

Almost all of the beaches on this stretch of coastline, including those currently used for racehorse training and those proposed to be used, are home to shore and migratory birds including the protected and vulnerable Hooded Plover and the critically endangered Orange Bellied Parrot. The constant disruption and damage to their breeding sites has a detrimental and possibly devastating effect on successful fledging of any hatched chicks. These birds are protected under **the Wildlife**

Act 1975 as well as being listed as vulnerable under **the State Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988** and **Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999**. The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 for the EPBC Act state the following:

What is an important population of a species?

An 'important population' is a population that is necessary for a species' long-term survival and recovery. This may include populations identified as such in recovery plans, and/or that are:

- key source populations either for breeding or dispersal
- populations that are necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and/or
- populations that are near the limit of the species range.

Vulnerable species

Significant impact criteria

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a vulnerable species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species
- reduce the area of occupancy of an important population
- fragment an existing important population into two or more populations
- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species
- disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population
- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline
- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat
- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline, or
- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species

The Belfast Coastal Reserve is an **Internationally Recognised Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** and these birds form an important population of species, as identified by **Birdlife Australia** and **Victorian National Parks Association**