

Habitat Scoring System for Spiny Rice-flower (SRF)

This habitat scoring system describes elements indicative of suitable habitat for Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *spinescens*). Its use must be supported by survey information (i.e. targeted surveys for species presence, vegetation condition assessments), undertaken by suitably experienced experts. Targeted surveys will be performed in accordance with the standard methodology set out in Appendix 4 of Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit (DSE 2010) while vegetation quality assessments (VQA) assessments must be performed by DELWP accredited assessors to the standards identified by DSE (2004) and DELWP (2018).

Appropriate scores will best fit a description. Where all components of the 'detail' column description are not met, this must be specified and justification provided for that score to be accepted by the Department.

Remaining populations of SRF are mostly small and highly fragmented (DCCEEW in prep.). SRF is known from very few extensive areas of native vegetation outside linear reserves such as road and rail reserves and its extent within the reserves from which it is recorded is not readily identified. Most known populations are small, and no density information has not been collected for any populations. However, experience suggests plants often occur in clusters of relatively high density. Therefore assessments for impacts to a population and commensurate compensatory offsets are based on the extent of suitable habitat.

Species surveys for the life of offset management must be commensurate with the species stocking rate to be maintained or attained. For example, proposing to maintain species stocking rate at a score of 4 (as detailed in the table below) means surveys must be undertaken to demonstrate that recruitment continues to occur at the site.

For an offset site to be considered, it must have a start condition of 1 for each indicator (e.g., there must be a species stocking rate score of at least 1).

Indicator	Score	Detail	Impact site quality	Offset start quality	Quality without offset	Quality with offset
Site Condition: Assessed as a score out of three						
Vegetation condition and structure.	3	Site Condition: High Dominated by high quality native vegetation (VQA Site Condition score of 45+/75).				
	2	Site Condition: Moderate Dominated by moderate quality native vegetation (VQA Site Condition score of 30-45/75).				
	1	Site Condition: Poor Dominated by poor quality native vegetation (VQA Site Condition score up to 6-30/75).				
	0	Site Condition: Unacceptable Dominated by introduced vegetation. Vegetation does not qualify as a patch of native vegetation..				
Site Context: Assessed as a score out of three						
Overall extent of habitat.	3	Site Context: High Habitat patch ¹ size more than 50 ha in a shape which minimises edge effects ² , records of species on site within the past 12 months, site is within known distribution of species.				
	2	Site Context: Moderate Habitat patch size 5 ha to 50 ha in a shape which minimises edge effects.				
	1	Site Context: Poor Habitat patch size 1 ha and up to 5 ha.				
	0	Site Context: Habitat patch size <1 ha				

¹ A patch is considered to be an area of suitable habitat either occupied by the species or habitat that the species could expand into.

² Assessed on a case by case basis.

Species Stocking Rate: Assessed as a score out of four base on the number of plants within the population ³						
Abundance of the species.	4	Species Stocking Rate: High More than 100 plants present.				
	3	Species Stocking Rate: Moderate 51 -100 plants present.				
	2	Species Stocking Rate: Low 11 – 50 plants present.				
	1	Species Stocking Rate: Poor At least 1 plant present.				
	0	Species Stocking Rate: Unacceptable No record of species presence on site.				
Totals						

References

DCCEEW in prep. *National Recovery Plan for the Spiny Rice-flower Pimelea spinescens Rye. subsp. spinescens*. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Canberra.

DSE 2004. Native Vegetation: Sustaining a living landscape. Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – Guidelines for applying the Habitat hectares scoring method. Version 1.3, Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment. Melbourne, Victoria

DSE 2010. *Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit*. Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment Melbourne.

DELWP 2018. Assessor's handbook: Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Melbourne

³ A population is considered to be a group of plants where individuals occur within a defined area of native vegetation (DSE 2004) and individuals within an area of native vegetation are not separated from other individuals by more than 200 metres.