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## Amazing Species: Eryngium viviparum

**Eryngium viviparum** is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This aquatic plant species now occurs at a single site in Portugal, 16–18 sites in north-west Spain and a single site in north-west France where it has declined from approximately 50 sites between 1975 and 1980.

*Eryngium viviparum* depends upon the poaching feet of cattle to break up the surface of heathland to expose seed and supress aggressive grasses. In north-west France, the traditional practice of grazing heathlands, which created and maintained muddy, winter-inundated hollows, has now been abandoned. The catastrophic decline of this species is a combination of a reduction in cattle-grazing of heathlands, the replacement of heathland by conifer plantations and the disposal of waste on former heathland habitats.

At the single site in Brittany, *Eryngium viviparum* has been maintained through annual scraping of areas of heathland, however, after an initial increase, this population is also declining. The creation of micro-reserves, the monitoring and restoration of the habitat and the translocation of individual plants are the recommended conservation measures for this Endangered aquatic plant.





