

Progress Report CF 2018-057

Flora conservation and recovery

BCS Species and Communities

Project Core Team

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Project Team granted
Program Leader granted
Directorate granted

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Context

The flora conservation team collates and manages biodiversity information and provides a range of science based support for flora conservation and recovery. Maintaining and managing the Threatened and Priority Flora (TPFL) database allows the department to provide accurate technical and scientific advice on threatened and priority flora to decision makers in land use planning and environmental impact assessment processes. Undertaking conservation status assessments, including nominations for listing, delisting and change of status, ensures that the most recent biological and ecological information is available to stakeholders. The department facilitates the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) and coordinates recovery programs, including developing interim recovery plans and supporting recovery teams, to guide translocations and conservation activities involving threatened and priority flora.

Aims

- Update records for threatened and priority flora as additional information becomes available.
- Contribute to the assessment of environmental impacts on flora conservation values for development and vegetation clearing proposals in accordance with relevant policy and legislation.
- Review applications for Ministerial authorisations to take threatened flora against acceptable levels of risk to the conservation of threatened flora biodiversity and issue authorisations in a timely manner.
- Guide strategic and coordinated recovery programs for threatened flora.
- Undertake assessments of conservation status and prepare nominations for the TSSC, as required.
- Develop, inform and influence policy and strategic direction relating to native flora.

Progress

- As at 30 June 2022, 429 flora species were listed as threatened species under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) (160 critically endangered, 140 endangered and 129 vulnerable), and 15 were listed as extinct species. There were 3410 species on the department's priority flora list.
- Conservation status assessments resulted in 72 additions to the priority flora list, change in category of 9 taxa, and delisting of 5 taxa after survey and/or taxonomic review clarified their conservation status.
- Four nominations for threatened flora were received and are currently under review for addition to the threatened flora list. A further 13 listed species are under review for changes to listing status.
- Public consultation was undertaken for 22 threatened flora nominations prior to assessment of nominations by the TSSC.
- 21 flora nominations were provided to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) for their consideration.
- Continued to review the status of 125 threatened flora species that are currently listed under the BC Act using superseded criteria. So far, reviews against the current IUCN Red List v3.1 criteria have been prepared for 69 species and the TSSC has endorsed nominations for two of these species to be .
- Conservation status was reviewed for taxa newly described in 16 draft *Nuytsia* manuscripts.
- 2287 new records were added to the TPFL database, of which 458 were records of new populations.
- 650 data search requests for threatened and priority flora were processed (39 from DBCA staff, 77 from other government departments, 486 from consultants or the mining sector, and 48 from other organisations).
- 201 threatened flora authorisations were issued. Of these, 71 were issued for herbarium specimen collections for identification purposes, 20 for scientific or research purposes and 110 for land management and operational purposes.
- Five translocation proposals were approved (2 internal and 3 DBCA external partnerships).
- Impact assessment advice was provided in relation to 46 clearing permit applications, 20 mining or other development projects and 11 land use planning proposals with the potential to affect threatened and priority flora.

- Advice was provided on flora license applications for priority flora, and on issues relating to the management of the Western Australian flora industry.
- Drafts of new policy guidelines, templates and associated documents to govern translocations of conservation-significant species were produced.
- Support was provided to the Goldfields region threatened flora recovery team meeting.
- Participated in expert elicitations and provided advice to support the Regional Conservation Planning process for every DBCA region.
- Participated in the national working group for implementing the MoU on a Common Assessment Method and single operational list of threatened species.
- Continued liaison with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) regarding the systematic review of species listings under the EPBC Act and the requirement for recovery plans. Advice was provided for 67 flora species.
- Nineteen draft conservation advice documents prepared by DAWE were reviewed and updated.
- Provided support to coordinate two volunteer-led projects to survey poorly-known priority flora so that the conservation status can be assessed. The Adopt an Orchid volunteer program surveyed or monitored 18 threatened and 37 priority orchid taxa in the Midwest, Swan, South West, Warren, South Coast and Wheatbelt regions, with 279 populations monitored and 59 new populations discovered. The Wildflower Society of WA's Rare Flora Search project surveyed seven priority flora species in the Midwest, Wheatbelt, South Coast, Swan and South West regions.

Management implications

- Enhanced data sets and data management systems, and more accurate and comprehensive lists of threatened and priority flora, facilitate improved assessment and conservation decisions.
- Addition of new TPFL records assist in resolving the status of flora and provides more reliable information for land use planning and management.
- Management advice and assessment of applications to take or translocate threatened flora, assists the department and other land managers in conserving threatened and priority flora.
- Management programs, regional conservation planning, threatened flora recovery plans, threatened species profiles and conservation advice documents guide conservation outcomes.
- Provision of expert technical input to environmental impact assessment and land use planning processes maximises the potential for positive conservation outcomes.

Future directions

- Continue to deliver strategic direction and coordination of the conservation, management, protection and recovery of flora in an efficient manner.
- Continue to assess the conservation status of native flora and prepare nominations for listing and recovery plans where necessary.
- Prepare high quality technical flora advice to internal and external stakeholders as required.
- Transition data to the new Threatened Species and Communities database and ensure high quality data is maintained and shared.
- Finalise translocation guidance documents.