

A statement for the purposes of approved conservation advice (s266B of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

Approved Conservation Advice for the Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia ecological community

Guidance on Listing Advice

Ecological communities are a convenient way to classify complex and variable natural systems. Australia, and each State/Territory jurisdiction, applies its own system to classify ecological communities; this can cause problems when cross-referring amongst systems that may vary in on-ground accuracy. Any reference to vegetation and mapping units as equivalent to a national ecological community at the time of listing should be taken as indicative, rather than definitive. A unit that is generally equivalent may include some elements that do not meet the description. Conversely, some areas mapped or described as other units (not identified in the Listing Advice) may sometimes meet the description.

When making a determination as to whether the nationally listed *Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia* ecological community is present at a particular site, the 'Description' (including the 'General Features' and 'Key Diagnostic Characteristics') and 'Condition Thresholds' of the listed ecological community as outlined in the Listing Advice (pp.1-4, TSSC 2008afi) must be used as the primary factor for determination rather than any other classification system.

To view the Listing Advice, see:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/pubs/76-listing-advice.pdf>

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved.

The Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia ecological community is a complex of rainforest and coastal vine thickets on the east coast of Australia influenced by its proximity to the sea. The canopy, which protects less tolerant species and propagules in the understorey from salt laden winds, can range from patchy to closed and may include emergents as well as dead trees due to ongoing natural disturbance. The vegetation height depends on the degree of exposure and can range from dwarf to medium (<1-25 m; Specht 1970) and tends to merge in a height continuum due to coastal processes. Plant diversity declines from a north to south direction with the species composition also differing with latitude subject to substrate and nutrient inflow.

The ecological community meets criteria 2 and 4 of the Guidelines for ecological community nomination. The ecological community is listed as critically endangered.

The ecological community occurs within 2 km of the eastern coastline of Australia, including offshore islands, from Princess Charlotte Bay, Cape York Peninsula to the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria. It is known to occur in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria where the relevant Natural Resource Management regions are: Cape York, Wet Tropics, Mackay-Whitsunday, Fitzroy, Burnett-Mary and South East (Queensland); Northern Rivers, Hunter-Central Rivers, Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Metro, Southern Rivers (New South Wales); and East Gippsland (Victoria).

The ecological community has been significantly reduced and fragmented by sandmining, agriculture and coastal development. Presently, the main key threats to the ecological community include clearing of native vegetation, coastal development, visitor disturbance, weed invasion, animal grazing/browsing, fire and the effects of fragmentation. In addition, natural disturbances,

such as storms and cyclones, can impact the ecological community and are likely to increase in frequency and intensity with climate change.

The following are actions that can be carried out to stop the decline or support the recovery of the ecological community.

Regional Priority Actions

The regional priority recovery and threat abatement actions required for this ecological community are identified below.

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- Identify known sites of high conservation priority and implement conservation mechanisms, such as covenants or inclusion in reserve tenure.
- Protect areas of native vegetation, which contain remnants of the listed ecological community.
- Manage any changes to hydrology which may result in increased run off or sediment or changes to the water table levels.
- Ensure chemicals or other mechanisms used to eradicate weeds do not have a significant adverse impact on the ecological community.
- Repair, expand and connect existing remnants of the listed ecological community through appropriate rainforest rehabilitation methods.
- Maintain and monitor rehabilitated remnants of the listed ecological community.
- Undertake appropriate collection and storage of seed of component species for future planting.

Invasive Weeds

- Develop and implement a management plan for the control of transformer weeds in the local region.

Trampling, Browsing and Grazing

- Develop a management plan or for the control and, as appropriate, eradication of feral deer, such as Rusa, Sambar and Hog Deer.

Fire

- Develop and implement a suitable fire management strategy for the ecological community.
- Provide maps of known occurrences of the ecological community to local and state rural fire services and seed inclusion of mitigative measures in bush fire risk management plan(s), risk register and/or operation maps.

Conservation Information

- Raise awareness of the ecological community within the local community.

Local Priority Actions

The local priority recovery and threat abatement actions for this ecological community are identified below:

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- Monitor known sites to identify key threats or progress of recovery.
- Modify access routes to prevent vehicular and pedestrian access.

This ecological community was listed under the EPBC Act on 10 October 2008. This Conservation Advice was approved by the Delegate of the Minister on 12 November 2015.

- Ensure the proper placing of access points and orientation of track access to the beach to ensure that protected vegetation continues to be buffered from prevailing salt laden winds.
- Undertake survey work in suitable habitat or potential habitat to locate any additional remnants.
- Minimise adverse impacts from changed land use at known sites.
- Protect remnants of the listed ecological community on private land through the development of conservation agreements and covenants.
- Preserve remnants of the listed ecological community on private and leased land through the development of reserves (if possible) and/or zoning for environmental purposes.

Invasive Weeds

- Identify and undertake weed management of known sites to reduce or remove transformer weeds.
- Identify and remove weeds in the local area, which could become a threat to the ecological community.

Trampling, Browsing and Grazing

- Manage known sites in reserve areas and on private property to exclude feral deer such as Rusa, Sambar and Hog Deer.
- Control feral animals by appropriate means.

Fire

- Implement hazard reduction zones in the vicinity of remnants of the listed ecological community and fire suppression which includes keeping stand margins in as weed-free a condition as possible.

This list does not necessarily encompass all actions that may be of benefit to this ecological community, but highlights those that are considered to be of highest priority at the time of listing.