



MABI FOREST

What is Mabi Forest?

Mabi Forest is a type of rainforest that occurs in North Queensland. It is found in small patches on the Atherton Tablelands, between the towns of Atherton, Kairi, Yungaburra and Malanda, with a remnant patch also located at Shiptons Flat, near Cooktown. Mabi Forest is otherwise known as Complex Notophyll Vine Forest 5b and includes the Queensland Regional Ecosystem 7.8.3.

Mabi Forest grows on highly fertile basalt-derived soils, and is characterised by an uneven canopy (25–45m) with many tree layers, scattered deciduous and semi-evergreen trees, and a dense shrub and vine layer. The dense shrub layer distinguishes Mabi Forest from similar rainforests, and provides important habitat for up to 114 bird species.

A variety of plants and animals make their homes in Mabi Forest, including the nationally threatened Large-eared Horseshoe Bat and Spectacled Flying-fox. Other species, such as the Musky Rat-kangaroo and the nationally endangered Southern Cassowary, used to occur in Mabi Forest. However, the remaining patches of Mabi Forest are too small for these animals to survive in, and so the Musky Rat-kangaroo and Southern Cassowary have become locally extinct.

Why is Mabi Forest included on the list of nationally threatened ecological communities?

Mabi Forest has been listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Mabi Forest was listed due to its restricted distribution and vulnerability to ongoing threats. There is only 1050 ha of Mabi Forest left, and this occurs as a series of small, isolated patches. Many of the remnant patches of Mabi Forest are being invaded by exotic smothering vines, and feral and domestic animals. The use of remnant patches of Mabi Forest by stock can impact on this ecological community through trampling, grazing and soil compaction.

National listing of Mabi Forest recognises that its long-term survival is under threat. The purpose of the listing is to prevent its further decline, and assist community efforts toward its recovery.

The Australian Minister for the Environment and Heritage decided to list Mabi Forest after considering advice from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee. The Committee is an independent committee of scientists with relevant expertise, whose role is to advise the Minister on the conservation status of native species and ecological communities.

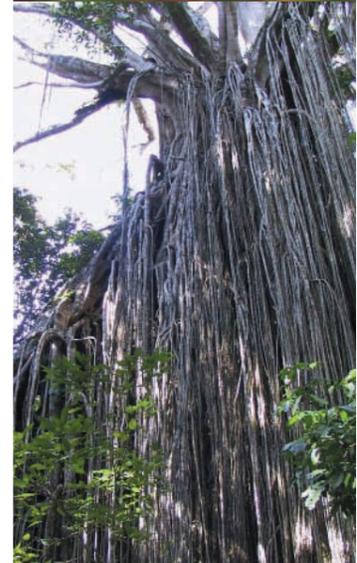
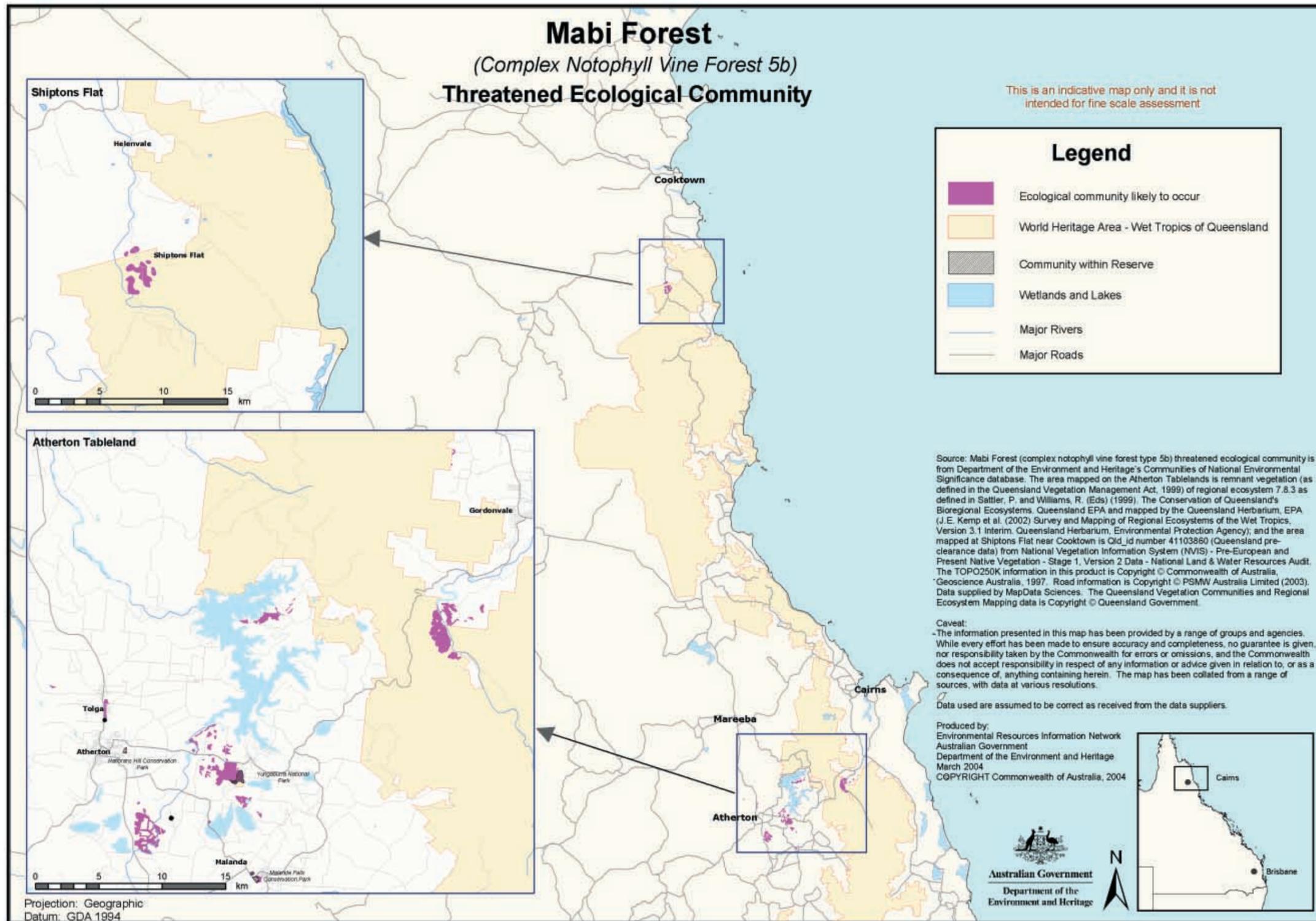
Community action to save Mabi Forest

