



We can choose
only one



It's time to make a choice on the Greater Glider

Greater Gliders, the 'flying koalas,' are an iconic forest species in NSW. They are listed as Endangered in NSW and nationally. Their numbers have crashed in the last few years, and they are now on a rapid trajectory to extinction.

Following decades of logging, the Black Summer bushfires of four years ago burnt most of their remaining core habitat in NSW, bringing them to a crisis point.

Their status is now an emergency which is unprecedented in the modern history of the species, and which no government in NSW has ever been confronted by before. Previous governments had the luxury of continuing to log high value glider habitat while still claiming that extinction could be avoided. That is no longer true.

An immediate choice has now fallen on the Minns Government: to stop Greater Gliders from going extinct, or to allow another few years of logging in the last remaining high value glider habitat within State Forest. We can no longer have both, and must choose one or the other.

If the Minns government chooses to continue logging in these critical areas of habitat, then it may become known as the government that allowed the extinction of the iconic greater glider.

The Minns government must choose one option:

Continue logging high value glider areas	Save the greater glider from extinction
What would this option mean?	What would this option mean?
This option locks in place the extinction of the greater glider.	This option gives the greater glider a very good chance of survival .
Less than 20% of the forest estate is high value glider habitat. There is likely only years' (not decades') of timber remaining in these areas.	The less than 20% of State Forests that are high value glider habitat must be identified. Scientists should advise on this process. But as a rule of thumb: high value glider habitat = forest that is unburnt or lightly burnt AND unlogged or lightly logged WITH many glider records in the vicinity.
The native forest logging industry in NSW employs only around 1,000 people (including felling, transport, mills and FCNSW). Only a fraction of these rely on high value glider habitat. Probably half these people can be transitioned immediately into plantations. Of the rest, many will already be at or near retirement age. It is a <i>tiny</i> problem to solve.	As a short-term solution: these areas must have more rigorous glider protocols immediately applied (through the CIFOA). The strengthened protocols to be applied in high value habitat areas should be developed by expert scientists.
The NSW government loses money in logging these areas. There is no financial reason to continue with native forest logging.	As a medium-term solution: a moratorium should be placed over all logging in all high value glider areas.
State Forest contains much of the remaining high value habitat for this species. Numbers of remaining greater gliders are so low that the species cannot survive without these state forest strongholds .	As a long-term solution: the only relatively safe path for this species is the protection of all high value glider habitat in formal conservation reserves, and an end to native forest logging on public land.

The Greater Glider is going extinct

NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee (in the final determination document by the in the listing of the greater glider as 'endangered' in NSW):

"Petauroides volans (Southern Greater Glider) Kerr 1972 is eligible to be listed as an endangered species as, in the opinion of the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee, it is facing a very high risk of extinction in the near future."

Australian Government (in the Conservation Advice for *Petauroides volans* (greater glider (southern and central)), as the basis for its national uplisting to 'Endangered'):

"The main factors that make the species eligible for listing in the Endangered category are an overall rate of **population decline exceeding 50 percent over a 21-year** (three generation) period, including population reduction and habitat destruction following the 2019–20 bushfires."

Professor David Lindenmayer and Dr Kita Ashman ('The Conversation', 14 February 2024):

"Australia leads the world in native mammal extinctions – roughly 10% have become extinct since British invasion. **The southern greater glider is heading towards this fate.**"

Dr Anne Kerle (advice to Minister Sharpe, February 2024):

"As the immediate past chair of the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee I have been involved in the assessments and threat determinations for the Greater Glider. In brief, the numbers of this species disturbingly continue to decline... **Previous strongholds such as Tallaganda state forest become significantly more critical to the survival of the species.**"



The primary threatening
process is logging

Pictured: Thousands of greater gliders were killed
when Tallaganda State Forest was logged

Why can't greater gliders survive in national parks?

The extinction threshold

Following the Black Summer bushfires, greater glider numbers are now so low that they are almost certainly approaching the 'extinction threshold.'

Without the habitat that still exists in State Forests, greater gliders will likely fall below this threshold and become 'functionally extinct.'

The **extinction threshold** is the minimum number or density of animals that must remain across their range to be viable in the long term.

If the species falls below this level, it will become **functionally extinct**. That is the tipping point beyond which no efforts can halt the inevitable decline and collapse of the species - it is the point of no return.

- Of particular importance to this threshold is the presence of **core populations** - healthy and viable 'strongholds' characterised by large areas of high quality habitat containing dense populations of gliders. These are the 'source populations' that are necessary for repopulating the wider landscape.
- It is also critical that these core populations are **connected by viable habitat**, to allow interbreeding between source populations, and repopulation of damaged habitat in the wider landscape. Connectivity is also essential to allow the species to respond to climate change.

We don't know exactly where the extinction threshold is for greater gliders. We don't even know how many greater gliders are left.

But it is very likely that if logging damages or destroys the remaining core populations and the connectivity of the habitat in State Forest, then the greater glider will fall below the extinction threshold.

There are simply too few core populations and habitat connectivity remaining within National Parks by themselves to maintain the gliders at viable numbers in the long term.

Solution

Step 1

Identify High Value Glider Habitat areas in State Forests.

These should be identified in consultation with experts, but the map on the next page shows indicative areas (in dark pink).

In the South Coast they only account for a relatively small proportion of State Forests.

