

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

Mapania macrocephala

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: D. Liddle

Description

Mapania macrocephala is a robust sedge to 2 m tall. The culms are 3-angled. The leaves are up to 4 m long, the blade 3-nerved with distinct secondary nerves, and the margin spinose. The inflorescence is terminal and globose, 4-7.5 cm wide. It is distinguishable from young *Pandanus* by m-shaped cross-section of leaf.

Fruiting: Feb, Jun, Nov.

Distribution

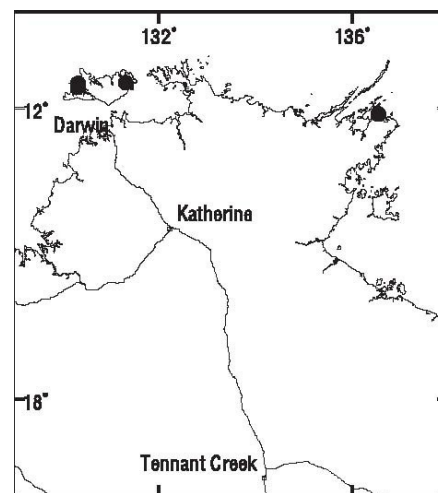
This species occurs in Sulawesi, Maluku, Nusa Tenggara, Philippines, New Guinea and north Australia (Queensland and the NT) (Simpson 1992). In the NT, it is known from four localities: two from Bathurst Island, one from Melville Island and one from northeastern Arnhem Land.

Conservation reserves where reported:

None

Ecology

This sedge occurs in wet, spring-fed rainforests.



Known locations of *Mapania macrocephala*.

Conservation assessment

It is known from four populations on the Tiwi Islands and in Arnhem Land with a total number of individuals estimated to be <250. The area of occupancy is estimated to be <20 km².

There is some negative collection bias associated with this taxon because of its similarity to *Pandanus* and the remote areas in which it occurs. More populations may exist but recent and extensive survey efforts in both the Tiwi Islands (Woinarski *et al.* 2003) and Arafura Swamp area (Brennan *et al.* 2003) have yielded only one additional population; and rainforests have been well

sampled in the NT (Russell-Smith 1991; Liddle *et al.* 1994).

The negative collection bias associated with this taxon has led us to list its status as **Vulnerable** (under criteria D1+2).

Threatening processes

There is a potential threat from pig and buffalo activity through either grazing on juveniles or disturbance. As a species occurring in spring rainforests, changes to hydrology could threaten populations. However such changes are not anticipated.

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.

Further research is required to provide a more detailed assessment of population size, distribution, and effects of putative threatening processes. A monitoring program should be established for at least representative populations.

Compiled by

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References

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