



Barking Owl



Powerful Owl



Masked Owl

## Large Forest Owls - Safe Havens Project

### LANDHOLDER - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) is seeking expressions of interest from property owners in the lower Richmond and Clarence valleys who would like to be involved in the Large Forest Owl project.

NCC has been running private property conservation initiatives for the large forest owls (Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*), Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) and Masked Owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)) in the lower Richmond and lower Clarence floodplains of northern NSW. The work has involved a long-term acoustic monitoring program to determine owl occupancy and distribution, and survey of habitats to identify owl roost and nest trees. Initially work was focusing on monitoring of owl populations and education for landholders on key threats, particularly loss of habitat, too frequent fire, and loss of hollow-bearing trees.

In the spring-summer of 2019-20 this emphasis changed after the study area was impacted by the largest fire event in living memory. The project then pivoted into a post-fire recovery phase with a large-scale crowd-funded nest box program, continued acoustic monitoring of the owls, as well as an expansion of monitoring to include their prey (primarily arboreal mammals) to gain a better understanding of the longer-term impacts from the fires.

The NCC has now initiated a new project, supported by funding from the NSW Environmental Trust called **Safe Havens**. This project aims to take the knowledge from the previous projects and apply them across a larger area to monitor and map owl populations and add habitat features to the landscape (nest boxes). The project will assist the recovery, and hopefully improve the long-term viability of the large forest owls and arboreal mammals (gliders and possums) in the lower Richmond and Clarence Valley areas.

**Suitable properties would meet the following criteria:**

- **Location** - in the lower Richmond or lower Clarence valley area.
- **Size** – at least 40 hectares (The larger the better).
- **Existing habitat** - have existing forest cover, ideally containing mature forest and hollow bearing trees.
- **Presence of owls** - containing existing owl territories (of any species), if known.



### What is involved?

NCC staff will complete an initial desktop assessment of your property to determine if it would be suitable to be involved. If this initial assessment identifies potential values, a site assessment would be undertaken.

Potential activities undertaken on properties may include:

- Establishing an acoustic monitoring site/s using a Song Meter.
- Installation of nest boxes.
- Completion of spotlighting transects, targeting prey species particularly Yellow-bellied and Southern Greater Gliders.
- Identification and mapping of large hollow bearing trees.
- Preparation of a property management map/plan.
- Participation in workshop program.

Property access is required periodically to conduct:

- Initial field assessments.
- Acoustic monitoring equipment servicing every 3 months.
- Nest box installation (if appropriate) 1-2 days initially.
- Nest box monitoring once per year.
- Spotlighting transects once per year.

### What will participating properties owners gain from being involved?

- Access to highly qualified ecologists.
- A catalogue and greater understanding of the nocturnal species and biodiversity values of their properties.
- Creation of a digital management plan or building on an existing plan or property framework.
- Improved knowledge of property management for fire and biodiversity.
- Installation of high-quality nest boxes supplied by *Hollow Log Homes*.

NCC would like to acknowledge that this project operates across Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr country.

If you would like to be involved, please fill out the information on following pages and return to project coordinators. For further information please contact either:

**Angus Underwood**  
Safe Havens Coordinator  
0437 089 047  
[aunderwood@nature.org.au](mailto:aunderwood@nature.org.au)  
or  
**Pete Knock**  
Large Forest Owls Coordinator  
0457 091 988  
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## **Large Forest Owl - Safe Havens Project**

### **Expression of Interest**

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot(s)/DP number (these can be found on your rates notice. If you own multiple lots, please include all lot/DP numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

4) Size of Property (ha): \_\_\_\_\_

5) Is your property under a property conservation agreement?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6) What do you use your property for? (Tick all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grazing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cropping          | <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure/recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horticulture      | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle farming |   |

7) How would you rate your ecological knowledge/ capacity to manage your property to improve biodiversity?

- ☐ Very low "I know nothing"
- ☐ Low "I can identify some common weeds and/or animals"
- ☐ Moderate "I am familiar with many plants/ animals and management issues on my property".
- ☐ High "I have good knowledge of the plants and animals in my area and the management issues on my property".
- ☐ Expert I know my stuff

8) Are you currently, or recently, been involved with Landcare or other environmental groups or activities in your area?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9) Do you have a property, weed or fire management plan?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10) If you do have a property management plan, have you implemented any of the following actions? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Reducing fuel using fire
  - ☐ Reducing fuel using mechanical methods
  - ☐ Used fire for biodiversity outcomes
  - ☐ Managing weeds
  - ☐ Managing pests
  - ☐ Protecting hollows/hollow-bearing trees
  - ☐ Other? Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
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11) Are you interested in participating in a nocturnal monitoring survey on your property?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

12) Would you be interested in having nest boxes installed on your property? (Nest boxes are wooden boxes that are attached to trees to mimic natural hollows, that provide nest and roost sites for owls and habitat for their prey.

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

13) Would you be interested in having a Wildlife Acoustic Song Meter on your property to identify the presence of nocturnal wildlife and potentially owl nest sites?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

14) Would you be interested in protecting hollow-bearing trees from unplanned fire by reducing the bushfire fuel hazard by mechanical actions, weed control, or prescribed fire on your property yourself or with assistance?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

15) Are you interested in attending workshops to learn fire and property management strategies to protect and encourage native biodiversity and large forest owls on your property?

Yes/ No    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



16) Are you currently involved in any other conservation projects on your property? If so, please outline briefly.

Yes/ No    Comments:

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17) Any other comments?

Comments: 

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*Thank you for your time*

Please return forms to Angus Underwood

Email: [aunderwood@nature.org.au](mailto:aunderwood@nature.org.au)

Phone: 0437 089 047