

# Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 25

20 February 2024

**Welcome to Issue No. 25** of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update.

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme enables the impacts of development on biodiversity to be avoided, minimised, and offset. The scheme provides a consistent, transparent, and scientifically credible way for development to proceed while still protecting our environment. Keep up to date [via our website](#).

This monthly newsletter is one of how we communicate and help support the implementation of the scheme. You can view our past newsletters [online](#). The Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) twice-yearly newsletter is another source of information, which you can find on the BCT's [Publication website](#).

For other enquiries on the scheme, contact the dedicated scheme Help Desk team:

- Help Desk Line 1800 931 717, staffed Tuesday to Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm
- Help Desk mailbox, [BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au), monitored Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm.

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## For accredited assessors

### Next accredited assessor forum is on management costings for Total Fund Deposits

Join the Credits Supply Taskforce's John Seidel, Director Negotiation and Delivery, and Max Massa A/Senior Project Officer, to discuss work underway by the Taskforce to benchmark management action costs (such as fencing, weed management, pest animal control, track/trail maintenance and monitoring).

The next forum will be held **Thursday 21 March 2024 at 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

There will be a presentation from both speakers, followed by a Q&A and discussion session for participants. Use the link below to register:

- [Register for the online forum for accredited assessors](#)

The forum will be recorded for those unable to attend. If you have any questions in advance of the webinar, please submit them to [Stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au)

### New BSSAR and Management Plan templates now mandatory

A reminder that the new Biodiversity Stewardship Site Assessment Report (BSSAR) and Management Plan templates are now mandatory for new Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA) applications.

The new templates can be obtained by email: [Request the BSSAR and Management Plan templates](#). For further information or to ask any questions about the use of the templates, please email [stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au)

# Biodiversity Assessment Method updates

## Forest Owls changing to species credits 14 March 2024

Changes for the masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*), sooty owl (*Tyto tenebricosa*) powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) and barking owl (*Ninox connivens*) will be brought into the BAM-Calculator (BAM-C) with the next BAM-C update planned for **14 March 2024**. A few days before this date, the same changes will be made in the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) – note that this will not impact BAM-C cases.

### **The changes were outlined in the BOS Update No. 24 and include:**

- Change of the credit class from ‘dual credit’ to ‘species credit’.
- Change to the survey approach to detect the presence of owls within suitable habitat rather than detecting breeding birds.
- Change to how credits are calculated for the owls, by basing credit generation on vegetation zones containing appropriate hollow bearing trees (or for the sooty owl, containing hollows, caves or cliff lines/ledges) that are within 800 metres of the location of a detected owl (in contrast to the current approach that relies on generating credits from individually identified breeding hollows).

The changes address practical issues associated with survey and assessment for these species. In-progress BAM-C cases will automatically update with the changes when re-opened. Assessments that have been finalised before the import, but are then re-opened, will also update with the changes. Stewardship and development assessments which generate owl credits and are in progress, or finalised and then re-opened after the import, will be most affected. In the interim, these impacts can be managed by considering whether to:

- finalise assessments which generate owl credits prior to the changes coming into the BAM-C
- undertake targeted species surveys in suitable habitat or seek an expert report with advice from the department via BOS Help Desk (note: identification of breeding birds is no longer required)
- assume presence (development cases only).

Landholders with an existing biodiversity stewardship agreement (BSA) may be able to generate additional species credits for owls via a variation to the BSA. Contact [stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au) for advice.

# For credit owners and buyers

## New price to pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund for large forest owls

The department recently announced that the biodiversity credit class for large forest owls will be amended. In response to this change, the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) has reviewed and will update the price to pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF) for those species.

### What are the changes?

The price will decrease. The new price will be included in all BCF Charge Quotes issued after the BAM-C is updated (14 March 2024).

Proponents with a BCF Charge Quote issued before this date that have yet to pay into the BCF can request a new quote for these species. Proponents may also request that the entire quote be reissued, noting that the new quote will replace the original quote and the original quote will no longer be able to be used to pay into the BCF.

