

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

Eleocharis retroflexa

Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Data Deficient

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

Eleocharis retroflexa is a small, cryptic, annual grass-like sedge to 10 cm tall. The stems are mostly submerged, 4-angled. The leaves are reduced to a sheath. The flower heads are 2–3.5 mm long, 1–2 mm diameter. The nut is white, c. 0.7 mm long, pitted¹.

Flowering and fruiting: April to May.

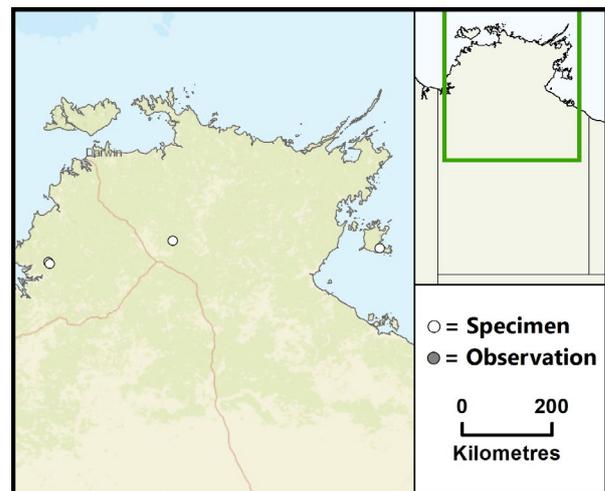
Distribution

This species is pantropical in distribution, and in Australia occurs in Queensland and the NT. In the NT, it is known from two swamps (5 km apart) on the Wingate Mountains plateau (Daly River/Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust), on the sandstone plateau in Nitmiluk NP and on Groote Eylandt.

NT conservation reserves where reported:
Nitmiluk National Park.



Credit: I.D.Cowie



Caption: Known locations or *Eleocharis retroflexa* in the NT (nrmmaps.gov.au)

Ecology

This species has been reported growing on plateaus, in shallow water on the margins of seasonal swamps on laterite, or clay loam substrates. One collection is from a sandy drainage depression. Associated species included *Melaleuca viridiflora*, *Eucalyptus phoenicea*,

Corymbia oocarpa, *Capillipedium parviflorum*, *Sorghum plumosum*, *Heteropogon triticeus* and sedges, mostly common, widespread species.

Threatening processes

No threats are known in NT. Parts of the NT where this species occurs are among the most remote and least affected by European settlement. Fire during the April-May fertile period could potentially be a threat, if they are dry enough to carry fire. It is possible that high densities of feral stock may affect the species, but there is no information available to demonstrate such threat. However, as an annual plant it is present in the landscape over the wet season when green vegetation is at peak biomass and grazing pressure is least intense.

Conservation objectives and management

Further targeted surveys of appropriate habitat at an appropriate time of year are needed to obtain distribution and abundance data and assess threats.

References

¹ Cowie, I.D., Short, P.S., and Osterkamp Madsen, M. 2000. *Floodplain Flora: A flora of the coastal floodplains of the Northern Territory, Australia*. Flora of Australia Supplementary Series 10, (ABRS, Canberra.)