



FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

***Caltha introloba* Herbland Community**

Date of receipt of the nomination: 8 October 1991
Date of preliminary recommendation: 18 October 1991
Date of final recommendation: 10 March 1992

File No.: 91/5580

Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided. The nominated community is clearly described so as to be distinguished from all other communities.

The community is unit 10 of McDougall (1982) and is described as very open herbland on flat rocky outwashes of snowpatch communities in the high sub-alpine zone. The community is dominated by *Caltha introloba* (Alpine Marsh-marigold) with cushions of *Oreobolus pumilio* (Alpine Tuft-rush). Other characteristic species are *Carex gaudichaudiana* (sedge), *Myriophyllum pedunculatum* (Mat Water-milfoil), *Drosera arcturi* (Alpine Sundew) and *Deyeuxia parviseta* (Bent-grass). The flat, rocky sites are in a constant flow of water from snowpatch communities. The nominated community is also known as Short Alpine Herbfield in NSW (Costin 1959).

In the opinion of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the nominated item is a narrowly defined community.

Eligibility for listing as a community under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1990*.

Evidence that criteria are satisfied:**Criterion 2.2** *the community is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction***Evidence:**

The main threat to the community is physical disturbance, caused by cattle and to some extent by bushwalkers. The *Oreobolus* cushions and the *Sphagnum* margins are particularly susceptible to trampling (McDougall 1982) and the vegetation suffers serious damage when cattle enter the community to drink. Processes which damage the adjacent snowpatch communities (soil loss, channelling, erosion and weed invasion) and alter drainage patterns on the slope also threaten the survival of the *Caltha introloba* Herbland Community.

Sub-criterion 2.2.1 *The community is very rare in terms of the total area it covers or it has a very restricted distribution or it has been recorded from only a few localities.***Evidence:**

The nominated community is very restricted in its distribution, occurring only below short turf snowpatches in the Bogong High Plains. The community consists of about 20 stands in five localities, covering a total area of less than two hectares.

The data presented on distribution and abundance are the result of comprehensive surveys and provide clear and strong evidence that the community is rare in terms of abundance and distribution.

Narrowly-defined community

The nominated item is considered by the Scientific Advisory Committee to be narrowly defined, so it must satisfy primary criterion 4.1 of the set of criteria stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1990*.

Criterion 4.1 *A community which is narrowly defined because of its taxonomic composition, environmental conditions or geography is only eligible for listing if in addition to the requirements of Section 11(1) of the Act there is a special need to conserve the taxon.***Evidence:**

The nominated community supports a number of wetland plant species categorised as rare or threatened in Victoria by Gullan *et al.* (1990).

These are *Deschampsia caespitosa* (rare), *Erythranthera australis* (rare), *Parantennaria uniceps* (vulnerable), *Utricularia monanthos* (vulnerable), *Deyouxia affinis* (rare), *Epacris glacialis* (rare) and *Juncus antarcticus* (vulnerable). The first four of these species are restricted to the community and are characteristic of it. The survival of these species depends on the ecological integrity of the community.

In the opinion of the SAC this is a special need for conservation of the nominated community.

Background Information:

- McDougall (1982) is the primary source of information for the nomination, and in the opinion of the SAC is the definitive botanical survey of the Bogong High Plains.

Advertisement for public comment

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for public comment for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

"The Age" - on 13 November 1991

"Alpine Observer" - on 12 November 1991

Government Gazette - on 13 November 1991

Submissions closed on 16 December 1991.

Further evidence provided:

No public comments were received by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

No evidence was provided to warrant a review of the Scientific Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendation that the taxon is eligible for listing.

Documentation

The published information provided to the SAC has been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee:

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Sections 11(1) and 11(2) of the Act because primary criteria 2.2 and 4.1 are satisfied.

The SAC also concludes that sub-criterion 2.2.1 has been satisfied and that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criterion 2.2.1 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 2 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Selected references:

Briggs, J.D. & Leigh, J.H. (1988) Rare or Threatened Australian Plants 1988 revised edition. *Special Publ. No. 14*, Aust. Nat. Parks & Wildlife Service, Canberra.

Costin, A.B. (1959) Vegetation of high mountains in Australia in relation to land use. *Mon. Biol.* 8: 425-451.

Costin, A.B., Wimbush, D.J., Kerr, D. & Gay, L.W. (1959) Studies in catchment hydrology in the Australian Alps. 1. Trends in soils and vegetation. *CSIRO Div. of Plant Industry Tech. Paper No. 13*.

Gullan, P.K., Cheal, D.C. & Walsh, N.G. (1990) *Rare or threatened plants in Victoria*. Dept. of Conservation and Environment, Melbourne

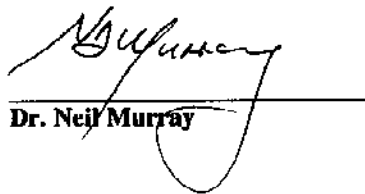
McDougall, K. (1982) The alpine vegetation of the Bogong High Plains. *Env. Stud. Publ. No. 357*. Ministry for Conservation, Victoria.

McVean, D.N. (1969) Alpine vegetation of the central Snowy Mountains of New South Wales. *J. Ecol.* 57: 67-86.

Walsh, N.G., Barley, R.H. and Gullan, P.K. (1984) The alpine vegetation of Victoria (excluding the Bogong High Plains region). *Env. Stud. Publ. No. 376* Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date



Dr. Neil Murray

30 March, 1992