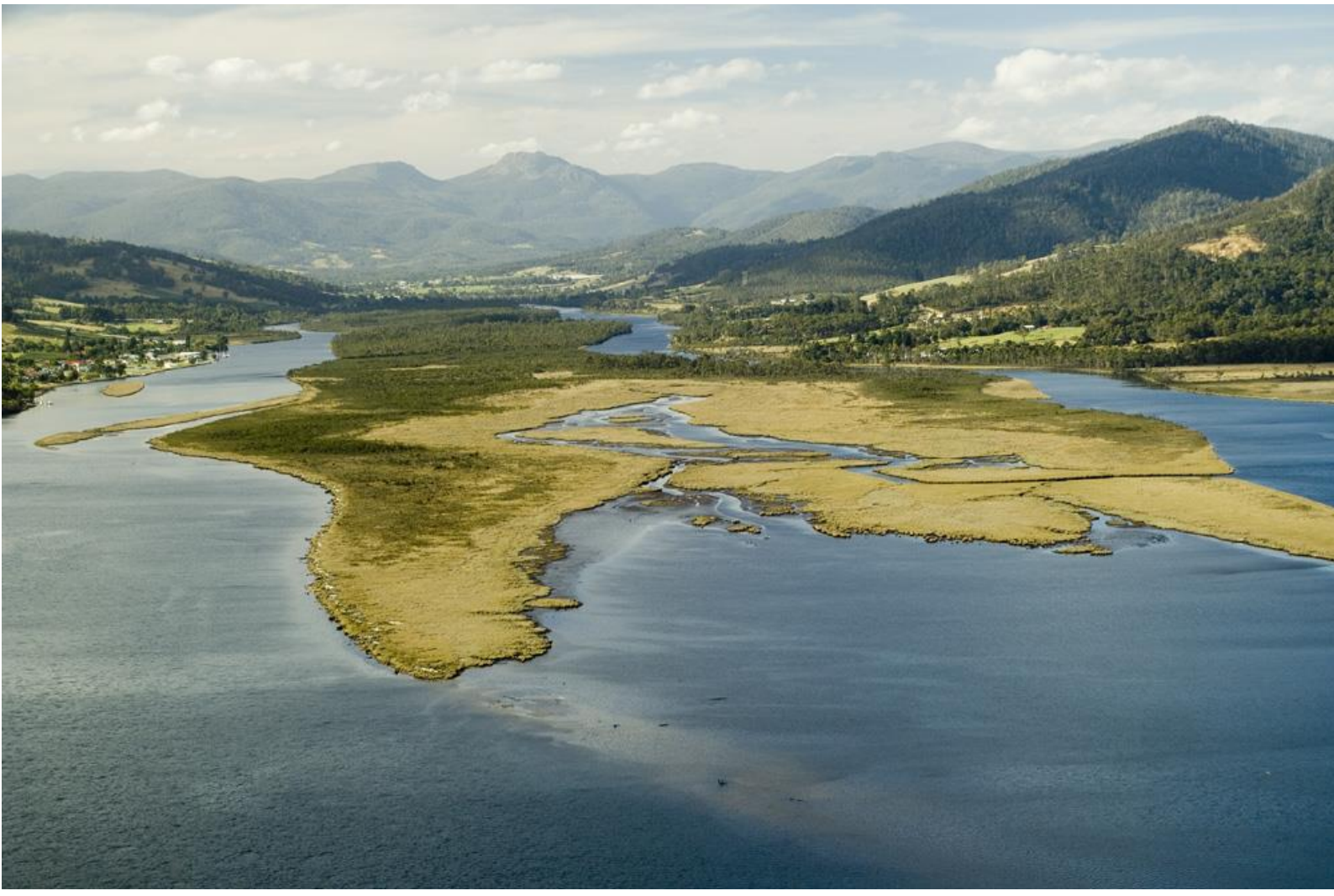
TASMANIAN
LAND
CONSERVANCY

# Annual Reserve Report

## Egg Islands Reserve 2014-15



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# Introduction

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) protects important natural areas as permanent reserves and aims to demonstrate excellence in reserve management for biodiversity conservation. To achieve this aim, the TLC has adopted an adaptive management framework – the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. The framework comprises 5 key steps – planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting, review/adaptation and communication.

