

# Conservation Action Plan

## Rufous scrub-bird (*Atrichornis rufescens*)

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of s.78C of the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019 (Reg.) in relation to an Asset of Intergenerational Significance (AIS) as declared under s.153G of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

### Site details

AIS site	AIS-E0-147, AIS-E0-148
Site location	An area of 2148 hectares in Border Ranges National Park An area of 871 hectares in Gumbaynggirr National Park An area of 859 hectares in New England National Park
NPWS contact	Project Officer, Threatened Species, North Coast Branch

### Environmental values

This table sets out the environmental values for which the land was listed as an AIS (Reg. 78C(3)(a)).

Identified value(s)	Value description
Important habitat for rufous scrub-bird	<p>The rufous scrub-bird is a vulnerable stocky, ground dwelling bird which can grow up to 17 centimetres in body length. Adults have scaly-patterned dark rufous-brown feathers, a lighter colour throat, with a long, rounded tail with dark brown eyes. Scrub-birds are generally found foraging in low lying habitats, amongst dense vegetation and woody debris or litter, which makes them very difficult to identify. However, the loud and frequent calls from males allows them to be readily detected.</p> <p>They are now generally only found in high rainfall areas of subtropical, warm and cool temperate rainforests, and wet sclerophyll forests above 600 metres in elevation, but formerly occurred in the lowlands of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers.</p> <p>Breeding season is from early spring to summer; however, little is known about their breeding behaviour due to the dense vegetation habitats.</p>

## Key risks to environmental values

This table sets out the key risks to the environmental values of the land (Reg. 78C(3)(b)).

Key risk(s)	Description
Inappropriate fire regimes	<p>Inappropriate fire frequency and intensity that alters vegetation composition and structure may lead to a reduction in suitable habitat and food availability and affect the persistence of the rufous scrub-bird at the sites.</p> <p>This risk is exacerbated by the severely restricted and fragmented distribution and very small population size of the species at the sites.</p>
Feral predators	<p>Predation of rufous scrub-bird by foxes and feral cats.</p>
Anthropogenic climate change	<p>Changes to weather patterns and climatic conditions as a result of anthropogenic climate change that increases the frequency and severity of drought conditions and frequency, intensity or extent of fire, may exceed the adaptive capacity and reduce survivorship of rufous scrub-bird at the sites.</p> <p>This risk is exacerbated by the severely restricted and fragmented distribution and very small population size of the species at the sites.</p>
Disturbance	<p>Authorised infrastructure maintenance activities (e.g., road and trail maintenance) that leads to degradation of habitat and damage to individuals by slashing and herbicide use.</p>

## Conservation activities

This table sets out the conservation activities required to:

1. Control, abate or mitigate the key risks and
2. maintain, restore and remediate the environmental values of the land (Reg. 78C(3)(c)).

Key risk(s)	Impacted site(s)	Conservation activities
Inappropriate fire regimes	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop guidance on the appropriate fire management for the habitat of the rufous scrub-bird within 12 months of adoption of this plan and update as required. This guidance must provide for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintenance of an appropriate fire regime by developing and implementing a site-specific burn plan for the declared areas</li> <li>- implementation of any required fire protection and response measures in the declared areas</li> <li>- integration of site-specific requirements into NPWS and NSW Government bushfire planning, risk management and operational response arrangements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Implement fire management consistent with the guidance.</li> </ul>
Feral predators	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To the extent practicable, reduce the density of foxes to a level that is not having an ecologically significant impact on Rufous scrub-bird and maintain at or below that level by baiting, trapping and shooting.</li> <li>• To the extent practicable, undertake opportunistic feral cat control by shooting, trapping, baiting and other approved methods to reduce the density of cats to a level that is not having an ecologically significant impact on Rufous scrub-bird and maintain the density at or below that level.</li> </ul>
Anthropogenic climate change	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a decline in species trajectory is attributed to impacts of anthropogenic climate change, investigate options for ex-situ management.</li> </ul>
Disturbance	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake periodic reviews to identify whether infrastructure maintenance is having an adverse impact on rufous scrub-birds. If adverse impacts are observed implement action to mitigate the impacts. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- upgrade/realignment of trails to avoid known habitat</li> <li>- installation of signage or more discrete marking systems to delineate exclusion areas to prevent slashing or herbicide use near sites.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Other land management activities

Within the declared land there are existing assets and infrastructure of NPWS and other external service providers, including public utilities.

Maintenance operations (including inspection, emergency works and routine and standard maintenance) that are exempt development in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and which are performed on and around existing assets and infrastructure, are authorised under this conservation action plan (CAP) provided such operations are undertaken in a manner that aims to minimise the risk to the declared environmental values of the land and with any other required consents or approvals.

All maintenance operations on the declared land are to be undertaken in accordance with this CAP.

