

Critically Endangered Swift Parrots documented on Raymond Island.

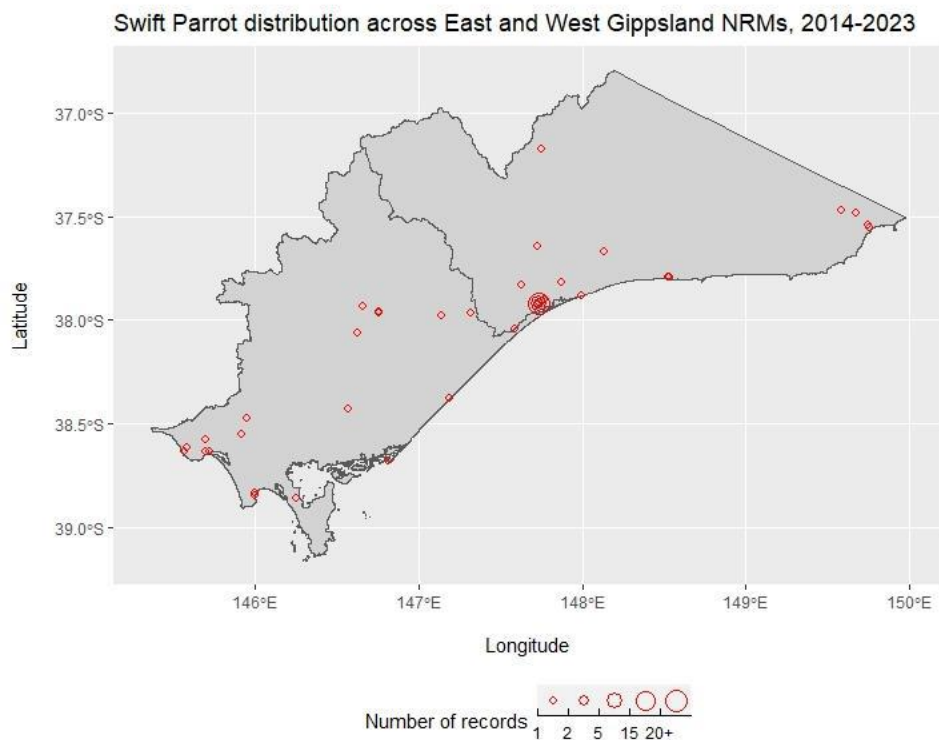


The Swift Parrot is one of the rarest birds in Australia, with only the Orange-bellied Parrot having a smaller total population. The small, fast flying parrot breeds in Tasmania over the summer months, and migrates to the mainland (mainly southern & central Victoria and eastern NSW) in winter.

The total remaining population of Swift Parrot in the wild is estimated at between 300 and 600 individuals.

In April 2024, after several years with very low numbers, over 30 Swift Parrots were recorded on Raymond Island. The island, just south of Paynesville in East Gippsland, lies inside the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site, and is considered an important migration pathway for the species as they travel from Tasmania and back.

Such bird numbers represent between **5-10% of the total remaining wild population** of the species, which is EPBC listed as Critically Endangered. BirdLife Australia survey records, recently added to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA), confirm that Raymond Island, with its mature Southern Mahogany trees, is the most important Swift Parrot habitat site for the entire Gippsland region.



Source: BirdLife Australia (2023)

A large flock of these small, colourful parrots was photographed this year feeding on lerps growing on the leaves of mature Southern Mahoganys. The large tall trees are located in, and next to a 1ha proposed subdivision site that is currently awaiting a planning decision by the East Gippsland Shire Council.

Very few of these mature feed trees are left on the island, with many of the oldest surviving trees located inside residential areas. Heightened development pressures on the island have resulted in the cumulative loss of much of the Swift Parrots critical habitat, making all surviving remnant mature feed trees vital for the ongoing survival of the species, that scientists predict may well [become extinct in the wild within 10 or so years](#).

The mature trees on the proposed development site are critical habitat for the **survival of an ecologically significant proportion of the total surviving population of the Swift Parrot**, and therefore have extremely high conservation value.

Notably, the proposed subdivision will effectively result in the full extent of native vegetation being removed, and therefore **all the critical habitat within the site being lost**. If the development application and planned tree removal is approved by the Council (without even an EPBC referral having been made), then it'll no doubt be challenged in VCAT.

The Gippsland Environment Group is calling on anyone worried about the loss of critical habitat for this threatened species, to please call (03 5153 9500) and/or email the East Gippsland Shire Council (Planning@egipps.vic.gov.au) to politely voice your concerns.



For more information on the proposed subdivision development and tree removal please download GEG's planning objection/submission