

Coomababah Lake 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.

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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

Coombabah Lake Conservation Park is located on the north side of the City of Gold Coast, approximately 15 kilometres southeast of Coomera. The park has limited accessibility from the Gold Coast Highway (Brisbane Road).

The following figure and table (Figure 1, Table 1) provide an overview of information related to the Coombabah Lake Conservation Park included in this resource information document, including their locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

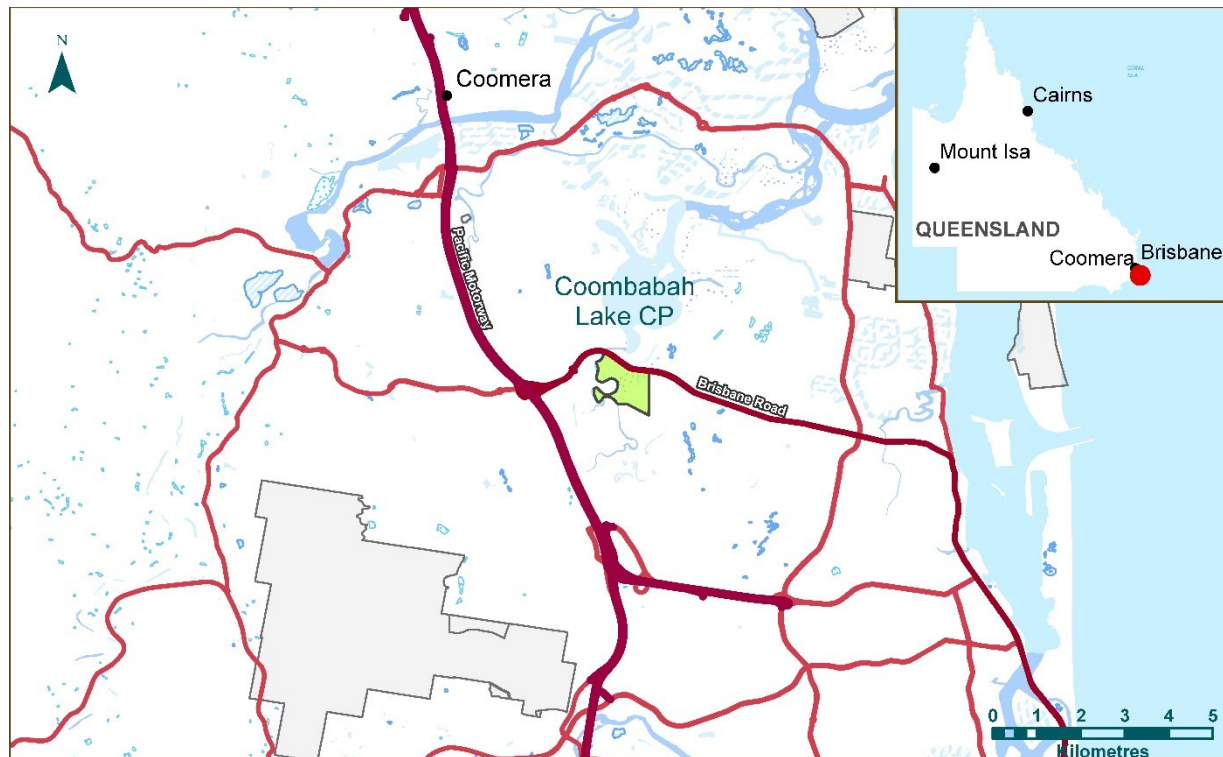


Figure 1. Locality of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park

Park size	Coombabah Lake Conservation Park	68.1 ha
Bioregion	South East Queensland	
QPWS region	South East	
Local government area	City of Gold Coast	
State electorate	Bonney	
Relevant legislation	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	
	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth) (EPBC)</i>	
	<i>Fire Services Act 1990</i>	
	<i>Fisheries Act 1994</i>	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	
	<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA)</i>	
Plans and agreements	<i>National Recovery Plan for the Koala Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory), 2022</i>	
	<i>Ramsar Convention on Wetlands</i>	

3. Resource Information

3.1 First Nations, Native Title and Cultural Heritage

Coomababah Lake Conservation Park is located on Country of the Yugambeh, Minyungbal, Nganduwal and (Northern) Bundjalung Peoples, whose cultural connections extend across the river systems, estuaries and coastal landscapes of South East Queensland and northern New South Wales. These connections remain ongoing and continue to inform the cultural values of the park.

