

RECOMMENDATION

*VANVOORSTIA BENNETTIANA* – (BENNETTS SEAWEED)

The Fisheries Scientific Committee, established under Part 7A of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (the Act), has made a recommendation to list the marine red alga, *Vanvoorstia bennettiana*, Bennetts seaweed, as a SPECIES PRESUMED EXTINCT in Part 4 of Schedule 4 of the Act.

Listing of Species Presumed Extinct is provided for by Part 7A, Division 2 of the Act.

The Fisheries Scientific Committee has found that:

1. The marine red alga, *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* (Harvey) Papenfuss (1956) of the family Delesseriaceae, Order Ceramiales, Division Rhodophyta, is a valid species which has also been known as *Claudea bennettiana* Harvey (1859) and *Sonderia bennettiana* (Harvey) Müller ex J.Agardh (1890).
2. *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* has only been collected from two localities in Port Jackson (east side of Spectacle Island and from between Point Piper and Shark Island). First discovered in 1855 from Spectacle Island, it was then collected in abundant quantities from near Shark Island in 1886 and was considered a common species.
3. *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* is one of three species in the genus *Vanvoorstia* which otherwise occur in clear Tropical/Subtropical Indo-Pacific waters including the Great Barrier Reef and Lord Howe Island. Like the other species of the genus, *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* consists of a flat, finely-meshed blade, but is distinguished by its smaller size and by the morphology of its reproductive structures. Plants would thus be prone to the accumulation of silt and sediment clogging their meshed blade, as occurs in the other two species of the genus.
4. *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* has suffered a complete population decline as extensive surveys of Port Jackson (particularly the two known collection areas) and the entire NSW coastline, by successive expert collectors and since the advent of SCUBA, have failed to rediscover it since its last collection in 1886.
5. *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* has an isomorphic alternation of macrophytic generations and thus could not have persisted undetected in these areas as a crustose or free-living microscopic stage.

6. In light of 2, 3, 4, and 5, the Fisheries Scientific Committee has determined that *Vanvoorstia bennettiana* is eligible for listing as a SPECIES PRESUMED EXTINCT in Part 4 of Schedule 4 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, and accordingly that the Schedule be amended by inclusion of this species.

Dr Andrew Sanger  
Chairperson  
Fisheries Scientific Committee