## Measuring and reporting

This table sets out the requirements for measuring and reporting on health and condition (Reg. 78C(3)(d)).

Attribute	Metric	Method
Health and condition of the rufous scrub-bird population	Population estimate	Design, and implement annually, monitoring to generate an estimate of the number of individuals in the population.

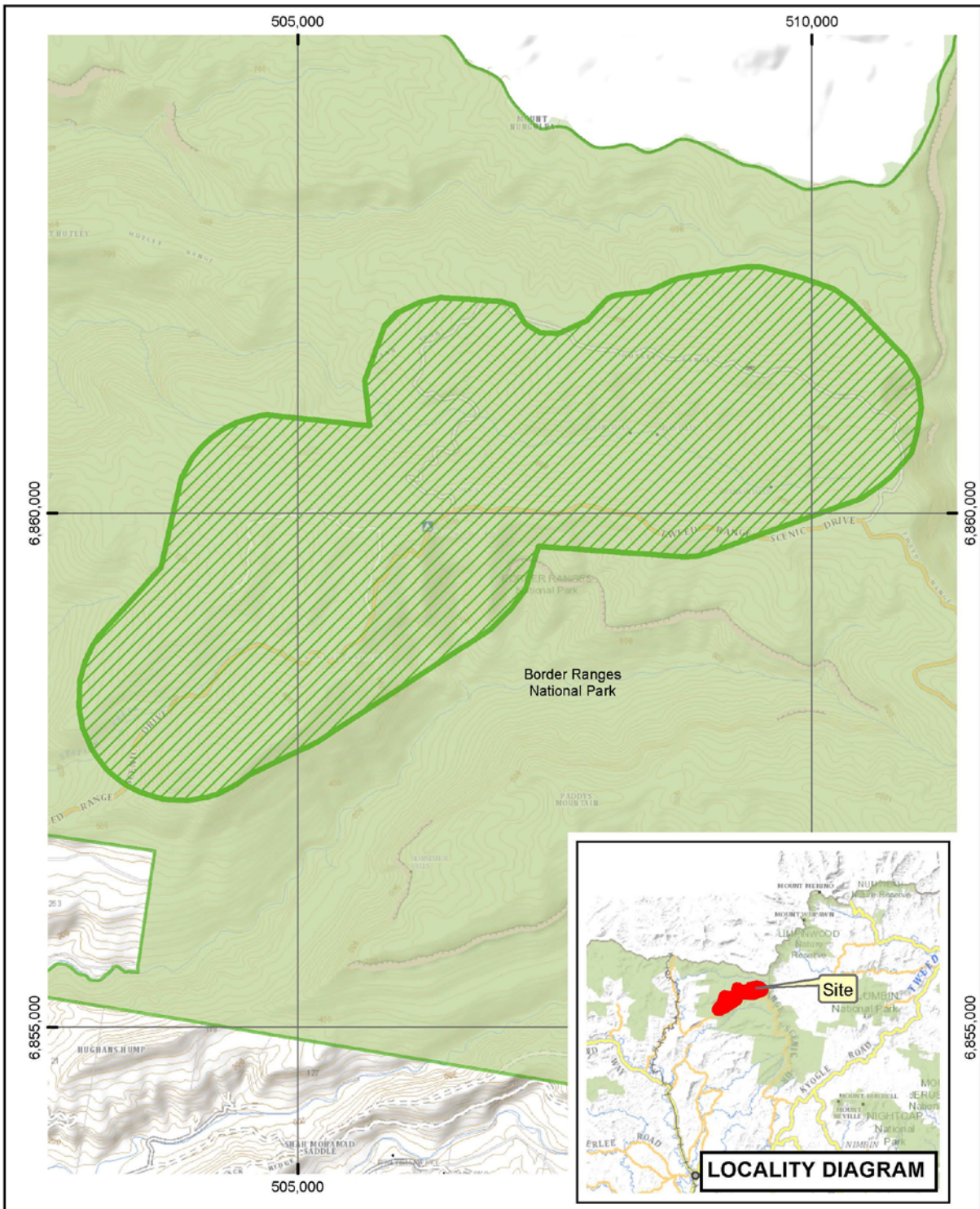
A report on the health and condition of the value for which this AIS was declared will be prepared and published on the Department of Planning and Environment website: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au). The report will summarise the baseline and current health and condition of the values of the declared land and its overall trajectory.

## Evaluation of conservation action plans



This CAP will be amended or replaced as new information becomes available that helps improve our management of the identified assets (Reg. 78H).

The Secretary must appoint a scientist, or a panel of scientists, to conduct a review, as soon as possible after the period of five years from the first approval of a CAP, to examine whether CAPs have been effectively implemented (Reg. 78J(1)).