Native title does not exist over the park area as a result of historical tenure and Federal Court determinations. This does not affect the recognition of Traditional Owners or their enduring connection to Country.

The park contains Aboriginal cultural heritage values, including both recorded and unrecorded sites, places and cultural landscapes. These values are protected under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, which establishes a duty of care requiring all reasonable and practicable measures to avoid harm.

Engagement with Traditional Owners supports informed decision-making and contributes to consistent and respectful co-stewardship outcomes.

3.2 Wetlands of international importance (Ramsar site)

Coomababah Lake Conservation Park is situated within the Moreton Bay Ramsar site. Ramsar wetlands are designated as internationally important because they are representative, rare, or unique, or play a critical role in conserving biological diversity. These wetlands are included on the List of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (DCCEEW, 2022). The park, located in the south-western part of the Moreton Bay Ramsar site, drains into Coombabah Lake. Its estuarine system links to Moreton Bay via a network of creeks, offering important feeding and roosting habitat (DETSI, 2013).

Listed in 1993, the Moreton Bay Ramsar site encompasses 120,639 ha and lies within a semi-enclosed basin. Its eastern boundary is defined by large sand islands, while the western side features a deltaic coastline where major rivers drain a combined catchment of around 22,000 km² into the bay. The bay stretches roughly 110 km from north to south and reaches about 35 km across at its widest point (DCCEEW, 2022).

This Ramsar site is distinguished by its large extent, variety of wetland habitats, and high biodiversity, including the presence of threatened ecological communities. It contains some of the most extensive intertidal seagrass, mangrove, and saltmarsh systems along Australia's eastern coastline, providing important habitat for fish, waterbirds, and marine megafauna of conservation value (DCCEEW, 2022).

Moreton Bay regularly supports more than 50,000 waterbirds, encompassing at least 43 shorebird species and 28 migratory shorebird species. It is designated as a network site under the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (site code EAAF013) and supports over 1% of the estimated flyway populations for at least nine migratory shorebird species, including the eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* and curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, both of which are listed as 'critically endangered' under national environmental legislation (DCCEEW, 2022).

3.2 Key value information

3.2.1 Melaleuca Swamp

Whilst the entire Coombabah Lake Conservation Park lies within the internationally recognised Moreton Bay Ramsar site, the south east section has been identified as a Key Value due to its relatively large patches of paperbark swamp (12.3.20). The park itself does not contribute significantly to this Regional Ecosystem (RE) (0.59%), however it is ranked 6th out of 19 protected areas for representation. 81.83% of the RE occurs on unprotected estate elevating the significance of the patches that do occur in this Melaleuca Swamp Key Value.

The Key Value includes the following regional ecosystem 12.3.20 (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*, *Casuarina glauca* +/- *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *E. siderophloia*, *M. styphelioides* open forest on low coastal alluvial plains (listed as 'endangered' under the VMA and EPBC). (BVG 22ab)).

3.3 Other Values

3.3.1 Moreton Bay Ramsar Wetlands

The Ramsar wetlands of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park form part of the internationally recognised Moreton Bay Ramsar site, listed for its rarity, representativeness and critical role in conserving biodiversity. The park's estuarine wetlands drain into Coombabah Lake and connect to Moreton Bay through a network of creeks, providing essential feeding, roosting and nursery habitat for a wide range of species. These wetlands support large numbers of waterbirds, including migratory shorebirds protected under international agreements along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, with several species listed as 'critically endangered' under national legislation.

