



## Fauna Technical Note No. 7: Wildlife Habitat Clumps



*The Fauna Technical Note Series provides information for Forest Practices Officers on fauna management in production forests. These technical notes are advisory guidelines and should be read in conjunction with the requirements of the Forest Practices Code.*

*Technical notes can be accessed on the Forest Practices Authority's website: [www.fpa.tas.gov.au](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au)*

### 1. Introduction

Wildlife habitat clumps are implemented in forestry operations for a wide range of reasons, including retention of habitat for flora and fauna. This technical note is intended to clarify the requirements for wildlife habitat clump (WHC) retention for different silvicultural regimes, and to better define some of the associated terminology.

The flow diagram (Figure 1) can be used to select the forestry activity being planned and a final prescription for habitat tree retention.

Most forestry situations are included in the flow diagram. However, there will be situations where further consultation with Forest Practices Authority (FPA) Biodiversity Program staff will be necessary to decide the requirements for habitat tree retention.

Further information can be obtained from Taylor (1991) 'Fauna Conservation in Production Forests in Tasmania' or by contacting staff of the FPA Biodiversity Program.

### 2. Using the flow diagram

Start at the top of the flow diagram by choosing the appropriate forestry activity. **Any activities not covered by the flow diagram should be referred to FPA Biodiversity Program staff.**

Please refer to the definitions provided in this technical note to assist in using the flow diagram and prescriptions. **Note that the guidelines for prescriptions for in-coupe and boundary retention of wildlife habitat clumps are provided as part of this technical note.**

### 3. Combining special values

WHCs can be used to target special values requirements. For example, a WHC used to retain habitat for hollow-using fauna can be placed over a sawmill site requiring protection or a location of a threatened plant.

### 4. Using WHCs to target threatened species requirements

WHCs are primarily aimed at maintaining biodiversity values (i.e. non-threatened species) of an area by providing local refugia and by enhancing the ability of species to recolonise logged areas. In some situations, however, retention of WHCs may be recommended to protect certain habitat important for threatened species (e.g. decaying logs for velvet worms or deep leaf litter patches for stag beetles). In some situations it may be that a modified form of habitat tree retention is required for some species or forest types (e.g. single tree retention of all age classes of blue gum for swift parrots throughout an entire coupe). The FPA Biodiversity Program or the *Threatened Fauna Adviser* planning tool will provide such variation to the standard *Forest Practices Code* provisions where necessary.

## 5. Definitions

The following definitions are provided for use with the flow diagram and prescriptions:

### *Habitat Tree*

A habitat tree is a mature living tree selected to be retained in a coupe because it has features of special value for fauna (e.g. hollows). Habitat trees should be selected on the basis of size and the presence of hollows. In situations where no suitable trees are present, large trees are to be selected which have the potential to develop hollows over time.

### *Wildlife Habitat Clump*

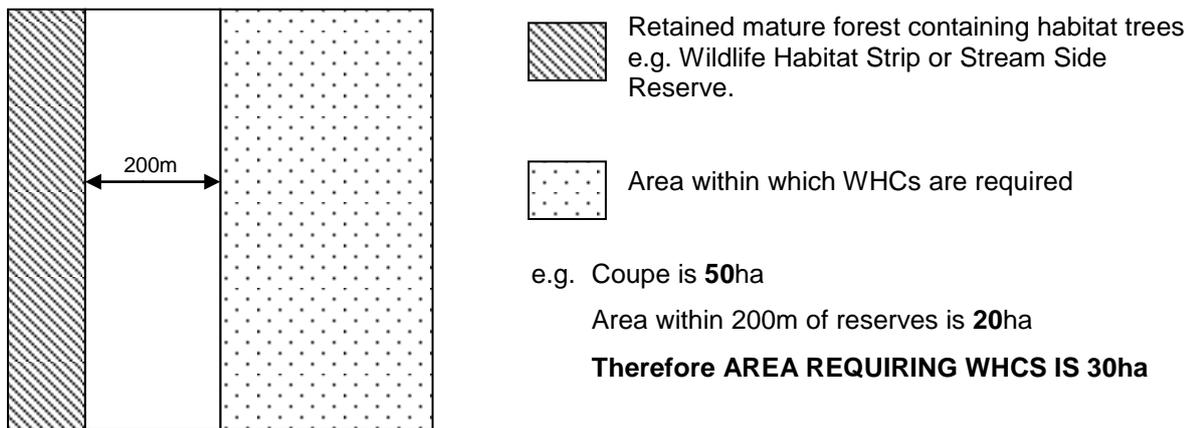
A wildlife habitat clump is an area containing at least two habitat trees set aside in a coupe to aid in the maintenance of biodiversity or other special values.

