

Tasmanian Threatened Native Vegetation Communities

CUSHION MOORLAND

Conservation status

Threatened: Community 13 - Schedule 3A *Nature Conservation Act 2002*

What is Cushion moorland?

Cushion moorland is treeless alpine vegetation, comprised of at least one of five main bolster heath species which cover 50% or more of the ground surface. Cushion moorland is generally found in high-rainfall, poorly drained areas above 1,000 m elevation, occasionally as low as 800 m.

In the central and western mountains at lower elevations (e.g., Walls of Jerusalem and further west), *Donatia novae-zelandiae* (snow cushionplant) is the principal cushion dominant sometimes occurring with *Dracophyllum minimum* (heath cushionplant) or even *Abrotanella forsteroides* (tasmanian cushionplant). In the far west mountains, including areas of persistent snow-lie, the community is dominated by *Donatia novae-zelandiae*. Eastern Central Plateau and other eastern dolerite mountains (900 – 1, 200 m) have *Abrotanella forsteroides* as the principal cushion species with minor internal mosaics of *Pterygopappus lawrencei* (sage cushionplant); on higher mountains, particularly in areas of prolonged snow-lie, cushion moorland may comprise pure patches of *Phyllachne colensoi* (yellow cushionplant) or *Dracophyllum minimum*, or these species mixed with *Donatia novae-zelandiae*. Lilies, daisies, grasses, herbs, sedges, and very small woody shrubs may occur in open areas between the cushions.

Cushions can occur as a scatter of rounded hummocks or as more extensive mats. At times the cushions form a series of 'steps' along natural watercourses that serve to dam water flow, thereby promoting further development of cushion-forming plants.

Cushion moorland can be found at Sarah Jane Plateau near Mt Anne in the south-west, Mount Field West Plateau (e.g., near Newdegate Pass), Walls of Jerusalem National Park and on the summit of Precipitous Bluff in the State's south.

To help you decide if this Threatened Native Vegetation Community is on your site, a decision tree is provided further below. This is a guide only. Assessment by a qualified ecologist is needed to confirm the presence (or absence) of a listed threatened community.



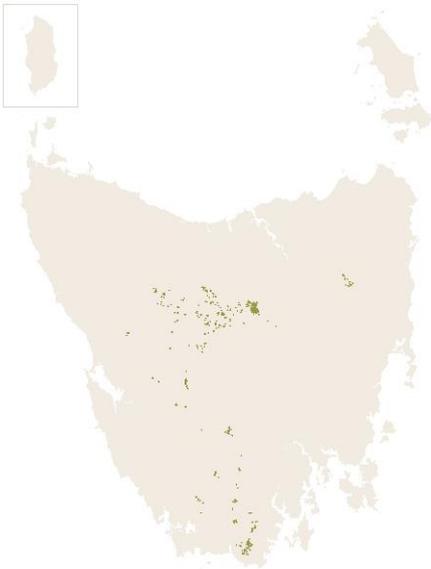
An example of the Cushion moorland community at Mount Anne. Louise Gilfedder.

Distribution, extent and reservation status

The Threatened Native Vegetation Communities 2020 (TNVC 2020) distribution of Cushion moorland is derived from the [TASVEG 4.0](#) mapping of HCM (Cushion moorland). TASVEG mapping units provide only an indicative distribution of listed communities.

Cushion moorland has an approximate Tasmania-wide extent of 3, 100 hectares. Of this, 94% is mapped within the secure National Reserve System increasing to 99% in the wider Tasmanian Reserve Estate, which also includes informal and fixed-term reserves.

A snapshot of the reservation status of Cushion moorland for Local Government is available on the [Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania website](#) and via the 'By Council Area' tab at this [link](#).



Indicative Cushion moorland distribution from TNVC 2020

Why is Cushion moorland important and what are its management issues?

All known examples of this rare community are in reserves, such as the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park, Wild Rivers National Park, and the South-West National Park.

The main management issue associated with the community is exclusion of fire. Most species within this alpine moorland are killed by fire and may not regenerate for some decades afterwards, if at all.

How can the condition of the vegetation be assessed?

To help you to assess the condition of Cushion moorland the following [TASVEG VCA benchmarks](#) are recommended:

- ❖ HCM Cushion moorland: *Abrotanella forsteroides* facies
- ❖ HCM Cushion moorland: western facies

What does it mean if you have a Threatened Native Vegetation Community?

If you are planning an activity that will potentially impact a Threatened Native Vegetation Community you should seek advice from the authority responsible for regulating this

activity. The authority responsible will depend upon the nature of the planned activity (see *Further information*).

In the first instance you can check the [Information for landowners](#) on the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) website for comprehensive advice on when a Forest Practices Plan may be required.

Some vegetation communities can represent important habitat for threatened species. This may have implications when development applications are assessed or for land use.

Matters of National Environmental Significance as listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA) should also be considered to determine if the proposal will need to be assessed under that Act.

Further information

For further detail about the possible variation within Cushion moorland refer to the description of the TASVEG mapping unit HCM within the 'Highland treeless vegetation' section of the online publication [From Forest to Fjaeldmark \(Edition 2\)](#).

Further information to assist developers and their representatives in assessing the impacts of proposed developments on natural values is provided in NRE Tasmania's [Guidelines for Natural Values Surveys – Terrestrial Development Proposals](#) and the [Threatened Species Link - Activity Advice](#).

Contact details

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Is Cushion moorland present at your site?

Q Is the vegetation at your site the threatened community Cushion moorland?

