



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc  
PO Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305  
[www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)  
ABN 62 415 889 446

Ms Sarah Ellis,  
Senior Project Manager, Strategy and Major Programs,  
Office of Strategic Lands,  
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
Via NSW Planning Portal

Dear Ms Ellis,

## **Re: Potential Future Uses of Fernhill Estate**

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. (HBOC) agrees with and supports the submission made by BirdLife Australia 23 March, 2020. HBOC asks you to limit development on Fernhill Estate and “additional lands” and to set aside the area as breeding and foraging habitat for Critically Endangered Regent Honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia*. A Critically Endangered listing under both the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act (2016)* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* are indicative of the imminent extinction of this species.

Ongoing habitat loss is the greatest threat to the survival of this species, via clearing, fragmentation and degradation. As indicated in the BirdLife Australia submission as much as 50% of Regent Honeyeater habitat was burnt in the bushfires of 2019/20. The woodlands on Fernhill Estate and “additional lands” where the Regent Honeyeaters bred in 2019 have therefore been elevated to the highest level of importance for the survival of this species.

HBOC is writing to you because we have a particular interest in this species as it breeds and forages in a limited numbers of sites in our region (in the 2018/19 season it bred in the Lower Hunter and was not detected breeding anywhere else). Members of HBOC have been involved in monitoring the presence of this species since the 1990s when it became clear that an alarming decrease in the population was taking place.

In conclusion HBOC asks that you protect areas on Fernhill Estate and “additional lands” where Regent Honeyeater breeds and forages from any further development that will impact negatively on this critical habitat.

For further discussion please contact Ann Lindsey – [ann.lindsey@bigpond.com](mailto:ann.lindsey@bigpond.com)

Yours faithfully,

Ann Lindsey – Conservation co-ordinator for Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. 27 March, 2020

Reference:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/286c0b52-815e-4a6c-9d55-8498c174a057/files/national-recovery-plan-regent-honeyeater.pdf>

## **About HunterBird Observers Club Inc.**

**Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.** (HBOC) was established in 1976 and currently has a membership over 350 members. Although the Club is based in Newcastle NSW membership includes members from other areas in NSW and from interstate.

### **Aims of HBOC:**

- to encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat and
- to encourage bird observing as a leisure-time activity.

**Activities** include monthly regular outings, evening meetings, camps and field studies. HBOC promotes systematic field studies which include regular surveys by volunteers from the membership:

**All data** gathered from field studies are entered into the national database, Birddata, administered by BirdLife Australia. Data are used to underpin conservation issues. HBOC has a long history of working in collaboration with local councils, national parks, industry and schools.

### **HBOC major publications include:**

- An annual peer-reviewed journal, *The Whistler*, of which there are now 13 volumes. It provides a platform for regionally significant observations and findings.
- An annual bird report which summarises the status of avifauna in the Hunter Region of NSW. This publication is now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year.
- Brochures which show self-guided birding routes of which there are now fourteen covering most of the Hunter Region.
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For more information about HBOC go to [www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)