Rufous scrub-bird (*Atrichornis rufescens*)  
Conservation Action Plan



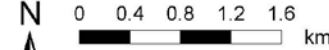


**Legend**

-  Declared Land
-  NPWS Estate

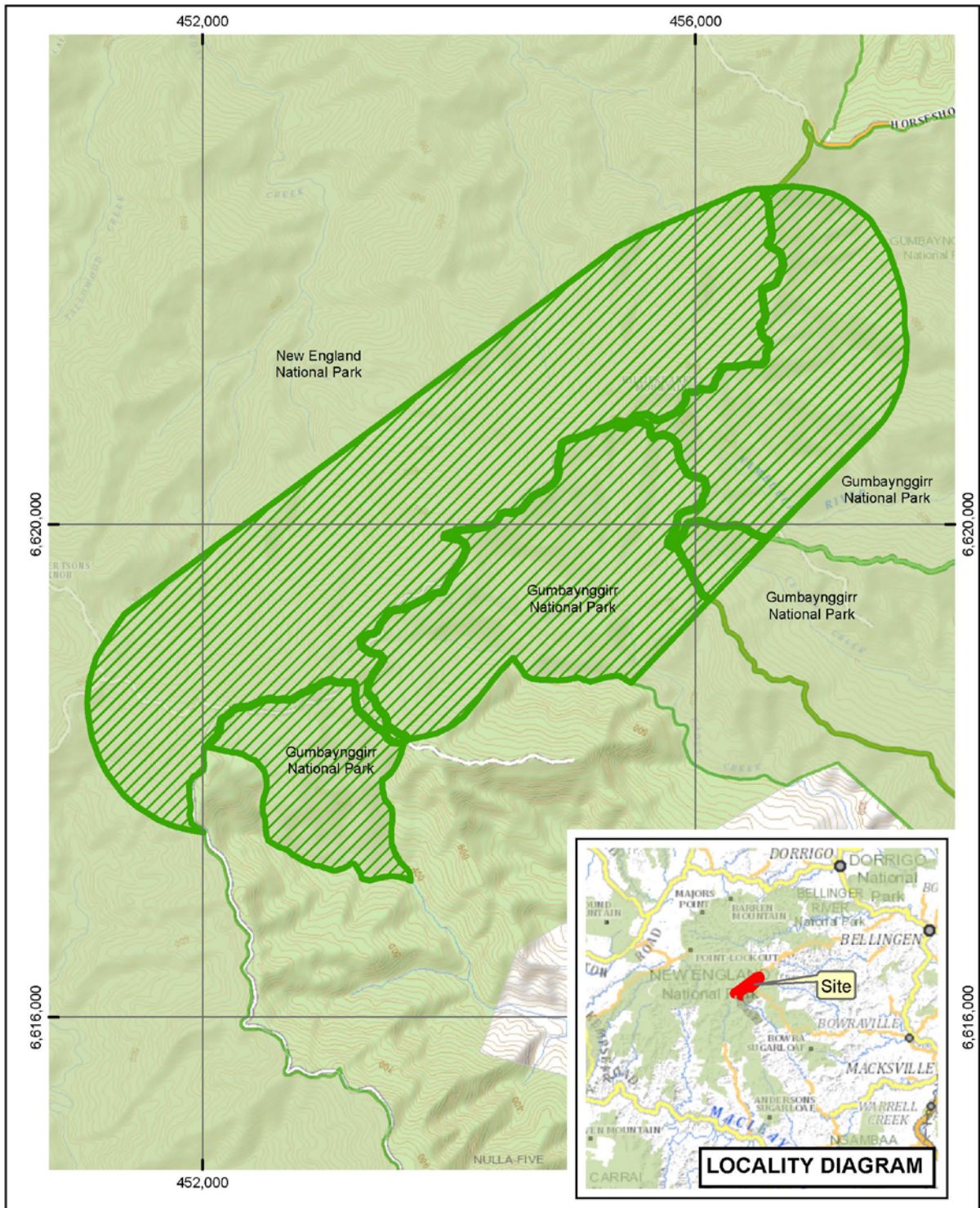
**AIS-E0-147**  
Asset of  
**Intergenerational Significance**  
**Rufous scrub-bird**  
*(Atrichornis rufescens)*  
**Border Ranges National Park**

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
N 0 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 km

Rufous scrub-bird (*Atrichornis rufescens*)  
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**Legend**



-  Declared Land
-  NPWS Estate

**AIS-E0-148**  
Asset of  
Intergenerational Significance  
**Rufous scrub-bird (*Atrichornis rufescens*)**  
Gumbaynggirr National Park and  
New England National Park

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N 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 km



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Date prepared	August 2022
Date approved	17 December 2022
Approved by	Atticus Fleming, Acting Co-ordinator General Environment and Heritage
Due for review	August 2027

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