These high value habitat areas are areas that:

- Are unlogged or lightly logged;
- Are unburnt or lightly burnt;
- Have many glider records or are known high quality habitat.

Step 2

Develop more rigorous glider protocols for these areas

Authorise the EPA to develop more rigorous logging rules in areas identified as High Value under the Coastal IFOA.

The EPA should consult with expert scientists to develop these increased rules.

They should be applied immediately to High Value areas.






Step 3

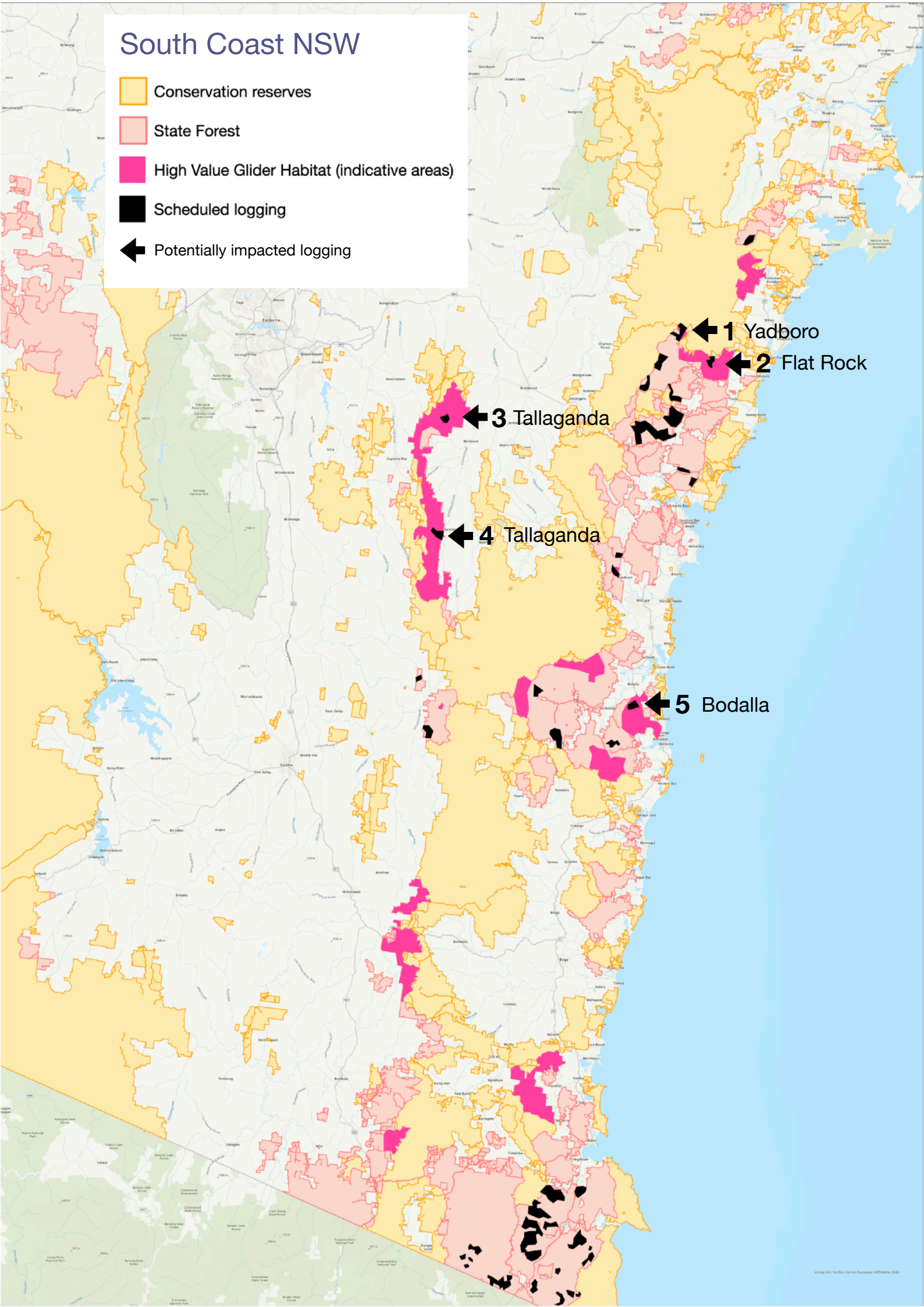
Reschedule logging operations if needed

In cases where more rigorous logging protocols mean logging is impractical, logging should be rescheduled.

There are only five areas on the NSW south coast that are scheduled for logging that will potentially be impacted.

South Coast NSW

-  Conservation reserves
-  State Forest
-  High Value Glider Habitat (indicative areas)
-  Scheduled logging
-  Potentially impacted logging



1 Yadboro

2 Flat Rock

3 Tallaganda

4 Tallaganda

5 Bodalla

In summary

The immediate threat of extinction for the Greater Glider is from the logging of High Value Habitat over the next few years.

This threat can be avoided easily, with minimal impact, and using immediately available mechanisms (IFOA protocols and logging rescheduling):

1. Apply a strengthened IFOA rule set to the relatively few high value glider habitat areas.
2. Reschedule logging in a small number of compartments if required.
3. A more comprehensive protection and recovery plan can then be developed, potentially including Glider Hubs and eventual increased protection in conservation reserves.



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