



Draft Forest Management Plan 2024–2033

Fact Sheet: Conservation reserves in the forest management area



Tingle Forest.

A key focus of the *Draft Forest Management Plan 2024-2033* is to value and protect our south-west forests. This is captured within the strategic goals of the plan.

Western Australia's conservation reserve system is the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation where species, communities and natural processes are offered protection from many external threats and pressures. Conservation reserves provide large areas of intact ecosystems that buffer environmental changes and support resilience in the face of a changing climate. These reserves also protect social, cultural, and spiritual values and provide opportunities for Aboriginal Western Australians to connect with country and their identity as traditional owners.

Under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), Western Australia's national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, and State forest and timber reserves are vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission (the Commission). Reserves can be jointly vested in the Commission and an Aboriginal body corporate.

When land is vested in an organisation, it is placed under the care, control and management of that organisation.

In Western Australia, management of reserves is undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on behalf of the Commission; either solely, or jointly with traditional owners, as well as the broader community and key stakeholders.

Types of reserves in the Forest Management Plan area

National parks and conservation parks

National parks have outstanding natural values which are managed for public use and enjoyment. They also have national significance for scenic, cultural or biological values, and can accommodate recreation that maintains these values.

Conservation parks have mostly regional or local, rather than national significance. Both are managed for sustainable nature-based tourism and recreation, to conserve plants and animals and to preserve features of archaeological, historical, or scientific interest.

Nature reserves

Nature reserves have high conservation values as they represent natural ecosystems and provide habitat for particular species of plants and animals. They are managed to protect and restore natural environments, and to promote the study and appreciation of nature. Recreational activities that are compatible with this purpose include bushwalking, nature appreciation and bird watching.

State forest and timber reserves

Under the *Forests Act 1918* once an area had been declared State forest it could not be used for purposes other than forestry, or be alienated for other uses such as agriculture or settlement without the consent of both Houses of Parliament.

State forest is now managed under the CALM Act, for purposes that include recreation, nature conservation and water catchment protection and the optimum yield production of exotic timber species (plantations). Commercial activities such as beekeeping and the sustainable harvesting of native plants can also occur in State forest.

Timber reserves created under the CALM Act are managed similarly to State forest.

Reserves under section 5(1)(g) or 5(1)(h) of the CALM Act

These reserves are managed for a variety of purposes including conservation, recreation, tourism, infrastructure, traditional Aboriginal uses, education and scientific research.

Some reserves deemed to be of high conservation or community value are classified as class 'A' under the *Land Administration Act 1997*. All other reserves are referred to as unclassified reserves. Most national parks and nature reserves are class 'A'. Any major changes to class 'A' reserves must be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

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Lane Poole Reserve is a combination of reserve types including conservation park, CALM Act section 5(1)(g) reserves, and national park.

Other land categories in the Forest Management Plan area

Forest Conservation Areas

The CALM Act also allows for the further classification of lands, including forest conservation areas (FCAs) to be created providing for limits on the permitted activities in designated areas. FCAs are determined on an area by area basis, with restrictions relating to the maintenance of biodiversity. FCAs are established by notice in the Government Gazette and amendments can be made by notice in Parliament.

Disturbance Avoidance Zones

Disturbance Avoidance Zones is a new term for areas previously identified as informal reserves. These are relatively undisturbed areas distributed across State forest and timber reserves identified to protect aquatic ecosystems, old-growth forest, provide connectivity and landscape diversity, fauna habitat, and to protect aesthetic values along major travel routes. They make an important contribution to conservation outcomes. Informal reserves were initially established to protect areas within State forest from disturbance from timber harvesting. With the ending of commercial timber harvesting from 1 January 2024, the *Draft Forest Management Plan 2024-2033* proposes to maintain a system of Disturbance Avoidance Zones within State forest and timber reserves, as a means of continuing to minimise disturbance to the values these areas contain.

Currently nearly 1.3 million hectares of the 2.5 million hectares of lands covered by the forest management plan are in existing or proposed formal reserves, including 56 national parks. These reserves contribute to the comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation reserve system that is a requirement of the CALM Act and the *Regional Forest Agreement for the South-West Forest Region of Western Australia*.



Further reading

Learn more about reserves and protected areas on our website at dbca.wa.gov.au/parks-and-wildlife-service/forests/about-our-forests

The management of Western Australia's south-west forests will be outlined in the *Forest Management Plan 2024-2033*.

For more information visit our website at dbca.wa.gov.au/forest-management-plan