Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Lake Murphy 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.

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.

Contents

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

Lake Murphy Conservation Park is 20 kilometres north-west of the inland town of Taroom and 310 kilometres west of the regional city of Maryborough. The park is mostly surrounded by freehold properties, with one area of Unallocated State Land to the south. Robinson Creek runs along the southern boundary of the park and Glenhaughton Road runs through the park.

There are several state forests in the area. Gwambagwine is nine kilometres north-west, Belington Hut is 23 kilometres east and Waterton State Forest 1 is 22 kilometres north-east.

Much of the surrounding landscape has been modified for agriculture (grazing, growing crops).

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.

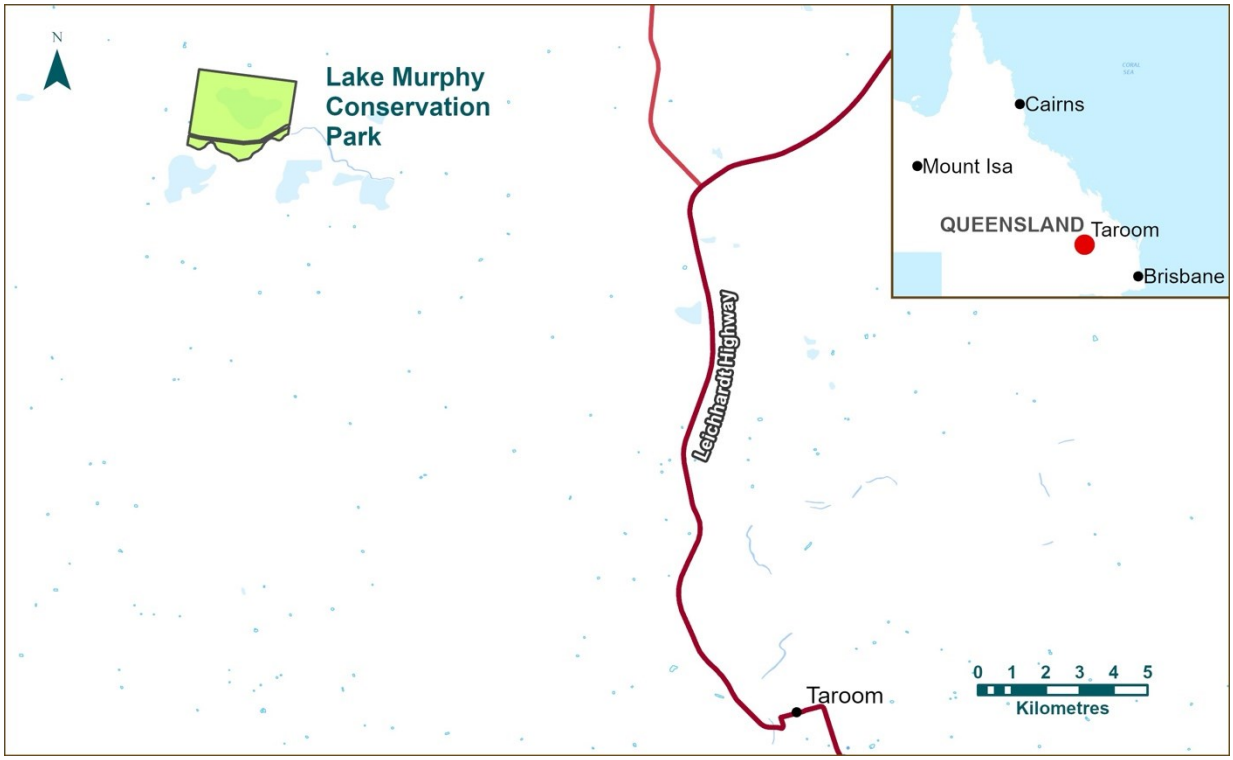

Figure 1. Locality of Lake Murphy Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Lake Murphy Conservation Park

