

SPINY RICE-FLOWER

Pimelea spinescens subsp. *Spinescens*



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SPINY RICE-FLOWER

Pimelea spinescens subsp. Spinescens

Photo: Norm Stimson (Enviro-images)

The Spiny Rice-flower is a small, attractive shrub with narrow, green leaves and pale yellow flowers, flowering from April–August.

It is native to Victoria and grows in grasslands or open shrublands in the North Central region. While once the Spiny Rice-flower was relatively widespread, it is now suffering a severe decline in numbers.

The species is under threat from habitat clearance, lack of reproduction in the wild and competition from weeds. It is also very difficult to propagate.

The North Central Catchment Management Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment are working together to increase the numbers of this species, with funding from the Natural Heritage Trust.

For further information, contact DSE Bendigo on ph: (03) 5430 4444.



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CRIMSON SPIDER-ORCHID
Caladenia concolor



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CRIMSON SPIDER-ORCHID

Caladenia concolor

Photo: Norm Stimson (Enviro-images)

The striking Crimson Spider-orchid produces deep purplish-red flowers that can be seen from September–October. In North Central Victoria, the orchid is found in Box–Ironbark forests. However, it is now considered vulnerable.

Less than 75 plants are known in the wild, in fewer than ten populations.

The species is currently under threat from damage to its environment, illegal collection and grazing, along with a poor understanding of its biology.

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WHIPSTICK WESTRINGIA
Westringia crassifolia



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WHIPSTICK WESTRINGIA

Westringia crassifolia

Photo: Department of Sustainability and Environment

The Whipstick Westringia is a delicate shrub that can grow to three metres high, with flowers coloured from pink through to blue or lavender. Flowering time is August–September.

The nationally endangered Whipstick Westringia is native to Victoria, confined to the Box–Ironbark forests of the Greater Bendigo National Park and Little Desert Mallee communities.

The shrub has survived near areas harvested for eucalyptus oil. However, with only 640 plants remaining in the wild, this species is facing a serious risk of extinction. One of the threats to its survival is being a source of food for wallabies.

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RED SWAINSON-PEA
Swainsona plagiotropis



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RED SWAINSON-PEA

Swainsona plagiotropis

Photo: Norm Stimson (Enviro-images)

The vulnerable Red Swainson-pea is a small perennial herb with bright red flowers that eventually fade to violet. Flowering usually begins in September and finishes by the end of October.

In North Central Victoria, it is restricted to a few sites (mostly between Bendigo and the River Murray), where it grows in grasslands and is now mainly confined to roadsides.

The species is currently under threat from land clearing, predation from the introduced red-legged earth mite and overgrazing.

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BUSH-STONE CURLEW
Burhinus grallarius



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BUSH-STONE CURLEW

Burhinus grallarius

Photo: Peter Merritt

Curlews typically inhabit open woodland remnants surrounded by farmland, the open woodland providing shelter during the day from predators. They also require fallen timber, as it provides camouflage from predators and material to build their ground nests. The fallen timber also provides Curlew with an array of invertebrates to feed upon.

While the future of the Bush Stone-curlew is uncertain, practical steps can be taken to conserve the species. These include restricting the clearance of remnant vegetation, leaving fallen timber on the ground, limiting grazing (particularly during Curlew breeding season), and controlling foxes and feral cats.



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BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE (TUAN)

Phascogale tapoatafa



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BRUSH-TAILED PHASCOGALE (TUAN)

Phascogale tapoatafa

Photo: Norm Stimson (Enviro-images)

The Brush-tailed Phascogale (Tuan) is a small marsupial that lives in dry forests and woodlands. It likes the ground layer to have scattered grass tussocks and ground litter.

The Tuan prefers to live in the hollows of large, old box trees. Mating occurs in May–June, after which all males die. The female is then left to give birth and raise the young in her pouch.

The Tuan is a carnivore that looks for food on trunks and branches. It mainly eats invertebrates like beetles, spiders and ants found beneath the rough bark and cracks of trees – one reason why they prefer trees with rough bark.

The Tuan is listed as vulnerable in Victoria. Damage to its environment is the main threat to the Tuan. Annual male deaths are increased by attack from predators such as owls, goannas and pest animals like cats and the red fox.



