, and *Santalum lanceolatum* — all have special least concern status (Appendix C).

3.6 Recreational opportunities

There are no visitor facilities within the park and camping is not permitted.

3.7 Post-contact cultural heritage

There are no known post-contact cultural heritage sites within the park.

3.8 Fire

The endangered vine thicket and brigalow that covers 34.39 per cent of the park requires protection from fire, while the other three regional ecosystems in the park need fire to be healthy.

There are no historical fire records for the park.

There is an established fire break that runs through the park in a north–south direction.

3.9 Pests

There have been nine pest species (4 animals and 5 plants) recorded from the park (Appendix E), including three Weeds of National Significance (WONS).

3.9.1 Pest plants

The three WONS present in the park are *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Parkinsonia aculeata* and *Opuntia streptacantha*. There are 32 WONS that have been identified due to their invasiveness, potential for spread, and their economic, environmental and social impacts. Flood-prone country is particularly susceptible to infestation by parkinsonia, as seed pods float and are easily spread by water. Parkinsonia can form prickly thickets along watercourses, making access difficult (Weeds Australia). Parthenium is toxic to both humans and animals (Weeds Australia).

Buffel grass is also present within the park and on surrounding grazing properties. It is a high-biomass tussock grass that can have significant impacts on biodiversity, including competition with native plants and increasing the frequency and intensity of fires. As buffel grass is tolerant to drought, fire and grazing, it is important to many pastoralists with grazing cattle (DCCEEW 2025).

3.10 Mining

Terra Calor Energy Pty Ltd lodged an application on 8 July 2024 for a geothermal exploration permit. The application extends across a large area and includes the park.

4. Bibliography

Business Queensland, 2025, *GeoResGlobe, Online services for mining and resources*, search undertaken on 4 November 2025, <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/resources/minerals-coal/online-services/georesglobe>

Birdlife Australia website, Diamond firetail profile, accessed 4 November 2025.
<https://birdlife.org.au/bird-profiles/>

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, undated, *Weeds Australia, powered by the Centre for Invasive Species Solution*, search undertaken on 12 January 2026. <https://weeds.org.au/>

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2009, *Species Profile and Threats Database, Hirundapus caudacutus, White-throated needletail*, SPRAT profile, last updated 18 February 2009, accessed 4 November 2025. https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=682

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2015, *Ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and species decline in arid and semi-arid Australia due to the invasion of buffel grass (Cenchrus ciliaris and C. pennisetiformis)*, A Threat Abatement Advice, last updated April 2015. <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/threat-abatement-advice/buffel-grass-introduction>

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2026, *Species Profile and Threats Database, Stagonopleura guttata, Diamond Firetail*, SPRAT profile, accessed 9 January 2026.

Department of the Environment, 2018, Consultation document on listing eligibility and conservation actions, *Hirundapus caudacutus* (White-throated needletail).
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/env/consultations/a171b06e-3690-4ca9-a560-170ee5d806b3/files/consultation-document-hirundapus-caudacutus.pdf>

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2025, *Environmental Reports, Values-Based Management Framework, For Highworth Bend Conservation Park*, 7 May 2025.

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2025, CAR and RE Report.

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2025, *WildNet Records Species List For Lot 5 on BH65*, current as at 5 November 2025.

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2025, *WildNet Species and Sightings Search*, for Highworth Bend Conservation Park, accessed 13 November 2025.

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, 2015, *Highworth Bend Regional Park Management Statement*.

National Native Title Tribunal, 2025, *Native Title Vision*, search undertaken on 4 November 2025.
<https://www.nntt.gov.au/assistance/Geospatial/Pages/NTV.aspx>

Queensland Herbarium, 2024, *Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD)*, Version 13.1 (May 2024) (DESI: Brisbane). Retrieved from <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/regional-ecosystems/> on 15 December 2025.

5. Appendices

Appendix A. Policy and management commitments

Gazettal details

The park was originally gazetted as Highworth Bend Environmental Park on 20 July 1974 under the *Land Act 1962* and was managed under a trustee agreement by Banana Shire Council.

It was then gazetted as Highworth Bend Conservation Park under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) on 16 December 1994 and again on 1 July 2016.

There was a short period during 2014 to 2016 when certain classes of protected area under the NCA were removed, including conservation parks. During this time, the park was a regional park under the NCA, until legislative amendments in 2016 removed the 'regional park' class of protected area and it was reinstated as a conservation park.

Appendix B. Regional ecosystems of significance

Regional ecosystem	Description	Regional ecosystem class*	Biodiversity status**
11.9.4	Semi-evergreen vine thicket or <i>Acacia harpophylla</i> with a semi-evergreen vine thicket understorey on fine-grained sedimentary rocks	Of concern	Endangered
11.3.2	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern	Of concern
11.3.25	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> or <i>E. camaldulensis</i> woodland fringing drainage lines	Least concern	Of concern

* Vegetation Management Regional Ecosystem Description Database (VM REDD)

** Queensland Herbarium, Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD)

Appendix C. Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	NC Act status	EPBC Act status
Animals			
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	diamond firetail	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>	platypus	Special least concern	
<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	short-beaked echidna	Special least concern	
Plants			
<i>Brachychiton australis</i>	broad-leaved bottle tree	Special least concern	
<i>Brachychiton rupestris</i>		Special least concern	
<i>Santalum lanceolatum</i>		Special least concern	

Appendix D. Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	CMS	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
<i>Anas gracilis</i>	grey teal	✓			
<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	cattle egret		✓		✓
<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	nankeen kestrel	✓			
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle				✓
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail		✓	✓	✓
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater		✓		

Notes:

This list includes local and migratory birds that regularly use the park for feeding, nesting and/or breeding. Species that may visit intermittently have not been included in this table.

CMS – Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

Appendix E. Pests

Scientific name	Common name	Biosecurity Act 2014 status	Notes
Plants			
<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>	parthenium weed	Category 3	WONS
<i>Opuntia streptacantha</i>	cardona pear	Category 3	WONS
<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	parkinsonia	Category 3	WONS
<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	buffel grass		
<i>Megathyrsus maximus var. pubiglumis</i>	green panic		
Animals			
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	rabbit	Category 3, 4, 5, 6	
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	red fox	Category 3, 4, 5, 6	
<i>Pieris rapae</i>	cabbage white (insect)		
<i>Rhinella marina</i>	cane toad		