

R0001975460 Animal Interactions Procedure

Approval

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Feedback

Contact the Environment and Sustainability Team if you have feedback in relation to this procedure: environment@tasnetworks.com.au

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Animal Interactions procedure

HSEQ Management System

1. Background

1.1 Impact from infrastructure

The majority of TasNetworks' overhead power infrastructure is uninsulated, meaning that contact (or near approach) of the live electrical components exposes animals and wildlife to the risk of electrocution, particularly on the distribution network.

If an animal touches a live part of the infrastructure and either another electrical phase of the infrastructure or an earthed part of the infrastructure at the same time, then an electric shock is certain and electrocution of the animal highly likely. The interaction may also cause an outage to our network and sometimes damage to assets and/or fire.

Additionally, damage to our infrastructure, can cause other conductive materials (stay wires or fences) in the vicinity (through direct contact or induction) to become electrified. As larger animals such as cows and horses have greater 'step potential' they are particularly prone to receiving shocks. Collisions with overhead conductors without electrocution is also possible, particularly for large birds such as eagles or swans (distribution – likely, transmission – possible).

1.2 Impact from work

Animals can impacted while undertaking operations, construction or maintenance work. Vehicle collisions, breeding or nesting disturbance, den destruction (devils and quolls) habitat removal, can all result in direct (injury or death) and indirect impacts (i.e. abandoning eggs or young). Animals are also known to build nests on poles, towers and create dens underneath ground mounted transformers, creating the risk of contact with live electrical apparatus.

1.3 Regulatory requirements

TasNetworks is required to report any network interactions involving a listed threatened species (Appendix A) to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas.) as required by our Public Authority Management Agreement (PAMA). Additionally, The Nature Conservation Act 2002 (NCA) and Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021 also protects and restricts the taking, possession, hunting, trading and display of certain types wildlife and wildlife products without a permit.

2. Scope

This procedure sets out the requirements and responsibilities of TasNetworks' employees to reduce and manage animal interactions and protect wildlife.

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The procedure applies to everyone working for, or on behalf of TasNetworks. The procedure excludes interactions with aggressive dogs, snakes or any other animal while undertaking work for, or on behalf of TasNetworks which poses a direct risk to the safety of our people or the public.

For responding to threatened bird incidents, please refer to the Threatened Bird Incident
Response Work Practice. For managing impacts of operations and construction on breeding locations of threatened birds and nesting habitat refer to the Threatened Bird Nest Management
Work Practice.

3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility						
Executives and Heads	 Support implementation of this procedure through strategic planning and resourcing 						
Leaders and Team Leaders	 Ensure team members and contractors have the resources and knowledge to implement the requirements of this procedure Ensure team members implement the requirements of this procedure 						
Team Members and Contractors	 Ensure that all applicable requirements in this procedure are being met Undertake pre task risk assessments in line with the risks identified in this procedure Escalate high-risk work for environmental advice where required Comply with all applicable environmental advice, permits and regulatory approvals during work Report environmental incidents and near misses in line with the required timeframes to TasNetworks (the One Hour Rule) and comply with any incident investigations 						
HSEQ Team	 Provide or coordinate specialist environmental advice within agreed timeframes or as negotiated with the works owner Assist with or develop training where required Coordinate routine environmental audits and inspections Liaise with regulators and help facilitate permits applications (unless an alternative process has been approved by the E&S Team) Coordinate the investigation of environmental incidents or near misses as required by the Incident Management Procedure 						

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4. Procedure during planning, design and replacement

Where reasonably practical, TasNetworks preference is to design our network and undertake operations in such a way that the risk of any animal interactions, damage to habitat or nesting disturbance is minimised or avoided. Designing or replacing assets, planning work and completing environmental assessments for any work which will directly impact vegetation or create ground disturbance, will enable the proactive management of environmental (and animal) risk.

If wildlife (living) or nests (active) need to be removed from our assets during operations, you must seek advice from the E&S Team or the Wildlife Management Branch at NRE Tas. where practical to do so.

