
Home is where the hollow is

A guide '*Tree hollows in Tasmania*' has been developed to help forest field workers identify trees that are most likely to contain hollows that can be used for shelter by Tasmanian fauna.

Hollows are cavities in trees that provide important shelter and breeding sites for some fauna species. In Tasmania, 42 vertebrate species, comprising of birds, bats and possums, are known to use hollows to varying degrees. This includes threatened species such as the masked owl and swift parrot.

The guide developed by the Forest Practices Authority in conjunction with the Cooperative Research Centre for Forestry has been put together by Dr Amy Koch, who has been conducting research into tree hollows for the past six years. The results of Amy's and others scientists research, has helped identify what types of trees and hollows are used by fauna

Over the past two days (25 & 26 November) the Forest Practices Authority have distributed the guide and conducted hollow education workshops for forest field workers in Tasmania's state forests at Cluan Tier near Deloraine, and at Mt Morrison and Wielangta on Tasmania's east coast. Over 50 forest workers from various organisations attended the field days.

The aim of these field days was to provide forest workers involved in the planning and management of forest coupes with a greater understanding of what makes a good hollow and how to select appropriate habitat trees to be retained to try and maintain a hollow resource both now and into the future.

Amy said that "Careful consideration needs to be taken when selecting trees to retain in a harvesting operation to ensure that the trees that will provide the best quality hollows are kept. Because hollows take a long time to form, it is also important to ensure that trees likely to provide hollows in the future are retained within the landscape".

The tree hollow guide and new knowledge passed on to forest field workers aims to improve the identification of hollow-bearing trees in Tasmania's production forests.

An electronic version of the Tree hollows in Tasmania guide can be downloaded from the Cooperative Research Centre for Forestry's website, www.crcforestry.com.au

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Pictures available upon request.