

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Fen (Bog Pool) Community

Date of receipt of the nomination: 13 December 1990
Date of preliminary recommendation: 22 May 1991
Date of final recommendation: 18 October 1991

File No.: 91/2947

Validity:

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

The community is described by McDougall (1982) as unit 8B, the vegetation of pools of standing water within the boggy mossbed "Alpine Bog Community". The characteristic species are *Carex gaudichaudiana* (sedge), *Myrophyllum pedunculatum* (Mat Water-milfoil), *Ranunculus millanii* (Dwarf Buttercup) and *Pratia surrepens* (Mud Pratia). The pools usually have permanent water, but at the end of a dry summer the free water may disappear, although the peaty soil remains very damp.

In the opinion of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the nominated community is a narrowly defined sub-community of the "mesic-hydric alpine complex - fens" of McDougall (1982).

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 primarily by cattle. The pool vegetation is very susceptible to trampling, and suffers serious damage during drought years when cattle enter the pools to drink and to graze on the sedges (McDougall 1982).

Processes which damage the surrounding Alpine Bog Community (loss of cover, channelling and erosion) and reduce its water holding capacity also threaten the survival of the Fen (Bog Pool) 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 Fen (Bog Pool) Community is considered rare because it has only been recorded in four out of 1000 alpine quadrats and 16,000 statewide quadrats so far searched. Standing water in these isolated pools is an uncommon occurrence in the alps.

The data presented on distribution and abundance are not the result of comprehensive surveys but do cover a broad enough sample of the community's known habitat to indicate strongly 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 and the Alpine Bog Community are ecologically interdependent. The Fen (Bog Pool) is the central community of the bog mosaic, and its conservation is integral to the survival of the surrounding Alpine Bog Community (which has also been recommended for listing). Damage to the sub-community would inevitably result in damage to the Alpine Bog Community.

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

Background Information

- There is unconfirmed evidence for decline of the Alpine Bog Community, so by association the Fen (Bog Pool) Community may have declined also.
- The bog pools are of hydrological importance in alpine areas.
- The sub-community is likely to have a significant invertebrate faunal community.

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 10 July 1991

"Alpine Observer" - on 9 July 1991

Government Gazette - on 10 July 1991

Submissions closed on 8 April 1991.

Further evidence provided:

A submission was received, but no new evidence was provided to challenge 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:

Barnett, J. (1987) *The effects of alpine grazing on conservation values*. VNPA, Melbourne.

Costin, A.B. (1958) *The grazing factor and the maintenance of catchment values in the Australian Alps*. *Div. of Plant Industry Tech. Paper No. 10*. CSIRO.

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

McDougall, K.L. (1989) The effect of excluding cattle from a mossbed on the Bogong High Plains, Victoria. *Arthur Rylah Inst. Env. Res. Tech. Rep. Ser. No. 95*. Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Victoria.

Papst, W.A. and Williams, R.J. (1990a) The ecology of alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems in Victoria. Unpublished notes for the Alpine Ecology Training Workshop, Howman's Gap, 2-4 February 1990.

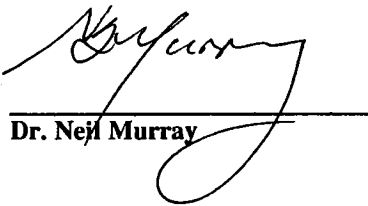
Papst, W.A. and Williams, R.J. (1990b) High mountain flora and vegetation. Unpublished notes for the Alpine Ecology Training Workshop, Howman's Gap, 2-4 February 1990.

Van Rees, H. (1984) Behaviour and diet of free-ranging cattle on the Bogong High Plains, Victoria. *Env. Stud. Publ. No. 409*. Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Victoria.

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

16 October, 1991