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Department of Biodiversity,
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Sandplain duck 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



Sandplain duck orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown

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

Protection from current threats:
regular monitoring of the health of known populations and conducting further surveys for this plant on soils and geology similar to that of the known populations.

Protection from future threats:
collection of seed and storage at Kings Park and Botanic Gardens; researching the biology and ecology of the species; enhancing plant numbers by direct propagation and translocation techniques; ensuring that relevant authorities, landowners and DEC staff are aware of its presence and the need to protect it; and the development of an Interim Recovery Plan for the species.

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

This project is funded by the Australian and State governments' investment through the Natural Heritage Trust, administered in the Midwest Region by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council.



Above: Buds of sandplain duck orchid. Photo – Benson Todd

Below: Habitat of Sandplain duck orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown



Sandplain duck orchid

Endangered flora of Western Australia

If you think you've seen this plant, please call the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC's) Moora District on (08) 9652 1911 or Swan Coastal District on (08) 9405 0700.

Sandplain duck orchid (*Paracaleana dixonii*), a tuberous, perennial herb to 18 centimetres tall, has a single, smooth leaf that appears in mid April. This leaf is linear and up to four centimetres long but by the time the species flowers in late October and November, has often shriveled due to the hot, dry conditions. The flowers are a muddy yellow to brown colour and up to 2.5 centimetres in length.

Sandplain duck orchid was first recognised as a distinct species by Dr Kingsley Dixon and was formally described by Stephen Hopper and Andrew Brown in 2006. The orchid has the largest labellum (lip) and one of the tallest flowering stems of all Western Australia duck orchids.

Pollination of the sandplain duck orchid is unusual; the insect-like labellum (lip) of the flower emits a pheromone that attracts sexually active male thynnid wasps. These attempt to mate with the lip and in the process pick up pollen bundles that are subsequently transferred from flower to flower allowing for cross-pollination.

Sandplain duck orchid is found between the Arrowsmith area and Moore River National Park, growing in deep sandy soils over laterite or deep sand in open areas of shrubland with *Eucalyptus todtiana* and *Banksia* species.



Sandplain duck orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown

Population sizes are generally very low with no known population having more than nine individuals and most only one or two.

Sandplain duck orchid is currently gazetted as declared rare flora and ranked as critically endangered.

DEC has set up the Moora and Swan Coastal districts threatened flora recovery teams to coordinate recovery actions that address the greatest threats to the survival of the species in the wild.

Threats to this species include mining, fire during the plants' growing period, roadside maintenance (including grading, construction of drainage channels and removal of roadside vegetation), firebreak maintenance and small population sizes.

If unable to contact the district offices on the above numbers, please phone DEC's Species and Communities Branch on (08) 9334 0455.

Recovery of a species

DEC is committed to ensuring that critically endangered taxa do not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of a Recovery Plan or Interim Recovery Plan (IRP), which outline the recovery actions that are required to urgently address those threatening processes most affecting the ongoing survival of the threatened species in the wild and begin the recovery process.

IRPs are prepared by DEC and implemented by regional or district recovery teams consisting of representatives from DEC, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future

