



Rapanea sp. Richmond River

Other names *Rapanea* sp. 1, *Rapanea* sp. A

Common name Lismore Muttonwood

Conservation status

Rapanea sp. Richmond River (J. H. Maiden and J. L. Boorman NSW 26751) is listed as an **Endangered Species** on Schedule 1 of the New South Wales *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*. The species is also listed as an **Endangered Species** on Schedule 1 of the Commonwealth *Endangered Species Protection Act, 1992*.

General description

R. sp. Richmond River is a shrub or small tree with leaves to 14cm in length and 3cm in width. Clusters of flowers form blue fruit 3 to 4mm in diameter. An illustration of *R.* sp. Richmond River can be found in Harden (1990).

Scientific description

R. sp. Richmond River (Myrsinaceae) is a shrub or small tree. Leaves elliptic to oblanceolate, 5-14 cm long, 1.5-3 cm wide, strongly tapered to base and apex, the apex \pm pointed or rarely slightly notched, margins entire, lateral veins faint and dots often raised on dried material; leaf stalk 4-7mm long and grooved. Flowers in axillary clusters, 5-merous, calyx and corolla prominently glandular. Fruit a blue globose drupe, 3-4mm diameter (Harden 1990).

R. sp. Richmond River is one of 4 species of *Rapanea* which occur within New South Wales. The others being; *R. variabilis*, *R. howittiana* and *R. subsessilis*. It is difficult to distinguish *R.* sp. Richmond River from these other species, especially *R. variabilis*. The botanical keys which currently exist for *Rapanea* species are not suitable to identify *R.* sp. Richmond River because there is much variation within this taxa and an overlap of characteristics between the species. The only person who is currently able to confirm the species is Betsy Jackes in Queensland. There are currently plans to

develop a key which can be used by councils, consultants, landcare type groups and botanists to identify *R.* sp. Richmond River (M. Matthes pers. comm.).

Distribution

This species has been recorded from near Coraki on the Richmond River, northern NSW, northwards to near Mt. Warning (Harden 1990). The species was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 1991. The species is currently known from only 4 sites; 3 within Boatharbour Nature Reserve and one on a private property near Tatham. These sites support a total of less than 50 individuals (M. Matthes pers. comm.).

Recorded occurrences in conservation reserves

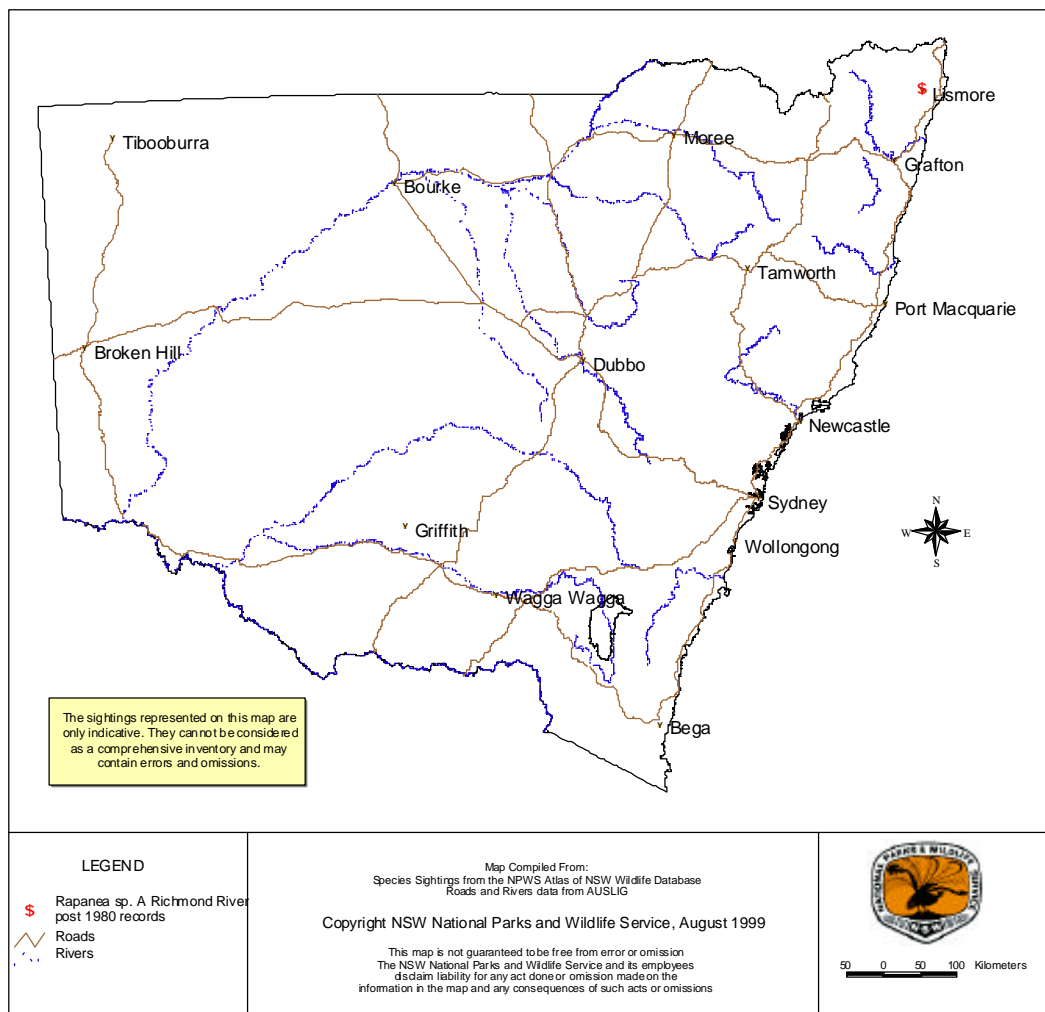
R. sp. Richmond River is known to occur at three separate locations within the Boatharbour Nature Reserve (NPWS 1999).

Habitat

R. sp. Richmond River grows in a swamp sclerophyll forest/rainforest ecotone on the Richmond River flood plain. The swamp sclerophyll forest is dominated by Prickly Paperbark (*Melaleuca stypheloides*) and Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) and also includes *Stebulus brunoides* and the exotics *Lantana camara* and *Solanum seaforthionum* (NPWS 1999).

Ecology

Little is known of the ecology of this species. It is however, known to be capable of setting fruit, producing seed and germinating. One of the extant sites was noted to contain 4 individuals, 3 young saplings and a seedling (NPWS 1999).



NPWS records of *Rapanea* sp. Richmond River in NSW

Threats

This species is currently threatened by cattle grazing and trampling, weed invasion, loss of habitat through clearing for agriculture and an extremely low number of populations/individuals (M. Matthes pers. comm.). Such a low number of populations/individuals increases susceptibility to catastrophic events and local extinction.

Management

Continued survey for this taxa is considered an extremely high priority. The population

on private land has been fenced to exclude cattle and now requires regular monitoring and weed control. A weed and fire management plan is to be created for this species. Taxonomic clarification is also considered important (M. Matthes pers. comm.).

Recovery plans

A recovery plan is currently being prepared for this species by the NSW NPWS.

References

Harden G. J. 1990. Myrsinaceae, in G. J. Harden (Ed.) Flora of New South Wales Vol 1: 501-504. New South Wales University Press, Kensington.

NPWS 1999. Atlas of NSW Wildlife. NPWS, Hurstville.

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