



Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

24 June 2016

Copyright © VicForests

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of VicForests.

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Purpose | 3 |
| 2. Background..... | 3 |
| 3. Scope..... | 3 |
| 4. Procedure..... | 3 |
| 4.1. A hierarchical approach to biodiversity value identification..... | 3 |
| 4.2. Desktop assessment..... | 4 |
| 4.3. Coupe Transect | 5 |
| 4.3.1. Coupe Transect Method | 5 |
| 4.3.2. Coupe Transect Effort..... | 5 |
| 4.4. Targeted Species Survey..... | 6 |
| 4.4.1. Targeted Species..... | 6 |
| 4.4.2. High Risk Coupes | 7 |
| 4.4.3. Targeted Species Survey Scheduling | 8 |
| 4.5. Detections of threatened species during the operation..... | 9 |
| 4.6. Third Party Threatened Species Reports | 9 |
| 4.7. Research and Long-term Monitoring | 11 |
| 4.8. Implementation of Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Actions | 11 |
| 4.8.1. VicForests Special Management Plans..... | 11 |
| 4.8.2. VicForests Reserve and Special Management Area Layers..... | 12 |
| 4.8.3. Coupe File | 12 |
| 4.8.4. Reporting to DELWP..... | 12 |
| 4.8.5. Responsibilities overview..... | 13 |
| 4.8.6. Pre-harvest Biodiversity Survey Process Overview | 14 |
| 4.9. Risk | 15 |
| 4.10. Document management and retention | 15 |
| 5. Definitions and abbreviations | 15 |
| 6. Appendices | 16 |
| Appendix 1: Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Action Form..... | 16 |
| Appendix 2: VicForests Special Management Plan (Template) | 17 |
| Appendix 3: Validation and Verification of Third Party Reports | 18 |

1. Purpose

This instruction outlines VicForests pre-harvest biodiversity survey approach to identifying biodiversity values at the operational coupe-scale. It describes the range of survey types undertaken, including when a targeted species survey is required, and what actions must be undertaken if key biodiversity values are identified.

2. Background

Maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and High Conservation Values within Victoria's public forests is a key management objective within VicForests Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management framework as regulated through *the Code of Practice for Timber Production (2014)*.

All forest contains potential habitat, and due to the transient nature of many fauna and the difficulty in identifying every plant across a large forest estate, it is impractical to identify every occurrence of every species and quantify the extent of every value. VicForests pre-harvest biodiversity identification and management approach is inherently risk-based, and is designed to complement the extensive conservation reserve system with consideration to management options that are applied at both the operational and broader landscape scales.

In the context of identifying biodiversity values listed in the *Management Standards and Procedures for timber harvesting operations in Victoria's State forests (2014)*, threatened species are generally those that are classified as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act (1988)* or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act (1999)*. Taxa that are classified as extinct, data deficient or near threatened are not considered to be threatened.

3. Scope

This instruction applies to all coupes that are proposed or approved on a Timber Release Plan (TRP) in accordance with the *Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act (2004)*, and is intended to be used in conjunction with *VicForests Instruction - Coupe Reconnaissance*, *VicForests Instruction - Coupe Planning*, *VicForests Procedures - Regulatory Handbook*, *VicForests Procedures - Targeted Species Surveys* and *VicForests Strategy for Assessing and Maintaining High Conservation Values*.

This document does not include the management prescriptions for threatened flora, threatened fauna or threatened EVC's. For details about threatened flora, fauna and community protection requirements refer to *VicForests Procedures - Regulatory Handbook*.

4. Procedure

4.1. A hierarchical approach to biodiversity value identification

Every coupe proposed or approved on the TRP is subject to a range of surveys aimed at identifying and addressing biodiversity conservation risks associated with timber harvesting. These surveys are collectively termed 'pre-harvest surveys'. Pre-harvest surveys focussed on identifying significant biodiversity values, including threatened species, their habitat and threatened vegetation communities are termed 'Pre-harvest Biodiversity Surveys'.

A risk-based approach is used for every coupe to determine what and when biodiversity values are to be surveyed for, what the most appropriate survey method(s) are, and what management options are to be considered. Whilst the value identification process has a high degree of focus at the operational scale, the risk evaluation decisions regarding biodiversity management will consider existing conservation representativeness of biodiversity values at much broader scales.

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

The remainder of this document describes VicForests pre-harvest biodiversity survey hierarchy (Figure 1) and under what circumstances and for what threatened species, may a coupe be subject to an additional targeted species survey.

