



Prasophyllum uroglossum

Common name Wingecarabee Leek Orchid

Conservation status

Prasophyllum uroglossum Rupp is listed as an **Endangered Species** on Schedule 1 of the New South Wales *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*. This species is also listed as an **Endangered Species** on Schedule 1 of the Commonwealth *Endangered Species Protection Act, 1992*.

General description

A strong smelling flower is a feature of *P. uroglossum*. The flowers are brown, purple-red and green. An illustration of this species can be found in Bernhardt and Rowe (1993) and a photograph is provided in Bishop (1996).

Scientific description

The orchid *P. uroglossum* (Orchidaceae) is a terrestrial herb, to 45 cm high. Leaf to 40 cm long. Inflorescence usually <20-flowered, not crowded. Flowers brown, purple-red and green, with a strong sweet scent. Dorsal sepals ovate to lanceolate, to 9 mm long. Lateral sepals to 8 mm long, usually free to base, almost parallel to each other. Lateral petals linear, usually <8 mm long. Labellum on a narrow claw, lamina to 7.5 mm long and 4.5 mm wide, linear to ovate to weakly 3-lobed, abruptly reflexed. Callus plate linear to oblong, greenish, with a deep central channel dividing it into 2 low ridges, usually extending about three-quarters the length of the lamina. Column wings lanceolate, bright or pale pink; rostellum shorter than wings (Bernhardt & Rowe 1993).

There is confusion about the taxonomic status of this species. Jones (1993) claims the species is identical with *P. fuscum*. However, Bishop (1992) claims B. Bates of Adelaide has established that *P. uroglossum* is a distinct species.

Distribution

This species is restricted to the Burrawang district in the Illawarra region of NSW where it occurs on the margins of Wingecarabee Swamp (Bishop 1996).

Recorded occurrences in conservation reserves

P. uroglossum is not known to occur within any conservation reserves (NPWS 1999).

Habitat

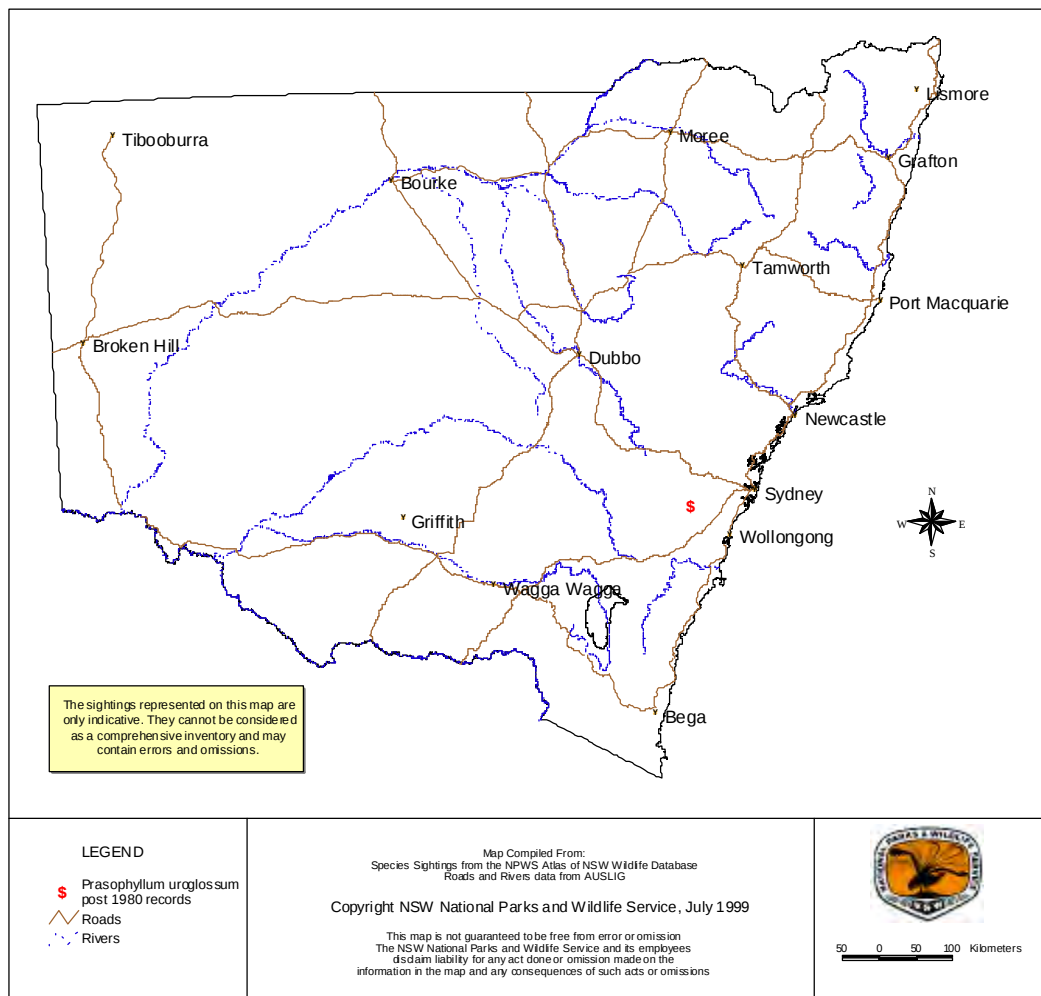
P. uroglossum grows on the margins of a peat swamp, in peat to clay-peat soil at the ecotone between grassy woodland/forest (now degraded) and the swamp. It favours open heathland where good light is available and where low shrubs such as *Leptospermum obovatum* provide some shelter. It likes moist but not really wet soils, and thus does not extend into the swamp itself (Bishop 1992).

