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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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# Pingaring spider orchid

E n d a n g e r e d F l o r a o f W e s t e r n A u s t r a l i a

**If you think you have seen this plant, please call the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Katanning District on (08) 9821-1296 or Narrogin District on (08) 9881-9200.**

Collectively known as spider or fairy orchids *Caladenia* is a large mainly Australian genus with 112 species found in the south-west of Western Australia. Contained within *Caladenia* are a number of complexes with *C. hoffmanii* being a member of the *C. longiclavata* complex. It differs from the others in its shorter petals and sepals, a tapering labellum which is curled only at the tip and a more northerly and inland range of distribution.

The species occurs in two quite remarkably disjunct areas and, due to this and several floral differences, has been separated into two subspecies. *Caladenia hoffmanii* subsp. *hoffmanii* (Hoffman's spider orchid) is found between the Murchison River and Geraldton where it grows beneath dense shrubs on rocky hillsides while *C. hoffmanii* subsp. *graniticola* (Pingaring spider orchid) is found 600km to the south-east near Pingaring.

K. White first found Pingaring spider orchid near the town of Pingaring in 1984. Since then further populations have been found by J. Tonkinson, S. Hopper, S. van Leeuwen, A. Brown, A. Coates and D. McDonald during surveys of granite outcrops between Newdegate and Hyden.

Pingaring spider orchid has a single hairy leaf 8-15cm long by 5-10mm wide. Plants produce one or two small flowers 3-5cm across on a stem 12-30cm high. Its name is derived from the word granite and the Latin suffix -cola (dweller), alluding to the distinctive habitat it occupies.

Pingaring spider orchid differs from Hoffman's spider orchid in its larger flowers, longer basal calli and later flowering period.

The species is found over a geographic range of 50km between Pingaring and Newdegate in the south-central wheatbelt, growing beneath tall shrubs and sheoaks (*Allocasuarina huegeliana*) on and around granite outcrops.

Pingaring spider orchid has an underground potato-like tuber from which it resprouts in the autumn following a summer dormancy. It is presumed that its flowers are insect pollinated, possibly by thynnid wasps, but very little else is known about its biology.

Pingaring spider orchid was declared as Rare Flora in 1987 and ranked as Critically Endangered (CR) in 1999 due to the small size and severe fragmentation of populations and a decline in the area, extent and quality of habitat.



Pingaring spider orchid has distinctive flowers with short petals and sepals.  
Photo – A. Brown

The Department has set up the Katanning and Narrogin District Threatened Flora Recovery Teams to coordinate recovery actions that address the greatest threats to the survival of the subspecies in the wild (see overleaf).

The subspecies is known from just six small populations and the Department is keen to know of any others.

If unable to contact the district office on the above number, please phone the Department's Wildlife Branch on (08) 9334 0422.

## Recovery of a Species



The Department is committed to ensuring that Critically Endangered flora does not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of a Recovery Plan or Interim Recovery Plan (IRP), which outlines the recovery actions that are required to urgently address those threatening processes most affecting the ongoing survival of threatened taxa in the wild and begin the recovery process.

IRPs are prepared by the Department and implemented by Regional or District Recovery Teams consisting of representatives from the Department of Conservation and Land Management, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.



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**Recovery actions that have been, and will be, progressively implemented to protect the subspecies include:**

**Protection from current threats:** These include control of weeds; protection from rabbits; seed collections; genetic studies; liaising with land holders and Local Government workers to ensure accidental damage does not occur; conducting further surveys; and regular monitoring of the health of populations.

**Protection from future threats:** These include researching the biology and ecology of the subspecies; propagation; translocations; development of a fire management strategy; ensuring that relevant authorities, landowners and Departmental personnel are aware of the subspecies' presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threats identified in the Interim Recovery Plan.



Plants produce one or rarely two flowers in late spring. Photo – A.Brown



Pingaring spider orchid has a distinctive red-tipped semi protruding labellum. Photo – S.Hopper

IRPs will be deemed a success if the number of individuals within the population and/or the number of populations have increased.

This poster was prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.



Monitoring quadrats have been set up to ascertain threats to the sub species.. Photo – S.Hopper