The entirety of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park is part of the broader Ramsar wetlands of Moreton Bay. This includes four broad vegetation groups (BVGs) consisting of five REs, a small patch of non-remnant vegetation, and the mapped waterways of the park.

At a regional and local scale, the wetlands of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park are increasingly important due to extensive urbanisation across the Gold Coast and associated catchment clearing, which has altered natural hydrological regimes. The Coomera Connector (M9) motorway is currently under construction, with some parts of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park less than 100 metres from the works.

As one of the largest remaining intact wetland systems in the area, the park provides a critical refuge for biodiversity and helps buffer surrounding urban impacts by moderating flood flows, filtering sediments and nutrients, and supporting groundwater recharge. The park contains a diverse mosaic of intertidal and palustrine ecosystems, including mangroves, saltmarshes and open forests which support threatened species such as the false water-rat *Xeromys myoides* and koalas and contribute to broader coastal habitat connectivity.

3.4 Ecosystems and biodiversity

Five REs are present within the park, including mangroves, wetland, salt marshes and open forests. These are classified as intertidal or palustrine, with one RE having a listed biodiversity status of 'endangered' and another as 'of concern'. Together, these ecosystems provide important habitat for a wide range of protected flora and fauna, with the park mapped entirely as a Ramsar-listed wetland.

The park protects areas of State biodiversity significance, including remnant vegetation that provides core habitat for priority taxa, an 'endangered' RE and significant wetland areas, while also contributing to a broader bioregional corridor. The park rates highly for bioregional and subregional ecosystem value, condition, context and connection, but ranks lower in terms of relative ecosystem size at both the bioregional and subregional scales.

3.4.1 Open forest

The park contains an 'endangered' open forest community (12.3.20 - *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, *Casuarina glauca* +/- *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *E. siderophloia*, *M. styphelioides* open forest on low coastal alluvial plains), which covers a large proportion of the park within the south-eastern section. This RE is classified as a palustrine wetland, occurring on the lowest terraces of Quaternary alluvial plains in coastal areas.

Open forest provides potential habitat for NCA listed species: *Acacia attenuata*, *Allocasuarina emuina*, *Lenwebbia* sp. (Blackall Range P.R.Sharpe 5387), *Maundia triglochinosoides*, *Persicaria elatior*, *Phaius australis*, *Phaius bernaysii*, *Symplocos harroldii*, *Tecomanthus hillii*. This ecosystem is also known to provide suitable habitat for koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus*, which have been recorded at the park (DETSI 2025).

3.4.2 *Casuarina glauca* woodland

The swamp she-oak *Casuarina glauca* woodland community (12.1.1 - *Casuarina glauca* woodland on margins of marine clay plains) covers a fifth of the park and has a biodiversity status of 'of concern'. This RE is classified as intertidal, occurring on margins of Quaternary estuarine deposits and providing estuarine wetland habitat (DETSI 2025).

3.4.3 Mangrove shrubland

Two regional ecosystems are present within the mangrove shrubland community (12.1.3b – *Avicennia marina* subsp. *australasica* dominated shrubland to low closed forest; 12.1.3g - Mangrove dieback area leaving bare soil or ponding). These mangrove communities have an important role cycling nutrients within coastal environments, while providing habitat and feeding grounds for a diverse range of flora and fauna (City of Gold Coast 2025). Mangroves are protected plants under the *Fisheries Act 1994*.

The 12.1.3b RE covers a quarter of the park and provides important habitat for threatened fauna species, including the false water-rat *Xeromys myoides*.

The mangrove dieback present in the park originated in 1994 due to a blocked drainage tunnel which decreased or halted tidal flow effects, resulting in freshwater inundation from rainfall. The drainage tunnel was unblocked in August 1995, but the backlogged water did not fully flush out for another month. It was theorised that once the normal tidal regime resumed, regeneration would occur. After six months of monitoring, it was determined that regeneration was not occurring, but that active regeneration would likely lead to further damage to the mangrove community. At that time, it was decided that monitoring should continue for several years and then assessment of the management approach should take place. In 2005, QPWS released a status report on the mangrove dieback and recovery in Coombabah Lake Conservation Park. The report found that while dead mangrove trees were still present, the mangrove dieback area was slowly recovering with evidence for new growth. It was determined at that time that active regeneration was not necessary (QPWS 2005).