Park size	Lake Murphy Conservation Park	550.6 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt South	
QPWS region	South West	
Local government area	Banana Shire Council	
State electorate	Callide	
Relevant legislation	*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*	
	Biosecurity Act 2014	
	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)	
	Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)	
	Nature Conservation Act 1992	
	Queensland Heritage Act 1992	
Plans and agreements	*A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*	
	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	
	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement	
	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement	
	Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement	
	Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032	
	Draft National Recovery Plan for Greater Gliders	
	National Recovery Plan for the Koala Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)	

3. Resource information

3.1 Iman People

A native title claim including the park and other areas was lodged on 30 October 1997 and a determination was made on 23 June 2016 (Tribunal Number QCD2016/005, Federal Court Number QUD6162/1998). Native title is held by the Iman People described in the determination, with the registered native title body corporate (RNTBC) being Wardingarri Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (QI2023/009) over the park and other areas was registered on 30 April 2024.

3.2 Key value information

3.2.1 Wetland habitat

The park is part of the Palm Tree and Robinson Creek Wetland, which is listed in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. The wetland habitat within the park extends across half of the park and includes a perched lake, fringing woodland and sedgelands, and a small area of freshwater swamp. The freshwater wetland regional ecosystem that is present (11.3.27) has of concern biodiversity status, and of the 21 protected areas in Queensland where it is present, this park has the second highest representation. The three vegetation communities found here (11.3.27 a, c, d) are not found in many other protected areas in Queensland. This park has the highest representation for vegetation communities 11.3.27a and d, and is the only park protecting vegetation community 11.3.27c. The park's wetland provides important habitat for resident and migratory birds, with 159 different bird species recorded from the park, including waterbirds like ducks, pelicans and black swans, and 13 migratory species listed on international conventions.

3.3 Other values

3.3.1 Eucalypt woodlands with near threatened palm *Livistona nitida*

The eucalypt woodlands in the park are alongside Robinson Creek and comprise blue gums, coolabah, black box and the near threatened palm *Livistona nitida*. This regional ecosystem (11.3.4) has of concern biodiversity status. There are only five protected areas in Queensland where the near threatened palm *L. nitida* has been recorded. It is endemic to central Queensland.

3.3.2 Brigalow forest

The park has an endangered regional ecosystem with brigalow *Acacia harpophylla* open forest to woodland. Brigalow forests have been extensively cleared in Queensland.

3.3.2 Birdwatching

The park's wetland, woodlands and forests provide excellent opportunities for birdwatching. With 159 different bird species recorded from the park, birdwatching groups and individuals can view a diverse range of birds, including migratory species visiting from other countries and some species that are nesting in the park. The day-use and camping area provide the flexibility for birdwatchers to visit for the day, or to stay overnight and capture the best times for birdwatching in the late afternoon and early morning. Two walking tracks provide access to Lake Murphy, Robinson Creek and the open woodland and forest.

3.4 Ecosystems and biodiversity

The park is part of the Taroom Downs subregion of the Brigalow Belt South Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) bioregion.

The southern part of the park is within a State Biodiversity Corridor. These corridors were identified to maintain and enhance ecological connectivity across the state.

The park is within Brigalow Country, which covers a large area from Bowen to northern New South Wales. Brigalow is a species of acacia *Acacia harpophylla*, an ecological community and the name of the wider bioregion. The Australian Government's *Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032* identifies Brigalow Country as one of 20 priority places for targeted action over five years, with the objective to improve condition.

3.4.1 Regional ecosystems

Over 90 per cent of the park comprises regional ecosystems with endangered or of concern biodiversity status. There are six regional ecosystems on the park, one with endangered biodiversity status, four of concern (Appendix B) and one with no concern at present status. Five of these represent less than one per cent of that regional ecosystem remaining in Queensland or within the protected area estate, only 11.3.27 has higher representation. There is a small 12.3 hectare area of non-remnant vegetation.

Freshwater wetland (11.3.27) covers 279.57 hectares (50.95 per cent) of the park and has of concern biodiversity. While this is just 0.65 per cent of this regional ecosystem remaining in Queensland, it is 13.38 per cent of that within the protected area estate. The three vegetation communities found within the park (11.3.27 a, c and d) are not found in many other protected areas. The park is ranked as the most important protected area for representation of these three vegetation communities. This regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for a diverse range of fauna, particularly birds — six birds of conservation significance have been recorded from the park (Appendix C). The Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD) fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is to protect it from fire through management of the surrounding country.

