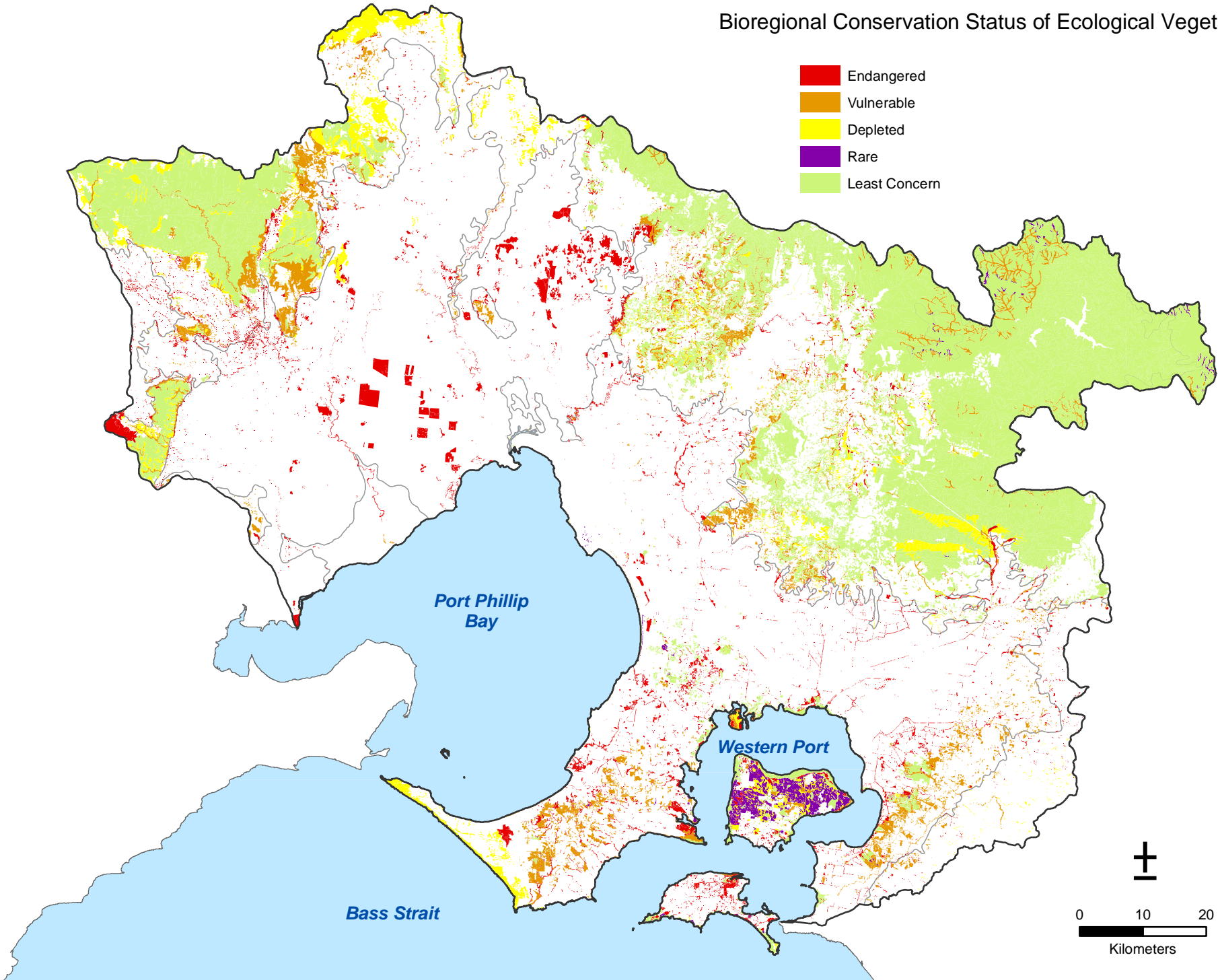


Bioregional Conservation Status of Ecological Vegetation Classes

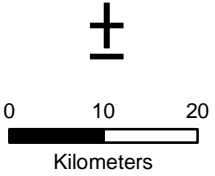
- Endangered
- Vulnerable
- Depleted
- Rare
- Least Concern



Port Phillip Bay

Western Port

Bass Strait



Assessing bioregional conservation status of Ecological Vegetation Classes.

