



ACT
Government

Perunga Grasshopper Action Plan 2017 5-year Effectiveness Review Summary



Perunga Grasshopper

Perunga ochracea

Endangered

The overall conservation objective of this plan is to maintain in the long term, viable, wild populations of the Perunga Grasshopper as a component of the indigenous biological resources of the ACT and as a contribution to regional and national conservation of the species. This includes the need to maintain natural evolutionary processes.

Specific objectives of the Action Plan are to:

- Protect sites where the species is known to occur in the ACT from unintended impacts.
- Manage the species and its habitat to maintain potential for evolutionary development in the wild.
- Enhance the long-term viability of populations through management of adjacent grassland to increase habitat area and connect populations.

Population Trend (2017–22): Data Deficient

Surveys aimed solely at finding additional populations appear to be impractical as the Perunga Grasshopper is small, cryptic (being well camouflaged and cannot fly) and in very low numbers.

The difficulty in surveying for the Perunga Grasshopper means little information exists on population sizes at sites, and hence conservation priority for sites is not quantifiable. Most records of the Perunga Grasshopper are incidental observations made of single individuals during vegetation, invertebrate and reptile surveys in native grassland, or from opportunistic observations from naturalists and other interested persons, as no standardised survey methods have been able to be established to monitor populations.



Figure 1: Perunga Grasshopper – found in the Jerrabomberra East grasslands with missing back legs, severely limiting its ability to escape predators. While the community is important in informing the occurrence and distribution of the species, people should not handle this tiny grasshopper as it can easily cause legs to be lost.

Key conservation actions to support the species have focussed on broader habitat management of Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG) and Box-Gum Grassy Woodland, including:

- Managing herbage mass and structure to maximise site quality and biodiversity.
- Establishing and implementing ecologically appropriate disturbance regimes.

Actions taken under other species Action Plans, such as the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon, and under the broader NTG Action Plan will also benefit this species.

Perunga Grasshopper

Perunga ochracea

Action Indicators	Progress (2017–22)
Protection	
All native grassland habitat is protected from unintended impacts by appropriate measures.	Partially achieved - ongoing
Monitoring	
Records of sightings are maintained and used to determine the distribution of the species in the ACT.	Achieved
Vegetation surveys in suitable habitat also aim to detect the species.	Mostly achieved
Management actions are recorded.	Partially achieved
Habitat Management	
Habitat is managed appropriately (indicated by maintenance of an appropriate sward structure and herbage mass). Potential threats (e.g., weeds) are avoided or managed.	Partially achieved - ongoing
Grassland adjacent to or linking habitat is managed to improve suitability for the species.	Partially achieved - ongoing
Research	
Research undertaken and reported and where appropriate applied to the conservation management of the species.	Not achieved
Community Engagement	
Engagement and awareness activities undertaken and reported.	Partially achieved

Note: this is a summary of progress for action indicators. For the full Effectiveness Review Report, please contact OfficeofNatureConservation@act.gov.au.



Outcome:

The Perunga Grasshopper requires more research to understand the species ecology and population numbers. At present, the PCS Environmental Offsets Team records opportunistic observations of this species while undertaking other threatened species monitoring as no standardised survey methods have been established to monitor populations. The primary way Perunga Grasshopper populations are managed in the ACT is through the management of habitat, and the long-term conservation of the species depends on protecting its native grassland and grassy woodland habitat.

What's next for the Perunga Grasshopper?

- Research into an effective and reliable method to monitor Perunga Grasshopper populations at key sites. This should be incorporated into regular ecological monitoring, if a feasible and repeatable survey method is devised.
- Monitoring the vegetation structure, condition and floristic composition of larger remnants that may be required to detect habitat changes at key sites where the Perunga Grasshopper occurs.