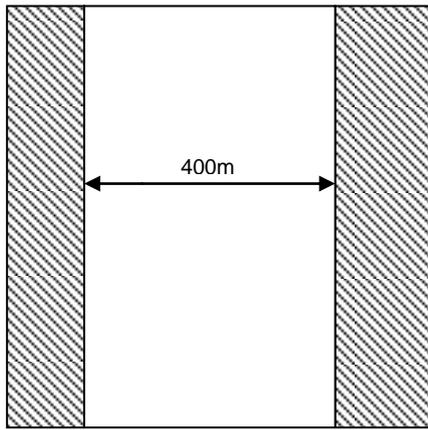
### *Reserve*

The flow diagram refers to 'reserved areas'. This is intended to refer to areas of retained forest which will remain unlogged for several decades (in the order of 60–100 years). Reserves on the boundary of coupes include formal reserves such as Forest Reserves, informal reserves such as wildlife habitat strips and other excluded areas such as streamside reserves. These areas should not be considered as 'reserves' when using the flow diagram if they do not contain habitat trees (e.g. buttongrass moorland, grassland or rainforest). Areas set aside from logging due to silvicultural or operational constraints (e.g. steep country or non-commercial forest) can be considered as reserves when using the flow diagram provided that these areas contain suitable habitat trees. Reserves within coupes include areas retained for special values such as landscape or archaeological reserves and streamside reserves (excluding streamside reserves of class 4 streams) provided that these areas contain habitat trees.

### *200 m rule (applied to in-coupe prescriptions)*

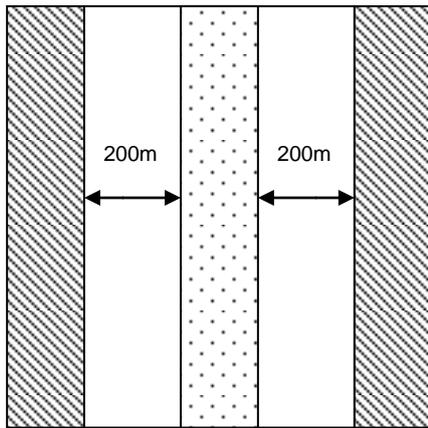
When calculating in-coupe WHCs requirements, there is a zone within 200m of retained mature forest for which no WHCs are required. The following three diagrams of hypothetical coupes show the implications of this rule for calculations.





Retained mature forest containing habitat trees e.g. Wildlife Habitat Strip or Stream Side Reserve.

All of coupe is within 200 m of reserves  
**therefore NO WILDLIFE HABITAT CLUMPS ARE REQUIRED.**



Retained mature forest containing habitat trees e.g. Wildlife Habitat Strip or Stream Side Reserve.



Area within which WHCs are required

e.g. Coupe is **50** ha

Area within 200 m of reserves is **40**ha

**Therefore AREA REQUIRING WHCs IS 10 ha**

## 6. When using the in-coupe prescription

- Apply the '200 m rule' to determine the area within the coupe requiring the retention of WHCs.
- Retain WHCs at a rate of one clump every 5 ha in the area of the coupe in which WHCs are required.
- In harvest areas where a large number of WHCs are required, consideration should be given to consolidating WHCs (e.g. consider halving the number of WHCs but including twice the number of habitat trees).
- Where a harvest area does not contain any habitat trees, WHCs should include the most mature trees present.
- WHCs should contain at least 2–3 mature trees with hollows (i.e. habitat trees) and a range of other ages of trees/shrubs.
- The range of tree species occurring in the harvest area should be represented within the WHCs.
- The WHCs should be placed to include the range of habitats within the harvest area (e.g. rocky knolls, swampy patches, slopes, flats).
- Ensure WHCs are protected from harvesting activities and high intensity burns. Note that light top disposal burning activities within partially logged coupes or fuel reduction burning activities over a large area is acceptable provided, where possible, that the intensity of burning is minimised within WHCs.
- Ensure WHCs are marked on the FPP map and are flagged on the ground. It is recommended that standard colours are used to flag WHCs and that an appropriately trained person (e.g. FPO or Accredited Fauna Officer) marks WHCs prior to the commencement of operations.

- Ensure prescriptions for retention of WHCs are included in the FPP and explained to contractors. Prescriptions for WHCs may need to be in several sections of the FPP including felling, conservation of other values and reforestation (particularly burning) sections.
- See pp 95–97 of *Fauna Conservation in Production Forests in Tasmania* for more detail and Figure 1 of this technical note.

## 7. When using the boundary prescription

- Retain WHCs in patches of approx 50 m x 20 m along the harvest boundary where the boundary does not border mature, reserved forest.
- Retain WHCs at a rate of one clump every 200 m. WHCs should be placed in eucalypt forest rather than in non-forest vegetation types (e.g. buttongrass) or non-eucalypt forest types (e.g. rainforest). In situations where boundaries are made up of non-eucalypt vegetation types or plantation, consideration should be given to consolidating WHCs with existing reserves (e.g. streamside reserves) or increasing the size of the WHCs to prevent the effects of windthrow. However, under these circumstances WHCs should still be retained in a number of different areas which capture the range of forest available (i.e. they should not be only placed along streamside reserves).
- Retain WHCs adjacent to one another when adjoining coupes are to be harvested.
- Where a harvest area does not contain any habitat trees, WHCs should include the most mature trees present.
- WHCs should contain at least 2–3 mature trees with hollows (i.e. habitat trees) and a range of other ages of trees/shrubs.
- Ensure WHCs are protected from harvesting activities and high intensity burns.
- Ensure WHCs are marked on the FPP map and are flagged on the ground. It is recommended that standard colours are used to flag WHCs and that an appropriately trained person (e.g. FPO or Accredited Fauna Officer) marks WHCs on the ground prior to the commencement of operations.
- Ensure prescriptions for retention of WHCs are included in the FPP and explained to contractors. Prescriptions for WHCs may need to be in several sections of the FPP including felling, conservation of other values and reforestation (particularly burning) sections.
- See pp 95–97 of *Fauna Conservation in Production Forests in Tasmania* for more detail and Figure 1 of this technical note.

