

Rare Plant Status Review:

Silene verecunda* ssp. *verecunda

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Changes made since the original status review appear in blue.

Silene verecunda ssp. *verecunda* is an endemic, perennial herb in the Caryophyllaceae. It is currently included on CNPS List 1B.2, and is ranked by NatureServe as a G5T2, S2.2 taxon. *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* occurs in coastal bluff scrub, chaparral, coastal prairie, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland habitats from approximately 30-645 meters in elevation. CNDDDB currently tracks 13 occurrences of *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sutter counties. *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* is threatened by development.

S. verecunda ssp. *verecunda* is treated as a synonym of *S. verecunda* in *The Flora of North America* (Vol. 5) and *The Jepson Manual*, 2nd Edition (the treatments do not recognize infraspecific taxa for *S. verecunda*), treatment available online at:

<http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/tjm2/review/treatments/caryophyllaceae.html>

According to ~~Ronald Hartman and Richard Rabeler~~ [Dr John Morton](#) in the *Flora of North America* (Vol. 5)

“*Silene verecunda* is an exceptionally variable species, very difficult to circumscribe and tending to intergrade with *S. bernardina*, *S. oregana*, and *S. grayi*. It differs from the first two of those species mainly in having two-lobed petals. *Silene grayi* is a much smaller caespitose alpine plant with very large seeds. Hitchcock and Maguire divided *S. verecunda* into subsp. *verecunda*, subsp. *platyota*, and subsp. *andersonii*. Of these, subsp. *andersonii* is the most distinct, with a scabrous-puberulent indumentum, very narrow, stiff leaves, and rigid stems that are decumbent at the base, with marcescent leaf bases. The claw of the petals also is often more uniformly ciliate. Subspecies *verecunda* has a very different appearance, its mature calyx being shorter, broader, and markedly clavate. It is a short, stocky, viscid-glandular plant of exposed coastal habitats and may simply be a local ecotype. Subspecies *platyota* encompasses the remainder of the variation in the complex. Most of this variation consists of plants with fewer flowering stems; softer pubescence; broader, flat leaves; and thinner, more papery calyces. All these forms of *S. verecunda* appear to intergrade freely and, based on current information, any separation would be arbitrary. The species is in need of an experimental study to determine the nature of variation and its taxonomic value.”

Considering this evidence, a discussion about how *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* should be treated in the CNPS Inventory seems warranted. Two potential options include:

1. Continue to include *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* on CNPS List 1B.2. This would require no changes to the CNPS Inventory. Hartman and Rabeler do indicate that *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* has a “very different appearance” and indicate that it may be a “local ecotype.” Consequently, there does seem to be some evidence for the continued recognition of *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* in the CNPS Inventory. The CNPS Inventory continues to include several taxa including *Loeflingia squarrosa* ssp. *artemisiarum* and varieties of *Corethrogyne filaginifolia* that have been treated as synonyms in recent taxonomic treatments. Naturally, this option means we will diverge from our policy of following the Jepson Manual (JM) treatments.
2. Adopt the new taxonomic treatment, which treats *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* as a synonym of *S. verecunda*. *S. verecunda* is a fairly common species documented by more than 450 specimens in the Consortium of California Herbaria, and is treated as a G5 taxon by NatureServe (*S. verecunda* also occurs in Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Mexico). Considering this, the adoption of the current taxonomic treatment (with *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* as a synonym of *S. verecunda*), would result in the deletion of *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* from List 1B.2 of the CNPS Inventory (it would be placed on the Considered but Rejected list). This option is consistent with the new JM treatment.

Please submit your comments on how CNPS should deal with *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda*. In spite of current taxonomic treatments, should we continue to include *S. verecunda* ssp. *verecunda* on List 1B.2 of the CNPS Inventory?

Current CNPS Inventory Record

Silene verecunda Wats. ssp. *verecunda*

San Francisco campion

Caryophyllaceae

List 1B.2

Santa Cruz (SCR), San Francisco (SFO), San Mateo (SMT), Sutter (SUT)
Big Basin (408B) 3712222, Davenport (408C) 3712212, Felton (408D) 3712211,
Ano Nuevo (409D) 3712213, Woodside (429A) 3712243, San Francisco South
(448B) 3712264, Montara Mountain (448C) 3712254, San Francisco North
(466C) 3712274, Sutter Buttes (545A) 3912127

Coastal bluff scrub, chaparral, coastal prairie, coastal scrub, and valley and
foothill grassland. 30 - 645 meters

Perennial herb. Blooms Mar-Jun(Aug)

Element Code: PDCAR0U213
Retained on CNPS List 1B.2 on 2009-06-08

Known from fewer than twenty occurrences. Threatened by development. See *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 10:344 (1875) for original description, and *University of Washington Publications in Biology* 13:41-42 (1947) for taxonomic treatment.

Sent to CW, GV, R. Hartman, R. Rabeler on 4/1/09