Wildlife Interactions Standard

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Official



Version	Date	Document Approver	Changes
1.0	1/07/2025	Executive People and Stakeholder	Replaces the Animal Interactions Procedure

TasNetworks acknowledges the palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal community) as the original owners and custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania). TasNetworks, acknowledges the palawa have maintained their spiritual and cultural connection to the land and water. We pay respect to Elders past and present and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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About this standard

This Standard sets out TasNetworks requirements for managing interactions between wildlife and TasNetworks assets and operational work, in accordance with all applicable environmental law and TasNetworks Environment and Sustainability Policy.

Scope

This Standard applies to all work where there is the potential to impact the environment. It includes:

- All work (including the use of mobile plant) where wildlife can be impacted
- All stages and aspects of TasNetworks asset management life cycle (planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning).

Wildlife interactions include any detrimental or potentially detrimental impact (death or injury) to native and non-native wildlife, including the products of wildlife (nests, eggs, dens) caused by TasNetworks assets and operations.

Exclusions

The Standard excludes the management of interactions with domestic animals, livestock, aggressive dogs and snakes, which pose a direct safety risk to our people, contractors or the public.

Responsibilities

All TasNetworks team members, and contractors undertaking work on TasNetworks behalf, must comply with the requirements specified in this Standard where work has the potential to impact the environment.

Work that cannot or, does not, meet the requirements in this standard, must be risk assessed, documented, and authorised by the applicable TasNetworks Executive.

Common terms and definitions

Term or Acronym	Definition	
AHT	Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania	
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan	
Clearing	Clearing means impact, or removal of vegetation involving the use of heavy machinery. Includes broadacre herbicide spraying.	
Construction work	Any work that involves the development, installation, replacement, refurbishment or upgrade of electricity infrastructure,	



Term or Acronym	Definition
	telecommunication infrastructure or facilities. including access tracks, and any other works needed to complete the job or project.
Electrocution	The death of any animal resulting from contact with live electrical apparatus.
'Emergency work' or 'fault work'	Fault jobs (asset defects) required to be completed within 7 days or as otherwise defined under <i>section 55 of the Electricity Supply Industry Act 1995</i> (Tas).
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
ENMCP	Eagle Nest Management Constraint Period
Environmental specialist	Individual with qualifications in environmental management, environmental science, ecology or similar.
EPA	Environment Protection Authority Tasmania
EPBC Act	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)
ERAPT	Environmental Risk Assessment and Planning Tool
E&S team	TasNetworks Environment & Sustainability team
Fauna	Any taxon of animal, in any stage of biological development, including eggs and any part of such taxon.
Ground disturbing work	 Any work that: disturbs the ground greater than 200mm in depth; or disturbs an area of ground greater than 1m²; or includes the use of tracked machinery; or involves mechanical clearing of vegetation.
Heavy machinery	 Heavy machinery includes any equipment used to: Perform excavation (including non-destructive digging) Perform the mechanical clearing of vegetation Undertake access track construction or maintenance work. Excludes the use of hand-held equipment (e.g. whipper snippers, chainsaws, pole saws).
HSE	Health, Safety and Environment
Mitigation measures	Actions taken to reduce the harmful effects of a hazard or risk, either by preventing the risk from occurring or minimising its impact if it does occur.
NRE Tas.	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
NVA	Natural Values Atlas
NVS	Natural Values Survey



Term or Acronym	Definition
Permit to take	Where work involves an impact on a species listed as threatened under the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> a permit to 'take' is required. 'Take' includes kill, injure, pursue, catch, damage, destroy and collect. A permit under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> is also required to take any type of protected wildlife defined under the <i>Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021.</i>
Permit to interfere	A permit under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> is required to interfere with any type of protected wildlife defined under the <i>Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021</i>
Pest animals	Generally, any non-native Tasmanian animals. Includes invasive species as defined by Biosecurity Tasmania.
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Service
RAA	Reserve activity assessment
Significant habitat	Habitat that is known to be of high priority for the maintenance of breeding populations and/or conversion, of which, to non-native vegetation is considered to result in a long-term negative impact on breeding populations of the species. Significant habitat is determined from published and unpublished scientific literature and/or via expert opinion, agreed by the Threatened Species Section (NRE Tas.) in consultation with species specialists.
Related environmental impacts	Impacts associated with a job or project that are not generally caused by the construction or modification of the primary asset. Related impacts include, but are not limited to, disposal of wastewater or soil, temporary lay-down areas, permanent or temporary access tracks, mobilisation of plant or equipment to site, increased vehicle traffic, changes to hydrology or waterflow.
Wildlife	All native Tasmanian animal species, including those listed as 'threatened' under State and Federal law, and the products of wildlife (eggs, nests, dens). It excludes livestock, pest animals and domestic animals.
Wildlife interactions	Include any detrimental, or potentially detrimental impact (death or injury) to native and non-native wildlife, including the products of wildlife (nests, eggs, dens) caused by TasNetworks assets and operations.



