

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Lathamus discolor Swift Parrot

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Aves (birds), Psittaciformes, Psittacidae

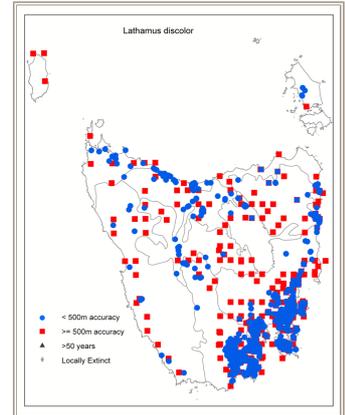
Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* **endangered**
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Critically Endangered

Endemic: Migratory, breeding endemic

Status:



The Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) is a small, largely nectar-feeding fast flying parrot which spends its winter in south-eastern mainland Australian before migrating to Tasmania in late winter/early spring to breed. During the breeding season, nectar from Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) flowers is the primary food source for the species. These eucalypts are patchily distributed and their flowering patterns are erratic and unpredictable, often leading to only a small proportion of Swift Parrot habitat being available for breeding in any one year. Swift Parrots breed in tree hollows in mature eucalypts within foraging range of a flower source. Birds can nest at low densities or sometimes in groups of >50 nests in <100 ha depending on the availability of flowers and tree hollows. The main threats to the species are the loss of foraging and nesting habitat, predation by sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*), and mortality of adults through collisions with man-made structures such as windows and chain-link fences. Protection of the species requires the conservation and restoration of all remaining foraging and nesting habitat.



Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species' potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The known range of the Swift Parrot outside the breeding season includes all of Tasmania.
- The breeding range of the Swift Parrot mirrors the natural range of Tasmanian blue gum on the east coast of the state, but also includes smaller areas in the north-west. It is possible that some birds also breed in small isolated occurrences of Tasmanian blue gum on the west coast and on King Island.
- Habitat for the Swift Parrot outside of the breeding season in Tasmania includes any eucalypt forest.
- Habitat for Swift Parrot during the breeding season broadly includes the following elements: flowering Tasmanian blue gum and black gums (foraging habitat) and any eucalypt forest containing hollow-bearing trees (nesting habitat). Hollow-bearing trees are typically large and old with dead limbs or branches and at least some visible hollows. Note that the importance of breeding habitat in any one year varies depending on its location in relation to foraging habitat (i.e. blue gums or black gums in flower).

What to avoid

- Cutting down Tasmanian blue gums and black gums
- Cutting down hollow bearing trees
- Major wildfire
- Building structures that cause collision mortalities

Surveying

Key	Survey reliability more info
M	Peak survey period
M	Potential survey period
M	Non-survey period

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Spring				Summer				Autumn				Winter											
Swift Parrot	S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A

- A Swift Parrot monitoring program is undertaken annually by the Australian National University between October and January.
- An observation of foraging Swift Parrots or a potential nesting site is valuable information. Please report all observations of this species to the Threatened Species Section.
- Note that habitat use varies between years: habitat which is not used one year may be used during other years (see Summary).

Helping the species

- In order to recognise the species if it uses your property, learn to identify the Swift Parrot by sight and by its calls.
- In order to recognise Swift Parrot foraging habitat if it occurs on your property, learn to identify Tasmanian blue gums and black gums.
- In order to recognise Swift Parrot nesting habitat if it occurs on your property, learn to identify the sorts of trees that are likely to contain suitable nesting hollows.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the NRE Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- If you have Swift Parrot habitat on your land consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant. See the NRE Private Land Conservation Program for more details.

Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- The Swift Parrot depends on flowering Tasmanian blue gum and black gum for food and old trees with hollows for nesting.
- Blue gum and black gum are important in any setting (e.g. intact forest, remnant vegetation and paddock trees).
- To prevent loss of foraging habitat - avoid clearing Tasmanian blue gum and black gum throughout the species' range (i.e. statewide).
- To prevent loss of nesting habitat - avoid clearing eucalypt forest containing hollow-bearing trees throughout the species' breeding range.
- To avoid disturbance of breeding during spring and summer - check this year's Threatened Species Link updates (via the Home page) on current breeding locations, and avoid forestry activities in mature eucalyptus forest and removal of flowering blue or black gum in these locations. The species tends to breed in different locations each year. Contact us for more advice and precise detail on locations.

Grazing

- Grazing can suppress natural regeneration and recruitment of Tasmanian blue gums and black gums.
- To avoid impacts of stock grazing on regeneration of foraging habitat - fence off Swift Parrot habitat to exclude or limit access to stock.

Burning

- Major bushfires can destroy foraging habitat for the Swift Parrot. The recovery time from destructive bushfires can be as long as several decades.
- Occasional low-intensity fire in mature eucalypt forest can promote the formation of hollows where the fire does not kill entire trees and when swift parrots are not currently breeding in the area being burnt.
- To avoid destroying foraging habitat - avoid activities which increase risk of wildfire in or near foraging habitat. Avoid fires under conditions of high fire risk.
- To prevent destroying nesting habitat - avoid activities which increase risk of wildfire in areas of nesting habitat.
- To avoid disturbance to breeding during spring and summer - always seek advice and/or obtain permits from relevant authorities (e.g. Tasmanian Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife Service, NRE) prior to undertaking burning in areas that contain Swift Parrot foraging or breeding habitat.
- To avoid disturbance to breeding during spring and summer - check this year's Threatened Species Link updates (via the Home page) on current breeding area locations, and avoid non-urgent management burns in these areas. The species tends to breed in different locations each year; these are identified by surveys completed in October, and reported on the Updates pages. Contact us for more advice and precise detail on locations.

Construction

- For general information and advice on building structures which minimise risk of collisions (with e.g. wire-mesh fences or windows) - see Guidelines and recommendations for parrot-safe building design. For comprehensive advice on avoiding collisions with glass - see An end to birds dying at windows.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

National Recovery Plan
How to identify swift parrots
Further information

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2025). *Swift Parrot (Lathamus discolor): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Swift-Parrot.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 4/8/2025.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.