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LOGGING TO EXTINCTION

THE URGENT CASE OF THE SWIFT PARROT



Logging to Extinction: The Urgent Case of the Swift Parrot
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Authors
Dr Jen Sanger, Alice Hardinge, Hugh Nicklason, Melanie Audrey, Gemma Tillack, Billy Rowe, Tarquin Moon, Dr Lana Austin, Andrew Hunter

Maps: Luke Smith

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Disclaimer
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Swift Parrot *(Lathamus discolor)* is one of Australia's most loved birds, yet it is rapidly approaching extinction. It was once a common bird and one of the first Australian birds to be scientifically described and illustrated following European colonisation in 1788.[1] The population has declined to as few as 750 birds over the past two decades. Recent modelling suggests this decline could exceed 90 per cent within the next decade, potentially leaving 58 birds remaining by 2031.[2]

Decades of scientific research has consistently identified habitat destruction and degradation of native forest from logging in Lutruwita / Tasmania as the primary driver of this decline.[3] Logging removes large hollow-bearing trees needed for nesting and mature trees required for feeding. These habitats take centuries to develop and cannot be replaced once lost. Logging also increases competition for habitat with other species which increases the risk of predation, compounding the species' decline. Over half of the Swift Parrots breeding range has already been impacted, with ongoing logging continuing to degrade and destroy habitat critical to their survival.

Despite this clear evidence base, government policy has consistently failed to protect the species. Weak and poorly enforced protections, legislative exemptions for logging under Regional Forest Agreements, and repeated disregard for expert advice by decision-makers has enabled habitat destruction to continue. The National Swift Parrot Recovery Plan, which should provide strong legal protection for the species, was weakened through political and industry pressure. This plan fails to adequately address the primary threat to the Swift Parrot: native forest logging.

In late 2025, the Federal Government decided the longstanding exemption for forestry operations covered by Regional Forest Agreements would be removed from the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation 1999 (Commonwealth) (the EPBC Act)* by 1 July 2027. Given this, Australia's national nature law reforms should theoretically offer the Swift Parrot better protection because the species is classified as critically endangered under these same laws. Logging that seriously impairs the Swift Parrots viability, or seriously damages its irreplaceable critical habitat, meets the Act's new definition of an "unacceptable impact" (s527F). Unacceptable impacts cannot be offset and an action that crosses this threshold cannot be approved. However, without strong National Environmental Standards and rigorous implementation to enforce that threshold, there is a significant risk that logging continues largely unchanged across the Swift Parrots habitat in several states.

This report presents the scale of the threats to critical habitat areas in Lutruwita / Tasmania. Intensive surveys in the Lonnavale forests have confirmed the area as critical breeding habitat, with successful nesting, and large numbers of birds recorded directly within planned logging coupes. Despite this, these areas remain unprotected and continue to be logged by the Tasmanian Government's logging agency Forestry Tasmania (trading as Sustainable Timber Tasmania). Analysis of new logging plans recently released by the forestry agency also reveals significant ongoing scheduling of logging in Swift Parrot Important Breeding Areas (SPIBA) and other areas of critical importance to the survival of the species, over the coming three years.

Citizen scientists have played a crucial role in documenting impacts on the Swift Parrot, contributing a significant proportion of recent observations. However, this reliance on volunteers exposes a failure in government oversight, with critical monitoring and compliance work being carried out by the community rather than agencies responsible.

This report reinforces a clear conclusion: the science, solutions, and tools to save the Swift Parrot already exist. The primary barrier is not knowledge, but a lack of political will as well as the absence of a regulatory framework that is equipped to save this iconic bird. Without immediate and decisive action to stop habitat destruction, the Swift Parrot is on a trajectory toward extinction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **IMMEDIATELY** END LOGGING IN SWIFT PARROT HABITAT AND MAKE AMENDMENTS TO LAWS AND POLICIES UNDER THE TASMANIAN FOREST PRACTICES SYSTEM.

2. **ENSURE** THE COMMONWEALTH RETAINS POWERS TO ASSESS AND ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS TO PROTECT MATTERS OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE (MNES) AFTER 1 JULY 2027 AND DOES NOT ENDORSE 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

3. **EXPAND** AND STRENGTHEN SWIFT PARROT IMPORTANT BREEDING AREAS (SPIBAS) USING THE MOST UP TO DATE CITIZEN SCIENCE DATA. SPIBAS AND "ALL BREEDING HABITAT IN TASMANIA AND FORAGING HABITAT ON THE MAINLAND" MUST BE RECOGNISED AS "IRREPLACEABLE" AND "CRITICAL HABITAT" AS DEFINED IN REFORMS TO THE EPBC ACT.

4. **ISSUE** A PROTECTION STATEMENT FOR THE SWIFT PARROT WHICH CLEARLY IDENTIFIES AND REQUIRES PROTECTION OF ALL CRITICAL HABITAT FROM THE KEY THREAT OF LOGGING IN TASMANIA'S NATIVE FORESTS.

5. **THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT** MUST RESOURCE THE SWIFT PARROT NATIONAL RECOVERY TEAM AND THE NATIONAL RECOVERY PLAN MUST BE URGENTLY IMPLEMENTED.



1 BACKGROUND

1.1 THE SWIFT PARROT CRISIS

Habitat destruction remains the primary threat to the survival of the critically endangered Swift Parrot. The species is being driven toward extinction by native forest logging, despite clear, science-based evidence stating that all remaining habitat must be protected. As the crisis worsens, governments are still taking little action to protect the species and still enabling ongoing logging of habitat.

1.2 SWIFT PARROT PLAN - SOLUTION IGNORED

In 2022, The Wilderness Society and BirdLife Australia released a report titled: "On the Edge of Extinction: A case for the Swift Parrot Protection Plan". The report set out a clear, science-based pathway to prevent the extinction of the Swift Parrot by protecting its remaining breeding habitat in Lutruwita / Tasmania. It showed that habitat destruction from native forest logging is the main cause of decline and highlighted the significant failure by governments to adequately protect this species. The plan found that protecting key habitat would only require reserving approximately 7% of 'production forests'. This could be achieved with little impact on the forestry industry while averting extinction for the Swift Parrots.[4]

The report made it clear that current policies are failing because they still allow logging in critical habitat, despite strong scientific evidence of the harm it causes. It offers a simple solution: fully protect all Swift Parrot habitat, including breeding and foraging areas, to help stabilise and recover the population. The knowledge and the tools to save the species already exist. The main barrier is a lack of political will due to influence of the logging industry.

Governments have taken limited meaningful action on Swift Parrot recovery since the report was released. They have continued to ignore expert advice and are pushing ahead with plans to log areas known to be critical breeding habitat. At the same time, the forestry industry continues to downplay the role of habitat destruction in the Swift Parrots decline.

This new report builds on previous work by providing an updated assessment of the threats to the Swift Parrot, incorporating new research from Lutruwita / Tasmania and examining recent changes to federal environmental laws to demonstrate what has changed and where there are gaps that need action.

1.3 SWIFT PARROT ECOLOGY

The critically endangered Swift Parrot *(Lathamus discolor)* is one of Australia's most loved birds. It has become an icon for threatened species across the country, and its rapid decline has shone a light on the impacts of native forest logging and the inadequate protection of threatened species that takes place in both Lutruwita / Tasmania and mainland Australia.

The Swift Parrot is a remarkable bird. It is the fastest parrot in the world and one of only three species of parrot on earth that migrates. The species has a small population but a wide range and it needs extensive areas of forests to survive. From September to January each year, the species breeds in Lutruwita / Tasmania, requiring nesting sites in deep tree hollows in mature trees close to reliable flowering food sources for the chicks to survive. Within the nesting range, it feeds predominantly on the Tasmanian Blue Gum *(Eucalyptus globulus)* and the Black Gum *(Eucalyptus ovata).*

Its preferred food sources, the Tasmanian Blue Gum and Black Gum, do not flower in the same place each year, so Swift Parrots follow these shifting flowering patterns and may nest anywhere across the east and south of Lutruwita / Tasmania, depending on where food is available.[5] The species migrates to the Australian mainland every winter, where it may range from southern Victoria, New South Wales, and all the way up to southern Queensland, depending on the availability of flowering eucalypts.

The Swift Parrot has a specialised tongue to eat nectar, pollen and lerps, which are sugar-rich excretions made by tiny sap-sucking bugs that live on leaves. They will visit trees of any size, provided the trees are blooming or hosting sap-sucking insects. However, large, old trees are essential for Swift Parrot survival for nesting hollows and as a steady and reliable food supply. The foraging value of mature trees is higher. These trees produce the most flowers, with more nectar, and on a more regular basis.

