

## A forest, a swamp and saving the bats

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While most people know that forests absorb carbon dioxide, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change; that they are one of the biggest contributors to regional economies; and that wildlife and ghost mushrooms live in them; did you also know they are also home to a bat cave or two?

Nestled in the Green Triangle forests are a series of caves that are home to the critically endangered Southern Bent-winged Bat. At a tiny 52-58mm these microbats have seen their populations in rapid decline since the 1950s.

In 2016 leading regional environmental organisation Nature Glenelg Trust and OneFortyOne joined forces to purchase land and trees next to the Mount Burr Swamp, with the aim of restoring the drained wetlands on site. Lying between the neighbouring forests containing bat caves, both organisations were hopeful that once the wetlands were restored the bats would make use of them.

OneFortyOne's Chief Forester, Glen Rivers said "We wanted to partner with Nature Glenelg Trust on this project as soon as we heard about it. Our organisations share the same values being strongly committed to ensuring our respective activities have a long-lasting positive impact on this region".

It certainly didn't take long for that positive impact to materialise, and two years into the wetland restoration project the wildlife has returned, including the critically endangered Bent-winged bat.

Nature Glenelg Trust's Rose Thompson said "We were fairly confident that the bats would make use of the swamp property as they are known to forage in wetlands, but it hadn't been confirmed – until now!"

The team at Nature Glenelg Trust undertook a series of surveys and discovered Long-eared Bats, Forest Bats, as well as the critically endangered Southern Bent-winged Bat.

"This is just fantastic news", said Mr Rivers "It just goes to show you that something as simple as raising the water level in a wetland, can help save a critically endangered species. OneFortyOne are extremely proud that we've played a small part in this important wildlife renewal."

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