

Threatened Flora of the South East

Grey Box *Eucalyptus microcarpa* Grassy Woodland

State Endangered

Location

Grey Box Grassy Woodland of the Upper South East of South Australia currently occupies less than 3 percent of the area it once did before European settlement. The largest remaining areas of Grey Box Woodland in the region are around the locations of Bordertown, Mundulla, Custon and Frances. These same areas are also where the larger remaining areas of Buloke (*Allocasuarina leuhmannii*) are found.

Conservation Rating

Grey Box Grassy Woodland has no status under Commonwealth Legislation but is rated endangered under the Provisional List of Threatened Ecosystems in South Australia 2001.

Recovery

To ensure the continued survival of Grey Box Grassy Woodland the Department for Environment and Heritage has a recovery program underway.

What does Grey Box look like?

- tree to 25 m high with bark persisting on trunk and larger branches, smooth above
- bark is grey with white patches, tightly held, fibrous and flaky ('box'), and sheds in short ribbons on upper branches
- white flowers (March – May) and cylindrical to pear-shaped fruits in groups of 7-11
- leaves are dull with blunt ends

Grey Box Woodlands in the Upper South East occur on fertile, poorly drained clayey, shrink-swell (*gilgaid*) soils on gently undulating plains, and generally have a grassy understorey. For the purpose of this factsheet Grey Box Woodland is a plant community where Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) is the dominant tree species. In the Upper South East co-dominant vegetation includes the following species:

- Buloke (*Allocasuarina leuhmannii*)
- Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon* ssp. *pruinosa*), and
- Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*)

Grey Box Woodland is also home to other threatened plant species such as the Pink Mulla-mulla (*Ptilotus exaltatus* var. *semilanatus*) and Leafy Templetonia (*Templetonia stenophylla*).



Grey Box paddock tree

Threats



Small size of remnants



Habitat fragmentation



Rabbit, goat, deer grazing



Stock grazing



Disturbance of roadside vegetation



Competition from weeds



Lack of recruitment of overstorey component species

Ecosystems that are endangered have been greatly reduced in range and often exist in less than ideal situations, where various processes can threaten their ability to survive in an intact state. Serious threats to this ecosystem include:

- habitat fragmentation
- grazing by stock and introduced herbivores
- competition from weeds
- disturbance of roadside vegetation
- small size of remnants
- lack of recruitment of overstorey and component species

Where does it occur?

Some of the best remaining examples of Grey Box Woodland can be found at Custon Parklands, Mundulla Common and Pooginagoric-Teatrick Roadside Reserve.

Recovery

Aim: to manage immediate threats and to restore and maintain habitat through:

- weed control – targeting species such as Bridal Creeper, Boxthorn, Olive and Phalaris
- improving our knowledge on the communities' ecology and responses to ecological disturbance and weed invasion
- linking remnants through revegetating roadside corridors where appropriate
- increasing the amount of Grey Box Woodland in reserves/under covenant



Grey Box bark

How you can help

Helping to save threatened species and communities is something that everyone can become involved in.

- protect native plants and habitat on your property from grazing, weeds and clearance
- join your local Landcare or Friends of Parks groups
- use minimum disturbance methods to control weeds and feral animals

Further Information

Biodiversity Conservation Programs
Department for Environment and Heritage
Telephone (08) 8222 9422
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Photos courtesy of D. Hinchliffe
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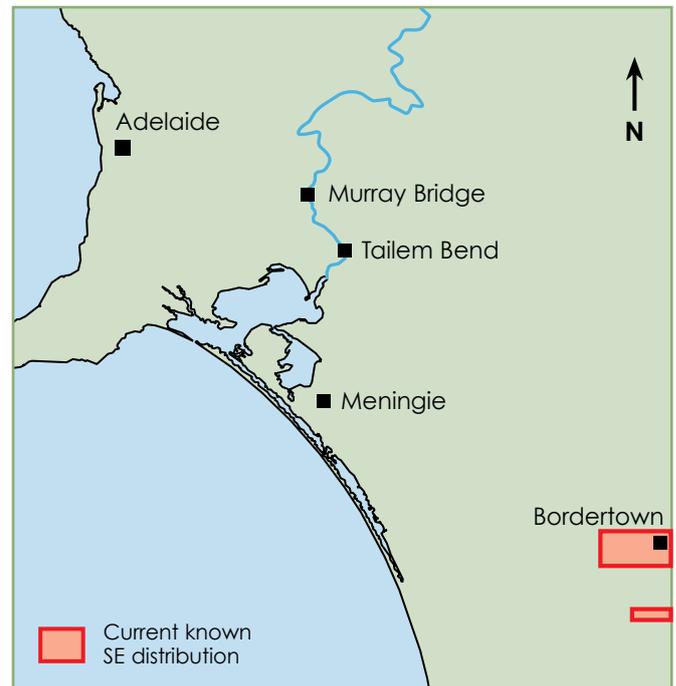
Grey Box flower

Further reading

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Contact

Threatened Species Program
Department for Environment and Heritage
Mount Gambier
Ph: (08) 8735 1177



Department for Environment and Heritage
South East Natural Resources Management Board