1. Managing wildlife interaction risks with new assets

1.1 Assessing wildlife interaction risk with assets

The risk of wildlife interacting with TasNetworks infrastructure must be assessed for all new developments, and during the replacement or upgrade of existing electricity infrastructure as per TasNetworks Environmental Risk Management Standard. Works must not be undertaken unless the risks associated with wildlife interactions have been properly assessed and wildlife mitigation measures specified.

1.2 Managing wildlife interaction risk during design

TasNetworks electricity infrastructure must be designed to minimise the risk of wildlife interactions as far as reasonably practicable. While measures should be implemented to mitigate interaction risks for all wildlife, TasNetworks prioritises the mitigation of risk to threatened species – refer to TasNetworks Threatened Bird Strategy or the list at Schedule 3 of the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tas).

At a minimum, when designing new assets or upgrading or replacing existing assets, mitigation measures to reduce wildlife interaction risk must be specified as per TasNetworks Environmental Risk Management Standard and TasNetworks Design and Construction Standards.

Standard and non-standard wildlife interaction mitigation measures include, but are not limited to the following:

- Undergrounding or partially undergrounding electricity, or telecommunication assets
- Reconfiguring assets (e.g. changing network alignment)
- Aerial bundled conductor (ABC)
- Insulated or non-conductive cross-arms (FRP)
- Increasing the separation between live electrical components (e.g. delta configuration)
- Covered conductor
- Conductor cover (including pin insulators)
- Under slung conductors on strain poles
- Bird perches
- Bird diverters
- Possum guards

Depending on the scale, complexity and the risk posed, additional wildlife interaction mitigation measures may need to be specified and implemented. In all instances the preference is to eliminate, or design-out the risks of wildlife dying or becoming injured on our electricity network. Mitigation measures which make electricity infrastructure safer for all species is preferred over measures targeted at individual species.

If the residual wildlife interaction risk for a job or project sits outside TasNetworks stated level of risk appetite (low), the issue must be escalated to the TasNetworks Environment and Sustainability Team (E&S team) for advice.



1.3 Managing wildlife interaction risk during find and fix work

During the planning and scoping of any find and fix work (fault and defect rectification) wildlife interaction measures must be specified as per section 13.3 of TasNetworks Distribution Overhead Design Standard and the Threatened Bird Mitigation Scoping Work Practice. This includes all intermediate and non-intermediate poles known to pose an elevated risk to threatened bird species.

1.4 Adaptive management

TasNetworks aims to apply an adaptive management approach to the assessment and management of wildlife interaction risk. This means that the management and mitigation of wildlife interactions must be informed by, and updated, in line with new evidence and information which supports ongoing threat abatement including:

- Incident data, investigations and postmortem assessments (e.g. necropsies)
- Changes to threatened species listing status
- New research and evidence
- New wildlife interaction mitigation techniques
- Cost effectiveness including asset maintenance

TasNetworks will periodically evaluate and review the effectiveness of its' wildlife interaction mitigation measures to ensure they remain effective at minimising wildlife interaction risk.

2. Managing impacts on wildlife habitat

The preservation of wildlife and threatened wildlife habitat is critical for maintaining the viability and sustainability of Tasmania's wildlife, particularly species listed as threatened under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* or the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Wildlife, and the products of wildlife, are also protected under the *Tasmanian Wildlife Regulations 2021*.

TasNetworks seeks to retain and preserve areas considered 'significant habitat' for threatened species during all new developments (see the definitions section of this document).

Risks to threatened species habitat posed by TasNetworks program of work, must be assessed and managed as per TasNetworks Environmental Risk Management Standard and the Environmental Standard for Vegetation Management and Clearing work section 10.1.

3. Managing impacts on wildlife breeding



Disturbances to breeding wildlife must be minimised for all species while undertaking work for, or on behalf of TasNetworks. For some threatened species, there are restrictions on when work can, and can't be completed in proximity to known breeding sites.

These requirements do not apply to meter reading, routine asset inspections (excluding work that involves the use of drones and helicopters), the urgent management of vegetation near overhead electricity infrastructure to minimise bushfire risk, and any other fault or emergency work.

