# *Utricularia violacea*

*Utricularia violacea*.
Drawing: E. Lazarus

**FAMILY:** LENTIBULARIACEAE

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Utricularia violacea*, R.Br., *Prodr*. 431 (1810)

**COMMON NAME:** Violet bladderwort

**COMMONWEALTH STATUS:** (*EPBC Act*) Not Listed

**TASMANIAN STATUS:** (*TSP Act*) vulnerable

## Description

A small, terrestrial, annual herb. **Leaves:** The numerous leaves form a rosette and are thinly wedge-shaped (up to approximately 12 mm long). The bladder traps are oval shaped and approximately 1-2 mm long. **Flowers:** The inflorescence has 1-4 flower shoots, which bear a single flower. The flower shoots are between 2.5-10 cm long. The flower itself is 4-9 mm long and violet in colour with a centre of pale yellow with approximately 3 dark violet lines. The petals appear mostly from October to December. **Fruit:** The capsule is between 1.4-2 mm in diameter. The seeds are minute, 3-dimensional and approximately 0.3 mm in diameter (description from Walsh & Entwhisle 1996).

## Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia. In Tasmania, *Utricularia violacea* grows in swampy/marshy habitat around Five Mile Road on Flinders Island. This species can be found in swamp verges that have spots free of rushes and sedges (Walsh & Entwhisle 1996, Whinray 2003).

## Key Sites and Populations

Key sites for this species include Five Mile Road, Wingaroo, Flinders Island. There are approximately 6 known populations of *Utricularia violacea*, the largest containing approximately 500 plants. There are 800-900 individuals in total (Whinray 2003).

## 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.).

The major site for *Utricularia violacea* is threatened by weed invasion, alterations to drainage, marsupial grazing and land use changes.

## Conservation Status Assessment

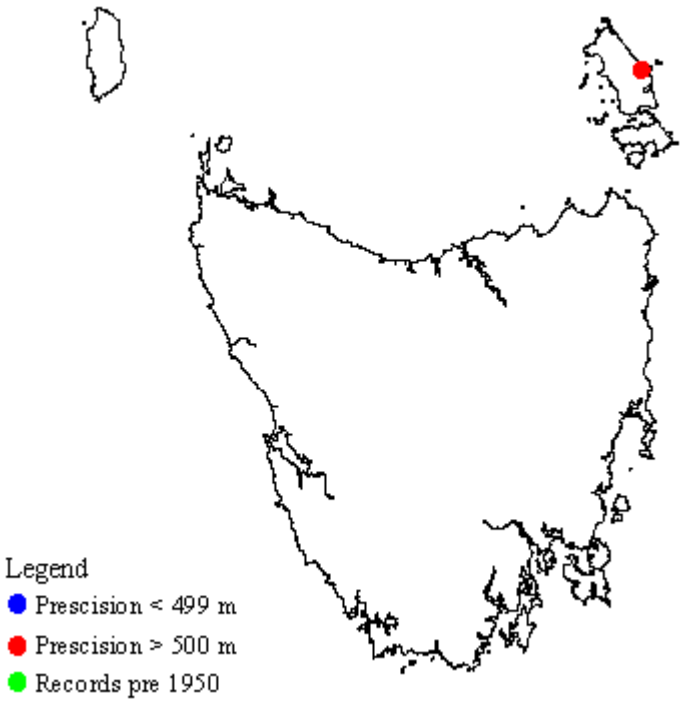
The Tasmanian Herbarium currently holds a record of *Utricularia violacea* from north of Bluff Hill Road near the Arthur River intersection on the West Coast. It has been determined that this specimen is not attributable to *Utricularia violacea* but represents another species that is currently undescribed.

## Further Information


- Hughes, JMR & Davis, GL 1989, *Aquatic Plants of Tasmania*, University of Melbourne Press, Melbourne.
- Walsh, NG & Entwhisle, TJ 1996, *Flora of Victoria: Volume 4*, Inkata Press, Melbourne.
- Whinray, J 2003, *Utricularia violacea: Nomination for Listing or De-Listing of a Taxon of Flora or Fauna,* Threatened Species Scientific Advisory Committee, Hobart, Tasmania.

## Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, April 2005)




## 1:25 000 Map Sheets

Wingaroo.

Date last modified: 04/05/2005