4.1 Mitigating risk during design and replacement

Designing and mitigating assets to minimise the risk of animal interactions should be considered as part of the design and scoping process. Factors to consider include:

- History of incidents/interactions;
- The level of hazard posed by the specific type of asset;
- The location of that asset including topography, vegetation, habitat modelling and surrounding land use;
- The sensitivity of the animal being impacted i.e. conservation status;
- The sensitivity of the network i.e. potential customers impacted, and;
- Public relations considerations.

Numerous design options are available for minimising animal interactions. These include:

- Undergrounding or partially undergrounding assets
- Reconfiguring network alignment (i.e. to avoid known habitat)
- Installing aerial bundled conductor
- Installing bird perches, conductor (redback) cover, using under slung conductors
- Installing bird diverters
- Installing possum guards

In particular, designers and scopers must consider the level of strike risk posed to eagles during the construction or replacement of networks assets using the eagle strike risk model. Please refer to the <u>Distribution design standard – overhead systems</u> and <u>New distribution construction standard – overhead systems</u> for prescriptive guidance.

4.2 Mitigating existing assets

A risk based approach will be used to determine a reasonably practical approach to mitigating the risks posed to and by animals. There are two primary drivers for the mitigation of existing assets:

- 1. Asset performance (reliability)
- 2. Impact on listed threatened species

TasNetworks Threatened Bird Strategy describes the approach taken for mitigating existing assets to minimise impacts on threatened birds.

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Where reliability is the key consideration, Asset Engineering is responsible for overseeing the mitigation of existing assets, and to determine the priorities for mitigation where asset performance is the primary driver. The programs of work are to be reviewed periodically and modified based on:

- New mitigation techniques
- Problem configurations
- History of incidents/problem locations
- Change in listing status of the threatened animal
- Customer complaints, and;
- Other emerging issues.

4.2 Significant impact on matters of national environmental significance

New capital work and operations may require approval under the EPBC Act. Approval from the minister is required if the action has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance (MNES; see Appendix A). If any work will impact a matter of national environmental significance (threatened fauna, flora, the habitat and threatened vegetation communities), the work must be escalated to the E&S Team for advice.

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5. Responding to interactions and incidents

5.1 Minimising animal interactions while driving

Where practical:

- Avoid driving during dusk, dawn or night time.
- Scan the sides of the road for wildlife (this will also help you keep alert). Remember that animals such as Tasmanian devils are very hard to see against a black bitumen road, particularly when it is dark and wet.
- Drive more slowly at night. This will give both you and the animal a better chance of avoiding a collision.
- Adhere to wildlife warning signs. They are there to advise you of known 'hot spots'.
- Animals react differently to approaching cars and it is best to let the animal move off first before passing.
- In areas where the road is bordered by steep banks on either side, animals can often become trapped and unable to escape from approaching cars. Drive with special care in such areas.
- Avoid throwing any rubbish, including apple cores or other fruit and vegetable scraps from your car. This attracts wildlife to feed on the sides of roads, thereby increasing the risk of roadkill.

Ensure that all road speed requirements set out under environmental approvals conditions or environmental management plans are adhered to.

5.2 Investigating outages

As far as reasonably practical, TasNetworks will investigate all power outages to determine whether it is due to an animal. It is noted that in some cases incident cause is difficult to determine, when injured animals move away from the asset, or dead animals are obscured by the surrounding vegetation. Team members should remain vigilant and should scan both the ground and overhead infrastructure following a fault for any signs of a potential interaction.

Any suspected animal interactions involving a listed threatened species, including while driving a TasNetworks vehicle, must be reported to the E&S Team within one hour. See Section 7 for reporting requirements.

5.3 Injured animals

If a team member injures, or comes across an injured animal they must:

- Assess the risk, do not jeopardise your own safety.
- Seek expert advice before handling any injured animal. Call the Wildlife Rescue Hotline:
 0447 264 625 for all native wildlife. These are volunteer services operated 24 hours a day: http://bonorong.com.au/wildlife-rescue/
- Minimise the amount of exposure the injured animal has to people and loud noises.