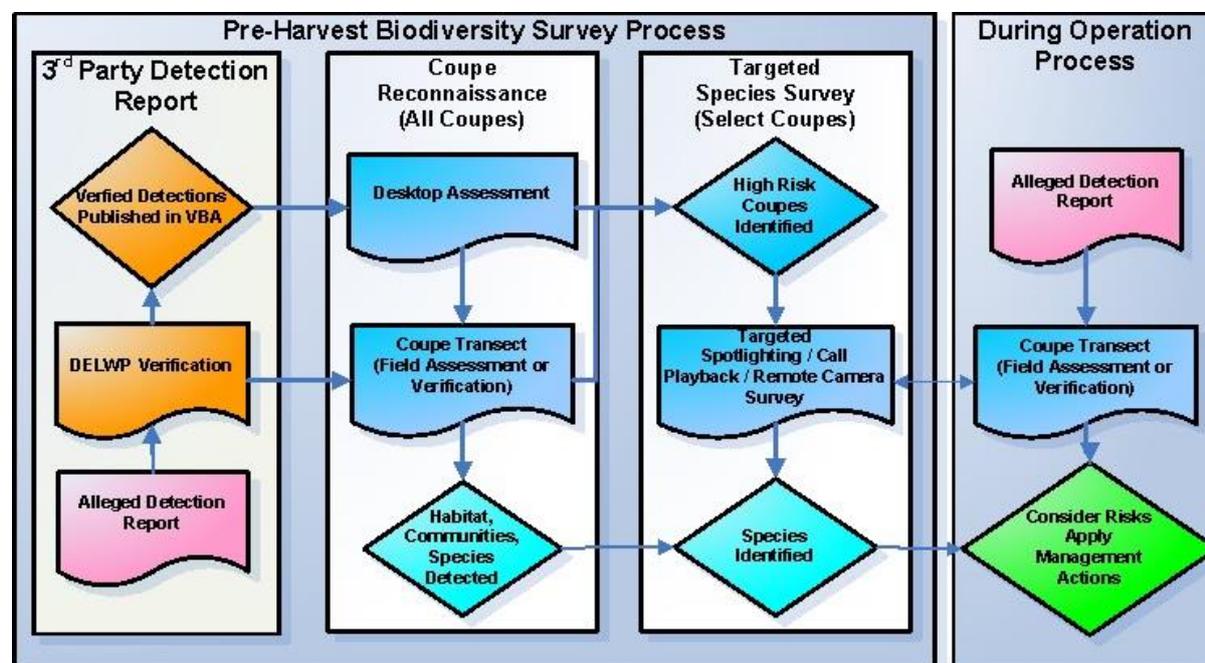


Figure 1 VicForests Biodiversity value identification hierarchy

4.2. Desktop assessment

All proposed coupes must undergo a **Desktop assessment** as outlined in *VicForests Instruction - Coupe Reconnaissance*. This stage of the Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey process requires the analysis of state government owned spatial data records (Table 1), to determine the potential occurrence of:

- existing habitat or threatened species records within or adjacent to the coupe;
- rare or limiting forest characteristics within the coupe that could indicate a higher likelihood of habitat for hollow-dependant fauna; and
- certain forest management zones or dedicated reserves that are known to represent areas containing threatened species populations, threatened species habitat or a threatened ecological vegetation community within or adjacent to the coupe.

Table 1 Key Spatial layers to be used in Desktop Assessment for consideration of coupe biodiversity risks

| Dataset | Owner | Key Features to note |
|------------------------------------|-------|---|
| FMZ100 | DELWP | Presence of Special Protection Zones or Special Management Zones containing threatened species habitat values within or adjacent to the coupe |
| MOG2009 | DELWP | Presence of Modelled Old Growth forest that could support habitat of threatened species adjacent to or within coupe |
| Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) | DELWP | Previously detected records of threatened species either within or adjacent to the coupe |
| NV2010_EVCBCS | DELWP | Presence of vegetation communities that may either be threatened vegetation communities or represent potential or preferred habitat of target threatened species. |

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

The results of the desktop assessment are to be field verified through a Coupe Transect (outlined in section 4.3), filed in the Coupe File and a summary of findings recorded within the Forest Coupe Plan.

4.3. Coupe Transect

All coupes proposed or approved for harvest on the TRP must undergo a Coupe Transect. The transect must be designed to verify the existence of habitat features that indicate the potential presence of a threatened species or community as identified and mapped via Desktop assessment.

In addition to verifying extent and location of mapped features in the field, the Coupe Transect must also be undertaken with the aim of identifying habitat features or values not distinguished by the Desktop assessment. These features may indicate the potential presence of a threatened species or community. Such features include:

- A high density of large hollow bearing trees
- Large Forest Owl or Birds of prey roosting, nesting or whitewash sites
- Rocky outcrops, caves or mine sites
- Potential Spot-tailed Quoll Den or Latrine sites
- 'V' notches, typical on potential glider feed trees
- Known research or monitoring sites for threatened fauna
- High Conservation Value species, communities or prescribed habitats

See *VicForests Procedure - Targeted Species Surveys* and *VicForests Strategy for Assessing and Maintaining High Conservation Values* for more detailed information about habitat features, survey detection methods, minimum survey size or effort, and the density thresholds of presence required to warrant management actions.

4.3.1. Coupe Transect Method

The Coupe Transect is to be undertaken as part of standard Tactical Planning and Operations (Harvesting) practice prior to operations commencing (see *VicForests Instruction - Coupe Reconnaissance* and *VicForests Instruction - Coupe Planning*).

Any values identified in the field during a Coupe Transect must be recorded and then filed within the relevant Forest Coupe Plan. The transect path must be recorded by GPS and any significant features marked by way-point. From this information an annotated map is to be produced and filed in the Coupe File, clearly showing any identified features that may warrant management action.