Acacia harpophylla (brigalow) and/or *Casuarina cristata* open forest to woodland on fine grained sedimentary rocks (11.9.5) has endangered biodiversity status and covers 64.12 hectares (11.69 per cent) of the park. This regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for threatened fauna species including pale imperial hairstreak butterfly *Jalmenus eubulus*. While this butterfly has not been recorded from the park, other animals of conservation significance have been (Appendix C). The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is to protect it from fire.

Eucalyptus tereticornis or *E. camaldulensis* woodland fringing drainage lines (11.3.25) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 112.15 hectares (20.44 per cent) of the park. This regional ecosystem is known to be associated with high fauna species richness in the Taroom area, and to provide potential 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*. While no turtles have been recorded from the park, endangered koalas have been. 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 tereticornis and/or *Eucalyptus* spp. woodland on alluvial plains (11.3.4) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 45.38 hectares (8.27 per cent) of the park. This regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for species listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA), including *Acacia pedleyi*, *Callicarpa thozetii*, *Cycas megacarpa*, *C. ophiolitica*, *Digitaria porrecta*, *Eriocaulon carsonii* subsp. *orientale*, *Livistona nitida*, *Rhaponticum australe*, *Samadera bidwillii*, *Sannantha brachypoda*, and to provide suitable habitat for koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus*. Near threatened *L. nitida* and endangered koalas have been recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is late wet to early dry season burns when there is good soil moisture, early storm season, or after good spring rains, with a low to moderate intensity, a fire interval of 6–10 years and burning less than 30 per cent in any year. The effect of fire on

recruitment and persistence of the near threatened palm *L. nitida* is largely unknown, although anecdotally, seedlings typically establish in sheltered gullies and creek lines where there is no fire (DETSI 2025).

Eucalyptus populnea woodland on alluvial plains (11.3.2) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 11.70 hectares (2.13 per cent) of the park. This regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for the threatened plant *Homopholis belsonii* and koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*. While *H. belsonii* has not been recorded from the park, endangered koalas have. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is the same as for 11.3.4.

Eucalyptus melanophloia +/- *E. chloroclada* open woodland on undulating plains and valleys with sandy soils (11.3.39) has no concern at present biodiversity status and covers 23.4 hectares (4.27 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for *Corymbia scabrida*, this species has not been recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline for this regional ecosystem is the same as for 11.3.4.

3.4.2 Wetlands

The park is within the Palm Tree and Robinson Creeks Wetland, which is 50,274 hectares in size, contains two wetland types, and is listed in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*.

Lacustrine wetland covers 178 hectares of the park and palustrine wetland covers 102 hectares (Department of Environment, Science and Innovation 2013). The park is within the Dawson River subcatchment of the Fitzroy catchment.

Lake Murphy is a perched lake that fills when nearby Robinson Creek overflows. Floodwaters extend across much of the surrounding landscape during significant flood events.

3.5 Species

3.5.1 Native animals

There are 249 native animal species (1 yabby, 1 fish, 14 frogs, 15 reptiles, 18 mammals, 41 insects and 159 birds) found within the park.

Six birds of conservation significance have been recorded — vulnerable Latham's snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*, sharp-tailed sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* and powerful owl *Ninox strenua*; and special least concern white-winged black tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*, Caspian tern *Hydroprogne caspia* and glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (Appendix C). Thirteen of the 159 birds recorded from the park are migratory birds listed on international agreements (Appendix D).

Lake Murphy provides a seasonal refuge for a range of waterbirds, including ducks, pelicans and black swans. It has only been dry five times in the past two centuries (DETSI 2019).

While the park is not mapped as koala habitat, endangered koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus* are present within the park.

A further two species of conservation significance have been recorded from the park — endangered southern greater glider *Petauroides volans volans*, and special least concern short-beaked echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* (Appendix C).

3.5.2 Native plants

There are 38 native plant species found within the park.

Two species of conservation significance have been recorded — near threatened palm *Livistona nitida* and special least concern *Vallisneria nana* (Appendix C). *L. nitida* is only found within five parks within the Queensland protected area estate.

