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Red List of South African Plants

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Taxonomy

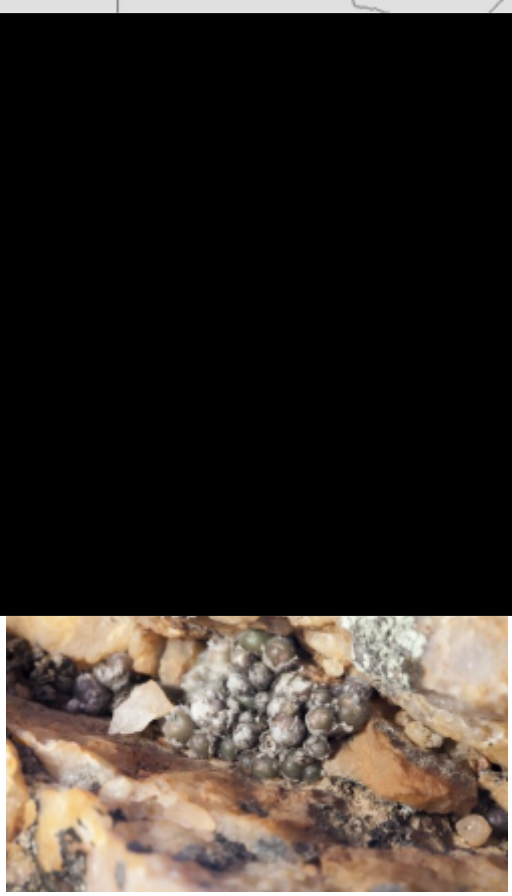
Scientific Name	**Conophytum stephanii Schwantes subsp. helmutii (Lavis) S.A.Hammer**
Higher Classification	Dicotyledons
Family	AIZOACEAE
Synonyms	Conophytum helmutii Lavis

National Status

Status and Criteria	**Near Threatened B1ab(v)+2ab(v)**
Assessment Date	2020/02/06
Assessor(s)	P.C.V. Van Wyk & D. Raimondo
Justification	A taxon endemic to the Richtersveld, in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. It is known from 17 subpopulations, 15 threat based locations and has an extent of occurrence (EOO) of 3487 km² and an area of occupancy (AOO) of 80 km². There is ongoing decline of mature individuals taking place as a result of the illegal succulent trade.

Distribution

Endemism	South African endemic
Provincial distribution	Northern Cape
Range	Richtersveld, from the Rosyntjieberg to



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Steinkopf.

Habitat and Ecology

Major system	Terrestrial
Major habitats	Desert, Succulent Karoo
Description	Shaded cracks and crevices on quartz outcrops and in open quartz grit pans.

Threats

This species is highly sought after in the specialist Conophytum trade as determined by the number of references to this species on EBay. Since March 2019 there has been a significant increase in the collecting of Conophytums to supply a new demand coming from Asian countries. Fifty two plants were obtained from Korean poachers in 2019 with many more suspected to have left South Africa undetected. The trend in illegal collecting is projected to escalate. An ongoing decline to the population is therefore taking place. The other threat in the region is overgrazing, erosion and degradation due to overstocking of communal rangelands across the Richtersveld. This is not suspected to have a significant impact on this taxon, as the majority of plants occur wedged in rock cracks where they are sheltered from trampling and erosion.

Population

This taxon is widespread, and known from 17 subpopulations. Local abundance varies from large subpopulations to just a few plants in each locality. The population size is estimated to be larger than 10 000 mature individuals, the population is currently declining due to illegal collection.

Population trend	Decreasing

Assessment History

Taxon assessed	Status and Criteria	Citation/Red List version
Conophytum stephanii Schwantes subsp. helmutii	**Least Concern**	Raimondo et al. (2009)

(Lavis)
S.A.Hammer

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Citation

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