## Further reading

Taylor, R 1991, *Fauna Conservation in Production Forests in Tasmania*, Forestry Commission, Hobart, Tasmania.

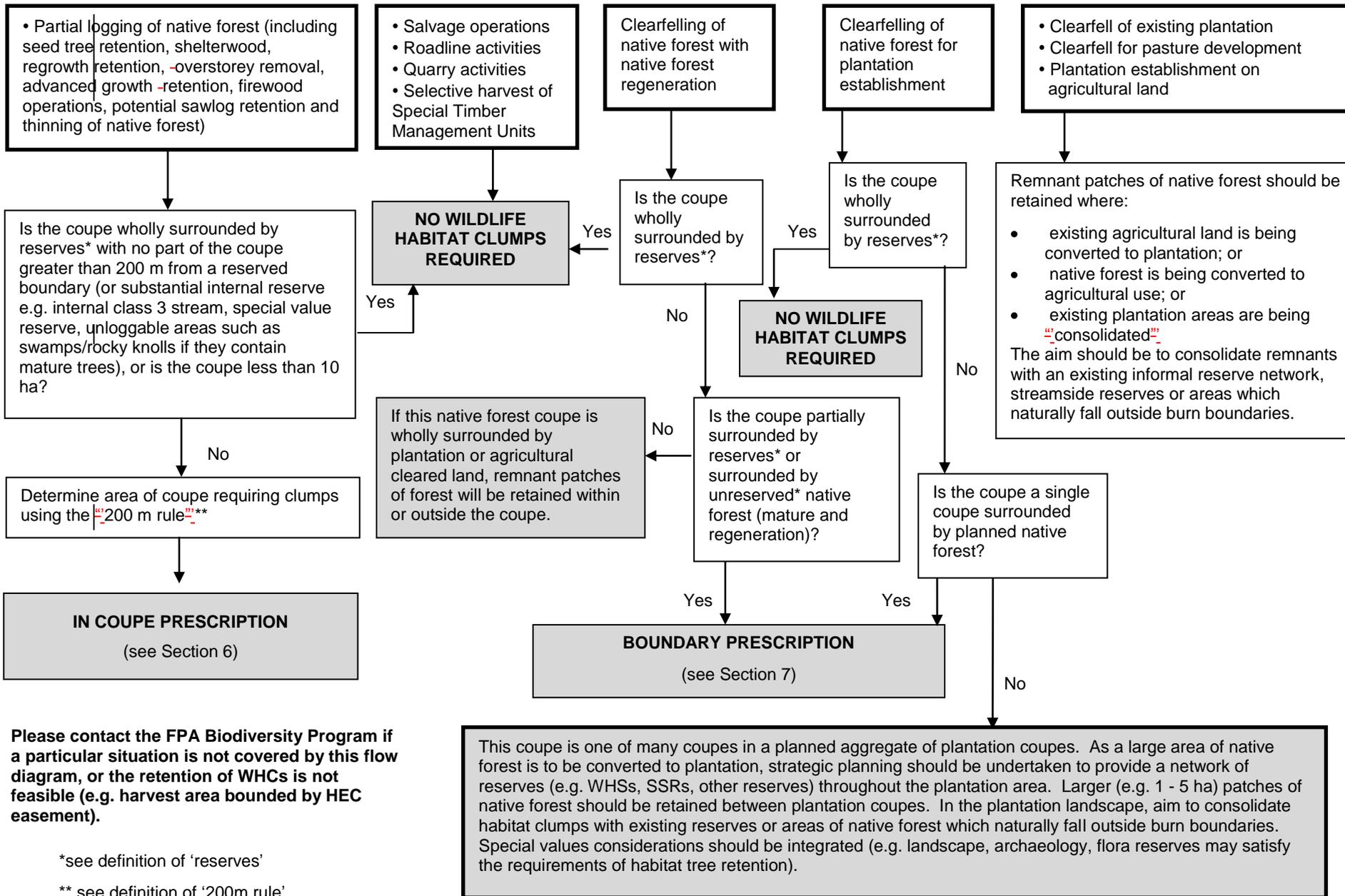
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Figure 1. Flow diagram for determining appropriate WHC prescriptions



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## Version Control

Version	Date	Author(s)	Summary of changes
2	Feb 2010	Biodiversity Section Staff	Document previously available on FPA website revised, including addition of new FPA logo and additional figure to illustrate 200 m rule. Previous revisions pre-date document control.
2.1	Feb 2011	Nina Roberts	Note: the wording of this document is identical to that approved by the FPA Biodiversity Manager in early 2010, except for the addition of document control information.