Utricularia tenella

Utricularia tenella.
H.& A. Wapstra.

FAMILY: LENTIBULARIACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Utricularia tenella,* R. Br. *Prodr*. 432 (1810)

COMMON NAME: Pink bladderwort

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*) Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A small herb with thread-like, erect flowering stems up to 7 cm tall. This species has aerial stems that bend over and fix to the ground (stolons), which are root like and clustered around the bases of the flowering stems. Some stolons have bladders attached that are approximately 1.5 cm in diameter. **Leaves:** There are only a few narrow, spoon-shaped leaves that arise from the base of the stem. **Flowers:** The flower stalk has either two flowers or just one that is situated on the end of the stalk. The flowers are pink with a yellow or white throat, the upper lip is divided deeply into lobes. Flowering is from September to December (Flora of Victoria). **Fruit:** The fruit is a capsule that opens by 2 or 4 valves, the seeds are minute. **Confusing species:** This species has four sepals (outermost parts of the flower, usually green and leaf-like). This distinguishes it from other species of *Utricularia*, which have only two (description from Curtis 1967, Gray *et al.* 2001). The only herbarium specimen was collected in October. **This species was previously known as *Polypompholyx tenella.***

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria. In Tasmania, *Utricularia tenella* is local in wet heaths on the islands of the Bass Strait (Curtis 1967).

Key Sites and Populations

Key sites include Badger Corner and the main road near Wingaroo (H. Wapstra pers. comm.).

Known Reserves

This species is not currently known from any reserve.

Ecology and Management

Species of the genus *Utricularia* have 'bladdertraps' to digest insects. The bladders are hinged by a flap which forms a door or valve that only opens inwards. The inner walls of the bladder contain glandular hairs that remove water, reducing water pressure inside. The door is firmly closed unless it is thrown out of structure. Stiff bristles project from the door and serve as a tripping device so that when a small animal comes in contact with these hairs, the door opens and the inrush of water carries the animal into the trap. The door then slowly closes and as water is again pumped out, the trap returns to the 'set' position (Curtis 1967, Hughes & Davis 1989).

Insects are the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

Conservation Status Assessment

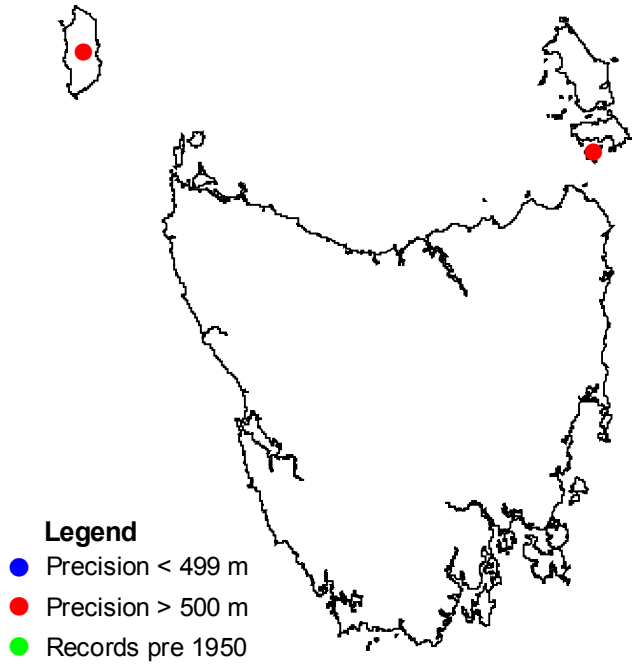
Utricularia tenella may warrant uplisting though more information is required for a meaningful assessment.

Further Information

- Curtis, WM 1967, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania,* Part 3, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Gray, M & Knight, J eds 2001, *Flora of Melbourne: A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area,* Hyland House Publishing, Melbourne.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, 2003)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Preservation, Sea Elephant.

Date last modified: 28/05/03