

11

CONSERVING GRASSY WOODLAND IN TASMANIA

Jamie B. Kirkpatrick

1. To help prevent trees from dying out, exclude or kill Common Brushtail Possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) (Tasmania only).
2. To help prevent trees from dying out, destock or stock lightly until a new generation establishes.
3. Burning can help prevent trees from dying out in the short term.
4. Both burning and grazing are necessary to prevent native tree and shrub thickening.
5. Vertebrate grazers can be used to control some species of woody weeds.
6. Mowing or slashing can be used to prevent tree and shrub thickening.
7. To maintain significant species, keep on doing what has been done until you prove that it is better to do otherwise.
8. Old, small, isolated remnants with high perimeter: area ratios can be very important for nature conservation. Corridors may not be particularly important.
9. Latitude and high relative relief make most of the Tasmanian grassy woodland biota resilient to climate change.
10. Regulation combined with stewardship payments seems to be the only way to stop more clearance and fertilisation of grassy woodlands.
11. People with local ecological expertise and experience can usually provide good management advice, whereas tool kits and models cannot cope with contingencies.

Introduction

Tasmanian woodlands range from the coast to the climatic treeline, from some of the poorest soils in the world to some of the richest, from waterlogged ground to sharply drained dry ridges. They are unusual in temperate Australia in that they support a full complement of native marsupial herbivores, which can occur in high densities. This chapter covers the subset of these woodlands with understoreys potentially dominated by native grasses and herbs, henceforth called grassy woodlands. These grassy woodlands have been dramatically reduced