Assessment of the conservation status of vegetation types is traditionally based on the broad concepts of inherent rarity, degree of threat (including consideration of historic and on-going impacts) and importance for supporting other significant features (for example, as a drought refuge for native fauna). These concepts have been expressed as more specific criteria in a number of processes at State and National levels. The Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process undertaken in partnership by Commonwealth and State agencies used National Forest Reserve Criteria which included a number of biodiversity criteria for establishing a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative reserve system (outlined in JANIS 1997). Many of these criteria have been used as the basis for assessing conservation status of vegetation types in the Net Gain approach. However, there are inherent differences between the processes - RFAs focus primarily on establishing a reserve system for forests in largely natural landscapes across public land, while NVPs focus primarily on prioritising protection of all types of remnant vegetation in rural landscapes across private land. These differences necessitate a refinement of the criteria. The key refinements are as follows:

- depletion and rarity of occurrence assessments are made within a Victorian bioregional framework which is more informative than the RFA study area framework;
- combinations of depletion-degradation-rarity which give equivalent conservation status to depletion-only thresholds are more explicitly defined;
- a “depleted” category is added to allow identification of vegetation types which may become threatened if broad-scale depletion or degradation activities are not managed appropriately;

The criteria are detailed in Table 4 and have been used to assign a provisional conservation status for each combination of EVC and bioregion. The status of each combination may be amended with time as more complete or better scale mapping of vegetation type and condition becomes available. Where an EVC is only a minor occurrence in a bioregion it is assigned the conservation status from an appropriate neighbouring bioregion, unless the occurrence is considered to represent a threatened floristic community.

Complexes/mosaics are assigned the conservation status of the most threatened component EVC. Similarly, where threatened EVCs/floristic communities are known to exist but mapping is not available at this level of discrimination, decision-making processes based on more generalised datasets (for example, Broad Vegetation Types at 1:250 000) should be driven by the conservation status of the most threatened component likely to be present in a mapped polygon.

Explanation of Terms:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Subject to a threatening process | - | includes currently acting threats that will lead to degradation (moderate or severe) OR risk of significant rapid change (e.g. rising groundwater; change of land use) |
| majority | - | greater than 50% of area |
| minority | - | greater than 10% and up to 50% of area |
| severely degraded | - | floristic and/or structural diversity is greatly reduced (and/or subject to a threatening process which will lead to an equivalent reduction) and unlikely to recover naturally in medium to long-term |
| moderately degraded | - | floristic and/or structural diversity is significantly reduced (and/or subject to a threatening process which will lead to an equivalent reduction) but may recover naturally with removal of threatening processes |

- little to no degradation - floristic and/or structural diversity is largely intact
- range - area of smallest concave polygon which includes all occurrences

Table 4a: Bioregional Conservation Status of Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs)

STATUS		CRITERIA
Presumed Extinct	X	Probably no longer present in the bioregion (the accuracy of this presumption is limited by the use of remotely-sensed 1:100 000 scale woody vegetation cover mapping to determine depletion - grassland, open woodland and wetland types are particularly affected)
Endangered	E1 E2	Contracted to less than 10% of former range; or Less than 10% pre-European extent remains; Combination of depletion, degradation, current threats and rarity is comparable overall to E1: 10 to 30% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> severely degraded over a majority of this area; or naturally restricted EVC reduced to 30% or less of former range <u>and</u> moderately degraded over a majority of this area; or rare EVC cleared and/or moderately degraded over a majority of former area.
Vulnerable	V1 V2	10 to 30% pre-European extent remains; Combination of depletion, degradation, current threats and rarity is comparable overall to V1: greater than 30% and up to 50% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> moderately degraded over a majority of this area; or greater than 50% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> severely degraded over a majority of this area; or naturally restricted EVC where greater than 30% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> moderately degraded over a majority of this area; or rare EVC cleared and/or moderately degraded over a minority of former area.
Depleted	D1 D2	Greater than 30% and up to 50% pre-European extent remains; Combination of depletion, degradation and current threats is comparable overall to D1 and: greater than 50% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> moderately degraded over a majority of this area;
Rare	R	Rare EVC (as defined by geographic occurrence) but neither depleted, degraded nor currently threatened to an extent that would qualify as Endangered, Vulnerable or Depleted
Least Concern	LC	Greater than 50% pre-European extent remains <u>and</u> subject to little to no degradation over a majority of this area

Table 4b: Geographic Occurrence of Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) within Bioregions

Rare	R1	- total range generally less than 10 000 ha; or
	R2	- pre-European extent in Victorian bioregion less than 1000 ha;
	R3	- patch size generally less than 100 ha

Naturally Restricted	NR	- pre-European extent in Victorian bioregion less than 10 000 ha.
Common	C	- pre-European extent in Victorian bioregion greater than 10 000 ha.
Minor	M	- pre-European extent in Victorian bioregion less than approximately 1% of Statewide extent