

**J SECTION 5A ASSESSMENT FOR THE SWIFT PARROT
LATHAMUS DISCOLOUR (NOVEMBER, 2004)**

Crookwell II Wind Farm

8 Part Test - Swift Parrot (*lathamus
discolour*)

Prepared for

WFJV

15 November 2004

52848

URS

Contents

1	Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot-----	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	8 Part Test	1
1.3	Concluding statement	4
1.4	References	5

Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot

1.1 Introduction

Swift Parrot Lathamus discolor

Lathamus discolor Swift Parrot was not recorded on site during site surveys, and only marginal habitat suitable for this species was recorded within the study area. However, as this species has a tendency to collide with man-made structures such as tennis courts and windows (NPWS. 2001), this 8-part test has been prepared as a precautionary measure, as directed by the objects of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (as amended).

1.2 8 Part Test

Part (a) - In the case of a threatened species, whether the life cycle of the species is likely to be disrupted such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction.

Lifecycle characteristics of the Swift Parrot indicate the species would only be potentially present in the vicinity of the study area during the autumn and winter months. During spring and summer Swift Parrots migrate to their breeding grounds in Tasmania where they utilise *E. globulus* (Birds Australia. 2002). On the mainland, the species prefers to inhabit box-ironbark woodlands and forests, and feeding is dependent on winter flowering eucalypts such as *Eucalyptus albens* White Box, *E. melliodora* Yellow Box, *E. sideroxylon* Red Ironbark, *E. leucoxylon* Yellow Gum, *E. robusta* Swamp Mahogany and *E. maculata* Spotted Gum (NSW NPWS. 2001). The stronghold area for Swift Parrots is the western slopes and plains of NSW however, it has been noted that during drought conditions, such as those currently experienced, the species relies on more abundant coastal resources (Pers. Comm. D. Saunders. 2003).

Due to the cleared nature of the site, it is most unlikely that Swift Parrots would utilise the poor habitat available at this site. The species may utilise the shelter of the fragmented woodland remnants that occur to the south (approx. 1 km), east (approx. 4 kms) and west (approx. 1.5 km) of the site. A large population of *Manorina melanocephala* Noisy Miners is present both at the proposed Crookwell II site and in the adjoining woodland areas. These aggressive birds compete with Swift Parrots and may also contribute to Swift Parrots not readily using the site or the surrounding woodlands.

Some mature *E. melliodora* (Yellow Box) occur on site. Swift Parrots may very occasionally visit these trees. However, these trees are isolated and exposed and are not in close proximity to the nearby woodland patches. The few and isolated *E. melliodora* individuals are unlikely to provide sufficient suitable feeding or shelter habitat.

The Swift Parrot is not likely to utilise the few feed trees on site in a manner that could disrupt its lifecycle (feeding, breeding, roosting) of a viable population of Swift Parrots given that the species is, at best, an occasional visitor. At this site, the proposed development is not predicted to disrupt the Swift

Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot

Parrots lifecycle to the extent that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction.

Part (b) - In the case of endangered population, whether the life cycle of the species that constitutes the endangered population is likely to be disrupted such the viability of the population is likely to be significantly compromised.

Not applicable.

Part (c) - In relation to the regional distribution of the habitat of a threatened species, population or ecological community, whether a significant area of known habitat is to be modified or removed.

In the western slopes region during winter and autumn, Swift Parrot numbers, although low, are found to be concentrated in the Box-Gum Woodland communities of the Gunnary Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) (approx. 60 km north west of the site), the Yerranderie State Recreation Area (approx. 70 km northeast of the site), and the Boyne State Forest (approx. 120 km south east of the site) (Swift Parrot Recovery Program 2002). The parrots have not been recently recorded in close proximity to Crookwell (NSW NPWS. 2004) and the scattered woodland remnants occurring close to the site are considered to be of poor value to the parrots.

The existing landscape at the proposed site is cleared with a very sparse scattering of isolated eucalyptus paddock trees. The birds are not expected to utilise any of the paddock trees existing on the site and the proposed Crookwell II wind farm does not propose to remove any significant habitat trees.

Therefore, it can be stated that no significant areas of known habitat are likely to be modified or removed as a result of the proposal.

Part (d) - Whether the area of known habitat is likely to become isolated from currently interconnecting or proximate areas of habitat for a threatened species, population or ecological community.

Few mature yellow box trees occur on the proposed wind farm site as isolated and exposed paddock trees. These trees are considered to already be isolated from the surrounding woodland remnants due to previous clearing regimes. Additionally, these individual trees are not expected to offer suitable feeding or shelter habitat to *L. discolor*.

Although most unlikely, if the Swift Parrot were to utilise this area for habitat, the surrounding woodlands and open forests would offer more suitable feeding and roosting opportunities for the

Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot

species. Therefore, the surrounding woodlands would provide a contiguous and more suitable habitat corridor for migrating birds to move through the landscape and they would be predicted to not use the proposed Crookwell II site.

Potential Swift Parrot habitat trees are not proposed to be removed from the proposed Crookwell II site, therefore, no further risk of known habitat becoming isolated from currently interconnecting or proximate areas of habitat for the Swift Parrot is predicted.

Part (e) - Whether critical habitat will be affected

No Swift Parrot critical habitat is known to exist in the vicinity of the proposed area of works and no critical habitat is proposed to be affected by the construction and operation of the Crookwell II wind farm.

Part (f) - Whether a threatened species, population or ecological community, or their habitats, are adequately represented in conservation reserves (or other similar protected areas) in the region

The Crookwell area is not considered to be a place of preferred Swift Parrot habitation and no Swift Parrots have been recorded in the area in the recent Swift Parrot Census (Pers. Comm. D. Saunders. 2004). This could be due to the lack of appropriate habitat through previous extensive clearing for agriculture and the Noisy Miner dominance.

In the western slopes region, the Gunnary Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) has been recorded to provide habitat for many threatened bird species, including the Swift Parrot (Swift Parrot Recovery Program. 2002). This reserve is close to Boorowa, approximately 60 km north west of the proposed wind farm site. Other nearby conservation areas include the Boyne State Forest and the Yerranderie State Recreation Area.

Therefore, the species can be considered to be adequately represented in conservation reserves on a regional basis.

Part (g) - Whether the development or activity proposed is of a class of development or activity that is recognised as a threatening process.

Threatening processes relevant to this proposed development include Clearing of Native Vegetation and specific threats to the Swift Parrot include loss of habitat and adult mortality through collision during breeding season (Swift Parrot Recovery Program. 2002).

Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot

Only a selected portion of the on-site native vegetation (eg. some planted windrows) will be removed and/or modified during construction and no substantial habitat trees are proposed to be removed. This situation is not considered to be problematic to any Swift Parrots occurring in the area (which in itself would be most unlikely) as on-site native vegetation would not be likely to provide suitable feeding, shelter or roosting habitat for the species.

The Swift Parrot is prone to colliding with man-made structures like tennis court fences and windows, typically during breeding season (Swift Parrot Recovery Program. 2002). Since the adult parrots are expected to inhabit Tasmania during breeding season, collision with wind turbines would not be expected as a likely occurrence. Compounding this, the species is not likely to utilise the site or surrounding vegetation.

Therefore, the proposed installation of the Crookwell II wind farm is not recognised to be a significant threatening process to the Swift Parrot.

Part (h) - Whether any threatened species, population or ecological community is at the limit of its known distribution

The Swift Parrot distribution extends north to Queensland, south to Tasmania, west to South Australia and to the east to the coast. The site is not at the limit of the species known distribution.

1.3 Concluding statement

In conclusion, the potential impacts of the proposed Crookwell II wind farm development on the Swift Parrot have been assessed and the findings are:

- The lifecycle of the Swift Parrot is not expected to be adversely impacted by the proposed development;
- No significant areas of known habitat are to be modified or removed as a result of the proposal;
- Known habitat is not likely to become isolated from currently interconnecting or proximate areas of habitat for the Swift Parrot as a result of the proposal;
- No known critical Swift Parrot habitat occurs within close proximity to the proposed development site, therefore, no critical habitat would be expected to be affected as a result of the proposal;
- The Swift Parrot and/or its habitat is adequately represented in conservation reserves occurring approximately 60km to the northwest of the site at the Gunnary TSR and approximately 120km to the southeast of the site at Boyne State Forest;
- The proposal is not found to be a class of development or activity that is recognised as a threatening process; and

Crookwell II Wind Farm - 8 Part Test - Swift Parrot

- The Swift Parrot is not at the limit of its known distribution at the site of the proposed development.

Therefore, the proposed installation of the Crookwell II wind farm does not present any significant threat to the Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor*, thus no SIS is recommended.

1.4 References

Birds Australia. 2002. www.birdsaustralia.com.au/birds/swift.html

Beaurau Of Meteorology (BOM). 2004.

http://www.bom.gov.au/announcements/media_releases/nsw/20020503.shtml

NSW NPWS. 2004. Atlas of NSW Wildlife.

<http://wildlifeatlas.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/watlasSpecies.jsp> (attached as Figure 1)

NSW NPWS. 2001. Swift Parrot Recovery Team. Swift Parrot Recovery Plan. Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. Hobart.

Saunders, D. 5 November 2004. Pers. Comm. Swift Parrot Recovery Officer. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Saunders, D. 12 June 2003. Pers. Comm. Swift Parrot Recovery Officer. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Swift Parrot Recovery Program. 2002. Swifts Across the Strait (February Newsletter).