The Swift Parrot feeds and nests across large areas. Effective conservation must also operate at a broad scale, with sufficient, quality habitat protected across its full range for the species to survive.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: BILLY ROWE





1.4 CAUSES OF SWIFT PARROT DECLINE

Habitat destruction is widely recognised as the main threat to the Swift Parrot.[6] Ongoing native forest logging is a key driver of its decline, as it removes the large, hollow-bearing trees that are essential for nesting. Hollows can take over 100 years to develop, so the younger, regenerating forests that regrow after logging provide no nesting habitat.[7] Logging also removes large, mature trees that provide food, making it harder for the parrots to survive and successfully raise their young.

Logging of native forests also increases risk of predation and competition for remnant old forests as habitat. Predation on Swift Parrots by both native and introduced species, including sugar gliders,[8] is also a threat. Research has shown that this increases with habitat loss as animals become concentrated and predators more common. [3] Hollows are also used by multiple species, due to logging increasing fragmentation and competition for nesting sites.[3, 9] Government funded research released in August 2026, found that breeding outcomes were variable and shaped by multiple interacting ecological factors that would likely increase as habitat reduces.[9]

The Swift Parrot faces a range of other compounding threats including agricultural expansion, illegal firewood collection, bushfire, competition with other species for hollows, and climate change. It is clear that in order to recover the Swift Parrot species, addressing the numerous threats it faces is necessary. However, native forest logging remains the most urgent and critical threat requiring immediate resolution to prevent extinction.

1.5 H5 BIRD FLU IS AN EMERGENT THREAT TO THE SWIFT PARROT

Now with H5 bird flu having reached Australia, exposure to the disease could lead to further decline or even the extinction of the Swift Parrot. In August 2026 Swift Parrots were rated 'high' under the Federal Government's national H5 risk assessment of native birds and mammals.[10] The susceptibility remains low for Swift Parrots contracting the disease. However, if they do, the impact could be significant, adding an additional pressure these birds cannot afford. This emergent threat makes habitat protection even more urgent, with resilient and thriving populations across multiple sites being one of the best ways to reduce the widespread devastation of H5 bird flu.

1.6 PUBLIC CONCERN FOR THE SWIFT PARROT HAS REACHED NEW HEIGHTS

Public concern for the Swift Parrot is at an all time high, reflecting growing awareness of its rapid decline and the risk of extinction. This was highlighted by the Swift Parrot winning the title of Australian Bird of the Year in 2023.[11] Increasing media coverage and advocacy have helped elevate the Swift Parrot as a symbol of Australia's broader extinction crisis, with many people now aware that without urgent action, the species could disappear within their lifetime. However, despite this growing concern, governments have still failed to take meaningful action to protect this iconic species.

An ABC investigation published on 13 July 2026 brought national attention to the destruction of nesting habitat in Lutruwita / Tasmania's southern forests, exposing what conservation groups describe as only the tip of the iceberg.[12]

1.7 NATURE LAW REFORM CONTINUES TO FAIL THE SWIFT PARROT

Far from fading, public engagement with Australia's nature laws has intensified through *the EPBC Act* reform process, with thousands of people making submissions on the new National Environmental Standards and demanding that the promise of stronger protection for threatened species be delivered. Australians were promised once in a generation environment laws. They were told that ending the Regional Forest Agreements would finally bring native forest logging under national scrutiny, that industry practices would be examined and reformed, and that matters of national environmental significance like the Swift Parrot would at last be properly protected. Instead, the new laws might hand decision-making power back to the Tasmanian government. This is a concerning move, as that same government has knowingly allowed logging in the Swift Parrot's only breeding area for decades.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: BILLY ROWE

2 NEW RESEARCH

2.1 HABITAT DESTRUCTION IN LUTRUWITA / TASMANIA

According to research in 2025, more than half of the Swift Parrot's breeding range has now been lost.[3] Over 37% was permanently cleared before 2000, and of the remaining forest, around a quarter has since been disturbed, degraded or deforested. Importantly, 'forest degradation' has occurred at a rate 6.5 times greater than deforestation, with native forest logging identified as the main cause.[3]

Deforestation is the removal of an entire forest while degradation is the alteration of the ecosystem such as removal of a selection of trees like old, hollow-bearing trees or large feeding trees. This practice may be labelled as 'sustainable harvesting' or 'active management' by industry, but for the Swift Parrot forest degradation is equivalent to habitat destruction.[3]

In Lutruwita / Tasmania, eucalypts don't produce hollows until they are over 100 years old,[13] and the Swift Parrot generally preferences feeding on larger, mature trees.[14] When trees are regrown after logging, they are generally logged again within 90 years, so they never get large or old enough to provide the most crucial and sought after habitat for the Swift Parrot. Therefore, areas that have been logged are unlikely to be able to provide productive habitat for the Swift Parrot.[6]

Forestry Tasmania has in some areas attempted to retain some mature trees in logged areas using a method they call "variable retention," which is otherwise known as "clump clearfelling". This is a form of logging where small patches of forest or individual trees are left behind in a wider clearcut. However, these trees often do not survive post-logging burns or are exposed to wind damage. They are also unlikely to contain the hollows needed by the Swift Parrot for nesting.[15] Researchers have found that these measures are not enough to prevent the long-term decline of the species.[6] Protecting mature native forests and managing them for their ecological values would support Swift Parrot recovery by securing valuable food sources and breeding habitat.

2.2 HABITAT DESTRUCTION ON MAINLAND AUSTRALIA

Across mainland Australia, particularly in NSW, destruction of winter-feeding habitat is also contributing to Swift Parrot population decline. This is occurring in many bioregions across NSW, from the north coast to the south-eastern highlands and south-western slopes.

Current efforts to quantify habitat loss on the mainland, particularly in winter feeding areas in regions like the Hunter Valley in NSW, show that this habitat loss is driving further decline of Swift Parrots. If threats in Lutruwita / Tasmania were fully addressed, habitat destruction on the mainland could still lead to a projected 32% decline in Swift Parrots over 100 years.[16] This habitat destruction reduces food availability and limits species recovery.

While mainland habitat destruction can cause long-term decline, the risk of extinction escalates severely when combined with habitat destruction in Lutruwita / Tasmania, predation, and competition-related aggression with numerous species. One report clearly states that while prioritising the protection of breeding habitat in Lutruwita / Tasmania is essential to preventing extinction of the Swift Parrot,[16] effective conservation also requires protection across the species' entire migratory range, highlighting why Federal Government oversight is essential.



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IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA BROZEK

2.3 MODELLING CONFIRMS EXTINCTION RISK

Research by the Australian National University highlights growing alarm among scientists that the Swift Parrot is on a rapid path toward extinction. Modelling predicts that there could be a 92.3% decline over three generations, meaning that only 58 birds may remain by 2031.[2] The researchers have warned that this may even be an optimistic scenario, as the modelling does not fully account for the impacts of logging, the primary threat to the survival of Swift Parrots.

The study found that breeding success is much higher in intact, mature forests, showing how important high-quality habitat is for the species.[2] While predation by sugar gliders is a threat, the study shows this risk is worse in degraded or logged forests where suitable nesting sites are limited. The research highlights that protecting mature forest is essential, as habitat destruction and predation are closely linked and together drive the species' decline.

2.4 NEW FIELD-BASED EVIDENCE

A new government-funded study by Landscape Recovery Foundation conducted comprehensive field-based evidence on Swift Parrot nesting outcomes on mainland Lutruwita / Tasmania, in areas where sugar gliders are present.[9]

Using a multidisciplinary approach, combining large-scale population monitoring, passive acoustic monitoring, motion-activated cameras, glider trapping, and veterinary assessment, the study investigated breeding outcomes and the factors influencing nest success across the species' mainland breeding range.[9]

Initial findings from the study state the loss of breeding habitat is the primary driver of Swift Parrot population decline, that breeding successfully occurs widely across Lutruwita / Tasmania, and that nest success or failure are variable and shaped by interactions with multiple species.[9]

The study challenges previous assumptions about the role of sugar gliders in predation, failing to confirm a case, despite documented visitation to, and entry into, active nest hollows. Conducting necropsies, researchers found that Tasmanian sugar gliders have a predominantly plant-based omnivorous diet consistent with descriptions of diet for the species in their natural range on mainland Australia.[9] Confirmed predation events on the Swift Parrot occurred, but involved other species including the native currawong and introduced starlings.[9]

The study forms part of ongoing research, with the report noting upcoming publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

3 WEAK ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS & POLICY FAILINGS

3.1 GOVERNMENTS IGNORING THE SCIENCE

The science is clear: native forest logging in Lutruwita / Tasmania is destroying Swift Parrot breeding habitat and driving its decline. Further, habitat destruction on mainland Australia, especially NSW, is exacerbating this decline. Despite this, state and federal governments have failed to act. As the situation worsens, there is an urgent need for stronger protections. The promise of improvements, yet to be delivered as part of the national nature law reforms, must be realised.