Where potential threatened species habitat or features are identified, photographic evidence may be taken and forwarded to VicForests' Conservation Biologist for verification. If there is ambiguity as to the presence of threatened species habitat or features, advice must be sought from the Senior Forester, Biodiversity Research Officer or Conservation Biologist and follow-up more intensive field surveys or site inspections may be recommended.

4.3.2. Coupe Transect Effort

For each Coupe Transect carried out, the following minimum requirements must be met for the purposes of meeting the pre-harvest biodiversity survey objectives:

- At least 200 meters transect for every 10 hectares of gross coupe area
- OR**
- At least 1 hour of transect time for every 10 hectares of gross coupe area

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

This minimum requirement should be met during normal coupe reconnaissance as undertaken by Tactical Planning, although the same Coupe Transect requirements described in 4.3.1 also apply to Coupe Transects undertaken by Operations staff at the coupe marking stage or during the operation.

4.4. Targeted Species Survey

Targeted Species Surveys are to be undertaken in accordance with the *VicForests Procedure - Targeted Species Surveys*. This additional survey is only undertaken on a selection of coupes that were assessed as having a higher overall risk regarding threatened species identification and management.

In this context, high risk primarily refers to an increased likelihood of a threatened species being present within an area affected by the proposed timber harvesting that if detected, may require changes to the way in which the proposed operation is planned and implemented.

A targeted species survey is designed to detect the presence of specific threatened species through actual sightings of individuals, or in some cases, their habitat. Targeted species surveys are completed using a range of commonly used survey techniques, either by a qualified ecologist, or person whom has demonstrated experience and expertise to undertake the required surveys.

Once targeted surveys are complete, surveyors must prepare detailed reports for VicForests describing their methodology and findings. The survey documentation must enable VicForests to be confident that the survey is reliable and repeatable and was conducted in accordance with *VicForests Procedure - Targeted Species Surveys*. (Note: The recommended survey methods and intensities within these Procedures have been developed with consideration to *DELWP Survey Standards* for each of the key threatened species).

4.4.1. Targeted Species

Threatened species considered significant and important for identification and protection at the coupe level are those recognised as being either unique, or outstanding relative to other examples in the same region because of their size, numbers, frequency, quality, density or socio-economic importance.

The prioritisation process for the target species chosen for these additional surveys recognises that different species are more rare than others, exploit different home ranges, have varied habitat requirements, face unique threats and extinction risks; therefore different overall risk profiles in each of our operational regions and at different operational scales.

Table 2. indicates the current list of threatened species that VicForests aim to identify during a Targeted Species Survey, dependant on the geographic region in which the coupe is located and subject to a specific set of 'detection-likelihood' Criterion.

Table 2. Target species and applicable criterion for Targeted Species Survey

| Common Name / Scientific Name | Survey Criterion |
|---|--------------------|
| Giant Burrowing Frog, <i>Heleioporus australiacus</i> Greater Glider, <i>Petaurus volans</i> Large Brown Tree Frog, <i>Litoria littlejohni</i> Long-footed Potoroo, <i>Potorous longipes</i> * Mallacoota Burrowing Crayfish, <i>Engaeus Mallacoota</i> Masked Owl, <i>Tyto tenebricosa</i> Orbost Spiny Crayfish, <i>Euastacus diversus</i> Powerful Owl, <i>Ninox strenua</i> Sooty Owl, <i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i> Southern Barred Frog, <i>Mixophyes balbus</i> Spot-tailed Quoll, <i>Dasyurus maculates</i> * Spotted Tree Frog, <i>Litoria spenceri</i> Yellow-bellied Glider, <i>Petaurus australis</i> | Criterion 1 |
| Leadbeater's Possum, <i>Gymnobelideus leadbeateri</i> * | Criterion 2 |
| Koala, <i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> | Criterion 3 |

Note: Those species with an * are also designated as High Conservation Values in accordance with [VicForests Strategy for Assessing and Maintaining High Conservation Values](#).

4.4.2. High Risk Coupes

High-Risk coupes are selected on the basis of a coupe meeting a number of criteria designed to indicate increased likelihood of a particular threatened species or group of threatened species inhabiting the forests within or within close proximity to the proposed coupe area.

VicForests currently use three sets of Criterion when considering 'high-risk' coupes. These criterion are specific to the target species (or group of target species) and the region the coupe is located as indicated within Table 2.

Coupes requiring a targeted species survey are generally selected after considering the information resulting from the desktop assessment or coupe transect stages of the Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey process. Information received from third-party threatened species detection reports may also be considered as part of the decision to undertake or not undertake a targeted species survey (See section [4.6](#) for more details on Third-party detection reports).

Criterion 1

Coupes located in East Gippsland, Tambo or North East FMAs that contain >1 hectare of Modelled Old Growth Forest mapped within the Gross Coupe Boundary (according to Government Spatial Dataset MOG2009).