Ecology

Like other members of the genus *Prasophyllum*, this species has a dormant phase. Plants are dormant during summer and sprout around April to form a short-filiform leaf. This leaf may develop further and flower.

The species flowers from September to December (Bernhardt & Rowe 1993). The response of this species to fire is unknown, however, fire stimulation of flowering is common within the genus (Jones 1993).

Reproduction is by means of seed and probably to a lesser extent by vegetative reproduction. Flowers are not self-pollinating, as not all set seed and the intense perfume suggests an insect vector. The pollinating vector is unknown, but related species seem to be pollinated by a variety of thynnid wasps and perhaps hoverflies (Syrphidae). It can be assumed that there



NPWS records of *Prasophyllum uroglossum* in NSW

is more than one pollinating species (Bishop 1992). The mature plants senesce after seed dispersal in late December or January (Bishop 1992).

Threats

P. uroglossum is currently threatened by weed invasion (particularly aggressive grasses like *Holcus* and blackberries) and changed hydrological conditions. A major washout/collapse of Wingecarribee Swamp in August 1998 may result in changed hydrological conditions within the swamp. Such changes could threaten the survival of the species at that location (J. Briggs pers. comm.). The species has also been threatened in the past by cattle grazing, topdressing and peat mining (Bishop 1992).

Management

Bishop (1992) outlines a number of management recommendations for this species. Management should be centred upon habitat protection, including; control of potential causes of physical disturbance (including cattle, humans and peat mining) and weed control.

Recovery plans

There is currently no recovery plan for *P. uroglossum*, but a Wingecarribee Threatened Species Task force is currently considering the needs of this species following the major collapse of Wingecarribee Swamp in August, 1998.

References

- Bernhardt P. and Rowe R.R. 1993. *Prasophyllum*, in G.J. Harden (Ed.) Flora of New South Wales. Volume 4: pp. 155-163. New South Wales University Press, Kensington.
- Bishop A.D. 1992. Conservation of *Prasophyllum uroglossum* at Wingecarribee swamp. Report prepared for the NSW NPWS.
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- Jones D.L. 1993. Native Orchids of Australia. Reed Books, Australia.
- NPWS 1999. Atlas of NSW Wildlife. NPWS, Hurstville.

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