

Natural Heritage of the Bush Capital



Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodlands

Critically
Endangered



Photo credit: Erika Steller



Photo credit: Meg Walker

WHAT IS IT?

Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland is a declared endangered ecological community in the ACT, and a critically endangered ecological community across Australia. It was one of the major types of woodland that once covered this region. The dominant trees are the Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum eucalypts which form an open tree canopy with a diverse understory of grasses, flowering herbs and scattered shrubs.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

The woodland community is found across the ACT and region - but much has been modified following grazing, clearing and timber collecting. Yellow Box-Red Gum Woodland can be found at Kama, Mulligans Flat, Goorooyarroo, Mt Majura, Red Hill and Mt Mugga Mugga Nature Reserves.

WHAT'S LEFT?

Less than 1/3 of the original extent of Yellow Box - Red Gum Grassy Woodland now remains in the ACT. Only about 8% of this community is left in Australia.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This ecological community provides important habitat for many of the ACT's woodland plants and wildlife. These woodlands contain a particularly diverse range of plant species in the understory. The wildlife found in these areas include birds such as the endangered Brown Treecreeper and Superb Parrot which breed in the ACT's woodland areas and visit the woodlands across south-eastern Australia; Sugar Gliders, Wallabies, the Echidna, the Blue-tongue lizard and many different types of skinks live in these woodlands.

Natural Temperate Grasslands

Critically
Endangered

WHAT IS IT?

Natural Temperate Grassland is a declared **endangered** ecological community in the **ACT**, and a **critically endangered** ecological community across **Australia**. It is one of Australia's most threatened ecosystems. Natural Temperate Grassland is naturally treeless and comprises several native perennial grasses as well as many native wildflowers.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

In the ACT, Natural Temperate Grassland is found in the valley floors where there is cold air drainage. These grasslands once covered the lower elevation areas in central Canberra as well as the Jerrabomberra and Majura valleys. Natural Temperate Grassland can now be found at the Dunlop, Kama, Gungaharra, Mulanggari, Crace and Jerrabomberra Grassland Reserves as well as at Lawson in Belconnen and in the Majura Valley.

WHAT'S LEFT?

Relatively more temperate grasslands remain in the ACT than in other areas in the south-eastern region of Australia. While there is only 0.5% of Natural Temperate Grassland remaining in good condition in the region, in the ACT 5% of Natural Temperate Grassland remains in moderate to good condition.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Natural Temperate Grassland provides habitat for many of the ACT's native plants and wildlife. Some of the ACT's endangered species that depend on grasslands include the Grassland Earless Dragon, the different legless lizards (left) and the Golden Sun Moth. These grasslands provide habitat for the only known population of the endangered Ginninderra Peppercreep. Uncommon species such as the Shingleback Lizard and the Singing Bushlark are also found in native grasslands.



Photo credit: J.P. Baker, Environment ACT



Photo credit: David Eddy



Stiped Legless Lizard (left)
Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (right)
Illustration by Helen Fitzgerald in 'Neighbours in Trouble!'

Small Purple Pea

– *Swainsona recta*

Endangered



Photo from: Australian Plant Image Index



Illustration by: D.J. Dunkley



Photo credit: R Hotchkiss (ANBG)

WHAT IS IT?

The Small Purple Pea is a declared endangered plant species in the ACT and across Australia. It is a slender, upright, perennial plant up to 30cm high with attractive purple flowers between 5-6mm long, located on long spikes.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

In the ACT, small populations of the Small Purple Pea are found in grassy woodland habitat at Mount Taylor, Aranda and in Kambah. The largest known population is found scattered along the Williamsdale railway line in NSW (along the border of ACT and NSW).

WHAT'S LEFT?

The Small Purple Pea was once relatively widespread, but its known range and numbers are now dramatically reduced. The population found in the ACT are relatively small, but are important remaining populations.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

All plants and animals contribute to maintaining the ecological balance of a natural area. Conservation of the Small Purple Pea is important because it has a special place and job to do in its natural environment. This is the same for all other native species as well - but because this plant is endangered it needs some special attention.

Superb Parrot

- *Polytelis swainsonii*

Vulnerable



(Taylor and Day, 2006)

WHAT IS IT?

The Superb Parrot is a vulnerable bird species in the ACT. These are beautiful, bright green parrots with long tails that visit ACT's woodlands in Spring and Summer.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Superb Parrots are found in Box - Gum woodlands on the western slopes and riverine plains in southeastern Australia. In the spring and summer, some migrate to the ACT region to breed, and can be found around Murrumbateman and the northern fringes of Canberra, such as Hall, Gungahlin and northern Belconnen areas.

Sometimes they can be seen in gardens feeding on the seeds of plants like Cootamundra Wattle. Superb Parrots are also a popular aviary bird.

WHAT'S LEFT?

Known to be faithful to their traditional breeding sites and individual trees, Superb Parrots are threatened across their range by the clearing of their woodland habitats which provide the tree hollows that are used for nesting.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Conservation of the Superb Parrot involves retaining their woodland habitat which also supports many other species. Standing, dead trees as well as mature, live eucalypts are vital for nesting, so it is important for landholders to retain these kinds of trees on their properties. Superb Parrots are also in decline due to road kill, illegal trapping and clearing of dead trees for the firewood industry.



Photo By: L. Dann