Criterion 2

Coupes located within the Central Highlands that are dominated by Ash forest and are:

- a) situated within 200m of a known Leadbeater's Possum colony site;
AND/OR
- b) situated within 1km of a known hotspot of Leadbeater's Possum colonies (a hotspot includes greater than 5 verified colonies);
AND/OR
- c) Contain Zone 1A or Zone 1B Leadbeater's Possum habitat and at least 3 of the following attributes:

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

- Modelled Old Growth Forest is mapped within the gross coupe boundary (according to Government Spatial Dataset MOG2009)
- Cool-temperate Rainforest (EVC 31) is field verified as present within the Gross Coupe Boundary
- Pre-1900 origin Mountain Ash, Alpine Ash or Shining Gum trees are field verified as present within the Gross Coupe Boundary
- Montane Riparian Thicket (EVC 41) is field verified as present within the gross coupe boundary
- An ANU Leadbeater's Possum Monitoring site (stag watch site) is present within the Gross Coupe Boundary

Criterion 3

Coupes located in a known high density koala population area and a coupe transect field survey confirms the presence of one or more of the following Koala forage tree species in the coupe

- Manna Gum, *Eucalyptus viminalis*
- Swamp Gum, *Eucalyptus ovata*
- River Red Gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*
- Southern-Blue Gum, *Eucalyptus globulus*

4.4.2.1. Additional Notes on Targeted Species Survey Triggers or High risk coupes

Where a coupe is identified as requiring a Targeted Species Survey, only those species likely to be present within the coupe should be targeted for survey, as determined by the presence of suitable habitat. For example, where species specific habitat such as permanent streams and streamside vegetation are absent within the coupe boundary, surveys for aquatic dependant fauna such as Crustaceans or Amphibians may not be required.

If at any stage during a Coupe Transect, specific habitat features as listed in section 4.3 of this instruction are observed, seek advice from the VicForests Conservation Biologist as to whether the presence of these features may trigger the need for a targeted species survey or more intensive field inspection. All decision-making must be clearly recorded within the relevant Forest Coupe Plan or associated coupe file.

Threatened species lists, associated habitat triggers and detection thresholds can be found in [VicForests Procedures - Targeted Species Surveys](#).

4.4.3. Targeted Species Survey Scheduling

Tactical Planning are responsible for providing Desktop Assessment and Coupe Transect outputs to Operational Planners, who are responsible for identifying and prioritising coupes that require a targeted species survey prior to scheduling them for harvest commencement. Key features within or adjacent to a coupe that indicate the potential presence of a threatened species must be clearly communicated from Tactical Planning to Operational Planning and this information used to create lists of coupes that may require a Targeted Species Survey.

Regional Operations Planners are responsible for:

1. Maintaining an up to date coupe commencement schedule (Rolling Operations Plan) that considers all constraints and contractual obligations;

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

2. Providing a primary contact point for survey team leaders to ensure they have appropriate maps, information and contacts in order to undertake the required work; and
3. Communicating the Targeted Species Survey schedules and outcomes of these surveys to the Operations Harvesting team.
4. Raising a CENGEA Alert for each coupe assessed as 'high-risk' and requiring a targeted species survey prior to commencement.

This coordination is critical to ensure that harvesting does not commence until coupes have undergone the appropriate biodiversity survey intensity and all relevant survey results and management actions have been finalised.

4.5. Detections of threatened species during the operation

Detections of threatened species, habitat or other biodiversity values can also occur after the timber harvesting operation or associated activity has commenced. Some operations can be conducted in stages over several years, in which time new information, or third-party reports can be received and warrant review, validation and actioning.

The Operations Forester supervising an active operation must direct the contractor to temporarily cease work if new information or an alleged detection is reported within the coupe area during the operation or it is alleged a detection nearby will be impacted by the continuing of the operation. Operations should be temporarily halted for such time as to allow appropriate review and/or investigation of a new detection by the Operations Forester and Forest Performance Officer.

Where the impacts of the allegations are not clear, advice is to be sought by the Manager Forest Performance, or Manager Forest Practices in accordance with the process illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

4.6. Third Party Threatened Species Reports

VicForests often receives information about threatened species and/or their habitat through reports provided by external third parties, including members of the general public. Validation of the information received and verification of reported records in the field are particularly important steps in the management and incorporation of this information into VicForests planning processes and is the responsibility of VicForests Conservation Biologist.

VicForests process for validation and verification of third party reports is described in [Appendix 3](#) and summarised in Figure 2. When VicForests receives a validated threatened species report, the Conservation Biologist must provide operational planning staff with sufficient information to manage the detection appropriately or to gather any additional information required to progress verification of the report at the coupe level by completing a *Pre-harvest Biodiversity Survey Siting Action Form* ([Appendix 1](#)).

