Sandhill Spider Orchid, *Caladenia arenaria*

**Description**

The Sandhill Spider Orchid (*Caladenia arenaria*) is classified as Endangered in NSW. Fewer than 2000 plants are believed to exist in the wild.

The species has the following characteristics:

- Five long spreading petals around a broad down-curved labellum (or ‘lip’)
- Densely hairy leaves, reddish at the base that are up to 10 cm long and 6 mm wide
- A flower stem up to 40 cm tall
- 1 or 2 pale yellow flowers, roughly 80 mm across

**Distribution**

Historically, the Sandhill Spider Orchid was scattered along the Edward, Columbo, Yanco and Murrumbidgee Rivers in the Riverina region. Its past distribution may have been even wider and encompassed a greater variety of habitats.

The species has undergone a substantial decline in range over the past century. Currently, its distribution is restricted to NSW, mostly on the south west plains and western south west slopes, including locations near Narrandera and Urana.
Habitat and Ecology

The Sandhill Spider Orchid occurs in woodland with sandy soil, particularly at sites dominated by White Cypress Pine (*Callicris glauophylla*).

Sandhill Spider Orchid life cycle:

- Little is known about the species’ reproduction, but like other *Caladenia* spp., it is likely that species is sexually deceptive, attracting pollinators by mimicking a female pollinator (e.g., a wasp)
- Flowering occurs between September and November, although flowering may not occur every year
- The plant spends hot summers underground, as a dormant tuber

Threats

The species is threatened by:

- Its small population size
- Hybridisation with other orchid species, which may reduce genetic viability
- Grazing by livestock and feral goats
- Limited ecological knowledge
- Competition with native plant species (e.g., White Cypress Pine)
- Human interference and industry activity

More information

To report a possible sighting of the orchid, contact:

**Office of Environment and Heritage Environment Line**

- t: 131 555 | f: 02 9995 5999
- e: info@environment.nsw.gov.au

For more information on the Wild Orchids Project:

**Rhiannon Caynes, Murray Local Land Services**

- t: 02 6051 2232 | f: 02 6051 2222
- e: rhiannon.caynes@lls.nsw.gov.au

The Wild Orchids Project is a Saving our Species partnership between Murray Local Land Services, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Forestry Corporation of NSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Primary Industries - Lands, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, and private landholders.

The NSW Government’s Environmental Trust is a key financial contributor to the Wild Orchids Project.

Information sources and further reading


© State of New South Wales through Local Land Services 2016.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing September 2016. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user’s independent adviser.

For updates, visit:  [www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au)