Egg Islands Reserve was acquired by the TLC in 2007 and protects 136 hectares of black gum swamp forest, wetlands and saltmarsh in the Huon Estuary in southern Tasmania. The Reserve adjoins public land managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service. The management of the Reserve is guided by the *Joint Management Plan for the Egg Islands Reserve and Egg Islands Conservation Area 2009*. The plan is implemented by TLC staff through an Annual Work Plan and Monitoring Plan. Details of ecological monitoring methods can be found in TLC's Ecological Monitoring Procedures Manual.

This report describes progress made towards delivery of the management plan in 2014-15, and is divided into three sections:

1. Reserve Scorecard – a table summarising the results of management effectiveness and ecological monitoring to date;
2. Management Effectiveness Summary – providing details of the implementation of key management strategies and making recommendations for plan improvement;
3. Ecological Monitoring Summary – providing details of the status of conservation targets and trends of key ecological indicators

The recommendations made in this report are used to adapt and improve management of the Reserve, update the management plan, and revise work and monitoring plans for the coming year. Key findings of this report are communicated to TLC Board, supporters and other stakeholders.

# Egg Islands Reserve scorecard

| **Monitoring** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Target*** | ***Indicator*** | ***Status 2014-15*** | ***Trend*** |
| Black gum swamp forest | Floristic diversity | | Baseline data collection is scheduled for 2016 |
| | Structural complexity | | |
| | Canopy recruitment | | |
| | Vertebrate fauna diversity | | |
| Wetlands and saltmarsh | Floristic diversity | | |
| | Structural complexity | | |
| | Canopy recruitment | | |
| | Vertebrate fauna diversity | | |
| Community connection to landscape | # volunteer days on the Reserve | 100 | Flat |
| **Management Effectiveness** | | | |
| ***Strategy*** | ***Indicator*** | ***Status 2014-15*** | ***Trend*** |
| Community engagement | # of volunteer activities at the Reserve | 1 | Flat |
| | # research activities on the Reserve | 0 | Flat |

# Monitoring Summary

**Black gum swamp forest**

Black gum swamp forest is a threatened community that has been extensively cleared since white settlement. The Egg Island stands are the largest remaining remnants in south-east Tasmania.
The stands are important as foraging and potentially nesting habitat for the endangered swift parrot.

**Goals**

- Maintain the floristic diversity of vegetation within 25% of baseline (ongoing)
- Maintain the structural complexity of vegetation within 25% of baseline (ongoing)
- Maintain the extent of vegetation (ongoing)
- Maintain vertebrate fauna diversity (ongoing)

Black gum swamp forest as seen from the air

| Ecological indicator | Current status | Trend |
|---|---|---|
| Floristic diversity | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |
| Structural complexity | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |
| Vegetation extent | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |
| Vertebrate fauna diversity | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |

**Key findings**

- Preliminary assessment of the black gum forests show that they are in excellent condition

**Recommendations**

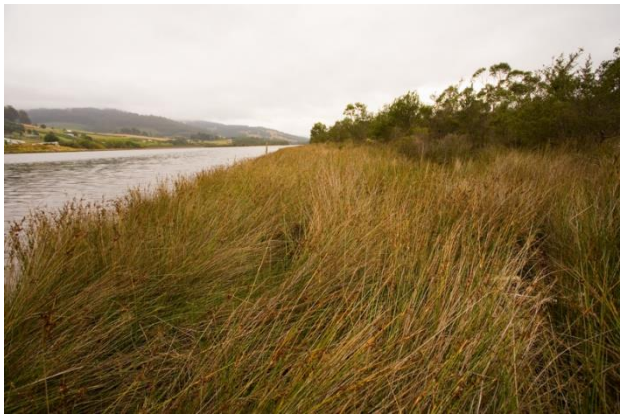
- Establish long-term ecological monitoring program

**Wetlands and saltmarsh**

Wetlands and saltmarsh are highly productive environments that support a diverse range of fauna and provide habitat for large numbers of water birds. Wetlands also perform the key ecological function of maintaining good water quality in the Huon River by acting as a sink for nutrients and sediments.