## New guideline to support better disclosure of information that may affect the price of biodiversity credits

The department has established a guideline for how the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Branch, the Credits Supply Taskforce and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust manage and disclose information that may affect the price of biodiversity credits.

The guideline aims to support all participants in the biodiversity credits market make informed decisions by ensuring this information is disclosed in a fair, timely, and meaningful way.

The guideline will come into effect on **31 March 2024**.

You can access the [guideline online](#).

## Reminder: Sell biodiversity credits to the BCT – the next Credit Tender opens 3 April 2024

The BCT website now has information on the [BCT Credit Tender 24-01](#). From **Wednesday 3 April**, applicants can offer the BCT a selling price for their biodiversity credits. This opportunity will be available for hundreds of credit types across the state.

### Important dates

- Updated Wanted Credits List available from the BCT's [Credit Offer Portal](#) on **Wednesday 27 March 2024**
- Tender opens to receive applications on Wednesday **3 April 2024**
- All applications must be submitted by **11:59 pm Wednesday 24 April 2024** using the BCT's [Credit Offer Portal](#)

Find guidance for how to use the [BCT's Wanted Credits List](#). Information for new landholders wanting to [offer credits to the BCT](#) is available.

## The Supply Fund is opening its next reverse auction

The fifth reverse auction through the Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund will open this week and bids will be accepted from **21 February to 6 March 2024**.

Results from the reverse auction will be published on the Supply Fund webpage by 10 April 2024 and credits will be available to purchase from May 2024.

More information about the upcoming reverse auction and results from the November 2023 Reverse Auction can be found on the [Supply Fund webpage](#).

## Interested in establishing a BSA?

### New BSA application guide

The new 'BSA application guide' is now available online. The guide is for landholders interested in establishing a BSA, and for accredited assessors working with landholders to establish BSAs. The guide is available to view and download on the [Applying for a biodiversity stewardship agreement webpage](#).

### Update on BSAs and SEOI Program

The Credits Supply Taskforce continues to increase the number of BSAs. As of 31 January, the Credits Supply Taskforce had approved 29 new BSAs this financial year, covering around 15,083 hectares (the total area protected under BSAs since 2010 is now around 74,000 hectares).

The Stewardship EOI (SEOI) program will reopen soon and landholders will then be able to submit EOIs on the [SEOI webpage](#). The program has had a strong response from landholders and over 100 sites have been progressed to detailed site assessment in the last year. The Taskforce has employed new accredited assessors who have commenced fieldwork on these sites and are finalising assessments from 2023.

# Training opportunities for local government

## New Biodiversity Offsets Scheme training for local government staff

In 2024, the department will deliver Biodiversity Offsets Scheme training workshops to local government staff. The workshops complement the eLearning training modules that have been offered since early 2023.

The workshops will be delivered regionally and will cover:

- biodiversity assessment and approvals pathways
- reviewing Biodiversity Development Assessment Reports (BDAR).

### Who is eligible to attend?

To be eligible to attend the workshops, council staff must have completed previous training, such as the early BOS training (2017–18) or the [BOS local government eLearning modules](#).

### Have you completed the eLearning modules?

Anyone who has previously been offered an eLearning position and has not yet enrolled or completed the training will still have a valid enrolment and can complete the course. The enrolment will be reallocated if eLearning courses are not completed within a reasonable timeframe. Please contact Greencap at [bos.training@greencap.wsp.com](mailto:bos.training@greencap.wsp.com) if you have forgotten your login details.

### Interested in enrolling?

If you would like to attend the workshops but have not enrolled in the eLearning program, the department is currently offering sponsored enrolments to eligible council staff. For information about the eLearning training and to apply for sponsorship, complete the [BOS local government eLearning expression of interest form](#) and return to the BOS Help Desk: [bos.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bos.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au).

More details on the training workshops will be circulated when available.

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