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

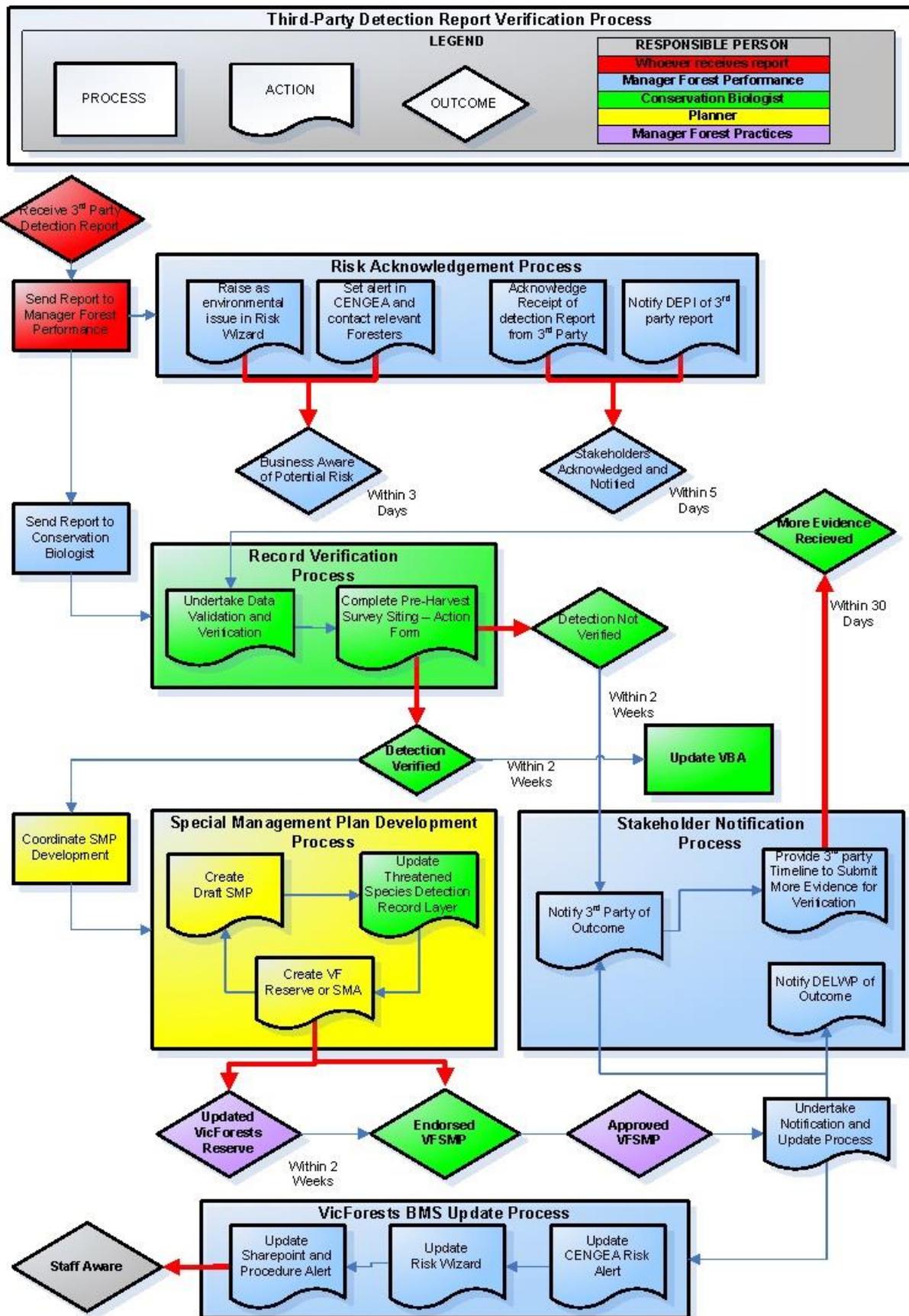


Figure 2 VicForests process for assessing and implementing outcomes from third-party detection reports

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

4.7. Research and Long-term Monitoring

To allow VicForests to gather information about species which have large home ranges, research and monitoring may be implemented across a much larger spatial scale than the coupe level. This approach is aimed at enabling VicForests to predict the presence of such species in future areas planned for harvest and incorporate this information into our forward planning. Such approaches seek to achieve our long-term objective to improve knowledge about distribution patterns, habitat requirements and best management practices for threatened species.

VicForests Research and Development Plan outlines the current and proposed research and monitoring projects for biodiversity and threatened species management across VicForests Forest Management Unit (FMU). Such projects must be proposed to and prioritised by VicForests Research Committee, with responsibility for development and implementation of the projects coordinated by either the VicForests Conservation Biologist or VicForests Forest Scientist.

The locations for landscape-scale research and monitoring projects may be determined through Desktop Assessment of previous verified records of threatened species recorded within the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) or by targeting known habitat areas. In each of these cases, targeted research and monitoring must be undertaken in accordance with a VicForests Project Plan.

4.8. Implementation of Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Actions

When a positive detection for a species occurs at a coupe the appropriate regulatory prescriptions must be determined, recorded within the Forest Coupe Plan and fully implemented. Threatened species prescriptions are outlined in *VicForests Procedures – Regulatory Handbook*, which incorporates regulatory requirements from The Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statements, DELWP Forest Management Plans and other relevant legislative instruments or Instructions.

If a Targeted Species Survey has been undertaken, the Conservation Biologist must review reports from the surveyor and recommend an appropriate action. For each surveyed coupe, information regarding the location of positive detections, the species identified, the detection method and the recommended action related to detection must be recorded in the *Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Action Form* ([Appendix 1](#)).

