

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

Triodia sp. Matt Wilson

(previously *Triodia fitzgeraldii*)

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

A perennial hummock forming grass to 0.6m. Leaf sheaths are hairy and non-resinous, the sheaths and orifice with long-ciliate margins and the blades are fine. Inflorescence is slender and 25-30 cm long. Spikelets are ovate, 4-6 mm long, c. 3 mm wide, closely 4-6 flowered.

Molecular data and morphological comparison show that it is distinct from *T. fitzgeraldii*, a similar rare species restricted to the Kimberley, Western Australia (M.D. Barrett pers. comm.)¹.

Flowering: February.

Fruiting: November.

Distribution

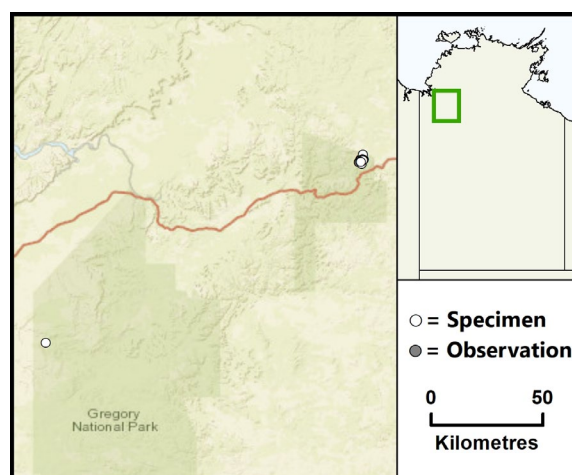
This species is endemic to the Northern Territory (NT). It is known mainly from an area on the edge of a plateau near Matt Wilson lookout in Gregory NP. In May 2015, many thousands of plants were observed extending in an arc around the rim of an amphitheatre for approximately 2.4 km. Two smaller, additional groups of plants were also located to the north and north east of this locality.



Credit: I.D. Cowie

A third disjunct locality was also recorded some 160 km to the south west at this time. The identity of this disjunct subpopulation was confirmed by molecular analysis (M.D. Barrett pers. comm.). It appears that additional occurrences are likely in the Matt Wilson Lookout area, or near the south-westerly locality.

NT conservation reserves where reported:
Gregory National Park.



Caption: Known locations of *Triodia* sp. Matt Wilson in the NT (nrmmaps.nt.gov.au)



Credit: I.D. Cowie

Ecology

The plant occupies the rocky cliff top at the edge of a laterite plateau and the upper 20 metres or so of steep scree slope. It is also recorded from the slope of a small gully near the top of the plateau, on gravelly soil. The overstorey typically consists of *Eucalyptus brevifolia* woodland.

Threatening processes

This species has a restricted range and is regarded as 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 or requires the greater fire protection offered by its rocky habitat. While the species occurs in an area frequently exposed to fire, the role of fire in determining its distribution is unclear.

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.

References

¹ Wheeler, J.R. (ed.) 1992. *Flora of the Kimberley Region*. (WA Herbarium, Perth.)