

East Lynne midge orchid

Genoplesium vernale

Vulnerable

Target: monitor the status of the orchid in the wild and ensure all populations are known to management authorities

This *Saving our Species* (SoS) project focusses on monitoring the East Lynne midge orchid (*Genoplesium vernale*), checking that the population remains stable throughout its range. This small ground orchid is confined to a narrow belt approximately 12 kilometres wide on the NSW South Coast, except for a single outlying population near Clyde Mountain at a much higher altitude. There are few threats to this plant, as most populations are protected within national park or parts of state forest that are rarely subject to harvesting.

In 2000, eleven permanent monitoring plots were established to monitor population trends and examine the effect of fire on the species, with trial burns carried out in 2001. The population has remained relatively stable over time until the breaking of the most recent drought in March 2020, which saw the number of flowering plants increase to 51% more than had ever previously been recorded in one flowering season. Almost the entire population was burnt in the summer 2019–20 bushfires, but given the record number of flowering plants recorded on the plots post-fire, it appears the species has not been negatively impacted by the fires.

This project is led by the SoS program, in partnership with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation of NSW, who both manage the known populations and have assisted in locating new populations and protecting existing populations from disturbance. Populations of this plant are stable and are not under significant threat, so the next steps for this project are to continue periodic monitoring and ensure all locations are known to managing authorities to ensure no accidental damage occurs.

Trajectory: stable

Following the end of the most recent drought in March 2020, there has been a 51% increase in flowering plants over the previous maximum number recorded in 2003.