**Goals**

- Maintain the floristic diversity of vegetation within 25% of baseline (ongoing)
- Maintain the structural complexity of vegetation within 25% of baseline (ongoing)
- Maintain the extent of vegetation (ongoing)
- Maintain vertebrate fauna diversity (ongoing)



Wetland dominated by *Juncus* sp.

| Ecological indicator | Current status | Trend |
|---|---|---|
| Floristic diversity | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |
| Structural complexity | Data collection scheduled for 2016 | Unknown |

**Key findings**

- Preliminary assessment of the saltmarsh and wetlands show that they are in excellent condition

**Recommendations**

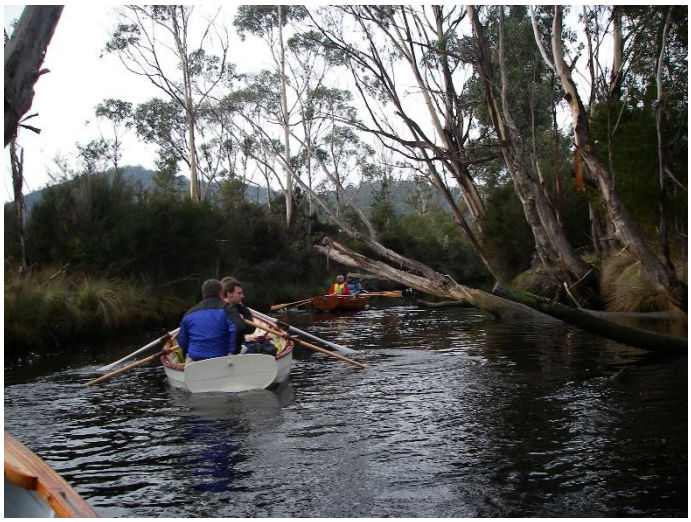
- Establish long-term ecological monitoring program

**Community connection with the landscape**

Egg Islands Reserve provides the community with a range of recreational, educational, research and volunteering opportunities. The proximity of the Reserve to the township of Franklin with its wooden boat school and living boat trust make it a popular location for recreational boating. Relatively few people land upon the islands because of the swampy vegetation and a reputation for snakes.

**Goals**

- People visit the Reserve every year for recreation, education or volunteering



Volunteers from the Franklin Living Boat Trust help TLC to access the Reserve

| Community indicator | Current status | Trend |
|---|---|---|
| Volunteer days | 50 volunteer days | Flat |
| Research and education | 0 projects | Flat |

**Key findings**

- A team of 20 volunteers assisted TLC staff for 5 days, controlling an infestation of Spanish heath.

**Recommendations**

- Continue to encourage community connections to the reserve by providing research, education, recreation or volunteering opportunities

# Management Effectiveness Summary

**Weed management**

The aim of this strategy is to eradicate existing infestations of weeds on the Reserve. Spanish heath occurs in areas that were previously cleared for agiculture, and New Zealand flax occurs along the banks of the Huon River. Weed mapping and control is continuing. Although weeds are not extensive or widespread, their eradication should be undertaken in a timely and effective manner before they increase in range.

