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TURNING THE TIDE FOR CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services are playing a significant role in national recovery efforts to protect the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater.

The five-year project, *'Turning the Tide on Threatened Species - Regent Honeyeater'*, is being delivered by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services in partnership with Landcare, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, to reverse the trend of events that has led to the potential extinction of the species.

Anya Salmon, Regional Landcare Facilitator, New England North West Landcare and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, is a member of the team facilitating the project which aims to address threats to the birds and improve both the scope and quality of their habitat. It also seeks to raise awareness of the critically endangered species.

"With population numbers in the wild estimated at approximately 300 – 500, protecting the species is critical. The project's success relies profoundly on collaboration from landholders, but support from the entire community is also crucial," said Anya.

Anya was recently encouraged to see approximately 50 enthusiastic bird watchers and landholders attend two field days held at Yarrowyck and Nullamanna.

Regent Honeyeater Focus Groups have been established across the region to raise awareness of the species. The groups also assist in the promotion of Bird Life Australia's census days which are held in May and August.

"Landcare networks will work in conjunction with a number of groups who will be involved in sightings, as well as collecting census data. We are very grateful to the enthusiastic citizen scientists for their assistance in recording the status of the Regent Honeyeaters in their neighbourhoods," she said.

Apart from the field and census days, there are numerous ways that landholders and community members may become involved.

"Community members are encouraged to join a focus group. Approximately four meetings are held annually, where valuable networking and support is encouraged. While members are drawn from bird watching groups across the region, anyone with an interest is encouraged to join," said Anya.

For landholders, a number of incentives are available, to encourage wider involvement.

"As the project is ongoing, we are continually seeking Expressions of Interest from landholders. Funding is available for fencing off areas of remnant vegetation that is core Regent Honeyeater habitat, as well as revegetation projects," she noted.

This investment will have significant secondary benefits for other woodland birds. Through protecting and enhancing habitat for the Regent Honeyeater, a number of endangered and vulnerable birds such as the Swift Parrot and the Painted Honeyeater also stand to gain from this project.

"Essentially a whole of community approach is required as it is often farmers, birdwatchers and bushwalkers who notice these endangered woodland birds on their properties, walking tracks and Travelling Stock Reserves. Interested landholders and community members are

strongly encouraged to contact their local Landcare network or Local Land Services if they do notice any of these birds. The Northern Tablelands would be a lot poorer if deprived of these spectacular species.”

For further information, or to register your interest, contact Anya Salmon on 0455 481 170 or anya.salmon@lls.nsw.gov.au.

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