The near threatened palm *L. nitida* is endemic to central Queensland. It is a tall palm that may have genetic inbreeding depression in some areas due to small population size. The palm is popular in the nursery industry (DETSI 2025).

3.6 Recreational opportunities

The park provides a range of visitor facilities, including walking tracks, a day-use area and camping area. While these can be accessed by conventional vehicle, access is limited during flood events when local roads become impassable. There is currently no mobile phone coverage in this area. A fence with a cattle grid and gate surrounds the camping and day-use area to exclude wandering cattle.

The park provides excellent opportunities for birdwatching.

3.6.1 Camping and day-use area

The camping area is suitable for tents, campervans, camper trailers and caravans, with a maximum of 10 people at any time. The campsites are in an open area with some shady trees. There are beautiful views from the camping area across the lake, particularly at sunset.

The camping and day-use area has an information shelter, picnic tables, barbecues (BYO wood) and composting toilets. Campfires are allowed within the fire rings provided.

3.6.2 Walking tracks

There are two walking tracks within the park:

(1) a short 300 metre (one-way distance) walking track from the camping and day-use area to Lake Murphy
(2) a four-kilometre circuit track from the camping and day-use area that traverses open woodland with iron bark trees and Dawson River palms, and red gum forest alongside Robinson Creek.

3.7 Post-contact cultural heritage

3.7.1 Leichhardt's expedition

In 1844, the German explorer Ludwig Leichhardt and his party camped under the forest red gums on the shores of Lake Murphy while on an epic 4827 kilometre expedition. The party of 10, which included two First Nations guides, departed from the Darling Downs in south-east Queensland on 1 October 1844 and arrived at Port Essington, 300 kilometres north of Darwin, on 17 December 1845 (Queensland State Archives 2022). They had been travelling for seven weeks when they camped at Lake Murphy. Travel had been slow due to the unfamiliar dense brigalow scrub. Lake Murphy was named after young 16-year-old John Murphy, who was in Leichhardt's party and first saw the lake. The expedition provided valuable information about the area that contributed to the expansion of European settlement into central Queensland and northern Australia (National Museum Australia).

The day-use and camping area opened in 1994 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Leichhardt's passage, a collaborative project between the Banana Shire Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Upper Dawson Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.

3.8 Fire

The eucalypt woodlands in the park need fire to be healthy and the freshwater wetland and brigalow require protection from fire.

There are firebreaks within the park and on neighbouring properties. Planned burns are undertaken to protect life and property, reduce the risk and severity of bushfires, and maintain healthy ecosystems. The last planned burn was in 2018.

3.9 Pests

There have been 24 pest species (10 animals and 14 plants) recorded from the park (Appendix E).

Pigs and invasive grasses are a significant threat to the park's wetland.

Pigs can cause significant damage to wetlands, with impacts including habitat degradation from feeding, tramping and wallowing, reduced water quality, spreading weeds, disturbing waterbirds, and predation of native wetland species including frogs, yabbies and bird eggs.

Grazing is prevalent in the surrounding landscape and improved pastures are used in neighbouring properties. The park is inundated during flood events and flood waters often transport pest plants to new areas. Invasive grasses can change habitats and create an increased fire risk.

4. Bibliography

DAWE, 2022, *National Recovery plan for the Koala: Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)*. Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra. March 2022. CC BY 4.0. https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/koala-2022

DCCEEW 2025, *National Recovery Plan for Greater Gliders (Petauroides volans and Petauroides minor)*, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Canberra. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/draft-national-recovery-plan-for-greater-gliders

Department of Environment, Science and Innovation, 2013, *Lake Murphy Conservation Park — facts and maps*, WetlandInfo website, accessed 6 November 2025. https://wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au/wetlands/facts-maps/conservation-park-lake-murphy/

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, 2015, *Lake Murphy Regional Park Management Statement*.

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, undated, *Background information for Lake Murphy Regional Park*.

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2019, Lake Murphy Conservation Park, Parks and forests webpages, accessed 6 November 2025. https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/lake-murphy

Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, 2025, *Environmental Reports, Values-Based Management Framework, For Lake Murphy 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 12 on LE295*, current as at 6 November 2025.

