



**PLANT**

***Corybas unguiculatus***

**Small Helmet-orchid**

| AUS | SA | AMLR | Endemism | Life History |
|-----|----|------|----------|--------------|
| -   | R  | E    | -        | Perennial    |

Family *ORCHIDACEAE*



Photo: © Ken Bayley

**Conservation Significance**

The AMLR distribution is disjunct, isolated from other extant occurrences within SA. Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.<sup>4</sup>

**Description**

Distinctive tiny helmet-orchid. Single, rounded to ovate leaf, to 3 cm by 2 cm, which is greyish-green above and reddish-purple beneath. Ground-hugging. Single flower, dark purple to blackish, shiny, about 1.5 cm long, arises on a stalk from near the base of the leaf.<sup>1,7</sup>

Synonym: *Anzybas unguiculatus*.<sup>7</sup>

**Distribution and Population**

Also occurs in WA, NSW, VIC, TAS and NZ. In SA, occurs in SL, KI and SE regions.<sup>2,7</sup> Rare in the AMLR from Lyndoch southward. Equally rare on KI but more frequent in the SE.<sup>1</sup>

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records from Scott CP and Myponga Reservoir Reserve.<sup>4</sup>

There are no pre-1983 records.<sup>4</sup>

**Habitat**

Usually found in coastal regions and adjacent ranges; mainly in heathland and heathy forest but also around swamp margins and depressions.<sup>7</sup>

Recorded in AMLR from stringybark (*Eucalyptus Baxteri*) forest, with *Acacia paradoxa*, *Xanthorrhoea* and *Banksia ornata*. Also in leaf litter under bracken, on damp sandy soil.<sup>1,2,5,8</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Heathy Open Forest.<sup>4</sup>

Within the AMLR the species' degree of habitat specialisation is classified as 'High'.<sup>4</sup>

**Biology and Ecology**

Flowers during the May-July period. The earliest of SA's helmet orchids to flower.<sup>1</sup> Self-pollinated. A form from peat bogs in the SE flowers only after fire.<sup>1</sup>

Usually grows in small colonies of sparse individuals.<sup>1,6</sup>

**Aboriginal Significance**

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in central Ngarrindjeri and southern Kurna Nations.<sup>4</sup>

**Threats**

Becoming increasingly rare due to loss of habitat.<sup>1</sup> Flowers are very attractive to slugs and snails.<sup>1</sup> Weeds have displaced some populations.<sup>3</sup>

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

**Further information:**

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region  
Phone: (61 8) 8336 0901 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0999  
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>

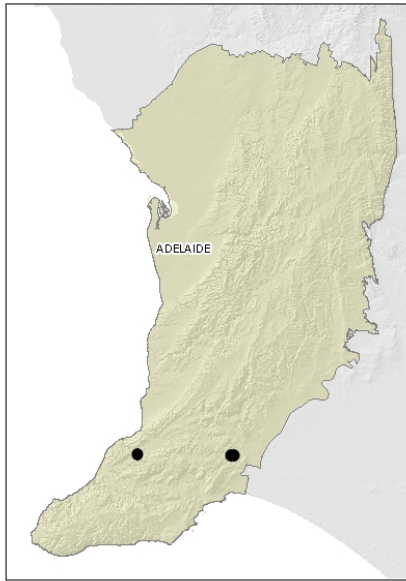
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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014





## Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.<sup>4</sup> Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

<sup>8</sup> Prescott, A. (1988). *It's Blue with Five Petals*. Ann Prescott, Adelaide, South Australia.

## References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

<sup>1</sup> Bates, R. J., ed. (2007). *South Australian Native Orchids. Electronic version, August 2007*. Native Orchid Society of South Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Department for Environment and Heritage *Electronic Flora of South Australia species Fact Sheet: Corybas unguiculatus (R.Br.) Rchb.f.* Available from <http://www.flora.sa.gov.au> (accessed August 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Department for Environment and Heritage. (2007). Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Expert Flora Workshop, Unpublished Notes. Participants: Bickerton, D., Croft, T., Jury, T., Lang, P., Prescott, A., Quarmby, J. and Smith, K., Adelaide.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Project Database*. Unpublished data extracted and edited from BDBSA, SA Herbarium (July 2007) and other sources.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *State Herbarium of South Australia Database*. Unpublished data, extracted October 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Jones, D. and Jones, B. (2000). *A Field Guide to the Native Orchids of Southern Australia*. Bloomings Books, Victoria.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, D. L. (2006). *A complete guide to native orchids of Australia including the island territories*. New Holland Publishers, Australia.

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