

# Swift parrot protection agreements are being broken

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Swift parrots. Credit: Kate Prestt

A new research paper from The Australian National University (ANU) has found agreements to protect the critically endangered Swift parrot in Tasmania have been broken leaving the species at high risk of extinction.

The paper's lead author Dr. Matthew Webb of the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society said the logging of known and protected

breeding habitats of the birds has continued.

"Sadly, even with legislation designed to protect the at-risk [species](#) and conservation plans in place, the plight of the Swift [parrot](#) has worsened.

"There's a lack of political will on the part of the Tasmanian government to adhere to conservation plans and we've seen logging operations that directly contravene Forestry Tasmania's claims to maintain the integrity of the parrots' breeding habitats," said Dr. Webb.

"Coupled with environmental threats such as the sugar glider and increasing incidents of bushfire, it's not looking good for this single nomadic population of birds."

Dr. Webb estimated the number of Swift parrots to be somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 but latest indications show further declines.

He said for them to successfully breed, a combination of fragile habitats need to coexist.

"The birds need flowering Tasmanian Black and Blue Gums for food as well as trees over 150 years old to provide suitable hollows for nesting.

"Due to policy and management failures logging of breeding [habitat](#) continues to be approved despite expert advice and scientific evidence that demonstrates the cessation of [logging](#) of breeding habitat is urgently required."

Dr. Webb said there is an existing conservation assessment system in Tasmania that could, in part, achieve sensible outcomes for the species.

"Since 2007 two management documents for the Swift parrot have been developed but both remain in draft form and have not been endorsed.

This is clear evidence of a lack of commitment to genuine conservation of the species."

The paper; "Policy failure and [conservation](#) paralysis for the crucially endangered Swift parrot" has been published in *Pacific Conservation Biology*.

Provided by Australian National University

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