



White Spider-orchid *Caladenia rigida* Endangered

Description

Caladenia rigida is an annual, terrestrial orchid. It has a single hairy leaf (3-20 cm long) that emerges in winter. It produces a single flower stem in Aug-Sept (15-25 cm tall) with one or two flowers. The flowers are white, with red fringes on the lip (labellum), which is curled under. The sepals and petals (2-5 cm long) are stiffly spread, and the sepals have red clubs on the tips.



Flowers of *Caladenia rigida*.

J. Quarmby

Conservation Rating

C. rigida is listed as nationally **Endangered** under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It has a restricted and declining distribution, and many of its populations are small, isolated and under threat.

Habitat

C. rigida grows in *Eucalyptus* woodlands, often with *E. leucoxydon* (South Australian Blue Gum) and *E. goniocalyx* (Long-leafed Box). The understorey usually includes *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* (Mount Lofty Grass-tree), *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle), and *Hibbertia exutiacies* (Guinea-flower).

It usually grows on the upper slopes and crests of moderate to steep hills in sandy loam soils.



Typical habitat of *Caladenia rigida*.

D. Bickerton

Distribution of *Caladenia rigida* in South Australia.



● Current populations
+ Historical populations

Distribution and abundance

C. rigida is endemic to South Australia and is currently known from over 20 populations in the southern Mount Lofty Ranges. Its range extends from Kuitpo in the south to Kersbrook in the north.

The population size of *C. rigida* was estimated to be approximately 5500 mature plants in 2007. Many populations are small and in decline. The largest populations are in the Kersbrook region.

Threats



Climate Change



Weed Invasion



Road Management



Herbivory



Recreation



Lack of Recruitment



Phytophthora



Illegal Collection

C. rigida is under particular threat from herbivory by kangaroos, rabbits and hares. Weed invasion is also a threat to many populations, especially Boneseed, Pine and Gorse. Some populations are also threatened by lack of pollination and recruitment.

Recovery Actions

C. rigida is included in a recovery plan for 12 threatened orchids in the Lofty Block region, which outlines strategies and actions for species recovery, including:

- Monitoring population size and trends.
- Surveying historical and potential habitat for populations.
- Mitigating the threats to populations (eg weed control, caging, rabbit control *etc*).
- Protecting and managing habitat (eg protecting land under Heritage Agreement, fencing *etc*).
- Collecting and preserving seed and mycorrhizal fungi.
- Preparing and implementing translocation proposals.
- Undertaking research related to the ecology and biology of the species.
- Informing, encouraging and supporting landholders and the community

How you can help

If you think you have seen *C. rigida* please report it to the Department for Environment and Heritage (see contacts below).

You can also volunteer your time to assist with surveys, monitoring, weed control, fencing, and other recovery actions for the species.



Group of *Caladenia rigida* plants.

J. Quarmby

Further reading

Quarmby J.P (2006) *Recovery plan for 12 threatened orchids in the Lofty Block region of South Australia 2007-2012*. Department for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide.

www.environment.sa.gov.au

For Further information please contact

Lofty Block Threatened Orchid Recovery Project Officer
Department for Environment and Heritage

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