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- Do not attempt to feed or treat the animal unless you have specialist knowledge or formal training
- Consider checking dead animals where safe and practical to do so. They may have surviving young with them (e.g. in a pouch) or near them
- Seek assistance, for injured farm animals or pets. Where practical, contact the property owner. Contact the police if the animal poses a risk to traffic or the public
- Contact the RSPCA if mistreatment is suspected or if other assistance is not available.
 RSPCA 1300 139 947 or https://www.rspca.org.au/report-cruelty

5.4 Dead animals

5.4.1 Threatened species

Recording accurate information when recovering deceased threatened species is critical for helping us to understand and manage our impact. All threatened species must reported to the E&S team, who will provide advice on whether the carcass needs to be provided to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to be autopsied and catalogued. The E&S Team may request that you retrieve the carcass of the animal. This will be dependent on the amount of decay and location of the carcass.

- Always use gloves and double bag the carcass if possible.
- Secure the top with a cable tie and arrange for the carcass to be frozen or surrounded by ice as soon as possible.

You must also record the following details prior to leaving the site:

- You should attach an 'eagle toe tag' (material no. 348582) so all carcasses can be traced and tracked.
- Identification and/or description of animal (species may have to be identified by a qualified person).
- Location of the interaction: coordinates (i.e. GPS reading 6-digit Easting and 7-digit Northing, GDA94) and the TasNetworks reference number of the nearest pole (6 digit pole ID) or two poles if mid-span.
- Date and time of the discovery, name and contact details of observer.
- Take photographs of animal in situ and the infrastructure involved in the incident (including pole ID), and a photograph that shows the whole setting.
- Record the condition of the carcass or injured animal when found and any signs of injury.
- Note the suspected cause of death: collision, collision/electrocution, electrocution, entanglement, other.
- Record any other information relating to the incident such as activity at the time, weather conditions etc.

5.4.2 Non-threatened species

If a non-threatened animal is killed as a result of interacting with assets, it may need to be removed. A carcass may be removed and disposed of if it:

• Poses a health or safety risk

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- May jeopardize the safe and normal operations of an asset
- Causes nuisance or distress to customers and/or the public, or;
- May give rise to a negative public relations response.
- You may need a permit to possess certain types of wildlife, including protected and partially protected wildlife. Contact the E&S Team for advice if required.

If workers do not feel comfortable handling dead animals they may choose not to. However, they should make the necessary arrangements for the appropriate disposal and removal of the animal as soon as possible.

5.4.3 Precautions for handling dead animals

The risk of contracting disease from dead animals is low if proper precautions are taken:

- Wear gloves and a face mask if needed.
- Ensure that the animal is dead before handling.
- If the animal is a marsupial and has been recently killed (within 24 hours), checking for pouch young is encouraged. If pouch young are alive, refer to section 5.1.
- Cover your gloved hand with a plastic bag, pick up the remains, then invert the bag over the remains and seal the bag.
- For larger animals, use a shovel to place remains inside a garbage bag, then rinse off the shovel with water.
- Wash your hands immediately afterwards.

6. Removing live animals, nests and dens from assets

The Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021, regulates and prohibits the taking and possession of wildlife. If you need to remove wildlife (living) or active nest or dens from assets during operations, you must contact the E&S Team who will liaise with the Wildlife Management Branch.

7. Managing pests

To protect TasNetworks infrastructure, facilities and assets, TasNetworks may need to control, or eradicate, pest animals such as mice, rats, rabbits and starlings. However, in doing this, TasNetworks endeavours to minimise any impacts to off-target animal species and the welfare of the target animal species. In particular, the use of any second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) may impact native carnivorous animals such as Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles, devils and quolls when the pest animal is consumed post treatment.

When undertaking the management pests for, or on behalf of TasNetworks, the following requirements must be met:

1. Prior to using pesticides, alternative control measures, such as physical removal, physical deterrents, barriers or biological control agents* must be considered. Refer to PestSmart for more information.