3.1 Eagle nests (Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles and white bellied sea eagles)

All work undertaken as part of TasNetworks' program of work, must comply with the requirements of Tasmania's Eagle Nest Management Constraint Period (ENMCP). This includes asset inspections using helicopters or drones.

Unless authorised by the TasNetworks E&S team, no planned work is to occur within 500m, or 1,000m line of sight of any known eagle nests (available via NetMaps or the Natural Values Atlas) during the ENMCP (nominally July to January inclusive each year). The ENMCP may be extended into February in late breeding years.

Wherever reasonably practicable, work within 500m, or 1,000m line of sight of a known eagle nest, must be scheduled outside of the breeding season. If the work cannot be completed outside of the breeding season, you must contact the TasNetworks E&S team (environment@tasenetworks.com.au).

Refer to TasNetworks Threatened Bird Nest Management Work Practice for more information or the Forest Practices Authority (2024) Fauna Technical Note No. 1.

3.2 Grey goshawk nests

No planned work must occur within a 100m of a known grey goshawk nesting site during breeding season (September – December inclusive each year) unless authorised by the E&S team.

Wherever reasonably practicable, work within 100m of a known grey goshawk nest must be scheduled outside of the breeding season. If the work cannot be completed outside of the breeding season, you must contact the TasNetworks E&S team.

3.3 Tasmanian devil and quoll dens

For all routine maintenance work (including the replacement of electricity infrastructure) a 50m buffer must be retained around any suspected devil or quoll den during breeding season. Breeding season for Tasmanian devils is February to May inclusive. Breeding season for spotted tail quolls is in winter (June to August inclusive).

Developments that involve the clearing of more than 0.5ha of native vegetation outside of existing easements, must be referred to TasNetworks E&S team for further assessment.

For further information on identifying potential denning sites for Tasmanian devils and quolls, refer to the Forest Practices Authority (2014) Fauna Technical Note No. 10.

3.4 Emergency and fault work



For fault and emergency work, you must notify the TasNetworks E&S team of any work undertaken within the defined buffers around known threatened species nests during breeding season.

For all other urgent works, contact the TasNetworks E&S team for advice prior to works commencing.

3.5 Reporting

Any suspected breeding disturbance of a listed threatened species must be reported to TasNetworks E&S team within One Hour (see link to One Hour Rule in Appendix B). This includes the unanticipated discovery of a new (previously unrecorded) nesting location.

4. Managing wildlife interactions during construction and operations

4.1 Driving

Project approvals

All TasNetworks team members and contractors must comply with any driving restrictions, including road speed limits, set out under any applicable environmental project approval conditions or environmental management plan for the duration of construction.

All other operational work or general travel

- Avoid driving during dusk, dawn or night whenever practicable
- Reduce speeds when driving during dusk, dawn or night
- Adhere to wildlife road warning signs
- Remain alert for the presence of wildlife. Wildlife, such as Tasmanian devils, are very hard to see against a black bitumen road, particularly when it is dark and wet.

4.2 During work

Never interfere with native wildlife while undertaking work for or on behalf of TasNetworks unless approved by the TasNetworks E&S team. Animal welfare legislation applies to all wildlife interactions.

Wherever practicable, avoid working in or travelling in areas where wildlife is known to be present.

In areas where wildlife is likely to be present, any trenches or pits that will remain open overnight, must be covered or fenced off, prior to leaving site for the day. Where fencing or exclusion zones around trenches or pits is not practical, exit ramps must be installed at regular intervals to allow wildlife to escape.

4.3 Working near penguin habitat



Any construction work near little penguin habitat must comply with the requirements and management advice in the Guidelines for works in, and management of, Little Penguin habitat. Seek advice from the TasNetworks E&S team if management measures cannot be implemented.

4.4 Drone and helicopter use

All requirements in TasNetworks Threatened Bird Nest Management Work Practice must be complied with during any helicopter or drone operations undertaken on TasNetworks behalf.

5. Nests and dens

Many Tasmanian native animal species, and their products (nests and eggs) are protected under Tasmanian law.