**Key objective(s)**

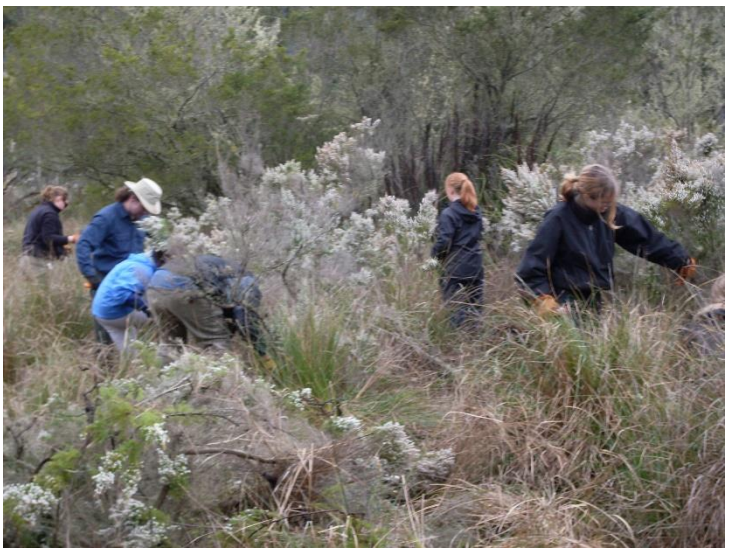
Spanish heath, gorse and blackberry are functionally eradicated from the Reserve by 2017

A plan for controlling New Zealand flax is being implemented by 2018

**Outcome 2014-15**

TLC hosted three volunteer trips to the Reserve.

No visitors were recorded



Volunteers removing Spanish heath

**Progress in 2014-15**

- A weed action plan was completed in 2009 and is being implemented.
- Weed control is continuing and weeds have almost been eradicated from the Reserve.
- The weed control program continues to provide volunteers with opportunities to connect with the Reserve and be actively involved in its management

**Key recommendations for future management**

- Continue the successful weed control program
- Experiment with control methods for New Zealand flax and develop a control plan

**Community engagement and neighbour relations**

The TLC provides opportunities for the community and individuals to achieve conservation. The local community, volunteers, the indigenous community and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate in planning and land management activities. TLC Reserves provide excellent opportunities for education and scientific research. Sustainable economic development may be supported at some reserves where appropriate.

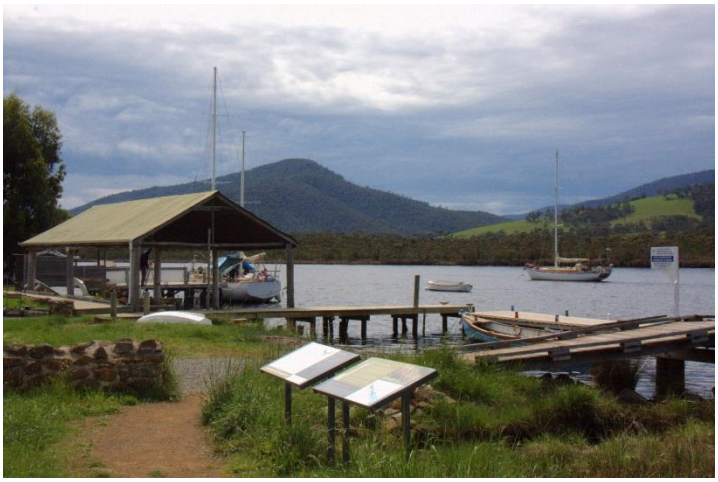
**Key objective(s)**

TLC provides opportunities for the community to experience or benefit from the Reserve

**Outcome 2014-15**

TLC hosted three volunteer trips to the Reserve.

No visitors were recorded



TLC interpretive signs at the Franklin waterfront

**Progress in 2014-15**

- TLC hosted a volunteer trip to the Islands to control weeds. 20 people participated.
- TLC maintained its good relationship with the Franklin Living Boat Trust, which provided support by transporting volunteers to the Islands.

**Key recommendations for future management**

- Continue to provide opportunities for people to connect with the Reserve.
- Continue to maintain relationships with neighbours including the Living Boat Trust