When survey results show that no threatened species were detected, the action form may state that there is no further action required and that harvesting can commence in that coupe.

Every recommended action must be first endorsed by either the Manager Forest Performance or Manager Forest Practices before proceeding or recommencing operations

All *Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Actions Forms*, once completed, endorsed and signed, must be forwarded to regional Operational Planning staff for implementation.

4.8.1. VicForests Special Management Plans

For detections resulting in a prescribed management action that includes the creation of new Reserve areas or Special Management Areas, an approved VicForests Special Management Plan (VFSMP) is required before harvesting can commence. All VFSMP's are to be compiled using the format in [Appendix 2](#), and as a minimum must include a map of the VFSMP area and indicate the location of the detection sites along with the proposed Reserve areas or Special Management Areas as determined through consultation with relevant regional DELWP Biodiversity staff.

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

Once drafted the following steps are to be taken:

1. Relevant Planner to submit the Draft VFSMP to regional DELWP Land and Fire staff for comment. A minimum consultation period of 15 days should be allowed
2. Relevant Planner to forward the VFSMP and associated VicForests Reserve Areas or Special Management Area shapefiles to the VicForests Conservation Biologist and Manager Forest Practices for review
3. Notify the relevant Planner once the Conservation Biologist and either the Manager Forest Practices or Manager Forest performance is satisfied that the VFSMP, VicForests Reserve Area, VicForests Special Management Area and associated maps adequately address findings and recommendations outlined in the *Pre-harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Actions Form*
4. If the threatened species detection also requires the creation of new 'Special Protection Zone' (SPZ) or Special Management Zone (SMZ), the relevant Planner must also prepare a Zoning Amendment request and make application to the Secretary, DELWP to have the Forest Management Zoning Scheme changed.
5. The relevant Planner to forward the VFSMP (and associated Zoning Amendment request if relevant) to the DELWP Regional Program Manager and the DELWP Timber Harvesting and Compliance group via email: fpd.reports@dse.vic.gov.au.
6. The relevant planner to notify and provide the signed VFSMP to the Manager Forest Performance for inclusion on VicForests Business Management System (BMS).

Only once steps 1-6 are completed can harvesting commence under the amended prescriptions as proposed within the VFSMP.

Refer to *VicForests Instruction - Reserve Areas, Special Management Areas and other Exclusions* for details about establishing VFSMPs.

4.8.2. VicForests Reserve and Special Management Area Layers

All approved VFSMPs, VicForests Reserves and VicForests SMAs implemented in response to a threatened species detection or other biodiversity value must be added to VicForests Reserve Area and/or the VicForests Special Management Area Layer. These layers are a spatially referenced regulatory dataset that represents forested areas containing values requiring protection or special management conditions during future planning and conduct of timber harvesting or associated operational activities.

Refer to *VicForests Instruction - Reserve Areas, Special Management Areas and other Exclusions* for further information

4.8.3. Coupe File

The Coupe File must contain all relevant information regarding Pre-harvest Biodiversity Survey outcomes including details of any species detections, prescriptions applied and any VicForests Reserves or VicForests SMAs depicted clearly on coupe maps. VFSMP's and details of any communication regarding Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Surveys (including the *Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Actions Form*) must be filed within the Forest Coupe Plan. It is the responsibility of Operations Planning and Operations Foresters to ensure that all Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey information and management actions are included in the Forest Coupe Plan and are implemented as part of the operation.

4.8.4. Reporting to DELWP

All Targeted Species Survey reports produced by Ecologists or by VicForests staff, are to be collated by VicForests Conservation Biologist and the detection site locations and details of threatened species are to be entered into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas via an online

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

lodgement process. The information provided must include the date of sighting, GPS coordinates, species recorded and method of detection.