3.2 ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT

Reforms of *Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act),* have been presented as a long-overdue fix to a major flaw in environmental law in Australia that has left many threatened forest species exposed for decades. For the Swift Parrot, this reform arrives dangerously late.

The success of the reforms depends largely on the robustness of new National Environmental Standards as part of the implementation of the revisions to the Act that were passed by the Australian Parliament in 2025. These standards are the rules that define what protection actually means in practice. They set out objectives and outcomes, which are the centrepiece of the recommendations made by the independent review of the EPBC Act led by Professor Graeme Samuel AC, former chair of the ACCC.

The Standard for Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) is most relevant to the conservation of Swift Parrots. This standard, among other things, governs how federally listed threatened species are protected. In the final version, however, an activity can satisfy the standard simply by following a set of procedural principles; avoid, mitigate, repair, offset; regardless of whether it achieves the Standard's own objectives. Such details mean that decision-makers are required to only "have regard to" for objectives such as protecting habitat for threatened species, rather than being required to deliver measurable outcomes. Put simply, a proponent must only demonstrate compliance with the process rather than being required to validate conservation success.

Vast areas of breeding habitat have already been logged under forestry exemptions, contributing to rapid species decline. Bringing logging under the EPBC Act should, in theory, introduce greater scrutiny and accountability. However, there are already clear warning signs. The reforms leave room for state-based decision-making and approvals, raising concerns that the same industry pressures that weakened previous protections will continue to shape outcomes.[17]

Ultimately, these changes represent a critical test for the capacity of Australia's environmental laws. For a species on the brink of extinction, small changes and weak action are not enough. Without strong, decisive steps to stop the destruction of critical habitat, the Swift Parrot is heading towards extinction.

3.3 EXEMPTIONS FOR REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENTS

For more than 20 years, native forest logging has been exempt from national environmental law under Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) between the Commonwealth and state governments. The RFAs were premised on states establishing a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system as their own mechanism for conserving and protecting listed threatened species, in place of case-by-case assessment and approval under the EPBC Act. In practice, this meant the impact of native forest logging on MNES, including Swift Parrot habitat, was never assessed or approved under national environmental law. As a result, important Swift Parrot habitat has continued to be logged and degraded by state government forestry agencies, and industrial-scale logging in state forests has remained technically compliant with federal law throughout.

The Tasmanian forestry sector's exemption under s 38 of the EPBC Act has been challenged in the courts, such as in the case Forestry v Brown (2006) 157 FCR 1, where Senator Bob Brown challenged the Tasmanian RFA on the basis that forestry operations at Wielangta state forest should not be afforded an exemption under s 38 of the EPBC Act because they had not been undertaken in accordance with then Clause 68 of the Tasmanian RFA which provided that the State agrees to protect the Priority Species through the CAR Reserve System or by applying relevant management prescriptions. Meanwhile on-the-ground forest management systems continue to rely on adherence to voluntary guidelines for threatened species that are often disregarded.[18] Protections set for nesting trees in forestry codes and guidelines are inadequate and inconsistently applied, and in many cases, logging has continued to be signed off by government departments, forestry agencies, and state regulators even in known breeding sites.

This long-standing exemption for the forestry sector is now set to be removed from the EPBC Act on 1 July 2027, and is being presented by the Federal Government as a major reform. From 1 July 2027, logging plans will, in theory, require federal assessment and approval where they impact matters of national environmental significance, such as federally listed threatened species or their critical habitat. Compliance will be overseen by the new National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: ANDREW SILCOCKS



3.4 WHAT IMPACT WILL THESE CHANGES HAVE ON THE FATE OF THE SWIFT PARROT?

It remains unclear what assessment regime will be applied to areas that are covered by the RFA exemption. The EPBC Act provides multiple pathways for bringing RFA-covered areas under national environmental protections: individual project approvals, bilateral agreements, strategic assessments, or bioregional planning. The same core safeguards apply across all of them, including the National Environmental Standards, the net gain requirement, and the unacceptable impacts test.[17] However, if those Standards are weak, poorly implemented, or not properly enforced, logging could continue much as before, just under a different system. Experts warn that removing the RFA exemption is an important step, but it won't deliver better protection unless the new laws are strong and applied without industry influence.[17]

As a federally listed threatened species, logging that seriously impairs the Swift Parrot's viability, or seriously damages its critical habitat, would meet the reformed Act's definition of an "unacceptable impact." Unacceptable impacts cannot be offset: a project causing one must be refused or redesigned. This test applies not just to individual logging operations, but to whichever regulatory pathway is chosen to assess areas previously covered by the RFAs. The Minister for the Environment and Water, who administers the EPBC Act, cannot hand approval powers to a state government, for example through a bilateral agreement, unless satisfied that operations approved under a system like Tasmania's forest management framework meet the Standards and will not cause unacceptable impacts on the Swift Parrot.

> **"If "business as usual" logging persists, the environmental reforms will fall far short of what Australia's forests – and their plants and animals – need."**
>
> *- Prof. David Lindenmayer, Australian National University.*[17]

3.5 DEVOLUTION OF POWER

In the 2026 budget, the Australian Government allocated $28 million over two years to help RFA states align their forest management systems with the new laws, including up to $8.5 million for Lutruwita / Tasmania. On 9 June 2026, a notice of intention was published commencing the drafting of a bilateral approval agreement between the Federal and Tasmanian Governments for forestry, aiming for a landscape-scale approval pathway.

An 'approval bilateral' agreement accredits a state's system as follows: the Environment Minister assesses whether Tasmania's forest practices framework can protect Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) to the standard required under the reformed laws. Once accredited, the state makes approvals from that point on, with no separate federal decision required. "Landscape scale" means approving Tasmania's Wood Production Plan as one program, not approving each logging coupe individually. Once a class of actions is approved this way, logging could proceed for years under that single sign-off, with no fresh check, state or federal, as new coupes are identified. In the case of the Swift Parrot, whose critical breeding habitat shifts from year to year to coincide with eucalypt flowering, this one off set-and-forget assessment is flawed. It simply recreates the RFA example, by another legal mechanism, that continues to protect logging operations from ongoing scrutiny, while driving the Swift Parrot closer to extinction.

No approval bilateral, as distinct from the assessment bilaterals several states already have, has ever been in force anywhere in Australia. Successive governments have tried to expand this power, and every attempt has failed in the Senate, largely due to concerns about environmental protection and integrity in decision making. If finalised and approved by the Minister as well as the federal parliament, then the Tasmanian agreement would be the first approval bilateral of any kind in the country. It would also be the first sought for forestry ahead of an assessment bilateral being in place. The combination of an untested legal pathway, applied at landscape scale, in habitat that shifts year to year, is the reason civil society organisations across the country strongly oppose this agreement.

IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA BROZEK



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3.6 RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE SWIFT PARROT

Recovery plans are legally binding instruments under the EPBC Act. They are designed to stop the decline, manage threats, and maximize the long-term survival of listed threatened species and ecological communities. Recovery Plans can be some of the strongest tools available to threatened species like the Swift Parrot.[19] They are conservation roadmaps developed under Australia's environment laws that outline the actions needed to protect a threatened species. Importantly, once a recovery plan is in place, the Federal Minister for Environment and Water cannot act inconsistently with that plan when deciding whether to approve the taking of a controlled action, and must not take any action that contravenes a recovery plan. They also provide guidance on where funding and resources should be focused. The update of the National Recovery Plan for the critically endangered Swift Parrot should have been a turning point for the species' management. Instead, it has become a case study in how political and industry pressure can override science.

The Swift Parrot Recovery Plan was originally drafted by the federal government, with input from scientists specialising in the Swift Parrot. These scientists were unequivocal that habitat destruction from native forest logging is the primary driver of the species' decline. But documents released under Freedom of Information reveal that both Tasmanian and Federal Governments intervened to weaken this conclusion.[20]

Key statements identifying logging as the greatest threat were removed or softened, while greater emphasis was placed on sugar glider predation.

