

Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

National nature laws not moving swiftly enough to save the Swift Parrot from extinction

The Australian national bird organisation BirdLife is coming to Toowoomba on May 8 to share its knowledge on how nature laws are failing our birds and what we can do to help them. BirdLife Australia is calling for stronger nature laws that genuinely protect our wonderful birds and their habitats.

A rare sight in Toowoomba these days, the Swift Parrot is Critically Endangered nationally. With fewer than 1,000 pairs left in the wild, it is predicted to go extinct if conditions don't improve quickly.* Destruction of precious remaining breeding habitat is one of the greatest threats to the Parrot's survival, yet continues to go unchecked.

In Queensland, urban development is of particular concern to the Swift Parrot at the northern extent of their winter range, and key habitats in the Toowoomba region in particular (alongside the Gold Coast and Greater Brisbane) are at risk from negative impacts associated with residential and industrial development.

"I have absolutely no doubts Swifties are under-reported here and elsewhere in South East Queensland. I believe targeted monitoring in the Toowoomba region will reveal they visit more frequently than the records suggest. I also believe researchers can better predict when this will occur in future.

My view is the legislation has to allow sufficient time - years if necessary - to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a known or suspected habitat, for example Toowoomba's escarpment parks, is a key habitat. The habitat needs to be protected and the research needs to be done.

Figuratively, we need to leave the table set, just in case the Swifties are counting on their favourite restaurant and accommodation in the Sunshine State." – Mick Atzeni, Toowoomba Bird Observers.

Event info:

Date: Tuesday 08 May

Time: 6:45pm for a 7:00pm start (runs until 8:30pm)

Venue: Laurel Bank Park Hall, 50 Hill St, Toowoomba

Speakers: Mick Atzeni, Margaret Quixley (BirdLife Australia),

Spokesperson: Mick Atzeni, President of Toowoomba Bird Observers, mob: 0408 155 528

Event title: Act for Birds Community Forum - A conversation about birds and nature laws

*A paper published this month by Geyle et al. has forecast the Swift Parrot's chances of extinction at 31% in the next 20 years. Full citation: Geyle Hayley M., Woinarski John C. Z., Baker G. Barry, Dickman Chris R., Dutson Guy, Fisher Diana O., Ford Hugh, Holdsworth Mark, Jones Menna E., Kutt Alex, Legge Sarah, Leiper Ian, Loyn Richard, Murphy Brett P., Menkhorst Peter, Reside April E., Ritchie Euan G., Roberts Finley E., Tingley Reid, Garnett Stephen T. (2018) Quantifying extinction risk and forecasting the number of impending Australian bird and mammal extinctions. *Pacific Conservation Biology*, -.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Ondrus". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Frank Ondrus, President – HOPE Inc., ph 07 4639 2135

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