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- 2. Conduct and document a risk assessment which identifies any potential environmental and animal welfare risks prior to the deployment of any pest control or eradication measures. Controls to manage the risk(s) identified must be specified and implemented.
- 3. Do not use SGARs** without prior authorisation from the E&S team.
- 4. Comply with all applicable requirements in the Hazardous Substances Procedure and Contractor HSE Management Procedure.
- 5. Refer to PestSmart (pestsmart.org.au) or contact the E&S team for more information or advice on managing pest animals.
- *Contact Biosecurity Tasmania to request the release of calicivirus virus (rabbit) or other targeted biological pest control agent
- ** There are 5 SGAR active constituents currently registered for use in Australia: brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, difenacoum and flocoumafen. Refer to the applicable Material Safety Data Sheets from the manufacturers for information.

8. Reporting incidents

If the animal is a listed threatened species and likely to have been impacted by TasNetworks infrastructure or operations, then the incident must be reported to your Team Leader and the E&S Team within one hour as per the Incident Management Procedure.

The E&S team will report the injury or death of a threatened species to the NRE Tas.

Incidents involving threatened species must be reported in TasNetworks incident reporting system (SAP) as soon as practical by the team member identifying the incidents.

Where a live listed threated fauna species needs to be removed from one our assets during operation or maintenance, advice should be sought from NRE Tas. as a permit maybe required.

Devil Hotline: 0497 DEVILS (0497 338 457) (for devil related incidents only)

NRE Tas. Wildlife Incidents (Business hours): 6165 4305

All other animal interactions can be reported as a minor environmental incidents. Animal interactions that have created a public safety risk must be reported to the Safety and Wellbeing Team (i.e. the electrocution of livestock or a pet) within one hour.

7.1 Determining incident cause

In some instances, the cause of an interaction cannot be quickly and easily determined, particularly where there is limited physical evidence of an interaction. Where additional assessment of the injured animal or carcass is required, TasNetworks may require advice from a vet or other suitably qualified person before reporting an incident externally. Please see the <a href="https://doi.org/10.1001/jnc.100

7.2 Reporting non-TasNetworks related incidents

Any deceased wildlife, threatened or non-threatened, including Tasmanian Devils encountered during work (non-TasNetworks incidents) should be reported via the <u>Tasmanian Roadkill Reporter</u> app to assist with data collection and the development of conservation programs. Please consider your safety at all times and do not use your phone while driving.

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9. Compliance Obligations

Document Title, Section or Part
Electricity Supply Industry Act 1995
Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994
Forest Practices Act 1985
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Nature Conservation act 2002
Threatened Species Protection Act 1995
Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021
Forest Practices Code 2020
Public Authority Management Agreement for Threatened Species
FPA Fauna Technical Notes

10. Internal Documents

Document Number	Document Title
TBU	Environment and Sustainability Policy
R0001599490	Environment and Sustainability Risk Register
R0000112530	Environmental Handbook
R0000502011	Environmental Considerations: Distribution – Design, Construction and Decommissioning
R0001975433	Threatened Bird Nest Management Work Practice
R0001975509	Threatened Bird Incident Response Work Practice
R0002077787	Bird ID Guide
R0000094015	Incident Management Procedure
R0000559572	One Hour Rule
R0001599490	Environment and Sustainability Risk Register
R0000826967	Threatened Bird Strategy (2016-21)
R0001293328	<u>Draft Helicopter Operations Procedure</u>
TBU	Eagle Strike Risk Model – final methods report
R0000500209	Work Practice - Install Diverters on the Distribution System
R0001722776	Distribution design standard – overhead systems
R0001722634	New distribution construction standard – overhead systems

