

Caladenia brachyscapa Short Spider-orchid

Taxonomy

Caladenia brachyscapa (G.W.Carr)

Although superficially similar to *Caladenia reticulata*, plants are smaller in all respects and the glandular sepal tips are more like those of the *C. patersonii* group. In one of the specimens held at MEL, the labellum has become petaloid (elongate and clubbed).

Description

Flowering plant less than 14 cm tall, flowering stem and leaf profusely hairy (particularly at base which appears almost white due to the broad, barrel-shaped proximal cells of each hair), all perianth segments with glandular, indistinctly clubbed tips (glands of clubs stalked and densely crowded) and the labellum calli variable in shape and size. Perianth segments 18–30 cm long, pink with reddish markings; labellum 10–12 mm long and 7–10 mm wide (when flattened), pink at base to deep red at apex, margins toothed (teeth to 1.5 mm long). Flowers Oct.–Nov. (VicFlora 2021)

Current conservation status

Listed as Extinct in Australia under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Listed as Threatened in Victoria under *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (SAC 1998).

Categorised as 'Presumed extinct in Victoria' in the 2014 Advisory list of rare or threatened plants in Victoria (DEPI 2014).

Proposed conservation status

Extinct (EX) in Victoria.

Criteria for Extinct status

As per Schedule 1 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 2020, the primary criterion for the category of threat 'extinct' is met if–

- (a) exhaustive surveys throughout the taxon's historic range fail to record an individual member of the taxon; and
- (b) those surveys were conducted over a time frame appropriate to the taxon's life cycle and life form, in known or expected habitat and at appropriate times (diurnal, seasonal, annual).

Historical records of the species were retrieved from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. A 50km buffer was placed around each location, and all surveys of appropriate surveying method to date were retrieved. In total, 4,433 appropriate surveys have taken place within the historic range with no records of *C. brachyscapa* since 1966.

Victorian Biodiversity Atlas search results

Number of known historical locations	3
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Last known record	1966
Total recorded surveys to date within 50km of all historical locations	4,433
Survey methods searched	External data, Monitoring, Quadrat

***External data:** Additional observation records collected by third parties. **Monitoring:** Observations recorded from surveys of bushfire hazard mapping surveys, pre-harvest surveys, indicator- or all-species assessments, etc. **Quadrat:** Square vegetation quadrats to measure vegetation attributes of an area (plant density, frequency, biomass, etc.)

Historical distribution

The taxon was only ever known (in the 1950s and 60s) from one, or possibly two, localities in the Warrnambool-Port Campbell area, where it apparently grew in heathland and heathy woodland on well-drained sandy loam. It was also recorded in Clarke Island, Tasmania, but was not seen there in recent times (VicFlora 2021).

References

DEPI (2014) *Advisory list of rare or threatened plants in Victoria - 2014*. Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Melbourne. Retrieved from:

https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0021/50448/Advisory-List-of-Rare-or-Threatened-Plants-in-Victoria-2014.pdf

SAC (1998). Flora and Fauna Guarantee Scientific Advisory Committee: Final Recommendation on a Nomination for Listing. Nomination No. 454 *Caladenia brachyscapa*.

VicFlora (2021). Flora of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria: *Caladenia brachyscapa*. Retrieved from: <https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/cf320a82-bc2d-41ab-8615-3a8c2c1e4721>