



Watershed  
**Landcare**  
Incorporated

# POWERFUL OWL

*Ninox strenua*  
in the Watershed  
Landcare region



Photo credit: John French, NSW

## SPECIES PROFILE

The Powerful Owl is the largest owl species in Australasia. Adults reach 60-65 cm in length and have a wingspan of up to 140 cm. The upper parts of the Powerful Owl are dark, greyish-brown whilst the underparts are white or off-white with dark greyish-brown V-shaped markings.

The call of this species may be heard at any time of the year, but it is more vocal during the autumn breeding season. It has a slow, deep and resonant double hoot, with the female's being higher pitched and expressing an upward inflection on the second note.

The Powerful Owl requires large tracts of forest or woodland habitat but can also occur in fragmented landscapes, including rural and urban areas. The species breeds and hunts predominantly in both open and closed sclerophyll forest and woodland, only occasionally hunting in more open habitats. It roosts by day in dense vegetation, however, is often visible from below.

Powerful Owls mate for life. They nest in large tree hollows (at least 0.5 m deep), in mature eucalypts that are often >150 years old. While the female and young are in the nest hollow, the male will roost nearby and guard the hollow. Mated pairs inhabit a large territory, often up to 4000 ha, with the size of territories varying according to habitat quality and prey densities.

The main prey items are medium-sized arboreal marsupials, including Common Ringtail Possum, Greater Glider and Sugar Glider.

**Conservation Status in NSW:**  
Vulnerable

## LOCAL DISTRIBUTION

The Powerful Owl is endemic to eastern and south-eastern Australia.

In the Watershed Landcare region, the main sightings have been made along the western side of the mountains; especially the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve, Ganguddy-Dunns Swamp and Ferntree Gully areas.

The Powerful Owl is at low densities in our region, primarily due to land clearing and fragmentation of suitable habitat both for itself and its prey species.



# POWERFUL OWL



Photo credits: John French, Lachlan Copeland and Ken Stepnell.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Retain large stands of native vegetation, especially those containing hollow-bearing trees. Protect large hollows suitable for breeding and promote tree recruitment to replace older trees in the long-term.
- Protect riparian vegetation to preserve roosting areas.
- Apply low-intensity, mosaic pattern fuel reduction regimes in habitat remnants.
- Retain at least a 200m buffer of native vegetation around known nesting sites.
- Minimise disturbances and visits to nests during breeding season.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Websites that allow you to record your sightings of the Powerful Owl (listed right), also enable you to search records for local populations of this species and others.

Information for this fact sheet was sourced from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment. You can visit their website for additional information via the following link:

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ThreatenedSpeciesApp](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ThreatenedSpeciesApp)

## REPORT A SIGHTING

Reporting your sightings of threatened species such as the Powerful Owl contributes to our understanding of the species' populations in our local area.

The sightings you report may be used in research and conservation programs and will help guide decisions on where government and land management activities will occur.

You can record your sightings online using:

- the NSW BioNet Atlas:

[www.bionet.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bionet.nsw.gov.au)

- the Atlas of Living Australia:

[www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au)

- BirdLife Australia's Birdata:

[birdata.birdlife.org.au](http://birdata.birdlife.org.au)