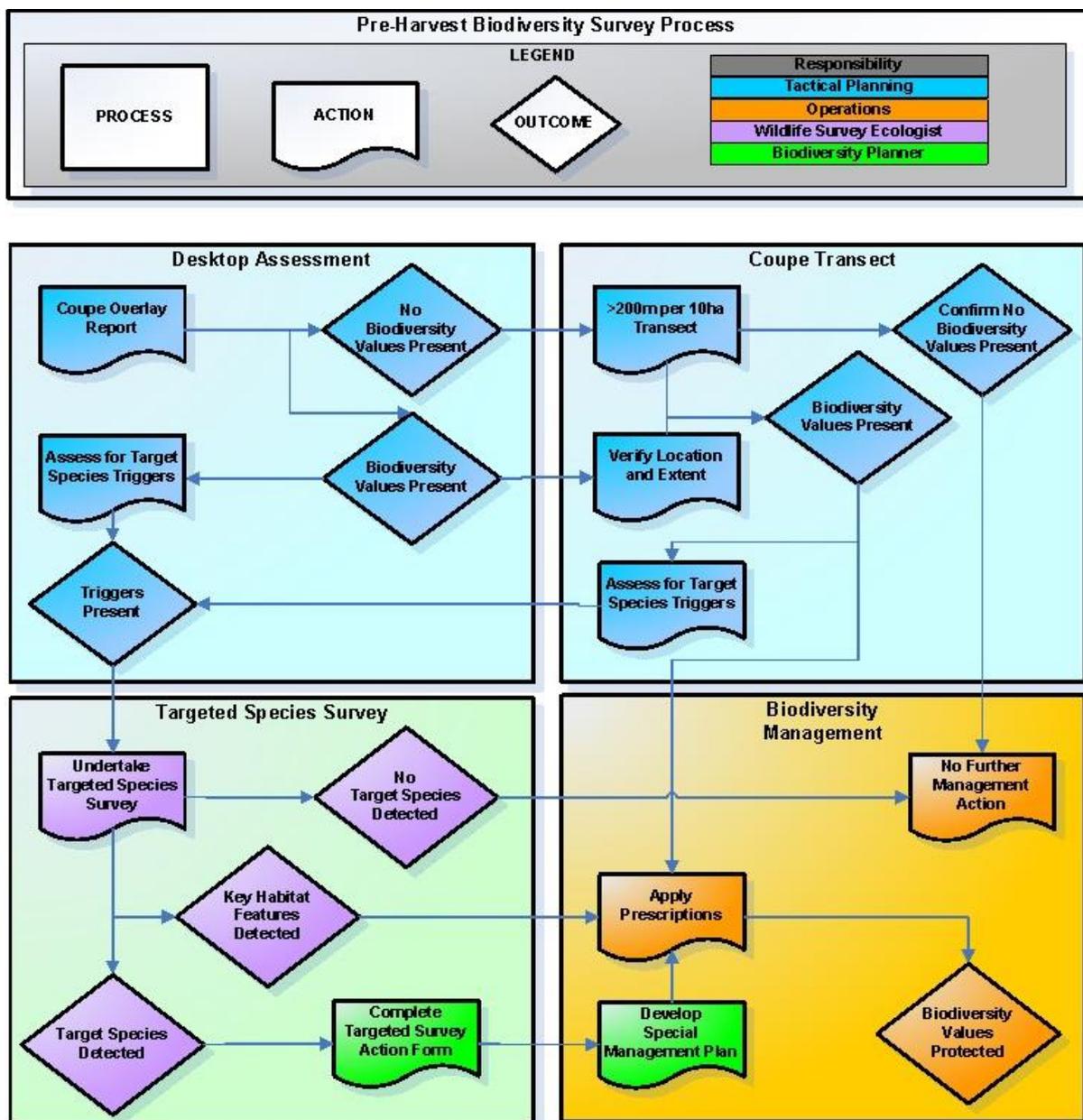
4.8.5. Responsibilities overview

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|--|
| General Manager Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve instructions, procedures and risk management strategy |
| Manager Forest Practices, Manager Forest Performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regulatory oversight, endorsement of recommended actions or variations to recommended actions • Endorse changes to instructions and procedures • Manage the approval and dissemination of approved documents, datasets and action forms, including update of the VicForests Reserves and Special Management Area layers • Manage alleged breaches, third party detections or compliance investigations • Manage conflict or dispute surrounding pre-harvest biodiversity survey process or their outcomes between VicForests and third parties, contracted surveyors or DELWP. • Designated reviewer of Instructions and procedures |
| Manager Tactical Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all Targeted Species Survey requirements identified during reconnaissance are recorded in CENGEA (record 'Alert' on coupe) |
| Tactical Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce list of coupes on TRP containing old growth and EVC's for new and amended TRP's • Undertake Desktop Assessment of all coupes • Undertake Coupe Transect on all coupes |
| Conservation Biologist, Biodiversity Planner or Biodiversity Research Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in development and maintenance of appropriate policies, strategies and risk management processes • Provide advice on appropriate survey methods and management actions for individual species • Consult with VicForests Planning or operations staff in compiling and implementing VFSMPs • Liaise with DELWP on survey methods, prescriptions and landscape level approaches to surveying and associated research or targeted monitoring • Review final survey reports and communicate results to Operational Planners via VicForests Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Action Form • Provide verified threatened species detections to DELWP for inclusion into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). • Engage survey contractors • Liaise with Operational Planners regarding packaged coupes requiring Targeted Species Surveys, quarterly • Endorse threatened species VicForests SMP • Liaise and consult with Regional DELWP Biodiversity and Forest Management staff during compilation of VSFMPs • Review and provide advice to changes in Instructions and Procedures |

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Operational Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all coupes on the ROP that have been triggered for a Targeted Species Survey Produce priority lists of coupes requiring Targeted Species Survey Liaise with Biodiversity Planner regarding packaged coupes requiring Targeted Species Surveys, quarterly Produce maps and information for survey contractors, and act as key contact Ensure Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey findings are documented in the Coupe Plan and that appropriate prescriptions are implemented Ensure appropriate Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Surveys are completed prior to Coupe Plans being produced for harvesting Update and maintain 'Survey and Progress' schedule spreadsheet |
|----------------------|---|

4.8.6. Pre-harvest Biodiversity Survey Process Overview



Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

4.9. Risk

This instruction addresses the following risks:

| Risk | Risk Rating |
|--|-------------|
| 153: Failure to identify threatened flora and fauna on planned coupes | Medium |
| 154: Failure to conform with legislative requirements | High |
| 156: Inadequate protection of threatened species or ecosystems | Medium |
| 261: Leadbeater's Possum is detected within 200m of a proposed current timber harvesting coupe | Medium |
| 262: Death or injury to Leadbeater's Possum or damage to colonised habitat | High |

4.10. Document management and retention

Unless stipulated within this Instruction, documentation generated from this Instruction must be managed according to [VicForests Records Management Policy](#).

