

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

Triodia fitzgeraldii

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: M. Armstrong

Description

The taxonomic identity of this hummock grass has only recently been determined – until recently it was named as *Triodia* sp. Matt Wilson. It is now recognised as *T. fitzgeraldii* (a rare species previously considered restricted to the Kimberley, WA). It can be distinguished by its fine, non-resinous leaves and narrow inflorescence. Spikelets are approximately 3-4 mm long and 2 mm wide. The inflorescence is between 10-30 cm long and 5 mm wide.

Flowering: Feb.

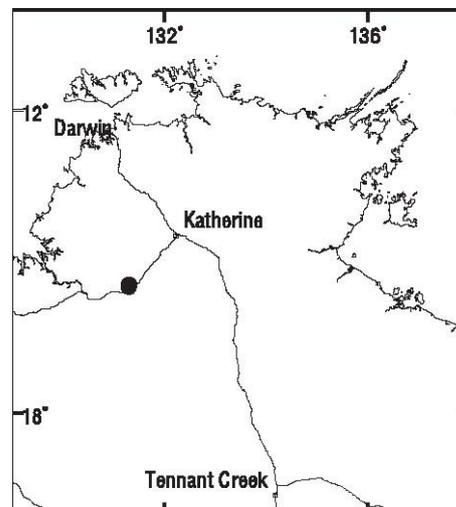
Fruiting: Nov.

Distribution

In the NT, this species is known only from one area on the edge of a plateau 2-3 km to the north of Matt Wilson lookout. Many thousands of plants were seen in a population extending south around the rim of an amphitheatre for approximately 1 km. The area has not been thoroughly surveyed and there is a strong possibility that the population is more extensive.

In WA, it is known “only from a sandstone area south east of Wyndham” (Wheeler 1992).

Conservation reserves where reported:
Gregory National Park.



Known locations of *Triodia fitzgeraldii*

Ecology

The plant occupies the rocky cliff top at the edge of a laterite plateau and the upper 20 metres or so of scree slope. It was also collected from the slope of a small gully near the top of the plateau, on gravelly soil.

Conservation assessment

In the Northern Territory, this species has been classified as Vulnerable (under criterion D2) based on the restricted area of occupancy estimated to be <20 km². Population size can

be interpreted as equivalent to more than 10,000 individuals (I. Cowie). There is no observed, projected or inferred decline in population size, or extreme fluctuations in area of occupancy or population size.

Threatening processes

With a restricted area of occupancy, this species is susceptible to stochastic events. The species occupies a narrow rim on rocky slopes. It is possible the species is a poor competitor against other *Triodia* species. The species occurs in an area frequently exposed to fire but the role of fire in determining its distribution is unknown.

Conservation objectives and management

Research into the status and distribution of the population and the impact of fire is required; and a monitoring program should be established.

Compiled by

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References

Wheeler, J.R. (ed.) (1992). *Flora of the Kimberley region*. (WA Herbarium, Perth.)