

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Nature Conservation Trust of NSW celebrates National Bird Day – 29th October 2010

This National Bird Day marks a brighter future for the threatened emu population and broilga thanks to the Nature Conservation Trust's work to protect nearly 1,000 hectares of extra habitat for the birds on private land in northern NSW.

Through its work with two landholders who have chosen to protect their lower Clarence Valley properties with conservation agreements, the Nature Conservation Trust has protected an extra 800 hectares of habitat for endangered emus on the NSW north coast.

Through its purchase of Shark Creek, a wetland property in the lower Clarence Valley, the Nature Conservation Trust has also protected an additional 175 hectares of habitat for threatened broilga. All up, the Trust has protected 2,000 hectares of broilga habitat across NSW to date.

Nature Conservation Trust Regional Manager, Kate Smillie, said that the Shark Creek area is a sanctuary for wetland birds like the broilga.

"There are 11 listed threatened bird species known in or near Shark Creek, and another seven threatened birds likely to occur in the area," said Kate. "This makes the Nature Conservation Trust's purchase of a property in this area very significant for the long-term protection of these species."

Threatened species are animals and plants that are in danger of becoming extinct. There are a number of categories of threatened species – endangered species are those at very high risk of extinction in the near future, while vulnerable species face high risk of extinction in the medium-term future. The NSW North Coast emu population is considered to be endangered, while the broilga is listed as vulnerable.

In NSW, there are 124 threatened bird species, while nationally there are 23 species listed as extinct, six as critically endangered and another 103 as either endangered or vulnerable.

Nature Conservation Trust CEO, Paul Toni, said that National Bird Day is an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of private land conservation to the survival of Australia's rare and threatened birds.

"Working with landholders who have chosen to permanently protect their land through a conservation agreement is inspiring," said Mr Toni. "We have partnered with landholders to protect over 21,500 hectares of land across 49 properties in NSW, ensuring that the amazing natural assets of these properties, including habitat for at least 40 threatened bird species, are protected forever."

For more information about the Nature Conservation Trust, visit www.nct.org.au.

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PHOTOS ATTACHED:

1. A broilga takes flight at Shark Creek. Photo by Ben Lynch.
2. Ian Forster and Sue Williams are helping to save the threatened broilga by protecting habitat for the bird on their Lennox Head property with a Nature Conservation Trust conservation agreement.