

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

Elaeocarpus miegei

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Critically Endangered



Photo: Martin Armstrong

Description

Elaeocarpus miegei is a tall tree, to 35m. It is occasionally reported to have buttresses. In Papua New Guinea, it is reported to be a variable species (Coode 1981). It is distinguished from *Elaeocarpus arnhemicus* by longer petals (3 – 3.5 mm in *E. arnhemicus* and 5 mm long in *E. miegei*), and leaf shape (elliptic acute and usually acuminate in *E. arnhemicus*, obovate and obtuse in *E. miegei*).

Fruiting: Nov.

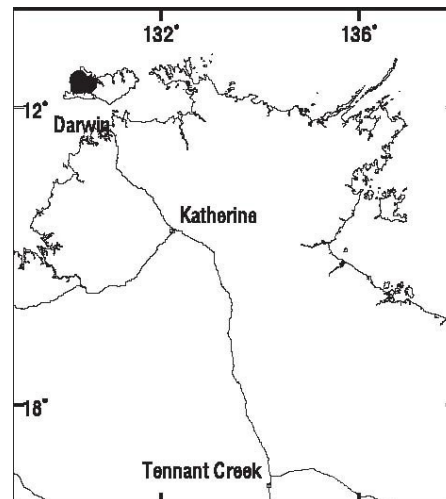
Distribution

The only Australian occurrences of this tall rainforest tree are on the Tiwi Islands. Beyond Australia, it is also known from New Guinea, Malesia and the Solomon Islands. On the Tiwi Islands, it has been recorded from six wet rainforest patches. Only one specimen is lodged at the NT Herbarium in Darwin.

Conservation reserves where reported: None.

Ecology

This species grows in permanently moist soils in wet rainforest patches.



Known locations of *Elaeocarpus miegei*.

Conservation assessment

No records of this species have been made since 1989, despite concerted search efforts on the Tiwi Islands in 1998-2001 (Woinarski *et al.* 2003). Without detailed knowledge of abundance, it is very difficult to assign a conservation status category. Given the survey effort applied to this species, its habitat on the Tiwi Islands, the non-cryptic nature of the species, and use of the precautionary principle, a status of **Critically Endangered** (under criteria D) is warranted based on an assumed number of mature individuals of <50.

Threatening processes

Potential threats include cyclonic events, feral animal activity (which may affect recruitment), changes to hydrology (possibly due to more intensive land use near rainforest patches) and the subsequent threat from fire.

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 into the status and extent of the population is required. A monitoring program should be established.

Compiled by

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References

- Coode, M.J.E. (1981). Elaeocarpaceae. In *Handbooks of the Flora of Papua New Guinea: Volume II.* (ed. E.E. Henty.) (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.)
- Woinarski, J., Brennan, K., Cowie, I., Kerrigan, R., and Hempel, C. (2003). *Biodiversity conservation on the Tiwi islands, Northern Territory. Part 1. Plants and environments.* 144 pp. (Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment, Darwin.)