

Rare Plant Status Review:

Malacothrix similis

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Background

Malacothrix similis is an annual herb in the Asteraceae. This species is known in California from 3 localities; one collection from Santa Cruz Island in 1888, one from San Miguel Island in 1886, and a collection from Hueneme Beach in Ventura County in 1925. While *M. similis* has not been collected or observed in California for more than 80 years, it is fairly common in Baja California. In *The Jepson Manual* (1993), *M. similis* was treated under *M. stebbinsii* with the note that *M. similis* is “mostly of Mexico, collected twice in California”. However, further study into *Malacothrix* shows that it does appear to be a distinct species and the author for the *Malacothrix* treatment for the new edition of *The Jepson Manual* (who is the same author as the *Malacothrix* treatment for the 1993 Jepson Manual) plans to recognize *M. similis* as a species extinct in California. *M. similis* is very similar to *M. clevelandii*; however, it is distinguishable from *M. clevelandii* by differences in leaf morphology, growth habit, and pollen size. It is thought that this species may still be found on one or more of the Channel Islands and may be “masquerading” as *M. clevelandii*. *M. similis* occurs on coastal plains, beaches, and dunes from 0 to 40 meters in elevation. The *Flora of North America* mentions that this species is “of conservation concern”.

M. similis is known from 3 occurrences in California that are presumed extinct and requires review for inclusion in both the CNPS inventory and the CNDDDB.

Recommended Actions

CNPS: Add to CNPS List 1A

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB as G2G3/SH

Please review the draft CNPS Inventory record below, respond Yes or No on the proposal to add this species to the Inventory and CNDDDB, and provide any edits/comments on either of the proposed changes.

Draft CNPS Inventory Record

Malacothrix similis W.S. Davis & Raven

Asteraceae

“Mexican malacothrix”

List 1A

Santa Barbara, Ventura; Baja California

114B* (Oxnard/3411922), SCZA?* (Santa Cruz Island A/3311987), SCZB?* (Santa Cruz Island B/3311986), SCZC?* (Santa Cruz Island C/3311985), SCZD?* (Santa Cruz Island D/3311984), SMIE?* (San Miguel Island East/3312083), SMIW?* (San Miguel Island West/3312084)

Element Code: PDA660D0
Added to CNPS List 1A on 4/9/07

Coastal dunes; 0-40 meters.
Annual herb, blooms April-May.
Last seen in 1925 at Hueneme Beach in Ventura County. A synonym of
Malacothrix stebbinsii in *The Jepson Manual* (1993). See *Madrono* 16: 262
(1962) for original description.