

Keebah | Stotts Island



Stotts Island covers an area of about 160 hectares within the Tweed River floodplain, between Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads. The island formed as a result of sediment accumulation in the River over many thousands of years.

River islands throughout the Tweed are important cultural sites and Stotts Island is known to Aboriginal people as Keebah, a place to respect. There has been no evidence of Aboriginal occupation on the island, however it is likely that the rainforest and other habitats were used as a rich source of food and materials.

The island's vegetation consists of numerous plant

communities. Mangroves are found in the lower lying areas, moving higher can be found swamp oak forest, freshwater wetlands, swamp sclerophyll forest and lowland floodplain rainforest on the more elevated sections of the island. This pattern of vegetation is likely to be typical of what once clothed the entire Tweed floodplain, which has been almost entirely cleared for agriculture.

Most of the vegetation communities on the island are now listed as endangered or critically endangered. Stotts Island is also one of only a few areas in NSW listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* as critical habitat. This is in recognition of its role in conserving the habitat of the critically endangered Mitchell's rainforest snail. The island also supports many other threatened plants and animals.

Photographer Mark Kingston