

Glossy Black Cockatoos & FFMV planned burns

Autumn 2024



Background

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) planned burns are targeting unburnt forest (in 2019-20 bushfires) in East Gippsland - between Lakes Entrance and the Snowy River, including parks and reserves.

This is the heartland of the threatened Glossy Black Cockatoo population in Victoria. There are 35-40 Glossies inhabiting this coastal forest.

Glossies are listed as Critically Endangered in Victoria (FFG Act), and Vulnerable (EPBC Act).

Glossies depend on seed from the cones of black she-oaks as their primary food source. However, she-oaks are highly sensitive to fire: they are killed by hot fires, and low intensity burns trigger seed shed.

Glossies will *not* feed on seed on the ground. Even mild fires damage she-oak trees. It takes 5-20 years before young she-oaks produce viable seed¹.

Any fire in Glossy habitat reduces food resources – limiting population numbers.

“Given the extreme impacts on the food supply for Glossy Black Cockatoos in Victoria from the 2019-20 bushfires, which will persist for a long time, expert advice is that greater protections than are specified in the Conservation Advice are required for persistence of this species.”²

Planned burns also destroy the hollow bearing trees Glossies nest in. DEECA’s research has identified that planned burns cause approx. 20% of hollow bearing trees in a planned burn area to collapse³.

FFMV plans to implement a 250 m buffer around recorded nest trees. Unfortunately, very few nest trees have been recorded. It is inevitable that unrecorded nest sites will be destroyed.



Juvenile Glossy Black Cockatoo
GunnaiKurnai Country, FFMV plan burn site
Pic: L.Roberts 24-03-2024, approx 5.50pm

¹DELWP *Biodiversity response and recovery supplementary report: bushfire impacts on species in Victoria* Aug 2022; and ARI webinar 13.9.2021

² DELWP *Threatened Species and Communities Risk Assessment: Tranche 1 Permanent Protections* Sept 2022 p13.

³ Lucas Bluff, *Reducing the effect of planned burns on hollow-bearing trees, fire and adaptive management report no.95* DELWP 2016

It is imperative that fire is excluded from all she-oak woodland in the coastal forests.

Planned burns

11,000 ha is scheduled to be burnt in the coastal forest between Lakes Entrance and the Snowy River over the next three years. Over 4,000ha will be burnt this year. see [FFMV Gippsland Joint Fuel Management Program 2023-24 to 2025-26.](#)

Planned burns that have already been ignited or are imminent:

Newmerella- Lagoon Tk GP-SNO-ORB-0014 (1185 ha) is scheduled for 2025 but a section in the Bails Tk area was ignited on 24 March - 174ha burnt including she-oak stands.

Nowa Nowa-Stockyard Break GP-TBO-NOW-0016 407 ha ignited 5 April 2024

Nowa Nowa- Browns Tk GP-TBO-NOW-0289 ignited 14 April 2024

A number of other planned burns are scheduled in Glossy Black Cockatoo habitat this year – posing a serious threat to the survival of this critically endangered species.

Planned burns are inconsistent with post-bushfire recovery efforts for the Glossies.

Birdlife Australia, with funding from the Australian Government's Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program have been carrying out a project to protect the Glossy Black Cockatoos and their habitat in East Gippsland <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/glossy-black-cockatoo/>

This restoration project is being seriously compromised by FFMV planned burns.



Lagoon Track planned burn, ignited 24 March 2024 – burnt she-oaks Bails Tk

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