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MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrating Wetlands on World Wetlands Day - 2 February 2011

Protecting natural wetlands in the Northern Rivers has become a major focus for the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW with the recent purchase of its first entire wetland property in the region.

The Nature Conservation Trust is celebrating World Wetlands Day on 2nd February 2011 with its purchase of 'Shark Creek', a stunning 216 hectare wetland property in the Tyndale Swamp, north east of Grafton. The purchase adds to the 940 hectares of wetlands already protected by the Trust through its acquisition of two other properties and its work with four private landholders in the Clarence and Richmond catchments.

'Shark Creek' is home to numerous threatened species, including brolgas, ospreys and grey-crowned babbler, as well as two endangered wetland vegetation communities.

Nature Conservation Trust CEO Paul Toni said the organisation is proud to be helping to protect one of the hardest working, and most vulnerable, ecosystems in northern NSW.

"Wetlands in the Northern Rivers support a wide range of animals, water-dependent plants and ecological communities, many of which are threatened with extinction," said Mr Toni. "They also provide breeding grounds and nurseries for insects, fish, frogs and waterbirds, and act as refuges for animals during droughts."

"As well as being important for biodiversity, wetlands perform many other functions, including purifying water, regulating water flows, filtering nutrients, maintaining water tables, mitigating floods and controlling erosion.

"With less than 10% of wetlands in the Clarence River catchment protected in reserves, the Nature Conservation Trust is thrilled to be helping ensure the long-term survival of wetlands in the area through the purchase and protection of 'Shark Creek'," said Mr Toni.

The Nature Conservation Trust purchases high conservation value properties like 'Shark Creek' through its revolving fund. After purchase, the Trust protects the properties with a conservation covenant and on-sells them to landholders who want to own and care for their own private nature reserves.

"The revolving fund is a highly effective way to safeguard habitat for native animals and plants because the proceeds from the sale of each property are used to buy and protect more high conservation value land.

"We look forward to protecting more wetlands across northern NSW and we would love to hear from people who are interested in buying wetland properties as their own nature paradises," said Mr Toni.

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PHOTO ATTACHED: A broлга takes flight at 'Shark Creek'. Photo by Ben Lynch.