

**Submission
No 205**

**INQUIRY INTO LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND
FUTURE OF THE TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS
INDUSTRY**

Name: Dr Peter Sainsbury

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Dear Committee members,

Please accept my submission to the Inquiry into long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry.

Since childhood, now almost 70, I have been a keen bird watcher. I grew up in the UK but have lived in Australia for over 40 years and started watching local birds as soon as I arrived. I seldom go anywhere without a pair of pocket binoculars.

Swift Parrots have been on a perilous decline over the past few decades and one of the key threats to their survival is habitat destruction, including native tree logging, throughout their range. The need to conserve their remaining habitat was made all the more urgent by recent research that suggests their effective population is 750 but could be as few as 300 birds.

Swift Parrots breed only in the forests of Tasmania in summer before migrating to the Australian mainland in autumn where they seek out mature forests to spend the winter, feeding on abundant blossom and lerp. The forests of New South Wales are critical feeding habitat for these birds. In particular, the Spotted Gum forests of the New South Wales south coast are well-documented as one of the most important mainland foraging areas for Swift Parrots.

The majority of Swift Parrot foraging sites in NSW occur outside of conservation reserves, including within state forests managed by the Forestry Corporation of NSW and open for logging under the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Agreement (CIFOA). Unless decisive action is taken to protect the remaining forest habitat across their range and improve and fund management actions, Swift Parrots could be extinct within the next two decades.

The 2019/20 bushfires exacerbated what was an already dire situation for Swift Parrots, with over a third of the Spotted Gum forests on the NSW south coast, one of the most important mainland feeding sites for Swift Parrots, impacted. Despite this, the NSW Forestry Corporation is planning further logging operations on the south coast and has recently logged important Swift Parrot habitat near Bateman's Bay.

Apart from being attractive creatures, Swift Parrots are very severely threatened, principally by the loss of their habitat from tree felling. They cannot just fly somewhere else to feed and breed as some ecologically-unaware people think. Like many creatures they are totally dependent on particular ecosystems. It would be a tremendous loss if they were to become extinct and it would also be a condemnation of our commitment to managing Australia's natural environment.

I urge you to make the following recommendations:

- Immediately and permanently suspend all current and planned forestry operations within fire impacted Swift Parrot foraging habitat.
- Amend the CIOFA to exclude all known and potential Swift Parrot foraging habitat.
- Amend the CIFOA to address the effects of climate change, including increased bush fires and droughts.
- Conserve remaining intact native forests and facilitate the expansion and connectivity of old growth native forests.
- Develop a forest industry transition plan with a focus on wood production from sustainable and appropriately placed plantations.
- Invest in sustainable tourism infrastructure and opportunities for local communities, tapping into the economic value and services of natural areas in NSW.

- Explore nature-based solution incentives, such as carbon markets, to finance forest conservation.

Please take swift action to protect the Swift Parrots.

Yours sincerely,