> **"Despite mountains of evidence that logging in Tasmania is the key threat to Swift Parrots, this government is trying to scapegoat a tiny possum for its inability to stand up to the forest industry."**
>
> *- Dr. Dejan Stojanovic, Swift Parrot Expert, Australian National University.*[21]

Critically, the integrity of the process broke down in the final stages. Scientists who helped develop the plan were excluded from reviewing the final version. Significant changes were made without being referred back to the recovery team. In 2023, the plan was publicly announced by Tanya Plibersek before it had been shared with the expert panel who 'authored' it. Many scientists only saw the final document after it was released to the media, raising serious concerns that their expertise had been sidelined at the point where it mattered most.[21] Changes to the Recovery Plan were driven by pressure to protect the forestry industry. This reflects a long-standing pattern in Lutruwita / Tasmania. There is a long and well-documented history of industry influence shaping environmental policy and decision-making.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: YOLANDE COZIJN



There were positive aspects to the final Recovery Plan released in 2023. These include acknowledging key biodiversity areas, and listing ambitious, strong objectives and a long-term vision of *"The Swift Parrot population has increased in size to such an extent that the species no longer qualifies for listing as threatened under any of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 listing Criteria"* . The plan acknowledges logging as a threat, but stops short of taking meaningful action to address the impact. It allows the continued destruction of key breeding habitat, particularly in areas covered by Regional Forest Agreements, focusing on the threat of predation by sugar gliders instead of the key threat of logging.

Key objectives of the Swift Parrot Recovery Plan:

- By 2032, maintain or improve the extent, condition and connectivity of habitat of the Swift Parrot.
- By 2032, anthropogenic threats to Swift Parrot are demonstrably reduced.
- By 2032, measure and sustain a positive population trend.

Achieving the ambitious objectives in the recovery plan will only be possible by first halting all clearing and degradation of breeding and foraging habitat of the Swift Parrot. This must include the provision of sufficient resources and coordination support to ensure the remaining strategies and actions described in the Recovery Plan are implemented.

In 2025, the Wilderness Society Ltd represented by Environmental Justice Australia commenced litigation against the Federal Environment Minister to enforce the Minister's statutory duty to ensure that recovery plans that were missing for key species, due to successive government failure, were made and in force. The case settled mid last year. The Environmental Minister conceded they had failed to make mandatory recovery plans, and agreed to court orders to make plans, including for the Australian lungfish, ghost bat, greater glider and sandhill dunnart. The recovery plans for these critical species are now in force as of 31 July 2026. The Environment Minister also confirmed in court orders that existing recovery plans remain in force and do not sunset. The case set an important national precedent that, where a decision has been made that a recovery plan is required, governments must deliver them.

3.7 PROTECTION STATEMENTS

The Federal Government could take an ambitious step, removing any legal doubt in protecting Swift Parrot habitat, by issuing a Protection Statement for the Swift Parrot. Protection Statements are a new regulatory tool introduced through the reforms to Australia's national nature laws which set out what must be protected to ensure the survival of threatened species and ecological communities in the wild. They are distinct from recovery plans but will draw from and interact with current regulatory conservation documents including recovery plans and conservation advice. Recovery plans set the long term strategy for a species' recovery, while a Protection Statement takes that existing evidence and turns it into a specific test that government decisions must not be inconsistent with. The two instruments work together rather than duplicating each other.

A Protection Statement for the Swift Parrot would describe in detail critical habitat for the species, including breeding habitat and vegetation type (such as Eucalyptus globulus and E.ovata forests in Lutruwita / Tasmania), and outline clear provisions that logging, degrading or clearing this critical habitat would result in an unacceptable, significant impact and must not be approved. Once the Protection Statement is made, government decisions, including approval of bilateral agreements or strategic assessments, could not be approved if they are inconsistent with the Protection Statement, especially in breeding habitat in Eucalyptus globulus forests in Lutruwita / Tasmania.

4 HISTORY OF TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S POOR POLICIES

The Tasmanian Government has a history of policy failure in relation to Swift Parrot habitat. Policies have been weak and ineffective, non-binding and poorly enforced. Examples include:

- Expert advice has repeatedly been ignored, even when it clearly identifies areas of forest as essential for the species' survival.[6, 19, 22] In one case, a long-term scientific monitoring site was logged despite its known importance to the species.[23]
- Former government scientists have raised concerns about pressure to alter advice to enable logging in critical habitat.[20]
- Systems designed to safeguard habitat are too simplistic and fail to reflect the species' complex needs, allowing large areas of critical habitat to be logged.
- Logging is increasing in important Swift Parrot habitat with little regulation to prevent it. Research has found that there was a significant escalation in the logging of habitat after the Liberal Government gained power in 2014 and tore up the Tasmanian Forest Agreement.[6]
- Compliance and enforcement of logging breaches in Swift Parrot habitat is extremely poor, and usually only actioned in response to environmental groups submitting breach reports.
- The Tasmanian Government has refused to give protections to known habitat in Lonnavale due to perceived economic value of timber products.

Recent efforts by the Tasmanian Government include the Swift Parrot Recovery Project which has focused on monitoring and research to support the conservation of the species. The program is a modest investment of $250,000 per year from 2021 to 2025. This includes tracking population trends, breeding season monitoring, genetic studies to explore captive breeding, and habitat protection efforts such as conservation covenants on Bruny Island. Despite these efforts, the project does not adequately address the primary driver of the species' decline, which is the ongoing destruction of its habitat through native forest logging.[24]

4.1 BETTER POLICIES NEEDED

The future of the Swift Parrot relies on governments that are willing to act on science. Preventing extinction will require stronger protections, proper enforcement, and a shift away from prioritising industry over conservation. Without these changes, the continued decline of the species will be the result of deliberate choices, not a lack of knowledge. Even recent law reforms remain uncertain and risk repeating these same failures.

Australia has committed to ending deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 through the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. Allowing ongoing logging of critical habitat directly violates these commitments, exposing a stark disconnect between government's promises and their actions.



SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: BILLY ROWE





5 POOR MANAGEMENT

5.1 FAILURE TO PROTECT KNOWN BREEDING AREAS

Critical Swift Parrot habitat is continuing to be logged despite clear scientific evidence of its importance. Surveys show that parrots are feeding and nesting within planned logging areas, yet protections have not been extended and key habitat remains unprotected. Citizen scientists are contributing the most to survey efforts, highlighting poor efforts by governments.

5.2 GAPS IN PROTECTION FOR CRITICAL HABITAT

A Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area (SPIBA) is a designated area identified as important for the breeding of the Swift Parrot. These areas are mapped using monitoring data and records of where the birds are found. While logging in SPIBAs must follow stricter rules, it can still occur. SPIBAs are one of the main tools used by the Tasmanian Government to protect habitat, but they have been criticised for not fully reflecting current science and for being poorly enforced.

SPIBAs do not cover all of the habitat used by the Swift Parrot. The 'Lonnavale forests' (Denison, Barnback and Russell forestry blocks) in the southern forests of Lutruwita / Tasmania have long been recognised as critical breeding habitat. Ecologists have repeatedly raised concerns about logging in these forests, which are known to support nesting birds. The area contains some of the most mature stands of blue gum in the world, including the Huon Valley Grove of Giants.

5.3 FAILURE TO EXTEND PROTECTIONS TO CRITICAL HABITAT

The Lonnavale forests have twice been recommended for inclusion as a Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area (SPIBA) for the Swift Parrot. They were classified as an interim SPIBA in 2013 after nesting was recorded, but this protection was later removed. Despite this long-standing recognition and new evidence confirming the area as important habitat, the forests remain outside current SPIBA boundaries and continue to be logged.

In the years since, Swift Parrot scientists and conservation groups have continued to push to have Lonnavale included as a SPIBA. This escalated following the significant documented breeding in the 2021-2 season, forcing a response from the government, who enacted interim coupe-by-coupe protection whilst a review was undertaken. Right To Information requests have since identified correspondence and reports which suggest the area was not given formal protections due the potential economic value of timber products within the forest, with an 'economic report' requested by the Forestry Practices Authority (FPA) and commissioned by Forestry Tasmania. Overall, this shows that the system is not following the science in favour of supporting ongoing logging. Areas known to support breeding Swift Parrots are deliberately being left unprotected because of 'economic' choices. The failure to extend SPIBA protections highlights how the Tasmanian Government is prioritising logging over conservation.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: MICK RODERICK

6 2021–22 BREEDING SEASON SURVEYS

New data collected during the 2021–22 breeding season by a team of citizen scientists, led by Dr Matthew Webb, highlights the importance of the Lonnavale area. This culminated in the release of 'The Lonnavale Report'.[25] Intensive surveys recorded Swift Parrots across most areas where suitable habitat remains, with flocks of up to 20 birds regularly observed. Multiple nest sites, active breeding areas, and important foraging habitat were identified, including within areas proposed for logging. Monitoring showed high breeding success, with several flocks of fledglings observed later in the season. In total, more than 100 observations were recorded, with over 50 birds present in a single logging coupe.[25]

The findings clearly demonstrate that the Lonnavale forests contain critical breeding habitat for the Swift Parrot. Despite this, the area overlaps extensively with planned logging, with parrots recorded in 17 of 19 proposed logging coupes and nest sites found in at least 10 of them. This habitat has already been heavily impacted by logging over the past two decades, and current plans threaten much of what remains. This new data highlights the urgent need to incorporate these habitat areas into the Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area and findings into forest management, as ongoing logging risks further destruction of some of the species' most important breeding areas.[25]

7 EFFORTS OF CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

In recent years, citizen scientists have played a critical role in documenting Swift Parrot numbers and breeding activity. The 2021–22 breeding season survey led by Dr Matthew Webb, was one of the first intensive citizen science efforts focused on the species.[25] Since then, multiple groups have continued to monitor populations each year. Notably, the Bob Brown Foundation contributed 41% of all recorded Swift Parrot observations in Lutruwita / Tasmania's 'production forests' during the 2024–25 breeding season, highlighting the growing importance of community-led monitoring.[26]

There are hundreds of records of Swift Parrot observations within and near logging coupes, which clearly shows that native forest logging is happening across important habitat. Data from the Natural Values Atlas shows more than 1,800 records in the southern forests alone. This growing body of evidence clearly shows that Swift Parrots use forests being targeted for logging, reinforcing the urgent need to better protect these areas.