The local community has been a key stakeholder in the fight for the protection of Mabi Forest. The concern of the local community over the decline of this unique rainforest was so great that the Mabi Forest Working Group was formed to promote the forest's conservation. Key participants in the Working Group include Queensland State and Local Government Agencies, TREAT (a community tree-planting group), the Tree-Kangaroo and Mammal Group, and the Barron River Catchment Management Group.

The Working Group has participated in and encouraged activities aimed at rehabilitating existing patches of Mabi Forest, and replanting areas where the rainforest once occurred. The Working Group also provides assistance to local landholders and community groups interested in preserving or replanting Mabi Forest on their land. There are approximately 10 sites currently being rehabilitated by the local community, using trees that were grown from seeds by volunteers.

If you would like to become actively involved in the conservation of Mabi Forest, you should contact the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on **(07) 4091 4262**.

Nationally threatened species and ecological communities





What the listing of Mabi Forest means for you as a landholder

Protection under the EPBC Act applies to all known patches of the Mabi Forest ecological community.

National protection means that any new or intensified activities that may have a significant impact upon Mabi Forest should be referred to the Minister for assessment and approval. These activities include, but are not restricted to, new developments, expansions to existing development, logging, clearing, and grazing.

The process for making a referral under the EPBC Act is easy and without charge. All you have to do is complete and submit the relevant form, which can be obtained from the Department of the Environment and Heritage website at www.deh.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/referrals/form or by contacting the Community Information Unit on free-call **1800 803 772**.

Based on your referral, the Minister will determine if an assessment is required before a decision is made. If it is not required, then you are free to take action in accordance with your referral. If an assessment is required, strict timeframes in the EPBC Act ensure the assessment and approval process is conducted in a timely manner.

The Commonwealth legislation allows for some exemptions to the requirement for assessment and approval. Any actions or activities you undertake, which involve the use of your land, do not require assessment or approval if you meet the following requirements.

Exemption due to prior authorisation

- Your action or activities were specifically authorised by a permit, or other authorisation, issued under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law before 16 July 2000; and
- on 15 July 2000 (immediately before the EPBC Act started) you did not need any further permits or other authorisations to carry out your action or activity in compliance with all relevant environmental laws.

Exemption due to lawful continuation of land use

- You started your action or activity before 16 July 2000;
- your action or activity does not have, and does not require, any permit or other authorisation to be carried out in compliance with all relevant laws; and
- your action or activity has continued in the same location without any enlargement, expansion or intensification.

Protection under Queensland's *Vegetation Management Act 1999* only applies to those parts of the Mabi Forest ecological community classified as an 'endangered regional ecosystem'. State protection requires landholders to get approval from Queensland authorities before clearing designated patches of Mabi Forest. However, prior approval is not required if the purpose of the clearing is for essential property maintenance.

Where can I get further information?

Funding for projects to recover threatened species and ecological communities is available through the Threatened Species Network Community Grants, which are normally opened for application in autumn each year. More information is available at www.wwf.org.au/tsn. Small community based projects may also be eligible for funding under Envirofund grants. More information on these grants is available at www.nht.gov.au/envirofund.

You may also wish to participate in the development and implementation of your region's Natural Resource Management Plan. In this case, contact your local land management agency.

Further information on the EPBC Act is available from the Department's website at www.deh.gov.au/epbc or by contacting the Department's Community Information Unit on free-call **1800 803 772**.

Photography credits

Front (top to bottom): Mabi sign - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service • Cassowary - Wet Tropics Management Authority, Queensland • Forest boardwalk - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service • Mabi planting - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Page 2: as front

Page 3: Rainbow Lorikeet - Arthur Mostead/ Department of the Environment and Heritage • Curtain fig - Annette Cohen, Department of the Environment and Heritage • Mabi planting - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service • Mabi sign - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Reverse (top to bottom): Roadside Mabi fig curtain - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service • Rainbow Lorikeet - Arthur Mostead/ Department of the Environment and Heritage • Lesueur's frog - Michael Mahony

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