



Herbaceous plant assemblages on Bentonite Lakes as originally described by Griffin and Associates (1991)

TEC Description

The community occurs on a series of lakes that have a substrate of an absorbent clay termed bentonite.

The community comprises herbaceous plant assemblages generally dominated by a combination of *Triglochin mucronata*, *Trichanthodium exilis*, *Asteridea athrixioides* and *Puccinellia stricta* on the lake beds, and a combination of *Podolepis capillaris*, *Angianthus tomentosus* and *Pogonolepis stricta* on lake margins. These herbaceous plant assemblages are characterised by a dependence on a bentonite (saponite) substrate that is naturally restricted to the lake beds and margins of perched, ephemeral freshwater playa lakes and claypans of the Watheroo-Marchagee region. Whilst most lakes comprise only herbaceous species, there are a number with varying densities of *Casuarina obesa* trees, and shrubs of *Melaleuca lateriflora* (gorada) and *Acacia ligustrina*.



Distribution

All the occurrences are located within a 20km radius of Watheroo and Marchagee.

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Region: Midwest

DBCA District: Moora

Local Government Authorities: Shire of Coorow, Moora

Habitat Requirements

The herb-dominated community and associated invertebrate assemblage is dependent upon intermittent freshwater inundation and regular drying out of the lakebed for survival.

Indigenous Interests

The community is not subject to any native title claims. An Aboriginal Sites Register is kept by the Department of Indigenous Affairs and lists no significant sites in the vicinity of the occurrences.

Conservation Status

Listed as endangered under WA Minister Environmentally Sensitive Areas list in policy.

Threatening Processes

The main threats to the community are unauthorised clearing, increasing salinisation and inundation, and disturbance from recreational activities (four-wheel drive vehicles).

Recovery Plan

An interim recovery plan has been produced for the community, and outlines the recovery actions required to reduce the threats and to maintain or improve the overall condition of the community in the known locations. Recommended actions include continued monitoring of plant assemblages, monitoring hydrological change, liaising with relevant owners regarding suitable management of their properties and fencing important occurrences, obtaining biological and ecological data, establishing a weed control strategy, and acquiring land on which the community occurs for conservation as opportunities arise.

Citation

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (2020). Recovery plans and interim recovery plans <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/wa-s-threatened-ecological-communities>

Key References

Department of Conservation and Land Management (2002). Herbaceous plant assemblages on bentonite lake beds (Vegetation Types 1, 2, 3 & 7) and margins (Vegetation Types 4, 5 & 6) of the Watheroo-Marchagee region Interim Recovery Plan 2002-2007, No. 108. CALM, Perth, Western Australia.

Griffin, E.A. and Associates (1991). Flora and Vegetation of Watheroo Bentonitic Lakes. Unpublished report prepared for Bentonite Australia Pty Ltd. Perth, Western Australia.

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