7.1 BETTER ACTION FROM GOVERNMENTS NEEDED

The growing reliance on citizen scientists to monitor the Swift Parrot raises serious questions about the role of government in protecting threatened species. Volunteers are stepping in to collect critical data on breeding activity and habitat use. This is work that should be the responsibility of Forestry Tasmania and the FPA to properly survey areas that are intended for logging.

When logging is occurring in areas known to support a critically endangered species, it is essential that these coupes are rigorously and independently monitored. Instead, much of this oversight is being left to community groups with limited resources. This not only places an unfair burden on volunteers, however also highlights a significant gap in accountability. Protecting threatened species should not depend on unpaid effort, it requires properly funded, trustworthy, transparent, and enforceable government oversight.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: BILLY ROWE



8 CASE STUDIES: FORESTRY TASMANIA'S LOGGING IN SWIFT PARROT HABITAT

The following case studies demonstrate that Tasmania's current forest management system cannot be relied upon to protect critical habitat for the Swift Parrot. These cases show a consistent failure of Forestry Tasmania to avoid logging breeding and foraging habitat and a failure of the Forest Practices Authority to ensure the protection of threatened species as called for in the National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot, and its own policies and technical guidance. These case studies do not represent all coupes where logging of habitat has occurred, but represent some examples of flagrant habitat destruction in recent years.

The information within these case studies is drawn from reports and reflections from the individuals who have documented Swift Parrots over the past decade. The 'Lonnavale report',[25] Bob Brown Foundation annual Swift Parrot reports, and reflections from other citizen scientists, photographers, and surveyors make up this documenting of disappearance.

Coupe name	Location	Coupe description and documented habitat	Documented Swift Parrot presence	Logging history and post logging findings
BB025A	**Lonnavale, Southern Forests**	Contained old trees with hollows.[27] Contained foraging habitat *(E. globulus).*[27]	Contractors identified Swift Parrots whilst logging in 2015 and logging halted. A Swift Parrot nest was then identified within the coupe. Swift Parrots were recorded and reported nesting in the forest in 2016.[27] Swift Parrots have been consistently recorded and reported in Lonnavale, including the Mount Barnback area.	The forest was partially clearfelled in 2015 (14.2 Ha). Logging ceased when contractors alerted the FPA of Swift Parrots being present on the site. In 2017 the rest of the forest was clearfelled (39.4 Ha). Some blue gum was retained, along with a 50m buffer around the identified nest tree. This area was burnt in a post-logging burn. Swift Parrots have continued to nest in the small area that was retained in years following logging, and have been reported using nearby habitat in areas still scheduled for logging.[25]
DN007C	**Lonnavale, Southern Forests**	Contained old trees with hollows.[25] In close proximity to extensive foraging habitat *(E. globulus).*[25] DN007C was once part of DN007B, or 'Grove of Giants' - the largest and oldest remaining stand of wet blue gum forest.	There has been extensive documentation of Swift Parrots in and around DN007C.[25]	Formal expert advice was provided on 3 occasions to not log the coupe (then part of DN007B). The area was then sliced off the coupe 'DN007B' to create 'DN007C'. Logged during the 2018/19 breeding season using 'retention' methods. Many trees >4m diameter were felled. No notifications were made to the FPA by contractors regarding Swift Parrots. Given the presence of Swift Parrots and habitat quality of the logged trees, it is highly likely active nests were felled.[28]
DN009G	**Lonnavale, Southern Forests**	Contained old hollow bearing trees.[25] Contained foraging habitat *(E. globulus).* [25]	This coupe is located near one of the largest remaining areas of wet blue gum forest in Tasmania, a critical food source for the Swift Parrot. In 2020, it was identified as one of 19 planned logging coupes with the highest habitat value for the species. Citizen scientists recorded and reported nesting activity just south of the coupe during the 2022 breeding season.	The forest was clearfelled in 2023. Some small clumps of forest and single trees were retained. Many retained trees were burnt and have since died.

Coupe name	Location	Coupe description and documented habitat	Documented Swift Parrot presence	Logging history and post logging findings
RU034B	**Lonnavale, Southern Forests**	Contained old hollow bearing trees.[25] Contained foraging habitat *(E. globulus).*[25]	Citizen scientists recorded and reported Swift Parrots in this coupe twice when it was actively being logged in late 2021.[25] FPA and Forestry Tasmania ecologists then surveyed the site and recorded Swift Parrots present while cable logging operations were underway. Several days later the contractors left the coupe.	The forest was partially clearfelled in November 2021. Following reports of Swift Parrots, the FPA Response Plan for Swift Parrot sightings within active coupes was implemented ensuring that no trees >1m dbh would be harvested (although multiple were felled post-sighting). The contractors left the coupe approximately two weeks after citizen scientists first raised the alarm. They then moved into coupe EP038E, where significant numbers of Swift Parrots were also breeding.
DN023H	**Lonnavale, Southern Forests**	Contained old hollow bearing trees.[25] Contained foraging habitat *(E. globulus).*[25]	During the 2021/22 breeding season, citizen scientists recorded and reported Swift Parrots within the coupe while logging was actively underway. Reports also included two Swift Parrot nests that were within 100m of the coupe boundary — one just 30m away.	The forest was clearfelled over summer of 2024-25. After Swift Parrots were reported whilst logging was active, FPA attended, and logging commenced the same day. Many breaches were recorded and reported to the FPA, including logging of giant and large trees, and logging of many hollow bearing trees > 1m diameter.[29] Some E. globulus were retained in constraints.
WT003E	**Wielangta**	Contained old hollow bearing trees. In close proximity to foraging habitat *(E. globulus).*	68 recordings of Swift Parrots within the coupe boundary in months prior to commencing of logging.[30]	One half of the coupe was logged in summer of 2024-25 The second half was logged in early 2026. The FPA was alerted to Swift Parrot presence in February of 2026. They attended the site and reported no Swift Parrots, and logging continued.
SH045A	**Snow Hill, Eastern Tiers**	Contained old hollow bearing trees.[31] Contained foraging habitat *(E. ovata).*[31]	Swift Parrots were recorded and reported in and around the coupe in 2022, including nest sites.[31] The FPA also recorded Swift Parrot sightings during its own visit.	The forest was partially logged using 'retention' practices in 2022. A court case relating to Swift Parrots presence in the coupe prior to Dr Bob Brown's arrest in the coupe is currently before the supreme court.[32]
SH050B	**Snow Hill, Eastern Tiers**	Contained old hollow bearing trees.[26, 33] Contained foraging habitat *(E. brookeriana).*[26, 33]	SH050B was one of the most important breeding sites for the Swift Parrot in the 2022-23 season. Citizen scientists documented extensive nesting behaviour throughout the coupe. [26, 33] Flocks of up to 30 birds were observed on several occasions, with 12 Swift Parrots photographed in a single tree on Christmas Eve. Swift Parrots were flocking and feeding in both the canopy and at ground level. Officers of the Forest Practices Authority visited the site and also recorded Swift Parrots there.	The forest was logged using 'retention' practices in June and July of 2023. Despite having SPIBA listing, virtually all of the habitat trees were felled, including some that were just 35m from an identified nest tree. Of the few older trees that were retained, many have since succumbed to windthrow.
SH051I	**Snow Hill, Eastern Tiers**	Contained old trees with hollows.[26] Contained foraging habitat *(E. brookeriana).*[26]	Swift Parrots were recorded and reported in and around SH051I between 2022 and 2024, including nest sites.[26] The area is made up of remnant critical habitat on steep slopes, surrounded by areas affected by logging. Nesting was documented within the coupe boundary. [26]	The forest was logged using selective practices in 2024. 50m buffers were put in place for nests within the harvest area.

