

Large-flowered goldfields (*Lasthenia ornduffii*)

ENDANGERED



Flower (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of large-flowered goldfields. Photos by ODA staff. If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

Family

Asteraceae

Taxonomic notes

Synonyms: *Lasthenia macrantha* ssp. *prisca*

Plant description

Large-flowered goldfields is a perennial herb, often rhizomatous and clump-forming, from 2.5-30 cm tall, frequently with a dwarfed and compact growth form on windswept bluffs. The decumbent, somewhat hairy stems branch near the base and the linear to oblong leaves are 5-40 mm long, 1-5 mm wide, with entire margins and glabrous or somewhat hairy surfaces. Involucres bell-shaped to hemispheric, 5-14 mm tall, with 6-15 phyllaries that are pubescent and elliptic to ovate. Receptacle is conic and glabrous but roughened (muriculate). The 8-15 ray florets are conspicuous, with yellow, 5-9 mm long laminae while the smaller 10-70+ disc florets are 1-3 mm long, with stamens and styles slightly exserted. Fruits are 3-4 mm long, glabrous, linear to narrowly club-shaped, with pappi of 0-4 bristle-tipped awns, clear to brown and 1-3 mm long.

Distinguishing characteristics

Lasthenia maritima (seaside goldfields, maritime goldfields) occurs in similar habitat on the Oregon coast, but differs in being an annual, with inconspicuous ray florets, and regular or irregularly toothed or lobed leaf margins.

While *L. californica* ssp. *macrantha* is morphologically similar to *L. ornduffii* and grows in grasslands and on dunes along the immediate coast of northern California, its range does not overlap with *L. ornduffii*; *L. ornduffii* has shorter leaves and ray flower laminae.

When to survey

Surveys should occur when the species is flowering from June to August.

Habitat

Lasthenia ornduffii grows in rhizomatous mats on open coastal bluff prairies on dry sandstone soil. The species co-occurs with coastal headland plants, *Castilleja mendocinensis*, *Empetrum nigrum*, *Festuca rubra* ssp. *juncea*, *Fragaria chiloensis*, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Lupinus littoralis*, and *Trifolium wormskioldii*, among others.

Range

Lasthenia ornduffii is restricted to Curry County, Oregon, where it is found at fewer than 15 sites.

Oregon counties

Curry

Federal status

None

Threats

Narrow habitat specificity, limited habitat availability, and ongoing habitat loss threaten *Lasthenia ornduffii*. The southern Oregon coast was historically farmed for dairy and beef cattle and other animals which contributed significant disturbance to the landscape. Perennial pasture grasses were introduced at some sites, and encroachment of conifers and shrubs now occurs at almost all sites. Invasive species present at sites can include ice plant (*Carpobrotus chilensis*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), and European beachgrass (*Calamagrostis arenaria*). Additional threats to *L. ornduffii* include erosion from wind, rain, and recreational activities. Small population size is another concern as it can reduce genetic diversity and reproductive success. Climate change also has the potential to decrease survivability of the species.

Did you know?

According to Chan (2001), "The species name is intended to honor the late Professor Emeritus Robert Ornduff, a native Oregonian, in appreciation for his outstanding contributions to our understanding of the evolution of *Lasthenia* and other groups in the California flora."

References

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