

# Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

## Hoya australis subsp. Oramicola

### Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: K. Brennan

### Description

*Hoya australis* subsp. *oramicola* is a vine. Its leaves have sparse to dense covering of hairs, and the leaf blade is succulent, >10 cm long, with leaf margin strongly recurved. Glands (colleters) are absent. Latex is present. The flowers are cream and fleshy.

Flowering: Mar, Jul.

Fruiting: 3 – 4 months after flowering.

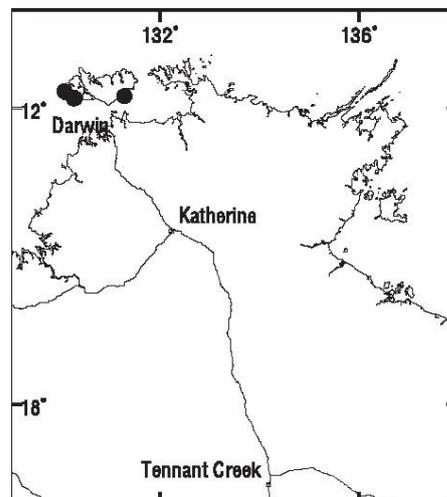
### Distribution

This subspecies is endemic to the NT. It is found only on Bathurst and Melville Islands, where it is known from just five collections. The Rainforest Atlas (Liddle *et al.* 1994) reported it from 11 records at seven localities.

*Conservation reserves where reported:*  
None.

### Ecology

This subspecies grows in coastal monsoon rainforest on dunes or red laterite.



Known locations of *Hoya australis* subsp. *oramicola*.

### Conservation assessment

This subspecies is considered adequately surveyed, based on extensive surveys on the Tiwi Islands and rainforest habitats across the Top End (Russell-Smith 1991; Fensham and Woinarski 1992; Woinarski *et al.* 2003). Over 7000 plant records have been collected from wet and dry rainforest communities on the Tiwi Islands (Woinarski *et al.* 2000).

Extent of occurrence is documented at 4821 km<sup>2</sup>, based on Liddle *et al.* (1994) and area of occupancy estimated as 2400 ha based on the

patch size of rainforest communities where collected (Fensham and Woinarski 1992).

Very little data on abundance are available for this species. Russell-Smith (unpubl.) recorded this species as common at Lubra Point on Bathurst Island and uncommon at Conder Point on Melville. Russell-Smith (1992) characterized adult population sizes of common rainforest species as large if > 50 individuals were present. Based on these figures the population size of this subspecies is estimated at 350-700 mature individuals, however this is highly speculative and surveys to quantify population size are crucial.

This subspecies has been classified as **Vulnerable** (under criteria D1+2) based on:

- an estimated population size of <1000 individuals; and
- a restricted area of occupancy estimated to be <20 km<sup>2</sup>.

### Threatening processes

Very little is known about the threatening processes that may affect this taxon, which may be naturally rare. However, monsoon rainforests generally are vulnerable to disturbance from cyclones, cattle, buffalo, pigs and dry-season wildfires (Russell-Smith and Bowman 1992; Panton 1993; Woinarski *et al.* 2003). Cyclonic frequency for the Tiwi Islands is documented at 0.8 to 1.2 cyclones per annum (Bureau of Meteorology data). With a small population size this species is vulnerable to stochastic events such as cyclones.

The coastal rainforest communities in which this taxon occurs are unlikely to be directly affected by developing forestry activities on the Tiwi islands (Woinarski *et al.* 2003). Nevertheless, large scale clearing of adjacent woodlands may affect local hydrology and provide opportunities for invasion by weedy

species, particularly if adequate buffer zones are not instituted.

### Conservation objectives and management

A Recovery Plan for this species, and other threatened plants on the Tiwi Islands, is due to be released in 2007, but many actions in its draft are currently being implemented.

Research priorities are to:

- i. provide a more detailed assessment of its distribution, habitat requirements and population size; and
- ii. provide an assessment of the factors limiting distribution, and/or threats to its survival.

A monitoring program should be established for at least some representative populations. Further survey may yield additional populations.

### Compiled by

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### References

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