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11. Definitions

Term	Definition
Animal	includes any taxon of threatened animal or protected animal, in any stage of biological development and includes eggs and any part of such taxon;
Collision	Collision means the physical contact of animal with any part of power infrastructure causing injury or death.
Collision / electrocution	Collision/electrocution occurs when a collision results in injury or death of animal from electrocution. Collision/electrocutions occur when on collision with power infrastructure the momentum of the animal causes any two parts of the individual to be simultaneously in contact with live conductors causing electrocution. Thus the proximate cause of death or injury is electrocution but the ultimate cause is collision.
NRE Tas.	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
Electrocution / electric shock	Injury or death of animal resulting from contact with electrical current either through a phase to phase or phase to ground short. Electric shock usually results in instant death of the animal but may cause injuries that result in permanent incapacitation or requiring euthanasia.
Electricity Infrastructure	Poles, towers, wires and other structures or parts of structures associated with the distribution and transmission of power being the responsibility of TasNetworks
Entanglement	Injury or death of animal resulting from being caught in any power infrastructure
E&S Team	Environment and Sustainability Team
EPBC Act	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
Escalation	When advice on controls for impact on environment and heritage values is required from the Environmental and Sustainability Team (see Table 1 and 2, Appendix A) or approved.
HSE	Health Safety and Environment.
Interactions	Any mortality or injury to animal or power outage possibly resulting from collision, electrocution and/or entanglement with power infrastructure while in flight, perching, nesting, climbing or in attempts to make contact with that infrastructure. Interactions are categorised as follows
NVA	Natural Values Atlas
PAMA	Public authority management agreement
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Service.

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Term	Definition
Threatened animal or threatened species	Threatened animal means a taxon of vertebrate animal that is listed in Schedule 3, 4 or 5 of the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> and or listed under the <i>Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;</i>
Wildlife	Under the Nature Conservation Act 2002, wildlife means any living creature other than a dog or cat, domestic stock fish, within the meaning of the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 any farmed emu.
WMB	Wildlife Management Branch
Work site	The area in which work is to be undertaken
Work	Any operational, construction or maintenance activities

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12. Document Control

11.1 Document history

The following table lists the changes made to this document:

Version	Date	Amended by	Comments
1.0	4/12/2014		Original Issue
1.1	11/2015		Zone references updated
1.2	1/12/2016		Major review
1.3	13/08/2020	Thomas Webster	Minor amendments
2.0	21/12/2021	Thomas Webster	Major review
3.0	10/05/2023	Mahalia White- McColl	Minor amendments

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Appendix A – legislation and regulations Forest Practices Act 1985

The Forest Practices Act 1985 restricts the clearing of trees (for any purpose) including the clearing and converting of listed threatened native vegetation communities (listed under the Nature Conservation Act 2002) in Tasmania, unless a Forest Practices Plan (FPP) has been approved by the Forest Practices Authority (FPA). However, TasNetworks is permitted to undertake the clearing of trees, native vegetation of threatened vegetation communities to provide a reasonable buffer for new or existing electricity infrastructure without a FPP so long as:

- There is an easement or, the land owner has given consent to the construction or maintenance of electricity infrastructure; and
- 2. The clearance and conversion is undertaken in accordance with an environmental management system (EMS) endorsed by the FPA.

In addition, TasNetworks must meet the conditions as prescribed in our FPA exemption. This includes:

- Where practicable, avoiding any impact of threatened native vegetation and where the impact unavoidable, offsetting the damage as a mitigation measure
- Reporting clearing which exceeds 100 tonnes of timber or an area greater than 1ha and/or any clearing of threatened vegetation communities to the FPA

Further, where a land owner or land manager wishes to undertake clearing for TasNetworks related electricity infrastructure, they must follow the standards and processes as described in this procedure.

Forest Practices Code

The Forest Practices Code prescribes the manner in which forest harvesting and clearing practices shall be conducted so as to provide reasonable protection to the environment. While TasNetworks is not required to develop an approved FPP prior to undertaking clearing work as part of our FPA exemption, all reasonable efforts are to be made to ensure vegetation clearing and management work complies with the requirements as described in The Code. These requirements aim to conserve natural and cultural values including:

- Threatened flora and fauna
- Aboriginal and European heritage
- Water quality and waterway protection
- Landscape, soils and geomorphology
- Biosecurity (weeds and soil borne pathogens)

Further supplementary details on how to manage specific environmental aspects, such as eagle nests, Swift parrot breeding habitat soils and karst environments and are contained in the FPA's Fauna Technical Notes and in the Earth Science planning tools

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Threatened Species Protection Act 1995

The primary objectives of the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* is to...'ensure that all native flora and fauna in Tasmania can survive, flourish and retain their potential for evolutionary development in the wild and to ensure that the genetic diversity of native flora and fauna is maintained'.

