



TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY



The Egg Islands

help conserve a precious Tasmanian ecosystem

Make this a special place and a safe home for endangered ecosystems and birds



A mosaic of endangered forest, wetland and saline grassland communities and home to the globally endangered Australasian bittern.



The importance of wetlands

“Wetlands are some of Tasmania’s richest habitats for plant and animal life. Our wetlands are under considerable threat from landclearing and changing rainfall patterns. This has caused stress to wetland ecosystems and waterbird populations in parts of the state. Conserving riverine wetlands like those on the Egg Islands, which are less affected by low rainfall and surrounding land use, is particularly important and urgent. The Tasmanian Land Conservancy acquisitions will add to the existing State Government reserved lands on the Egg Islands and will make a significant contribution to the reserve system.”



The Egg Islands, Tasmania, Australia

Stewart Blackhall
Nature Conservation Branch
Department of Primary Industries and Water

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy is a registered environmental organisation. We raise funds from the public to protect irreplaceable sites, endangered species habitats and threatened ecosystems by buying and managing private land. The Tasmanian Land Conservancy is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation. www.tasland.org.au

Photography: Matthew Newton, Peter Fuller & Nick Rains & The Department of Environment and Water Resources
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The Egg Islands need your help

Personal details:

Name Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ Email _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

I am supporting the work of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and investing in the Egg Islands by making a tax deductible donation of: (please circle) \$2000 \$1000 \$500 \$100 Other \$ _____

Donations of over \$200 will be recognised by including the donors name on a commemorative plaque. * Donations of more than \$2 are tax deductible

Please make cheques payable to: **Tasmanian Land Conservancy**

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Please keep me posted by sending me regular news updates I would like newsletters by email only Please do not send any material other than my receipt

Please send your donation to: **Tasmanian Land Conservancy PO Box 2112 Lower Sandy Bay TAS 7005**

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy does not disclose any personal details to any other organisation for any reason

code

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With your help we can give permanent protection to this very special place

We have an exciting opportunity to give permanent protection to a unique area of Tasmania, home to endangered birds and the plants and ecosystems that support them.

The Egg Islands are two islands in the estuary of the Huon River, only half an hour's drive south of Hobart in Tasmania. They cover a total of 430 hectares; 279 hectares is already a conservation area, public reserve and unallocated crown land.

We have a fantastic opportunity to purchase almost all of the remaining private land on the islands, and turn this area into a permanently protected conservation reserve.

Two-thirds of the purchase price has already been pledged from the Australian Government's National Reserve System Programme – this means that every dollar you give will effectively be matched by two dollars from the Australian Government. We need to raise \$200,000 to release that funding, to complete the purchase and manage the land for conservation.



Goold, John, Birds of Australia, 1840-48.

Why the Egg Islands are special...

Important ecosystems, vital habitats

The Egg Islands are a beautiful mosaic of wetland, marsh, scrub and forest communities. This includes significant areas of endangered black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) forest in excellent condition. Together these ecosystems provide prime habitat for a wide range of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Short-beaked echidnas and pademelons are among the many animals at home here; of particular importance is the presence of the globally endangered Australasian bittern.

The Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*)

Is a large, stocky heron up to 75cm in length with mottled dark brown, light brown and buff plumage. The bittern is a solitary ground nester, preferring dense wetland vegetation and feeds on frogs, eels and freshwater crustaceans.

The Australasian or brown bittern is globally under threat. It is listed by the IUCN on its Red List as endangered. It is unique to our

region, and scientists think that one of the main reasons for its decline is the draining and clearing of its favourite wetland habitat.

The bittern is just one of the birds that finds a home among the forests, wetlands, riverbanks and marshes of the Egg Islands. The area provides foraging or nesting habitat for 87 Australian bird species. The endangered grey goshawk (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*), swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) and wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) have all been officially recorded in the vicinity.

The following vegetation communities occur on the 125 ha for purchase:

- black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) shrubby forest - **endangered**;
- short paperbark (*Melaleuca squarrosa*) swamp;
- saline grassland;
- freshwater aquatic herbland - **vulnerable**; and
- wetland (undifferentiated) - **vulnerable**.

Bitterns & Bunyips

The 'cryptic and partly nocturnal' Bittern, with its shy habits, liking for densely vegetated wetland, and talent for camouflage, has a loud booming call, mainly heard at dusk and dawn throughout the breeding season. It is thought by many to be the origin of the Aboriginal legend of the Bunyip, the spirit creature who lurks in swamps, creeks and waterholes, eating crayfish and making loud terrifying noises at night.

"Australasian bitterns are amazing birds found in our wetlands. They are the world's second largest bittern and are usually found secretly feeding in reed beds of our wetlands. During the breeding season their loud booming calls echo across the wetland as they set up nesting territories. Unfortunately our chances of seeing and hearing these magnificent creatures are diminishing. Their numbers are in decline as their habitats disappear along some of our major river systems. They are considered vulnerable in Australia. So it is important to protect their habitats wherever we can."

Richard Kingsford
Professor of Environmental Science
School of Biological,
Earth and Environmental Sciences
University of New South Wales

