



PLANT

Prasophyllum australe

Austral Leek-orchid

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Life History
-	R	V	-	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 'Very Restricted'.⁶

Description

Slender leek-orchid, to 90 cm high. Bears up to 50 crowded flowers, spreading, in loose cylindrical spike. Flowers white with reddish brown and green stripes, to 10 mm across. Leaf to 45 cm, with distinctive vertical red stripes at the base.^{3,4,5}

Similar species: *Prasophyllum elatum*.¹⁰

Distribution and Population

Also occurs in QLD, NSW, VIC and TAS. In SA occurs in SL, KI and SE regions.^{5,9}

Restricted to high rainfall southern parts of the AMLR, western Kangaroo Island and the lower SE. More

common in the eastern States.³ Formerly fairly common in parts of the MLR south of Mount Lofty, but has become increasingly rare.⁷

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records occur in the area around Mount Compass to Tunkalilla, southern Fleurieu Peninsula.⁶

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records indicate a wider historic distribution, with multiple records from the MLR (Adelaide Hills) between Cleland CP, Scott Creek and Handorf, and a record on the eastern AMLR boundary near Black Swamp.⁶

Habitat

Occurs on boggy, peaty sand and gravel soils in swamps, forests, along creeklines or coastal heathland.^{3,5}

Within the AMLR recorded from *Leptospermum* shrubland swamps growing with *Viminaria juncea*, *Baumea rubiginosa*, *B. tetragona* and *Empodisma minus*.^{7,8}

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Wetland.⁶

Within the AMLR the species' degree of habitat specialisation is classified as 'High'.⁶

Biology and Ecology

Flowers from November to January.³ Flowers are sweetly vanilla scented.^{5,7}

Pollinators include bees, ichneumonid and thynnid wasps. Syrphiid flies, jewel beetles, rove beetles and small spiders also visit the flowers.^{2,9,11}

Flowers more freely after fire, grazing or mowing. Forms small vegetative colonies.^{2,4,5,9}

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the majority of the AMLR distribution occurs in southern Ngarrindjeri Nation (bordering Peramangk Nation). Also present in Kaurna Nation.⁶

Orchidaceae species are recorded as being a traditional food source for Aboriginal people in NSW. The small tubers were roasted (Flood 1980).¹

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



Government
 of South Australia



ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

Department
for Environment
and Heritage

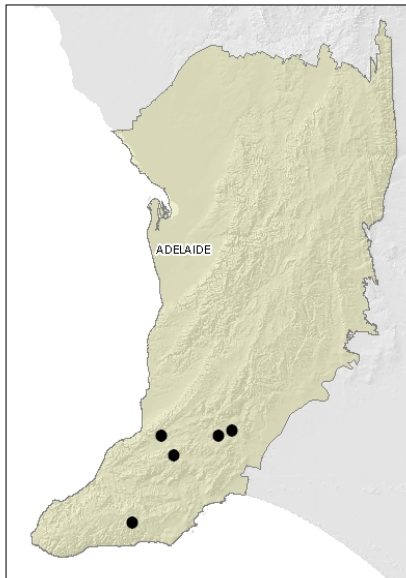
Threats

Threats include:

- loss of habitat: conversion of habitat to farmland³
- altered water regimes (e.g. at Swampy Creek, Higgs Swamp and Upper Coolawang Creek Wetlands)
- weed invasion/competition (e.g. Blackberry, Sweet Vernal Grass, Lesser Hawkbit, Greater Bird's-foot)
- grazing by livestock.⁸

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

Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.⁶ Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

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).

- 1 Australian National Botanic Gardens (2007). *Aboriginal Plant Use - NSW Southern Tablelands*. Available from <http://www.anbg.gov.au/apu/index.html> (accessed August 2007).
- 2 Banjorah (2007). *Australian Terrestrial Orchids, Other Flora and Fauna*. Available from <http://www.banjorah.com/> (accessed September 2007).
- 3 Bates, R. J., ed. (2007). *South Australian Native Orchids. Electronic version, August 2007*. Native Orchid Society of South Australia.

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4 Botanic Gardens Trust (1993). *PlantNET - The Plant Information Network System of Botanic Gardens Trust*. Available from <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au> (accessed September 2007).

5 Department for Environment and Heritage *Electronic Flora of South Australia species Fact Sheet: Prasophyllum australe R.Br.* Available from <http://www.flora.sa.gov.au/> (accessed September 2007).

6 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.

7 Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *State Herbarium of South Australia Database*. Unpublished data, extracted October 2007.

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

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