This Instruction should be retained for a minimum of 7 years after it is superseded by another version. If this instruction needs to be retained for a longer period of time, this needs to be stated clearly, with justification in this section.

5. Definitions and abbreviations

| Term | Definition |
|-------|---|
| DELWP | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning |
| EVC | Ecological Vegetation Class |
| FMP | Forest Management Plan |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| SMA | Special Management Area |
| VBA | Victorian Biodiversity Atlas |
| VSFMP | VicForest's Special Management Plan |

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Sighting Action Form

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Survey Date: | | Survey Provider: | | Package No. | |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--|

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Coupe Number: | | Coupe Name: | |
| Target Species Detected: | | | |
| Detection Method(s): | | | |

| |
|-------------------------|
| Survey Findings: |
| |

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Recommended Action(s): |
| |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Actions Assigned By: | | Title: | |
| Signed: | | Date: | |

| |
|---|
| Action Undertaken or Variation to Recommended Action: |
| <small>Note: Any variations to recommended actions need to be re-signed by person who assigned initial actions or relevant Manager.</small> |
| |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Actions Completed By: | | Title: | |
| Signed: | | Date: | |
| Actions Reviewed By: | | Title: | |
| Signed: | | Date: | |

Appendix 2: VicForests Special Management Plan (Template)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Forest Management Area: | <i>Insert Forest Management Area</i> |
| Forest Management Block: | <i>Insert Forest Management Block number and name</i> |
| SMA Number (if applicable): | <i>Insert SMP number</i> |
| Planned Prepared by: | <i>Insert name, title and organisation of person responsible for preparing the plan</i> |
| Date: | |

Featured Attributes:

List the species or attribute which the SMZ is to be managed for.

SMP Area:

*xx ha insert area of the SMP.
(Source: insert the method which the area was determined)*

Site Description:

Briefly describe the site where the SMP is located including forest types. Make reference to attached map where appropriate.

Special Management Plan Objectives:

Briefly describe the objectives of the special management plan and the attributes which are to benefit from the additional management requirements.

Special Management Plan Prescriptions:

Clearly describe the prescriptions which apply to the SMP as a whole.

ie 40% of SMP to be excluded from harvesting.

Coupe Management Prescription:

Clearly and succinctly describe the coupe management prescriptions that are to apply for any harvesting, roading or silviculture activities that are undertaken within this SMP.

Monitoring of the SMP:

Clearly describe any monitoring that is required to ensure the objectives of the SMP plan are achieved.

References:

List any references referred to within this plan.

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|--|
| Signed: | | Date: | |
|----------------|--|--------------|--|

Attached: VicForests Special Management Plan Map

Pre-Harvest Biodiversity Survey Instruction

Appendix 3: Validation and Verification of Third Party Reports

Upon receipt of a threatened species report from third party sources, VicForests undertakes a validation and verification procedure (in line with DELWP threatened species reporting standards) to ensure that all third-party threatened species or habitat detections are considered in a consistent and efficient manner.

1. Information Requirements for Report and Data Validation

VicForests first looks at the quality of the data being provided, to ensure that a repeatable detection method was used that allows for potential follow-up field verification of the detection to take place. VicForests requires that the following information be provided by third-parties as a minimum:

1. Name and contact details of the person making the report;
2. Date, time and location coordinates of survey and/or detection;
3. A description of the method used to detect the threatened species/habitat value; and
4. Complete copies of all evidence collected at the survey site
 - Photographs and/or video
 - Map and/or GPS Data

Third-Party Reports that do not meet this minimum are unable to be verified.

VicForests may seek to meet in person with the third party who provided the report in order to further verify information or visit the site where the information was captured. Where the minimum information requirements (above) are not met, VicForests will contact the third party to request additional information. VicForests will allow up to 10 business days following receipt of a request for further information to determine whether or not verification will proceed. If the required minimum information is unable to be provided, the report will remain unverified and the person making the report will be notified.

2. Validation process

Threatened species or habitat reports may require field validation before they are designated for further action. Where field validation occurs, all reports will be assessed against criteria that are specific to the species or habitat values reported. VicForests may seek assistance from species experts and/or DELWP for the verification of threatened species records. In many cases DELWP will undertake verification prior to inclusion in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.

All reports will be assessed by VicForests to determine whether:

1. The species is accurately identified
2. The claimed location of the report can be verified (this may require a field inspection)
3. The species has been legitimately found at the location

In the first instance, all threatened species reports received by VicForests will be forwarded to DELWP via the details below:

Forests and Parks Division
The Department of Environment and Primary Industries
PO Box 500, East Melbourne, VIC, 3002

Email: FPD.reports@dse.vic.gov.au