PLANS FOR LOGGING SWIFT PARROT HABITAT IN FORESTRY TASMANIA'S THREE YEAR WOOD PRODUCTION PLAN 2026/27 - 2028/29

In July 2026, Forestry Tasmania released its Three Year Wood Production Plan for the years 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 which includes plans for further logging of Swift Parrot habitat in Lutruwita / Tasmania. Initial analysis undertaken by the Bob Brown Foundation indicates that around 5,500 hectares of Swift Parrot Important Breeding Areas (SPIBA) will be subject to logging across 95 planned logging coupes.[34] This includes plans to log forests that are located within state forests that are critical habitat areas for the Swift Parrot.

Here, the map includes all known Swift Parrot records,[35] current SPIBAs and the proposed additional Lonnavale SPIBA,[25] and all planned native forest coupes for the next three years (Maps 1–3). This shows that logging is planned in the very areas where Swift Parrots are most often recorded in every year of the plan.

IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA BROZEK



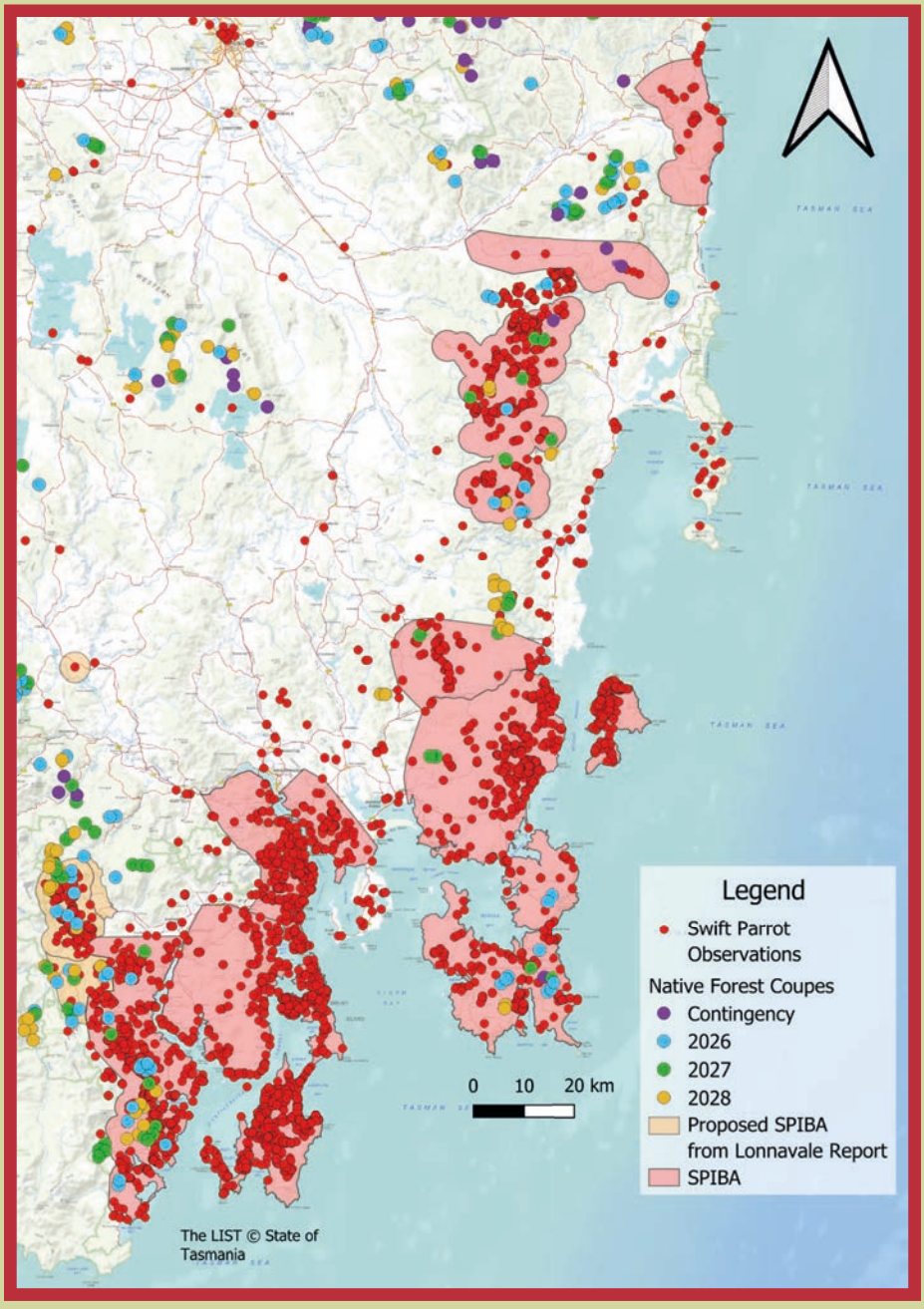
LOGGED COUPE DN023H - PRIME SWIFT PARROT HABITAT

8.1 THE WOOD PRODUCTION PLAN PUTS CRITICAL BREEDING HABITAT UNDER SUSTAINED PRESSURE OVER THREE CONSECUTIVE BREEDING SEASONS.

Across Tasmania, Swift Parrot records are densely clustered within the SPIBAs, confirming that these areas are important for Swift Parrot breeding (Map 1). Yet planned coupes sit inside SPIBAs in three main areas:

- the Eastern Tiers
- the Southern Forests
- the Tasman Peninsula

Coupes in these areas are scheduled for 2026, 2027 and 2028, and further coupes are held as contingency. The Wood Production Plan puts critical breeding habitat under sustained pressure over three consecutive breeding seasons.



Map 1: Planned logging coupes overlap Swift Parrot core breeding habitat across south-east Tasmania.

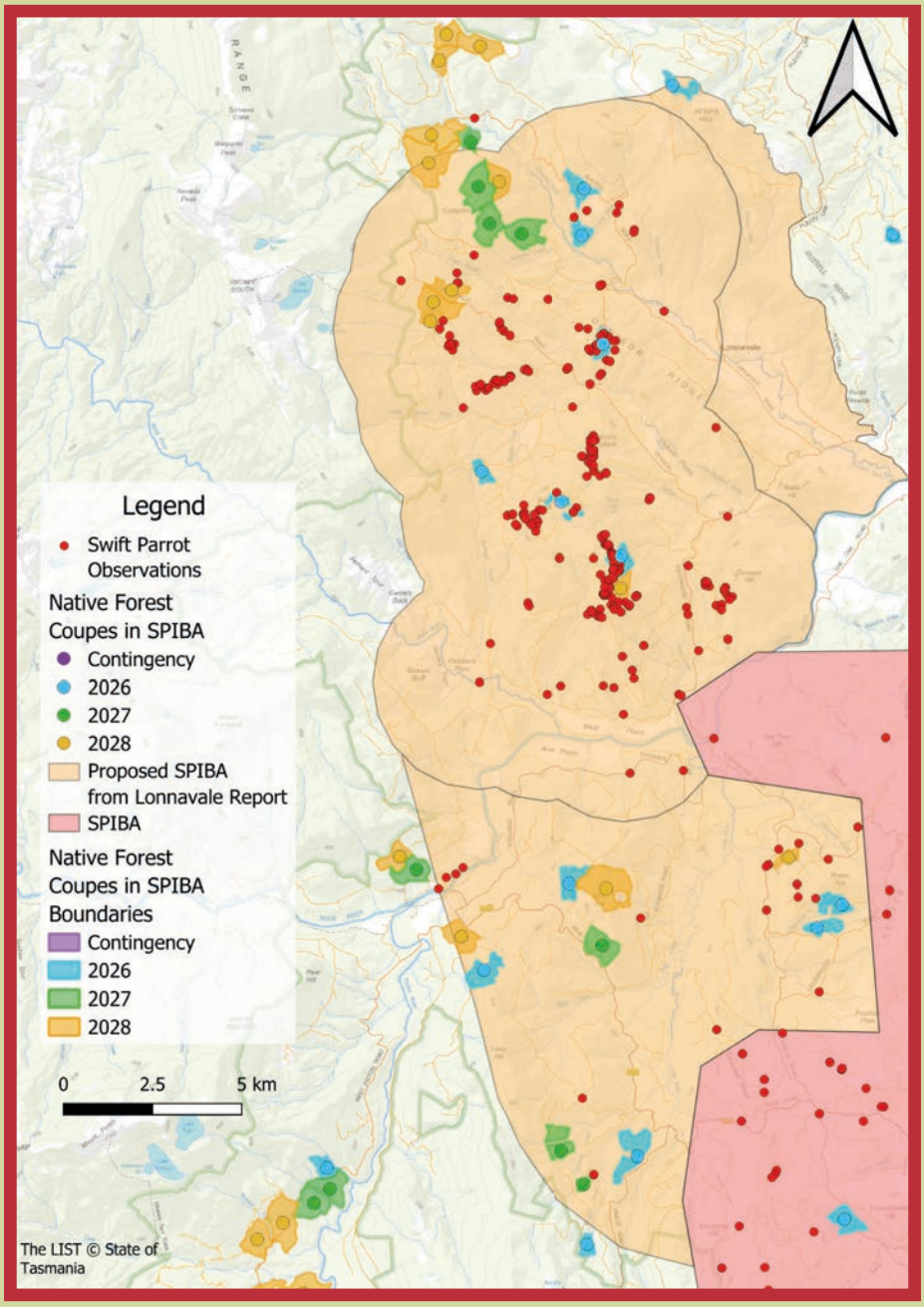
Native forest coupes in Forestry Tasmania's Three Year Wood Production Plan (2026/27–2028/29), coloured by scheduled year, shown against Swift Parrot records,[35] current Swift Parrot Important Breeding Areas (SPIBAs) and the SPIBAs proposed in the Lonnavale Report. Coupes fall within SPIBAs in the Eastern Tiers region, the Huon Valley area and the area stretching from Triabunna to Tasman Peninsula. Native Forest Coupes points represent the centre of a coupe - not the boundary, i.e. coupe points do not represent the actual area to be logged.



