



Montane Heath and Thicket of the Eastern Stirling Range

Summary description

The community occurs in the high peaks of the eastern Stirling Range mountains. It is commonly found at altitudes of approximately 900–1090m above sea level, but extends to lower altitudes in two occurrences. It comprises a heathland and dense shrub thicket with a number of endemic species. Several endemic and characteristic species within the community and the near absence of *Eucalyptus* species differentiate it from other plant communities in the range. Thirteen species of threatened flora are known in the community: *Andersonia axilliflora* (giant andersonia; critically endangered), *Banksia brownii* (feather-leaved banksia; critically endangered), *Banksia montana* (critically endangered), *Darwinia collina* (yellow mountain bell; critically endangered), *Darwinia nubigena* (endangered), *Darwinia squarrosa* (pink mountain bell; vulnerable), *Daviesia obovata* (endangered), *Deyeuxia drummondii* (Drummond grass; vulnerable), *Lambertia fairallii* (Fairall's honeysuckle; critically endangered), *Latrobea colophona* (critically endangered), *Leucopogon gnaphalioides* (critically endangered), *Persoonia micranthera* (critically endangered) and *Sphenotoma drummondii* (mountain paper-heath; endangered). Twenty-three priority flora taxa also occur in the community. *Andersonia axilliflora* is a characteristic endemic species of the community. Five threatened and one priority fauna species occur within the community: *Setonix brachyurus* (quokka; vulnerable), *Pseudococcus markharveyi* (Banksia montana mealybug; critically endangered), *Trioza barrettiae* (Banksia brownii plant-louse; endangered), *Zephyrarchaea robinsi* (eastern massif assassin spider; vulnerable), *Atelomastix tumula* (Bluff Knoll atelomastix millipede; vulnerable), and *Bothriembryon glauerti* (a bothriembryontid land snail; priority 2).



Distribution

The community extends a range of 13km across the mountain summits within Stirling Range National Park.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Region: South Coast
DBCA District: Albany

Local Government Authority: Shire of Gnowangerup

Habitat requirements

This community occurs on shallow soils on quartzite mountain summits from approximately 750m–1090m above sea level. Conditions are distinctively montane with extremes of temperatures, high humidity and exposure, and occasional snowfalls.

Indigenous interest

Traditional Owner group: Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar

The area is covered by the Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar Indigenous Land Use Agreement as part of the South West Native Title Settlement, which formally recognises Noongar people as the Traditional Owners of the south-west region. The Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar region is supported by the Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation and umbrella group, the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.

Conservation status

State: Listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Threatened ecological communities are declared environmentally sensitive areas under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

National: Listed as endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as 'Eastern Stirling Range Montane Heath and Thicket'. The community occurs within the Stirling Range National Park, a National Heritage listed place protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Threatening processes

Major threats to the community include dieback disease caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, too frequent fire, grazing and browsing by introduced fauna, disturbance from recreational impacts, and drying climate.

Recovery plan

An interim recovery plan has been developed for this community, outlining the recovery actions that are required to reduce threats and maintain or improve its overall condition. Priority actions include dieback hygiene measures and phosphite treatment, managing browsing with grazing exclosures and rabbit control, monitoring flora and vegetation, collecting and storing seed to safeguard against species extinction, developing a restoration and fire management strategy, mapping critical habitat, and installing protection from physical trampling.

Key references

Barrett, S. (1996). *Biological survey of mountains of southern Western Australia* [Unpublished report]. Department of Conservation and Land Management for the Australian Nature Conservation Agency.

Department of Parks and Wildlife. (2016). *Montane Heath and Thicket of the South West Botanical Province, above approximately 900 m above sea level (Eastern Stirling Range Montane Heath and Thicket Community): Interim Recovery Plan 2016–2021* (Interim Recovery Plan No. 370).

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