



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc
PO Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305
www.hboc.org.au
ABN 62 415 889 446

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,
Major Projects.
Submission made online, NSW Planning Portal.

Martins Creek Quarry Project SSD-6612

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. (HBOC) objects to the expansion of the Martins Creek Quarry, Hunter Region, which will require the destruction of 36.8 has of vegetation as well as land required for infrastructure for the following reasons:

Land clearing and ensuing habitat destruction has been identified as the main driver for animal extinction in Australia. Land clearing in NSW continues unabated despite evidence-based reports of species being added to the threatened species lists:

In 2018/19, over 37,000 hectares were approved to be cleared. This is almost 13 times the annual average rate of approval in the ten years prior to 2016/17 of approx 2,700 hectares (p6).

<https://www.justinfield.org/13-fold-increase-in-land-clearing-approvals-in-nsw-since-2016-law-changes-secret-government-report>

In NSW Over 100 bird species are listed as threatened:

*The NSW Scientific Committee is the key group responsible for the review of the conservation status of **threatened species**, including the **listing** of those **species**. More than 100 **bird species are listed as threatened** under the TSC Act, and the Scientific Committee supports the **listing** of additional **species**.*

<https://www.google.com/search?q=how+many+bird+species+are+listed+as+threatened+in+NSW&og=how+many+bird+species+are+listed+as+threatened+in+NSW&aqs=chrome..69i57.14461j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

In the Hunter Region 90 species are listed as threatened:

In the Hunter Region alone, 90 species of birds are classified as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and/or the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (Roderick and Stuart 2016). Of these 44 species are woodland birds.

HBOC thinks that:

- the surveys for avifauna were carried out in 2014 and 2015 and were inadequate to detect already rare threatened species in such a fragmented landscape. Long-term surveys are required to establish presence or absence of threatened species especially in woodlands.

The Assessment of Significance stated for 21 woodland species:

“It is considered that suitable habitat for this species is present on the subject site, however this species was not observed within the subject site during surveys. It is considered that the action proposed is not likely to have an adverse effect on the life cycle of the species such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction”.

- the fact that suitable habitat for threatened species is present should be sufficient to retain the habitat, not clear it. Clearing this land will further fragment remaining forest leading to detrimental effects e.g. increased edges providing avenues for weeds and pest species e.g. Noisy Miner.
- the proposed development site sits in a landscape already largely cleared makes this forested area even more significant in terms of providing refuge for extant species and the opportunity for further recruitment.
- hollow-bearing trees are crucial in the life cycle of nocturnal species. Clearing them is to clear out those dependent species.
- offsetting strategies such as the system of trading credits may not protect threatened species.
- land clearance and deforestation are activities exacerbating climate change.

Since the 19th century, human-induced CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion, cement manufacture and deforestation have disturbed the balance, adding CO₂ to the atmosphere faster than it can be taken up by the land biosphere and the oceans <https://www.science.org.au/learning/general-audience/science-climate-change/3-are-human-activities-causing-climate-change>

- it would be of advantage to humanity if forest remnants such as that at Martins Creek were being expanded, not destroyed.

HBOC asks that this project be rejected and that woodland involved in this proposed expansion be protected and enhanced for biodiversity.

Prepared by Ann Lindsey - Conservation coordinator for Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

19 June 2021.

References

Roderick, M. and Stuart, A. 2016. Threatened bird species in the Hunter Region: 2016 status review. *The Whistler* 10 (2016). 33-49.

About Hunter Bird Observers Club

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. (HBOC) was established in 1976 and currently has a membership over 400 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.

For further information see: www.hboc.org.au