- The removal nests and dens from our assets, or facilities, must be avoided where practicable (excluding pest animals).
- Translocation can be considered in some circumstances.
- If the nest or den needs to be removed (or destroyed) as part of planned work or maintenance, permits are required from NRE Tas. You must seek advice from the TasNetworks E&S team, or the Wildlife Management Branch (NRE Tas.) prior to removal.
- Wherever possible, work should be scheduled/planned so the nest can be removed outside of breeding season.
- Measures to prevent the nest, or den, being reestablished should be deployed once the nest has been removed (e.g. bird spikes).
- If there is an immediate threat to our assets, team members, or the community, nests maybe be removed during emergency/fault work. Where practical, seek advice from Bonorong Wildlife Rescue (24/7 contact is 0447 264 625) prior to removal. Tasmanian animal welfare legislation applies in all circumstances.
- You must advise the TasNetworks E&S team of all bird nests removed within 24 hours including photos of the nest removed.

If wildlife needs to be removed from any assets or facilities, you must contact the TasNetworks E&S team.

6. Managing wildlife interactions with existing assets

6.1 Investigating outage cause

As far as reasonably practicable TasNetworks, and anyone undertaking work on TasNetworks behalf, must investigate the cause of the outage (including transient faults or a trip and reclose) to determine whether it is due to wildlife. It is noted that the exact incident cause is often difficult to determine due to the terrain,



vegetation or site access. Wildlife that is injured due to a collision or electric shock with electricity infrastructure, may move away from the asset before it can be located.

Team members and contractors should scan both the ground and overhead infrastructure for any signs of a potential wildlife interaction.

Any wildlife interactions involving, or are suspected to involve, a listed threatened species, must be reported to the TasNetworks E&S team within One Hour. This includes any threatened species interactions with electricity infrastructure, vehicles (e.g. while driving) or facilities (e.g. window collisions).

Refer to TasNetworks Threatened Bird Incident Response Work Practice for more information on responding to threatened bird incidents.

Outages caused by any wildlife (including suspected interactions involving wildlife) must be recorded against the fault job including the species involved. If the species is unknown, or cannot be determined, seek advice from TasNetworks E&S team.

6.2 Threatened bird incident response

TasNetworks will deploy bird mitigation measures in response to all reportable threatened bird interactions with electricity infrastructure. Mitigation measures, adequate to minimise the risk of a future incident, must be installed within 90 days of a job being created. Where electricity infrastructure has already been mitigated, alternative mitigation measures must be deployed near the incident site within the same timeframe.

Bird mitigation may also be deployed where a threatened bird is suspected of interacting with electricity infrastructure and, the electricity infrastructure poses a credible risk of further incidents. This determination is made by the TasNetworks E&S team in consultation with any relevant stakeholders.

All threatened bird incidents must be managed in accordance with TasNetworks Threatened Bird Incident Response Work Practice unless otherwise agreed.

6.3 Other wildlife interactions with existing assets

As far as reasonably practical, TasNetworks will seek to minimise wildlife and animal interactions with existing assets, particularly where repeated issues are known to occur (wildlife deaths or outages). This includes protected species such as possums and swans.

In all instances, the preference is to implement measures which prevent physical contact with live electrical apparatus (e.g. possum guards) or exclude wildlife from accessing hazardous areas (e.g. substations).

For advice or support managing wildlife interactions with existing assets, contact the TasNetworks E&S team.

6.4. Managing injured wildlife

Any team members or contractors who encounter injured wildlife must immediately call Bonorong Wildlife Rescue (24/7 contact is 0447 264 625). Do not handle or euthanise any live animals without authorisation from the TasNetworks E&S team.

If the injured animal is a threatened species, you must report it to TasNetworks E&S team within One Hour.



6.5. Managing dead wildlife

Dead animals on electricity infrastructure can be removed, without any approvals, using appropriate PPE and equipment. Wherever practical, any animal remains must be bagged and disposed of as general waste. It's important, however, that Team members consider any relevant biosecurity directions before handling dead animals (i.e. due to outbreaks of pests and disease).

If the animal is a listed threatened species, you must report the incident to the TasNetworks E&S team within One Hour. All threatened species must be transported to the nearest TasNetworks facility with a freezer (Devonport, St Mary's, Campbell Town, Rocherlea and Mornington) to enable necropsy at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

7. Managing pest animals

To protect TasNetworks infrastructure, facilities and assets, TasNetworks may need to control, or eradicate, pest animals such as mice, rats, rabbits and starlings. In doing this TasNetworks endeavours to minimise any impacts to off-target animal species and the welfare of the target animal species.

In particular, the use of any second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs¹) may inadvertently impact native carnivorous animals such as Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles, devils and quolls. They also pose a risk to children and domestic animals and must not be used in open areas or areas accessible to the public.