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

Environment Australia, 2001, *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*, Third Edition, Canberra.

Munroe MH, undated, *Australia: The land where time began*. https://austhrutime.com/lake_murphy_conservation_park.htm

National Museum Australia website, undated, *Defining moments - Leichhardt expedition*. https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/leichhardt-expedition

National Native Title Tribunal, 2025, *Native Title Vision*, search undertaken on 5 November 2025. https://www.nntt.gov.au/assistance/Geospatial/Pages/NTV.aspx

Queensland State Archives, 2022, Stories from the archives, Ludwig Leichhardt's final expedition. https://blogs.archives.qld.gov.au/2022/04/06/ludwig-leichhardts-final-expedition/

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 a Department and Official Purposes (Environmental Protection Purposes) Reserve under the *Land Act 1962* on 21 June 1986, and was managed under a trustee agreement by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and Taroom Shire Council.

It was originally gazetted as Lake Murphy Conservation Park under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) on 23 October 1986 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.

Recovery plans and guides

- Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032
- Draft National Recovery Plan for Greater Gliders
- National Recovery Plan for the Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)

Appendix B. Regional ecosystems of significance

Regional ecosystem	Description	Regional ecosystem class*	Biodiversity status**
11.9.5	*Acacia harpophylla* and/or *Casuarina cristata* open forest to woodland on fine grained sedimentary rocks	Endangered	Endangered
11.3.27	Freshwater wetlands	Least concern	Of concern
11.3.4	*Eucalyptus tereticornis* and/or *Eucalyptus* spp. woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern	Of concern
11.3.25	*Eucalyptus tereticornis* or *E. camaldulensis* woodland fringing drainage lines	Least concern	Of concern
11.3.2	*Eucalyptus populnea* woodland on alluvial plains	Of 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			
Phascolarctos cinereus	koala	Endangered	Endangered
Petauroides volans volans	southern greater glider	Endangered	Endangered
Calidris acuminata	sharp-tailed sandpiper	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's snipe	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Ninox strenua	powerful owl	Vulnerable	
Chlidonias leucopterus	white-winged black tern	Special least concern	
Hydroprogne caspia	Caspian tern	Special least concern	
Plegadis falcinellus	glossy ibis	Special least concern	
Tachyglossus aculeatus	short-beaked echidna	Special least concern	
Plants			
Livistona nitida		Near threatened	
Vallisneria nana		Special least concern	

Appendix D. Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	CMS	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
Anas gracilis	grey teal	✓			
Ardea alba modesta	eastern great egret		✓		✓
Bubulcus ibis	cattle egret		✓		✓
Calidris acuminata	sharp-tailed sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chlidonias leucopterus	white-winged black tern		✓	✓	✓
Edolisoma tenuirostre	common cicadabird		✓		
Falco cenchroides	nankeen kestrel	✓			
Falco longipennis	Australian hobby	✓			
Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
Haliaeetus leucogaster	white-bellied sea-eagle				✓
Hydroprogne caspia	Caspian tern		✓		✓
Merops ornatus	rainbow bee-eater		✓		
Plegadis falcinellus	glossy ibis	✓			✓

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			
Abutilon theophrasti	velvet leaf		
Capsicum annum			
Cenchrus ciliaris			
Cuscuta campestris	dodder		
Echinochloa colona	awnless barnyard grass		
Eclipta prostrata	white eclipta		
Glandularia aristigera			
Heliotropium indicum			
Lysimachia arvensis			
Malvastrum coromandelianum subsp. coromandelianum			
Phyla canescens			
Richardia brasiliensis	white eye		
Sida rhombifolia			
Xanthium occidentale			
Animals			
Felis catus	cat	Category 3, 4, 6	
Oryctolagus cuniculus	rabbit	Category 3, 4, 5, 6	
Sus scrofa	pig	Category 3, 4, 6	
Carassius auratus	goldfish		
Lepus europaeus	European brown hare		
Mus musculus	house mouse		
Pieris rapae	cabbage white		
Rhinella marina	cane toad		
Sturnus vulgaris	common starling		