



Northern and Yorke Region

Spiny Daisy, *Acanthocladium dockeri*

Critically Endangered



Conservation status

The Spiny Daisy is classified as critically endangered under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999). It is also classified as endangered under the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act (1972) and presumed extinct under the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995).

Description

The Spiny Daisy is a low blue-grey shrub that grows to about 0.5 metres in height. Branches often have pairs of sharp spines at their ends forming a 'V' shape. Leaves are small and oval shaped. The leaves and branches of the Spiny Daisy are covered in a whitish to blue-grey fur. Flowers are small and yellow with grey bracts (a modified leaf surrounding the flower).

This species is a member of the Daisy family; *Compositae* (referred to as *Asteraceae* outside South Australia).

Habitat requirements

Due to the small number of populations and a lack of information, it is difficult to define the habitat requirements of the Spiny Daisy. The five existing populations all occur in remnant native grassland on low hills and plains in the Mid North of South Australia. Soils are light brown clay to clay loam.

Information from historical collections indicate that the Spiny Daisy may have also previously occupied a habitat with different rainfall patterns, soil type and landscape characteristics.



Ecology

The Spiny Daisy suckers readily from exposed roots and shoots. Despite regular flowering, it produces very little viable seed and no seedlings have ever been observed in the wild. Genetic studies have shown that all plants at each site are a single clone, but that the different populations are distinct from each other. This means that, in genetic terms, there are only five known Spiny Daisy individuals, making this one of the world's most endangered species.

Distribution

Very little is known regarding the historical distribution of the Spiny Daisy. The species was first collected in 1860 from central-western New South Wales, during the Burke and Wills Expedition. A second collection was made from the South Australian Riverlands in 1910. Despite searches of these areas in the 1990's, no populations were relocated and for many years this unique daisy was thought to have become extinct.

Fortunately this was not the case and, in 1999, a population was located growing along a roadside just outside Laura. The Spiny Daisy is now known to occur in five locations, all situated on roadsides outside the towns of Laura, Hart, and Telowie, in the Mid North of the State.



Threatening processes

- Small isolated populations
- Competition from weeds
- Lack of seedling recruitment
- Habitat destruction
- Insect attack
- Stock grazing

Conservation and recovery

Projects that will aid the Spiny Daisy, include:

- Continued management of existing sites, through weed and snail control.
- Translocation to new sites to increase the number of populations.
- Cross pollination trials to attempt to induce sexual reproduction.
- Searches to locate further populations of the species.
- Monitoring of known Spiny Daisy populations.
- Further studies into the ecology and reproductive biology of the daisy.



How you can help

- Report any sightings of the Spiny Daisy to the contacts below.
- Protect any native plants and habitat on your property from grazing, clearance and weeds.
- Become involved in a local conservation group such as the Biodiversity and Endangered Species Team (BEST), phone (08) 8841-3402.

For further information please contact

Department for Environment and Heritage
Unit 6, 17 Lennon Street, Clare, SA 5453

Phone: (08) 8841 3402 Fax: (08) 8841 3411

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www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/bcp/index.html