When undertaking pest management for, or on behalf of TasNetworks, the following requirements must be met:

- 1. Prior to using pesticides, alternative control measures, such as physical removal, physical deterrents, barriers or biological control agents² must be considered. Refer to pestSMART for more information.
- 2. Conduct and document a risk assessment which identifies any potential environmental and animal welfare risks prior to the deployment of any pest control or eradication measures. Controls to manage the risk(s) identified must be specified and implemented.
- 3. Do not use SGARs³ without prior authorisation from the TasNetworks E&S team.
- 4. Choose first generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs)⁴ as an alternative. These are labelled "caution", rather than "poison".

⁴There are 3 FGAR active constituents currently registered for use in Australia: warfarin, coumatetralyl and diphacinone. These FGARs are currently approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for use in and around domestic, commercial, industrial and agricultural buildings.



¹ SGARs are known as "single dose" poisons, which work by preventing blood clotting and cause animals to die from internal bleeding. A lethal dose can be ingested in a single feeding. SGARs persist, meaning animals which feed on poisoned animals are also affected by the poison.

² Contact Biosecurity Tasmania to request the release of calicivirus virus (rabbit) or other targeted biological pest control agent.

³ There are 5 SGAR active constituents currently registered for use in Australia: **brodifacoum**, **bromadiolone**, **difethialone**, **difenacoum** and **flocoumafen**. SGARs are not approved for use in crops, in the open, or in other areas accessible to non-target animals or children. Refer to the applicable Material Safety Data Sheets from the manufacturers for information.

5. Comply with all applicable requirements in the TasNetworks Hazardous Substances Management Procedure and Contractor HSE Management Procedure.

Refer to pestSMART (pestsmart.org.au) or contact the TasNetworks E&S team for more information or advice on managing pest animals.

7.1 Pest management plans

Many pest species require persistent management over multiple years to see effective results. Prior to implementing any pest management measures on TasNetworks behalf, a pest management plan must be developed and endorsed by the TasNetworks E&S team. The pest management plan must prioritise long-term, effective measures which comply with all applicable animal welfare requirements.

The pest management plan must include consideration of any applicable permit and approvals prior to the management plan being implemented.

8. Reporting wildlife interactions

8.1 Internal reporting

Any suspected incidents that involve a listed threatened species, must be reported to the TasNetworks E&S team within One Hour for further investigation and follow-up. This includes suspected interactions with TasNetworks infrastructure and during operations (e.g. driving or trenching).

All other wildlife interactions that occur because of TasNetworks assets, or operations, can be reported as an environmental incident via SAP. These will be reviewed by the TasNetworks E&S team and will investigated on a case-by-case basis as determined by the TasNetworks E&S team.

8.2 External reporting

Incidents involving threatened animal species and TasNetworks assets or operations must be reported by the TasNetworks E&S team to NRE Tas. each month. Decisions on whether an incident is reportable is made by the E&S team in accordance with TasNetworks Threatened Bird Incident Response Work Practice.



Appendix A – External compliance obligations

Туре	Title	
Legislation	Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1995	
Legislation	Animal Welfare Act 1993	
Legislation	Biosecurity Act 2019	
Legislation	Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994	
Legislation	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	
Legislation	Threatened Species Protection Act 1995	
Regulation	Biosecurity Regulations 2022	
Regulation	Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 2021	
TasNetworks agreement	Public Authority Management Agreement for Threatened Species	
Guidelines	Forest Practices Authority Fauna Technical Notes	
Guidelines	Guidelines for works in, and management of, Little Penguin habitat	
Guidelines	Survey Guidelines and Management Advice for Development Proposals that may impact the Tasmanian Devil	

Appendix B – TasNetworks compliance obligations

Document type	Document Number	Document title with rec link
Other	R0000499811	TasNetworks Risk Appetite Statement
Framework	R0000909655	TasNetworks Risk Management Framework
Policy	R0001905184	TasNetworks Environment and Sustainability Policy
Register	R0001599490	Environment and Sustainability Risk Register
Standard	R0000502409	Animal Interactions with Power Infrastructure
Standard	R0002091338	Biosecurity Standard
Standard	R0001984493	Environmental Risk Management Standard
Procedure	R0000094015	Incident Management Procedure
Procedure	R0001660044	HSE Accountabilities and Responsibilities Procedure
Rule	R0001753472	One Hour Rule
Work practice	R0000112530	Environmental Handbook
Work practice	R0001975509	Threatened bird incident response
Work practice	R0002278799	Threatened bird mitigation scoping
Work practice	R0001975433	Threatened bird nest management



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