

23 May 2016

Letter to confirm the Conservation Significance of Reid St Reserve and the Importance of an Environmental Management Zone extension.

Throughout rural and urban north-west Tasmania many bird species are declining primarily as a consequence of loss, fragmentation, isolation and shrinkage of habitat patches. As a Bushcare Community Extension Officer and Biodiversity Consultant I surveyed vegetation and fauna on hundreds of bush remnants throughout north-west Tasmania and King Island. I visited Reid St Reserve with Hazel Britton on the morning of 26 December 201⁵ and we observed a Brown Falcon with two fledged young and Dusky Woodswallows with fledglings.

Reid St Reserve has a Black Peppermint Coastal Forest vegetation community comprised of two co-dominant eucalypt species, Black Peppermint and White Gum, and healthy dry forest understorey species such as *Exocarpos*, *Bursaria* and *Acacia*, and ground-layer vegetation such as *Lomandra*, *Diplarrena* and *Dianella*.

Reid St Reserve is a very small bush remnant, only 2.6 ha in size, yet it has an exceptionally high bird species richness of 47 native and introduced species including eight species endemic to Tasmania (Hazel Britton's updated list) that is comparable to much larger remnants and far greater than similar-sized remnants. The breeding forest bird assemblage of about 30 native species includes some of Tasmania's tiniest birds such as two species of thornbills and two pardalote species and large birds such as raptors (eg. Brown Falcon) and White-faced Heron and intermediate-sized birds such as Brush Bronzewing and Grey Shrike-thrush. About one third of Tasmania's forest and woodland birds require understorey for nesting and the remainder need large old trees or hollows and cavities for nesting. Half of the resident birds at Reid St Reserve require understorey for nesting and most of these are small to medium sized birds such as Grey Fantail, Silveryeye, thornbills, wrens and honeyeaters. Birds that require hollows and cavities, and large old trees for nesting include parrots, raptors, White-faced Heron, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and Dusky Woodswallow. What makes Reid St Reserve so good for birds is that it is an uneven-aged forest with a combination of large old eucalypts with hollows and cavities, mature and younger eucalypt trees and an understorey of trees, shrubs and ground-layer plants that provide birds with foraging substrates, nest-sites, roost-sites and shelter.

Reid St Reserve provides habitat and resources for bird species that are common, uncommon or declining as well as some that are threatened. The Critically Endangered Swift Parrot is a migratory parrot that winters in mainland south-eastern Australia and breeds in tree hollows primarily in south-east Tasmania. Flowering White Gum and Black Peppermint are important food sources for the Swift Parrot. Reid St Reserve provides important breeding habitat for two species that are declining nationally, the migratory Dusky Woodswallow and the resident Strong-billed Honeyeater endemic to Tasmania. Reid St Reserve is an important breeding habitat and of high conservation significance for these two declining bird species.

The future viability of bird populations and bird species diversity in a fragmented landscape depends on the maintenance and restoration of landscape linkages or connectivity that enables birds to disperse from their natal territories and settle in other bush remnants, and

also provides habitat for migrating birds. The large old trees especially along the eastern side of Hall St southeast of Reid St Reserve are vital landscape 'stepping stones' that connect Reid St Reserve with the Leven River estuary. The loss of large old trees especially those with hollows is one of the main factors driving hollow-nesting birds to extinction.

The encroachment of residential development on the south-east side of Reid St Reserve and any loss of large old trees along Hall St and within the south-east corner of the residential zone will negatively impact on the future viability of some bird populations in Reid St Reserve.

I strongly urge that the above large old trees be retained and protected and an extension to the Environmental Management Zone from Reid St Reserve to the Leven estuary be granted to provide a faunal linkage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Donaghey', written in a cursive style.

Dr Richard Donaghey
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