RU001J LOGGING COUPE -
PART OF AN ONGOING LEGAL CASE

8.2 FUTURE LOGGING TARGETING NESTING HABITAT IN LONNAVALE AREA

The Lonnavale region holds one of the densest concentrations of Swift Parrot records,[35] yet 27 coupes are planned inside it, and several more in close proximity (Map 2). Of particular concern are the seven 2026/27 coupes that sit directly among dense clusters of records, in the northern half of the area. Further coupes are scheduled for 2027 and 2028 across the southern half, next to the existing SPIBA. If this logging goes ahead, some of the area's most heavily used Swift Parrot habitat will be cleared before this proposed SPIBA can be formally recognised.



Map 2. Coupes are planned among some of the densest Swift Parrot records, within the proposed Lonnavale SPIBA.

Planned coupes within and next to the proposed Lonnavale SPIBA.[25] Coupes scheduled for 2026 sit among clusters of Swift Parrot records in the north of the area. Further coupes are scheduled for 2027 and 2028 in the south, next to the existing SPIBA. These areas will be logged before the proposed SPIBA can be formally assessed and recognised.

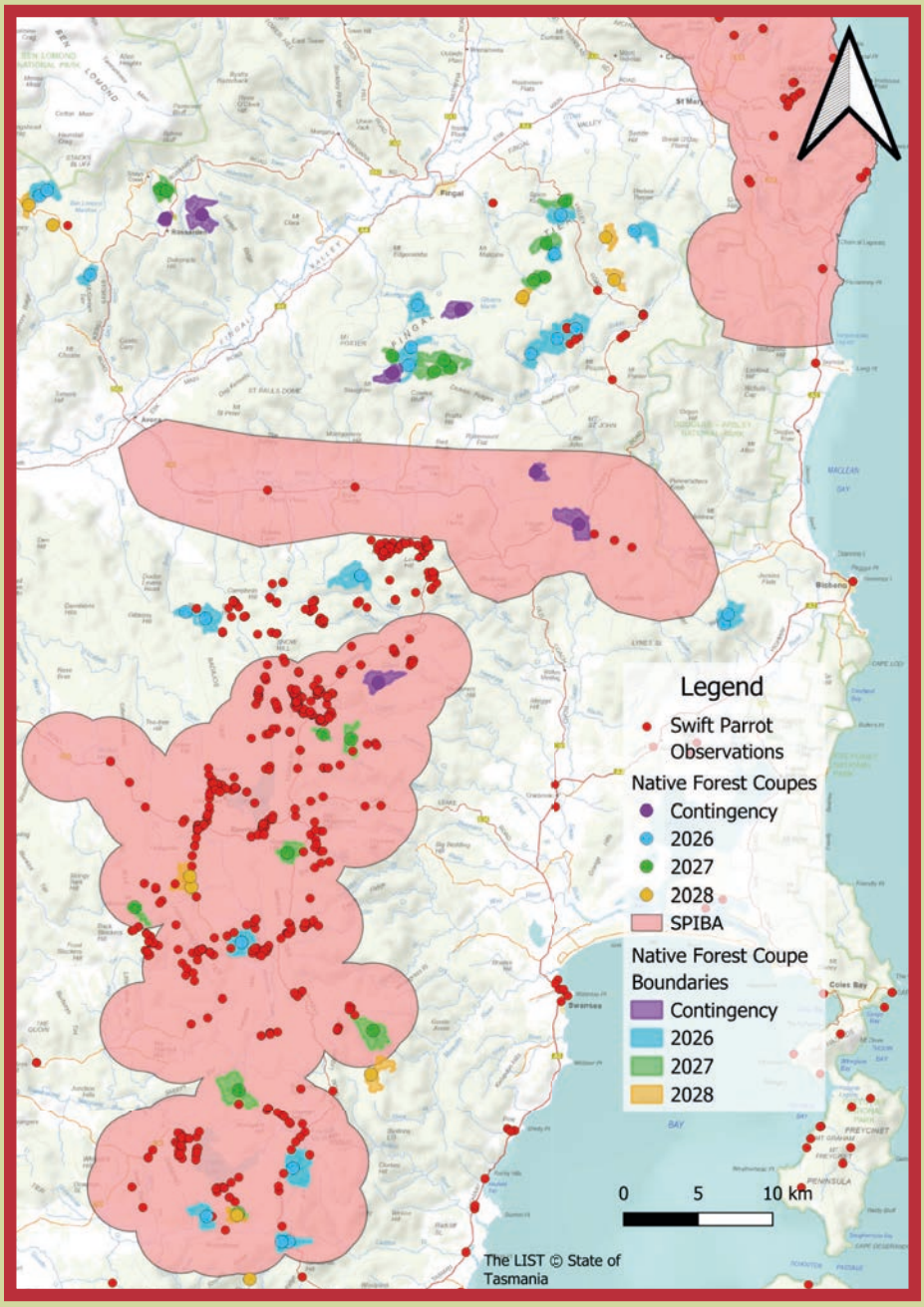
IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA BROZEK



LOGGED COUPE DN023H -
PRIME SWIFT PARROT HABITAT

8.3 FUTURE LOGGING TARGETING NESTING AND FORAGING HABITAT IN EASTERN TIERS

The Wood Production Plan includes 18 coupes that are within existing SPIBAs, and several more coupes nearby that are close to document Swift Parrot observations (Map 3). Coupes from every year of the plan are scattered through the southern Eastern Tiers SPIBA, which contains a very high density of Swift Parrot records.[35] Contingency coupes also sit within the narrow east–west SPIBA to the north.



Map 3: Coupes from every year of the plan, plus contingency coupes, fall within Eastern Tiers SPIBAs.

The high density of Swift Parrot records just outside the SPIBA boundaries in Snow, Campells, and Lewis Hill - close to planned 2026 coupes - suggest the current SPIBAs do not sufficiently cover all important Swift Parrot habitat.

IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA BROZEK

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

1 PROTECT SWIFT PARROT HABITAT FROM LOGGING

Federal and State Governments must work together to deliver the immediate protection of all habitat for critically endangered Swift Parrots. The protection of habitat is the highest priority action, especially in Tasmania's native forests, which are the sole breeding grounds for the Swift Parrot. The land tenure of habitat areas must be reviewed, and where necessary, changed to immediately remove habitat areas from public land areas zoned to allow logging.

The end of the RFA exemption by 1 July 2027 represents an opportunity to deliver protections for Swift Parrot habitat in areas of native forests previously exempt from federal oversight. However, the Swift Parrot's situation is urgent, and immediate action is required to deliver protection for Swift Parrot breeding habitat before the 2026/27 breeding season. The Tasmanian Government, supported by the Federal Government, must act now to:

a. Remove logging coupes, and new roading areas, located within Swift Parrot habitat, including SPIBAs, from Forestry Tasmania's Three-Year Wood Production Plan for the period 2026/2027 - 2028/2029.

b. Remove identified Swift Parrot habitat from land that is currently designated for timber production and secure formal protection of these areas via changes to land tenure.

c. Change land management arrangements so that all habitat areas are removed from Forestry Tasmania's management.

d. Implement restrictions via amendments to the Forest Management Act 2013 to prevent land managers from undertaking forestry practices in critical habitat areas for the Swift Parrot.

