

# Threatened species of the Northern Territory

## Rainbow Valley fushia bush

### *Eremophila prostrata*

#### Conservation status

##### Australia: Vulnerable

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

##### Northern Territory: Near Threatened

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976



The total area occupied by the species is less than 50 ha. Five of the seven populations are small and have fewer than 50 individuals recorded<sup>2</sup>. The populations to the East of Mt Ooraminna and within Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve comprise many hundreds and many thousands of plants respectively.

NT conservation reserves where reported:  
Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve.

#### Description

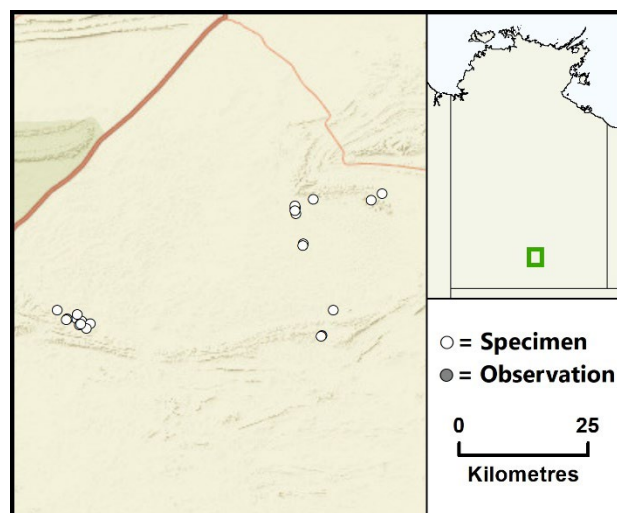
*Eremophila prostrata* (formally *E. sp.* Rainbow Valley) is a prostrate perennial shrub. The flower (corolla) is purple with white in the throat, has a two-lobed upper lip, and a three-lobed lower lip. The corolla is occasionally white. The fruits are one centimetre in diameter.

Flowering: recorded for January - April and August - December.

Fruiting: recorded for January - April and August - December.

#### Distribution

*Eremophila prostrata* is endemic to the Northern Territory (NT), with a latitudinal range of 25 km and longitudinal range of 61 km. It is known from seven populations: two from the Mt. Ooraminna area, four from between Deep Well and Mt Ooramina and another from the Rainbow Valley area<sup>1</sup>.



Caption: Known locations of the Rainbow Valley Fushia in the NT ([nrmaps.nt.gov.au](http://nrmaps.nt.gov.au))

## Ecology and life-history

*Eremophila prostrata* occurs on sandplains and lower dune slopes that characteristically support hummock grasses (*Triodia basedowii*) and a variety of shrubs and trees including *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Acacia*, and Desert Oaks<sup>1</sup>. Known populations are concentrated near the base of rocky ranges and probably receive additional moisture after rain via run-on from adjacent slopes.

This species can resprout after fire and with rainfall after drought. It is apparently short-lived, with a life-span of somewhere in the order of two to ten years<sup>1,2</sup>.

*Eremophila prostrata* experiences a flux of individuals between different life stages, coinciding with disturbance-return intervals. This species has a persistent seed bank that is stimulated by disturbances (fire, flooding, mechanical effects), and adult plants may die out prior to the next disturbance event due to a short life span. Thus the absence/low abundance of standing plants at a site does not necessarily signify decline.

## Threatening processes

There are no known threats that could drive this species to Vulnerable or worse in a very short time. Drought and hotter temperatures associated with climate change may have a negative impact on this species in the long term. Road construction, pastoral/agricultural developments and mining are potential future threats.

## Conservation objectives and management

Future survey work should aim to further document the geographic extent and population size of this species. Monitoring should occur at selected sites.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P., and Hamilton, M. 2000. *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory. Volume 1: significant vascular plants*. A report to the Australian Heritage Commission. (Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs)
- <sup>2</sup> Eldridge, S.R. 1996. *A Preliminary Survey of the Distribution, Status and Basic Ecology of Eremophila (prostrata)*. Report to the Australian Heritage Commission NEGP programme, National Threatened Species Network.