



White Beauty Spider-orchid *Caladenia argocalla* Endangered

Description

Caladenia argocalla is an annual, terrestrial orchid. It has a single hairy leaf (12-20 cm long) that emerges in winter. It produces a single flower stem in Oct-Nov (30-60 cm tall) with one or two flowers. The flowers are creamy white, with red fringes on the lip (labellum), which is curled under and sometimes has a red tip. The petals and sepals (9-15 cm long) have reddish tips and are usually drooping.



Flowers of *Caladenia argocalla*.

J Quarmby

Habitat

C. argocalla grows in grassy *Eucalyptus* woodlands, often with *E. leucoxylon* (South Australian Blue Gum) and *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping Sheoak). The understorey usually includes *Austrodanthonia* spp. (Wallaby grass), *Austrostipa* spp. (Spear-grass), *Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate Lily), *Plantago gaudichaudii* (Narrow-leaved Plantain), and *Hibbertia exutiacies* (Guinea-flower).

It usually grows on gentle hill slopes, often with a southerly aspect in clay loam soils with high humus content.



Typical habitat of *Caladenia argocalla*.

D. Bickerton

Distribution and abundance

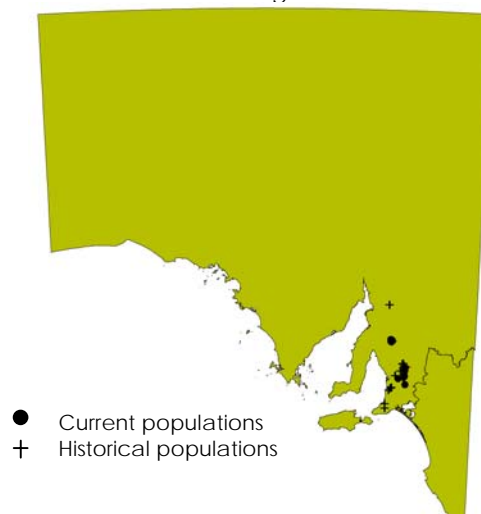
C. argocalla is endemic to South Australia and is currently known from less than 15 populations in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Mid North regions. Its range extends from Harrogate in the south to Clare in the north.

The population size of *C. argocalla* was estimated to be approximately 4500 mature plants in 2007. Many populations are small and in decline. The largest populations are in the Clare region.

Conservation Rating

C. argocalla is listed as nationally **Endangered** under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. It has a restricted and declining distribution, and many of its populations are small, isolated and under threat.

Distribution of *Caladenia argocalla* in South Australia.



- Current populations
- + Historical populations

Threats



Climate Change



Weed Invasion



Road Management



Herbivory



Phytophthora



Lack of pollination



Trampling



Illegal Collection

C. argocalla is under particular threat from weed invasion, especially from Topped Lavender and Watsonia. Herbivory by kangaroos, rabbits and hares is also a threat to *C. argocalla*. Some populations are also threatened by a lack of pollination and recruitment.

Recovery Actions

C. argocalla is included in a recovery plan for 12 threatened orchids in the Lofty Block region, which outlines strategies and actions for species recovery, including:

- Monitoring population size and trends.
- Surveying historical and potential habitat for populations.
- Mitigating the threats to populations (eg weed control, rabbit control *etc*).
- Protecting and managing habitat (eg protecting land under Heritage Agreement, fencing *etc*).
- Collecting and preserving seed and mycorrhizal fungi.
- Preparing and implementing translocation proposals.
- Undertaking research related to the ecology and biology of the species.
- Informing, encouraging and supporting landholders and the community.

How you can help

If you think you have seen *C. argocalla* please report it to the Department for Environment and Heritage (see contacts below).

You can also volunteer your time to assist with surveys, monitoring, weed control, fencing, and other recovery actions for the species.



Flowers of *Caladenia argocalla*.

J. Quarmby

Further reading

Quarmby J.P (2006) *Recovery plan for 12 threatened orchids in the Lofty Block region of South Australia 2007-2012*. Department for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide.

Robertson, M.A. & Bickerton, D. (2000) *White Beauty Spider Orchid recovery plan*. Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia.

www.environment.sa.gov.au

For Further information please contact

Lofty Block Threatened Orchid Recovery Project Officer
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