

UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE

MARSH MICROSERIS

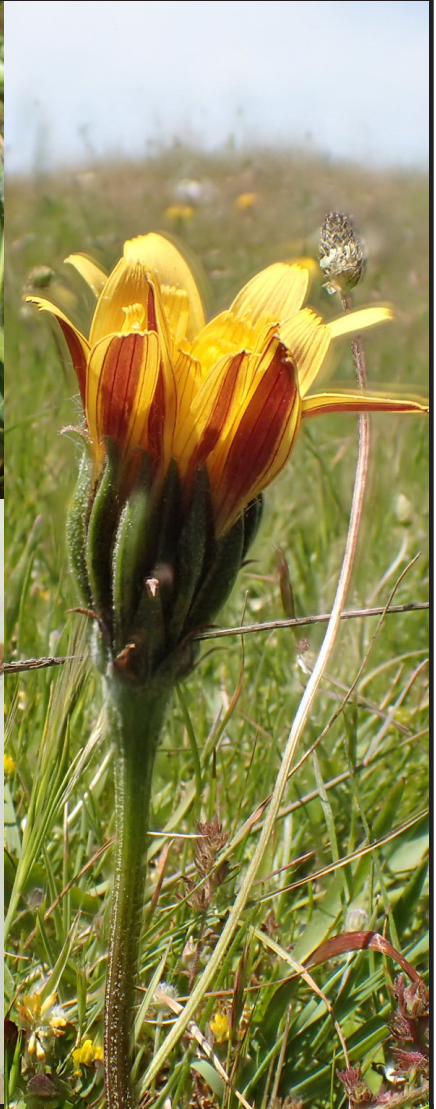


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UCR SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE
Microseris paludosa (Greene) J. T. Howell

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CALIF. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Microseris (Celastr.) sylvestris
San Francisco, Cal.

Josephine Taylor

Scientific Name: *Microseris paludosa*

Common Name(s): Marsh Microseris, Marsh Silverpuffs

Global Rarity: Imperiled

State listing: Imperiled; California Rare
Plant Rank 1B.2

UCSC Rarity: Very rare



General Description

Marsh Microseris is a perennial herb that blooms in late spring/early summer (April, May & June) within moist grasslands and open woodlands along the northern and central coast of California. This member of the Asteraceae family can be distinguished from other similar species by being generally branched and leafy only near the base of the stem, having long and narrow and often lobed leaves, red on the back of some ligule flowers, and black-hairy outer phyllaries.



Identification

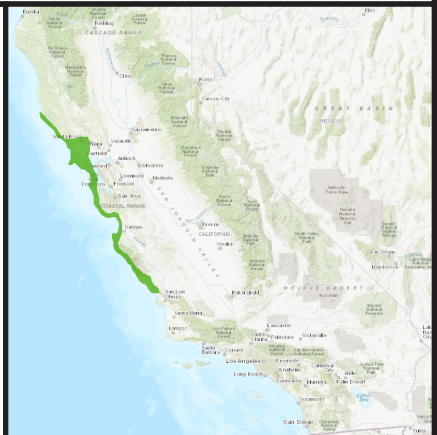
Flowers: In ligulate heads (each “petal” is actually an individual flower, called a ray flower; a ligule is the elongated part that looks like a petal); yellow to yellow-orange, with red on the back of some ray flowers

Leaf Shape: Entire to lobed leaves, branched only at base

Fruit: Long bristles extending from fruit help give its silverpuff appearance

Geographic Range

The Marsh Microseris has a range restricted to the California northern central coast. Specifically, populations have been observed from southern Mendocino County Colusa to San Luis Obispo County, no more than 300 meters in elevation.





UCSC Distribution

A small population in Upper Campus coastal prairie has been observed as recently as 2015. Current status is unknown.

Life history

As a perennial herbaceous plant, Marsh Microseris sprouts each year from a long taproot, flowering May-June. This dicot can get to be a height of approximately 15-70 cm, when it typically flowers and produces a puff of very small, straw-colored to white, barbed 4-7 mm long fruit topped with 6-9 mm bristles. Marsh Microseris's preferred habitat is often dominated by similar looking yellow-flowered invasive Asteraceae plants, making it easy to overlook this rare species.

Threats

Statewide:

1. Competition with non-native and invasive plants
2. Development of moist coastal prairie
3. Grazing

UCSC campus:

1. Competition with non-native and invasive plants
2. Lack of management in coastal prairie habitats
3. Recreation impacts

Conservation Status

**California Native Plant Society
Rare Plant Rank 1B.2**

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California: fairly threatened in California.

Ways you can help

1. Support the California Native Plant Society and volunteer with habitat restoration projects.
2. Raise awareness of rare native plants.
3. Document the plants you encounter with the app iNaturalist.

References and Photo Credits

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