The latest RE mapping from Queensland Government indicates that the mangrove dieback ecosystem (RE 12.1.3g) comprises approximately 0.3% of the park; an improvement from 2005.

Across Queensland, mangrove dieback has been attributed to and exacerbated by a range of natural and anthropogenic factors, including weather, insects and disease, nutrient changes, climate change and pollution (DETSI 2025).

The park abuts the Coombabah declared Fish Habitat Area (FHA). The FHA does not enter the park. The FHA declaration considered the protection of undisturbed habitat and the habitat value from adjacent mangrove communities which include those within Coombabah Lake Conservation Park.

3.4.4 Saltpan vegetation

This saltpan vegetation community (RE 12.1.2 - Saltpan vegetation including grassland, herbland and sedgeland on marine clay plains) covers approximately a quarter of the park and comprises *Sporobolus virginicus* grassland and samphire herbland, with *Zoysia macrantha* subsp. *macrantha* sometimes present in upper portions of tidal flats. This RE is classified as intertidal and provides habitat for the false water-rat *Xeromys myoides* (DETSI 2025).

3.4.5 Coombabah Sub-Catchment

The Coombabah sub-catchment is made up of Coombabah Lake, Coombabah Creek, Saltwater Creek, and surrounding wetlands and tributaries. The City of Gold Coast (CoGC) has undertaken considerable scientific research effort in the Coombabah sub-catchment as part of a broader goal to safeguard the sub-catchment for the future. This includes tide gauge monitoring, bathymetric surveys, sediment source studies, and marine and terrestrial fauna and flora studies (DETSI 2024).

The CoGC has identified rising sea levels, climate change and development as the key threats for the long-term viability of the Coombabah sub-catchment (DETSI 2024).

3.5 Species

3.5.1 Native animals

Twenty-eight fauna species were recorded on the Department's WetlandInfo and/or WildNet databases. The estuarine wetlands of the park provide habitat for many protected migratory shorebirds, such as the curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* and eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*, both listed as 'critically endangered' under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) and EPBC Act. Other migratory shorebirds recorded include the Western Alaskan bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica baueri*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and common greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, all listed as 'endangered' under the NCA and EPBC Act.

Other migratory shorebirds included are listed as either 'vulnerable' or 'special least concern', with many of these included in the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (Commonwealth of Australia 2015). Key threats to these migratory shorebirds include habitat loss due to coastal development, modification of wetland habitats due to fishing, aquaculture, mining or agricultural practices, climate change and overharvesting of shorebird prey (Commonwealth of Australia 2015).

Koalas were also recorded in the database search and are listed as 'endangered' under the NCA and EPBC Act. The open forest community (RE 12.3.20) in the south-eastern section of the park provides important habitat for koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus* and is mapped as core koala habitat (DETSI 2025). A National Recovery Plan for the koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* is currently in place (DAWE 2022).

See Appendix C for the full list of conservation significant fauna as per Queensland Government WildNet database.

3.5.2 Native plants

Six flora species were recorded on the Department's WetlandInfo and/or WildNet databases. This includes *Acrostichum speciosum*, *Cymbidium madidum*, *Liparophyllum exaltatum*, *Lobelia anceps*, *Platyserium bifurcatum*, *Triglochin striata* which are all listed as 'special least concern' under the NCA. As listed in Section 3.6.1, RE 12.3.20 provides habitat for other protected flora species, including the *Phaius australis* and *Phaius bernaysii* orchids, both listed as 'endangered' under the NCA and EPBC Act.

See Appendix C for the full list of conservation significant flora as per Queensland Government WildNet database.