The act lists the flora and fauna species that are protected under the act including critical habitats which are crucial for the survival of a listed threatened species. Permits to take can be issued under the act, subject to such terms and conditions that the Secretary thinks necessary for the conservation of any listed taxon of flora or fauna. It is an offence to contravene any terms and conditions attached to a 'permit to take' a listed threatened species.

Penalty for 'taking' a listed flora taxa without a permit: Fine not exceeding 629 penalty units (\$100,000) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both, and a further fine not exceeding 126 penalty units for each day during which the offence continues after conviction.

Note: TasNetworks <u>Public Authority Management Agreement</u> (PAMA) only applies to listed threatened fauna species.

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places world heritage properties.

Any activity (such as new developments or an expansion of an existing development) which is likely to have a 'significant' impact on a nationally threatened species or ecological community, world heritage or national heritage, must be referred to the federal Environment Minister by the proponent. This Act will apply to any development or impact that significantly affects nationally listed threatened communities or species or will be undertaken in a world or national heritage area.

The EPBC Act requires permit for activities which may kill, injure, take, trade, keep or move a member of a listed threatened species or ecological community, a member of a listed migratory species, or a member of a listed marine species in or on a Commonwealth area.

A person who takes an action that is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, without first obtaining approval, can be liable for a civil penalty of to \$900,000 for an individual and \$9 million for a body corporate, or for a criminal penalty of seven years imprisonment and/or a penalty of \$75,600.

Nature Conservation Act 2002

The Nature Conservation Act 2002 regulates the conservation and protection of flora, fauna and geological diversity within Tasmania, classifies reserved lands in Tasmania, and establishes values and objectives for each reserve class, and provides for conservation covenants and reservation of

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private lands. In relation to any development requiring land clearance this Act lists all the threatened vegetation communities and provides for their protection.

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Appendix B – threatened animal species impacted by TasNetworks assets or operations

Species	Common Name	Family	TSPA	EPBCA	Possible network interaction?	Notes
Accipiter novaehollandiae	Grey Goshawk	Birds	е		Yes	Incidents recorded, electrocution only
Aquila audax fleayi	Wedge- tailed Eagle	Birds	e	EN	Yes	Commonly impacted by overhead assets
Ceyx azureus diemenensis	Tasmanian Azure Kingfisher	Birds	e	EN	Yes	No previously recorded incidents
Dasyurus maculatus maculatus	Spotted-tail Quoll	Mammals	r	VU	Yes	No incidents recorded
Dasyurus viverrinus	Eastern Quoll	Mammals		EN	Yes	Incidents recorded, denning under pad mounted sub
Haliaeetus leucogaster	White- bellied Sea- Eagle	Birds	v		Yes	Commonly impacted by over head assets
Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot	Birds	e	CR	See note	Work may impact breeding habitat
Limnodynastes peroni	Striped Marsh Frog	Amphibians	e		See note	Work may spread chytrid (frog fungus)

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Litoria raniformis	Green and Gold Frog	Amphibians	٧	VU	See note	Work may spread chytrid (frog fungus)
Pardalotus quadragintus	Forty- spotted Pardalote	Birds	e	EN	See note	Work may impact nesting habitat
Perameles gunnii gunnii	Eastern- barred bandicoot	Mammals		VU	See note	Work may impact habitat
Sarcophilus harrisii	Tasmanian Devil	Mammals	e	EN	See note	Potential vehicle collision (must be reported). Ground disturbing work may impact devil dens.
Thalassarche cauta	Shy Albatross	Birds	V	EN (sensu stricto)	Yes	One reported incident (Bruny Island) with over head assets
Thalassarche melanophris	Black- browed Albatross	Birds	е	VU	Yes	Observed near network, no reported incidents
Tyto novaehollandiae castanops	Masked Owl	Birds	e	VU	Yes	Electrocution - one incident reported

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