2 ENSURE THE COMMONWEALTH RETAINS POWERS TO ASSESS AND ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS TO PROTECT MATTERS OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE (MNES) AFTER 1 JULY 2027 AND DOES NOT ENDORSE 'BUSINESS AS USUAL' FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:

a. Environmental assessment and approval powers must not be devolved to the state governments through, for example, proposed approval bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and RFA states for forestry operations.

b. The National Environmental Protection Agency must play its role in ensuring the protection of current, and newly identified future, Swift Parrot habitat areas on public and private land.



3 EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN SWIFT PARROT IMPORTANT BREEDING AREAS (SPIBAS) USING THE MOST UP TO DATE CITIZEN SCIENCE DATA. SPIBAS AND "ALL BREEDING HABITAT IN TASMANIA AND FORAGING HABITAT ON THE MAINLAND" MUST BE RECOGNISED AS "IRREPLACEABLE" AND "CRITICAL HABITAT" AS DEFINED IN REFORMS TO THE EPBC ACT.

a. Audit, update and expand Swift Parrot Important Breeding Areas annually based on best available science and data. Maps of the Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area (SPIBA) must be updated to include new areas shown on Natural Atlas and/or identified by citizen science and field monitoring efforts by experts. This includes locations in the Denison, Barnback and Russell River areas.

b. Updated maps of the SPIBA must be added to the Critical Habitat Register.

c. Federal Government funding allocated to the Tasmanian Government to prepare the forestry sector to adhere to the EPBC Act must be utilized to advance the following activities from the recovery plan:

- Undertake fine-scale mapping of Swift Parrot breeding, foraging and nonbreeding habitat to inform adaptive management in Tasmania (5.1 in recovery plan).
- Maintain a free and openly available database for population, habitat and distributional data (4.4 in recovery plan).
- Revise SPIBA map layers with most up to date citizen science data and multistakeholder monitoring.
- Restrict any form of forest practices in SPIBAs.

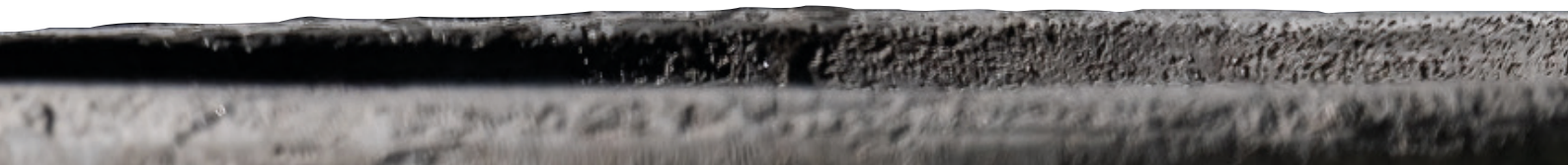
4 ISSUE A PROTECTION STATEMENT FOR THE SWIFT PARROT WHICH CLEARLY IDENTIFIES AND REQUIRES PROTECTION OF ALL CRITICAL HABITAT FROM THE KEY THREAT OF LOGGING IN TASMANIA'S NATIVE FORESTS.

a. Provisions introducing Protection Statements as the default conservation planning document into the EPBC Act will come into effect by December 2026. If a Protection Statement is in place for a species, decision makers are required to consider the Protection Statement when making decisions under the EPBC Act, see for example, 34D, 139, 53 and 146K.

b. Remove any legal doubt in protecting Swift Parrot habitat, by making a Swift Parrot Protection Statement that describes in detail critical habitat for Swift Parrot, including breeding habitat and vegetation type (such as E. globulus) forests in Tasmania, and includes clear provisions that logging, degrading or clearing this critical habitat would result in an unacceptable impact and must not be approved.

5 THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST RESOURCE THE SWIFT PARROT NATIONAL RECOVERY TEAM AND THE NATIONAL RECOVERY PLAN MUST BE URGENTLY IMPLEMENTED.

SWIFT PARROT, IMAGE CREDIT: YOLANDE COZIJN



10 CONCLUSION

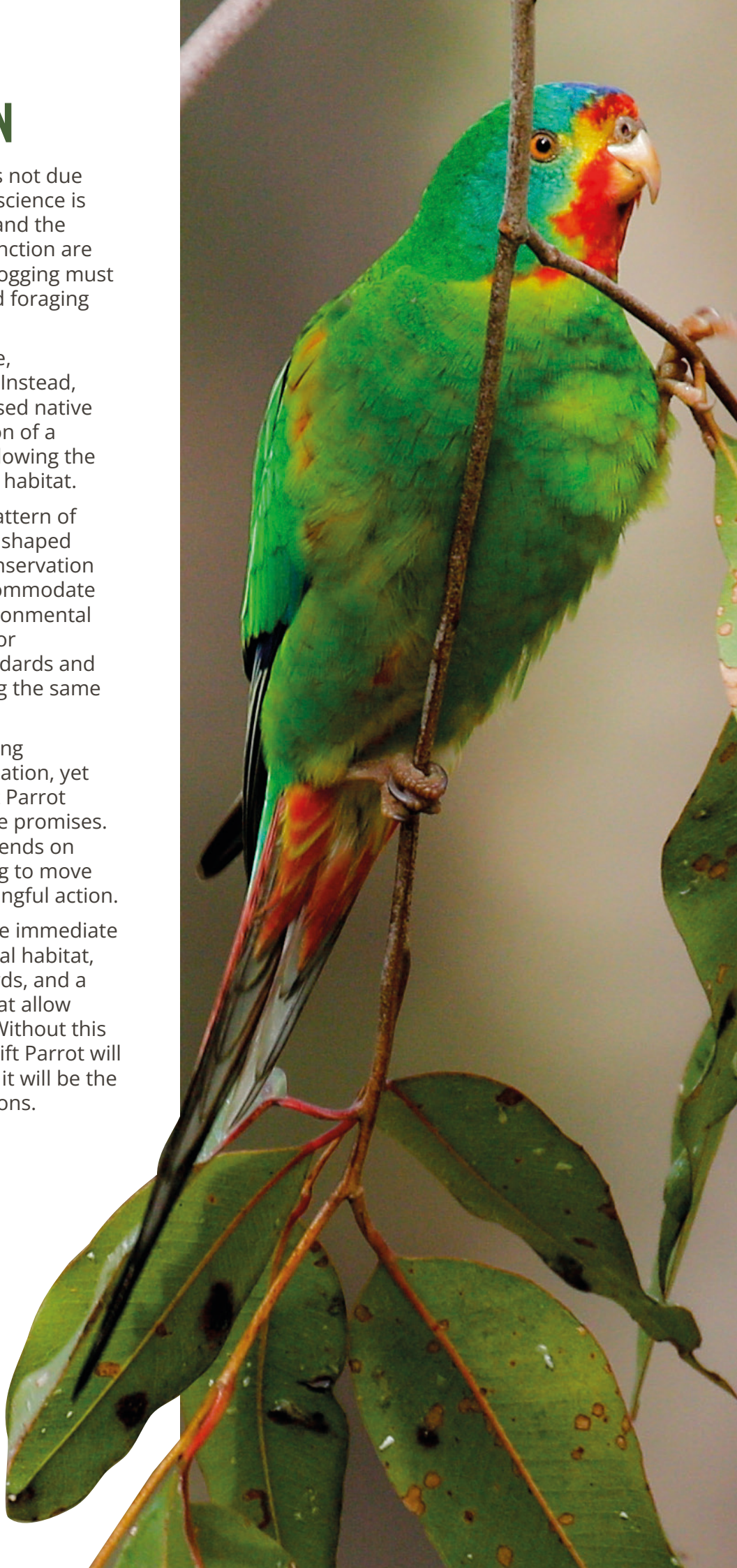
The decline of the Swift Parrot is not due to a lack of understanding. The science is clear, the solutions are known, and the actions required to prevent extinction are both practical and achievable. Logging must end in Swift Parrot breeding and foraging habitat.

Yet, despite decades of evidence, governments have failed to act. Instead, policies have repeatedly prioritised native forest logging over the protection of a critically endangered species, allowing the continued destruction of critical habitat.

This failure reflects a broader pattern of environmental decision-making shaped by industry influence, where conservation measures are weakened to accommodate logging. Recent reforms to environmental laws offer a potential pathway for change, but without strong standards and enforcement, they risk repeating the same failures.

Australia has committed to halting deforestation and forest degradation, yet the ongoing destruction of Swift Parrot habitat directly contradicts these promises. The fate of the species now depends on whether governments are willing to move beyond rhetoric and take meaningful action.

Preventing extinction will require immediate protection of all remaining critical habitat, stronger environmental standards, and a clear shift away from policies that allow continued habitat destruction. Without this change, the extinction of the Swift Parrot will not be an unforeseen outcome, it will be the direct result of deliberate decisions.



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