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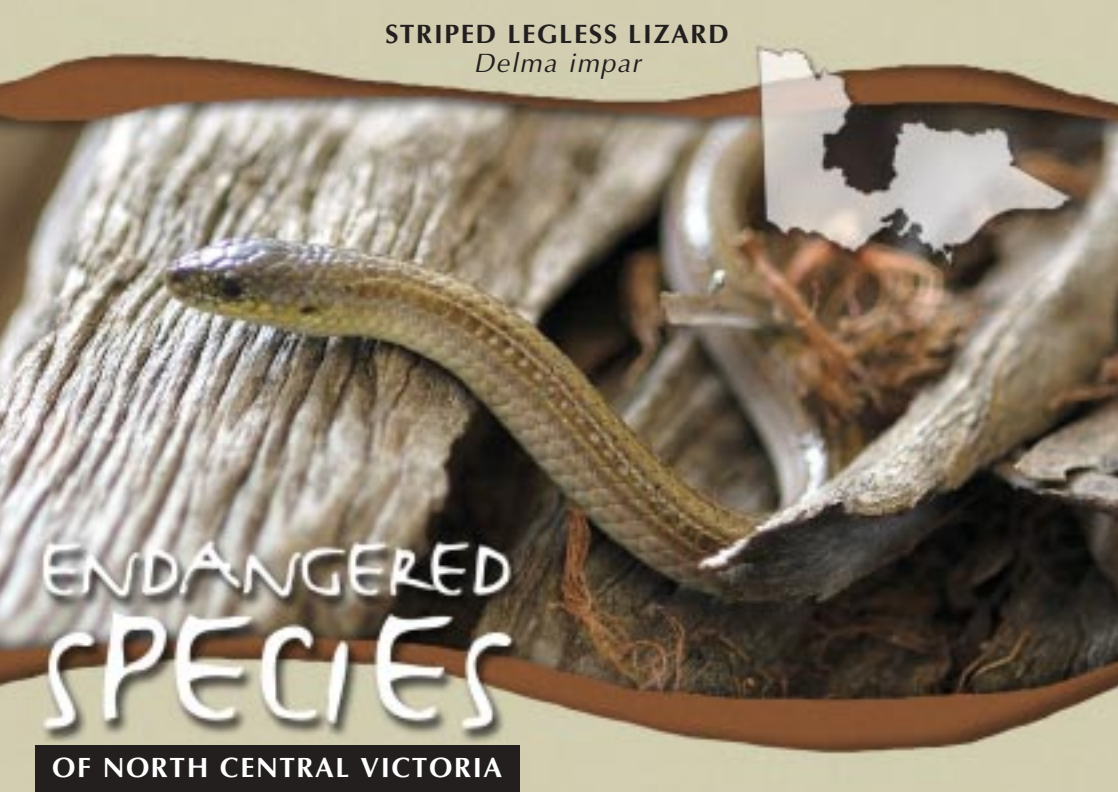
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STRIPED LEGLESS LIZARD
Delma impar



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STRIPED LEGLESS LIZARD

Delma impar

Photo: Loddonvale Landcare Group

At a glance, the Striped Legless Lizard looks like a small snake. However, legless lizards differ from snakes by the presence of ear openings, a fleshy undivided tongue and a tail, which is longer than the body.

The Striped Legless Lizard finds shelter in soil that provides deep cracks, where it lays eggs and enjoys protection from harsh weather. It lives in native grasslands amongst dense tussocks, often dominated by Kangaroo Grass or Spear Grass. Here it feeds on caterpillars, crickets and other insects.

The main threat to the Striped Legless Lizard is damage to its environment, particularly the loss of native grasslands. It needs shelter, like fallen timber and rocks that protect it against activity such as heavy grazing or even ploughing. Landholders should conserve native grasslands by avoiding burning in spring and summer, and limiting grazing in those areas.

The Striped Legless Lizard was once known to occur throughout Victoria's Riverina but is now listed as a threatened species in Australia. This status is unlikely to change unless we address the damage to its habitat, which continues to decline.



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SWIFT PARROT
Lathamus discolor



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SWIFT PARROT

Lathamus discolor

Photo: Chris Tzaros

The Swift Parrot is a small to medium-sized bird that breeds and feeds in Tasmania throughout the summer. As autumn approaches and food runs out, the entire population travels across Bass Strait to spend the winter on mainland Australia.

Most of the population then descends on the Box–Ironbark forests and woodlands, particularly those with large old trees that produce reliable and large quantities of nectar. These Box–Ironbark forests are found mostly in Northern Victoria and the western slopes of New South Wales.

Much of the Swift Parrot's habitat has disappeared and the species is now listed as endangered in Australia. A census in 1996 suggested that the population had declined to about 1,000 breeding pairs.

The major cause of decline is believed to be the loss of breeding habitat in Tasmania due to forestry operations, coupled with the further loss of mainland winter-flowering eucalypts on which these birds depend.



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