

Progress Report CF 2018-057

Flora conservation and recovery

Species and Communities

Project Core Team

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Project status as of April 28, 2021, 5:04 p.m.

Approved and active

Document endorsements and approvals as of April 28, 2021, 5:04 p.m.

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 database (TPFL) 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 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

- Provide evidence-based advice for the management, protection and recovery of flora.
- Collate, manage and interpret information on the distribution, conservation status and recovery of threatened and priority flora.
- Provide a data provision service to ensure threatened and priority flora data is available within and outside of the department.
- Contribute to the assessment of environmental impact on flora conservation values for development and vegetation clearing proposals in accordance with relevant policy and legislation.
- Prepare permits to take DRF in a timely manner and within acceptable limits of impact to ensure the conservation of threatened flora.
- Guide strategic and coordinated recovery programs for threatened flora, including the preparation of interim recovery plans and threatened flora translocations.
- Undertake assessments of conservation status based on all available data and prepare nominations for the TSSC.
- Develop, inform and influence policy and strategic direction relating to flora.

Progress

- Two hundred and three permits to take DRF were issued. Of these, 73 were issued for herbarium specimen collections for identification purposes (22 internal and 51 external), 43 were issued for scientific/research purposes (23 internal and 20 external) and 90 were issued for land management/operational purposes (45 internal and 45 external).
- Five hundred and eighty four new records were added to the TPFL database, of which 154 were records of new populations.
- A review of translocation data was undertaken, resulting in 40 threatened flora translocated populations being added to the TPFL database.
- Three hundred and seventy five data search requests for threatened and priority flora were processed (24 internal, 83 other government departments, 227 consultants, and 41 other organisations).
- Conservation status assessments resulted in 87 additions to the priority flora list, as well as the re-listing of two taxa, and de-listing of 21 taxa after survey and taxonomic review clarified their conservation status.
- Five species had conservation status reviews undertaken and presented to the TSSC. This included one nomination for an addition to the threatened species list and four conservation status assessments of threatened flora for changes in category and/or criteria.
- Administered changes to the Rare Flora Notice published January 2018 included: eight additions and four deletions to the threatened flora list; one addition and one deletion to the list of presumed extinct flora; assignment to a higher threatened category for seven species; down grading of three species to a lower category of threat; criteria change for nine species; and two name changes.

- Conservation status was reviewed for 17 taxa described in draft *Nuytsia* manuscripts.
- A recovery plan was prepared for one species, and interim recovery plans were drafted for another 10 species of threatened flora.
- Translocation proposals were approved for seven internal and six external projects.
- The management plan for the commercial harvesting of protected flora was updated, and the new plan was approved under the *EPBC Act* as an approved Wildlife Trade Management program.
- Impact assessment advice was provided in relation to 102 clearing permit applications, 28 other mining or development projects (42 separate advice requests) and four land use planning proposals with the potential to affect threatened and priority flora.
- The 2017 Flora Conservation Course was delivered to 19 staff.
- Support was provided for the meeting of Threatened Flora Recovery Teams representing the South Coast, Goldfields, Swan and Warren Regions, and the Albany, Esperance, Central Wheatbelt and Geraldton Districts.
- Volunteers in the Swan and Warren regions and Albany and Geraldton districts assisted in conducting surveys for many threatened flora species. Volunteers from the department and the Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group collaborated on the Adopt an Orchid project to survey and monitor 22 threatened and priority orchid species, with 60 populations monitored and 11 new populations discovered.
- Provided information and advice to the Department of the Environment and Energy to support threatened species listing and recovery plan decisions for 79 flora taxa, as well as a comprehensive review of federal recovery plans and conservation advice for three species listed under the *EPBC Act*.
- Representation continued on the national working group for implementing the MoU on a Common Assessment Method for assessing threatened species. Fifty one species of flora had their status aligned with the *EPBC Act* through this process.

Management implications

- Enhanced data sets and lists for threatened and priority flora facilitate improved assessment and conservation.
- Updates to the threatened and priority flora data base assists in resolving the status of flora and provides improved 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 to maintain the conservation status of threatened and priority flora.
- Industry management programs and threatened flora recovery plans guide conservation outcomes.
- Provision of input into the environmental impact assessment and land use planning processes maximises the potential for positive conservation outcomes.

Future directions

- Continue to assess the conservation status of flora and prepare six flora recovery plans.
- Make available the Threatened Flora Management Course for departmental staff.
- Transition to the new threatened species database and test the database for operational use, and train regional staff in the use of the new database.
- Revise threatened flora operational procedures as required under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act*.