

Form A

Minor Variation to Property Vegetation Plan Assessment

issued under Part 5 Clause 27 of the *Native Vegetation Regulation 2005*

Case Number: 875

PVP type : Development

Proposed development

Clear 1.2 ha of Spotted gum – Ironbark forest for sporting fields in Wyong LGA with a 60 ha off-set of similar vegetation type plus revegetation of the clearing site.

Minor Variation

Made on (date) _____ The date of the signature below.

The accredited expert is of the opinion that
:

- (a) a minor variation to the Assessment Methodology would result in a determination that the proposed clearing will improve or maintain environmental outcomes (other than a variation that is not allowable under this clause), and
(b) strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology is in the particular case unreasonable and unnecessary.

Minor variation made to the following Assessment Methodology : **Threatened Species**

Reasons for Minor Variation

See Attachment No 1

Assessment Protocols

There are no approved assessment protocols applicable to this minor variation.

Accredited Expert

David Russell (Soils/Biodiversity and threatened species/Water quality)

Signed

**Chairman
Hunter Central Rivers Catchment
Management Authority**

W.E.J Paradise

Signed

Note 1. Details of this minor variation are required by Clause 29 Regulations to be published and any reports made publicly available.

Attachment 1 – Reasons for Minor Variation

An assessment of the proposal has been carried out using the EOAM methodology.

Aspect of the Assessment Methodology to vary.

Under the threatened species (TS) tool rule set, no loss of foraging habitat is allowed for the species *Lathamus discolor* (Swift parrot) in the Wyong sub-IBRA. Foraging habitat is defined by the TS tool as “as per vegetation type” and in the TS tool species profile as “winter flowering trees”. The TS tool lists 106 vegetation types as potential habitat for this species. As defined in the TS tool, and flowering tree in any of these 106 vegetation types must be regarded as foraging habitat for this species.

The reasons why,

- (a) a minor variation to the Assessment Methodology would result in a determination that the proposed clearing will improve or maintain environmental outcomes (other than a variation that is not allowable under this clause), and**
 - (b) strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology is in the particular case is unreasonable and unnecessary, are as follows.**
1. The Swift Parrot is a species which migrates annually along the eastern Australian mainland during the cooler months. The species requires winter flowering trees producing nectar and lerps as a key habitat element. Key foraging resources for Swift Parrots in coastal regions of NSW include Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata*, Swamp Mahogany *Eucalyptus robusta* and Forest Red Gum *Eucalyptus tereticornis* Forests (Swift Parrot Recovery Team 2001). Swift Parrot habitats within the Lower Hunter Valley and Central Coast are poorly conserved with over 85% of the known foraging sites in Spotted Gum habitats occurring outside conservation reserves. The majority of these sites are therefore not adequately protected from vegetation clearance and degradation, which are key threats to Swift Parrot habitat (Swift Parrot Recovery Team 2001, Saunders 2002). In the Hunter Central Rivers CMA Swift Parrots have been recorded using Spotted Gum forests on a seasonal basis for over 20 years (NSW Wildlife Atlas, Swift Parrot Recovery Database).
 2. The tree species proposed for clearing are Spotted Gum and *Eucalyptus paniculata* (Grey Ironbark).
 3. Swift Parrot has been recorded 2.5 to 3.5 km south to south west of the subject site. These records are associated with estuarine and/or alluvial swamp forests near vegetation mapped as Estuarine Swamp Oak Forest and/or Alluvial Floodplain Shrub Swamp Forest by Bell (2004). Swamp Mahogany is a component of both these vegetation types. Spotted Gum and Grey Ironbark do not occur in these vegetation types.
 4. Swift Parrot records within the vicinity of the site all occur below the 10 metres elevation. The subject site is above the 20m topographic contour.
 5. The Swift Parrot has not been recorded at the 1.2 ha site; however the absence of records does not necessarily indicate that the birds do not use the site as surveys have not been conducted on the subject site during suitable seasonal conditions.
 6. The area proposed for clearing is 1.2 ha of a vegetation type that is wide spread and abundant in the locality. According to Bell (2004), there are 2215 ha of this vegetation type (Narrabeen Dooralong Spotted Gum-Ironbark Forest) in the Wyong LGA. The 1.2 ha proposed to clear represents a small proportion (0.0005%) of this extant area. In addition, the tree species Spotted Gum and Grey Ironbark are not restricted to this particular vegetation type.

7. As mapped by Bell (2004), there are approximately 618 ha of the vegetation type Narrabeen Dooralong Spotted Gum-Ironbark Forest within 5 km of the subject site. The 1.2 ha on the subject site represents 0.002% of this.
8. Bell (2004) states that the vegetation type Narrabeen Dooralong Spotted Gum-Ironbark Forest is 53% cleared and not represented in any conservation reserves. The vegetation is equivalent to PVP developer vegetation type Dry Foothills Spotted Gum which is 50% cleared according to the biometric tool.
9. The proponent proposes to off-set the loss of the 1.2 ha by securing 60 ha in perpetuity of a similar vegetation type located on a similar landform approximately 3.5 km west of the clearing site under a PVP and managing that site to maintain and improve its condition.
10. The offset proposal would result in an improvement to the conservation status of the vegetation type.
11. The proponent proposes to revegetate a ground area of 9,800 sq. metres with similar species to those occurring on the site and adjacent bushland. This revegetation includes landscaping as well as wildlife corridor planting. The proposed planting schedule includes a large proportion of Spotted Gum and Grey Ironbark and would use local genetic provenance.

Conclusion.

Under the particular circumstances, it is highly likely that the “local population” of Swift Parrot could sustain the temporary loss of 1.2 ha of Spotted Gum – Ironbark potential foraging resource. Consequently, it is the considered opinion of the accredited expert that a minor variation to the Assessment Methodology would maintain or improve environmental outcomes for the threatened species Swift Parrot, and that strict adherence to the Assessment Methodology in this particular case is considered unreasonable and unnecessary.

Reference:

- Bell, S. A.J. (December 2002) The natural vegetation of the Wyong Local Government Area, Central Coast, New South Wales, Vegetation Community Profiles, Final Report to Wyong Shire Council Version 4.0.
- Saunders, D. (2002). Assessment of Swift Parrot Sites near Cessnock, Lower Hunter Valley Region, NSW – including the Hunter Employment Zone. Report prepared for the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation.
- Swift Parrot Recovery Team (2001). National Swift Parrot Recovery Plan. Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.

David Russell
Catchment Officer
Date: