

**Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
NSW Government
Sydney**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Hastings Birdwatchers, Port Macquarie, is a community group focussing on native birds and their conservation. We are writing to express our concern at the proposed route of the Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade of the Pacific Highway, specifically of the route proposed from Glenugie to Maclean through the Clarence Valley.

We understand that this route will involve the destruction of around 950 hectares of habitat for native fauna and flora. A considerable percentage of this involves Endangered Ecological Communities, including the critically endangered Lowland Rainforest of Sub-tropical Australia, listed under the EPBC Act. This route will seriously impact on the survival of the endangered population of coastal Emus and over 80 species of other endangered species.

As a bird group concerned about the survival of Australian birds, we are particularly concerned for the survival of threatened bird species found in the area, including Painted Snipe (endangered federally), Black-necked Stork, Bush Stone Curlew and Australasian Bittern, all endangered in NSW, as well as the following species, all listed as vulnerable in NSW : Brolga, Eastern Osprey, Square-tailed Kite, Spotted Harrier, Little Eagle, Masked Owl, Eastern Grass Owl, Powerful Owl, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Grey-crowned Babbler and Diamond Firetail. As bird numbers decline and more and more of them are added to the endangered and vulnerable lists, it becomes more and more important to preserve the habitats of remaining populations. The destruction of these 950 hectares will be another nail in the coffin for our unique bird species.

We ask the department to reject this route as too ecologically damaging and to instead select the orange route as the preferred one. Please ensure the survival of these species, populations and ecological communities.

Yours Sincerely

Sue Proust

Conservation Officer
Hastings Birdwatchers