3.6 Geophysical features

The park is underlain by variable surface geology, with the underlying rock type classified as a stratified unit that includes volcanic and metamorphic components. The dominant rock across the park varies between alluvium and unconsolidated sediments, which absorb and retain water and contribute to groundwater recharge through infiltration processes (DETSI 2024). Hydrosol soils occur throughout the park which are characterised by prolonged saturation of much of the soil profile, typically for 2-3 months in most years.

3.7 Partnerships

QPWS works with community stakeholders to support broad continuing management programs.

3.7.1 Coombabah Catchment Management Group

The Coombabah Catchment Management Group work primarily within the Coombabah Catchment, including the Coombabah Lake Conservation Park. Members of the Group are actively involved in numerous committees throughout the Gold Coast dealing with issues affecting their area of interest. The Group meets regularly and welcomes residents to come along and participate in their various activities that help to protect and restore these creeks and catchments (City of Gold Coast 2025).

3.8 Fire

Fire management is core business for QPWS to protect life and property, mitigate wildfires and maintain natural diversity in accordance with the NCA and the *Fire Services Act 1990* for the control and prevention of fires.

The City of Gold Coast Council undertakes planned burns in the Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area neighbouring Coombabah Lake Conservation Park to manage fire risk to neighbouring properties.

3.9 Pests

3.9.1 Pest plants

Easter cassia *Senna pendula* var. *glabrata* and ground asparagus *Asparagus aethiopicus* have been found on the fringes of the park.

3.9.2 Pest animals

European fox *Vulpes vulpes* have been seen on trail cameras. Occasional reports of fox *Vulpes vulpes* are provided to QPWS.

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Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds, Commonwealth of Australia 2015.

5. Appendices

Appendix A. Policy and management commitments

Gazettal details

Coomababah Lake Regional Park was formally gazetted as Coombabah Lake Environmental Park in 1988 under the *Land Act 1962* with Gold Coast City Council as Trustees. In 1994 the environmental park was gazetted to Coombabah Lake Conservation Park under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Management obligations

- Australian Ramsar management principles, Schedule 6 of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*

Recovery plans and guides

- National Recovery Plan for the Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory), 2022

Appendix B. Regional ecosystems of significance

Regional ecosystem	Description	Regional ecosystem class*	Biodiversity status**
12.1.1	Casuarina glauca woodland on margins of marine clay plains	Of concern	Of concern
12.3.20	Melaleuca quinquenervia, Casuarina glauca +/- Eucalyptus tereticornis, E. siderophloia, M. styphelioides open forest on low coastal alluvial plains	Endangered	Endangered

* Vegetation Management Regional Ecosystem Description Database (VM REDD)

** QueenSpecial Least Concernand Herbarium, Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD)

Appendix C. Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	NC Act status	EPBC Act status
Triglochin striata	streaked arrowgrass	Special Least Concern	-
Animals			
Phascolarctos cinereus	koala	Endangered	Endangered

Appendix D. Pests

Scientific name	Common name	Biosecurity Act 2014 status	Notes
Plants			
<i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i>	Ground asparagus	Category 3 Restricted Invasive	Confirmed in the fringes of the park. Impacts: • Outcompetes native species, creating a dominant ground cover • Able to invade undisturbed systems
<i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>glabrata</i>	Easter cassia	-	Confirmed in the fringes of the park. Impacts: • Invades disturbed or modified areas • Smothers native vegetation
Animals			
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	European fox	Category 3, 4, 5 and 6 Restricted Invasive	Impacts: • Direct predation of ground-nesting birds, turtles and small mammals.

Appendix E. Wetland Management

WetlandInfo, Queensland Government

WetlandInfo provides information regarding wetland identification and management.

Accessed at <https://wetlandinfo.detsi.qld.gov.au/wetlands/>

Ramsar Sites Management Information – Moreton Bay

The Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) and Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) provides essential data and management information on each designated Wetland of International Importance.

RSIS - Moreton Bay accessed at <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/631>.

RIS – Moreton Bay accessed at <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/41-ris.pdf>