



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish & Wildlife Office
Species Account
CONTRA COSTA GOLDFIELDS
Lasthenia conjugens



CLASSIFICATION: Endangered

Federal Register [62-33029](#) (PDF 83 KB); October 22, 1997

The California Native Plant Society has placed the species on List 1B (rare or endangered throughout its range). Although it has not been officially listed by the State of California, the Department of Fish and Game considers the species to be "very threatened."

CRITICAL HABITAT: Designated

Originally designated in Federal Register [68:46683](#); August 6, 2003.

The designation was revised in [70:46923](#); August 11, 2005. Species by unit designations were published in [71:7117](#) (PDF) February 10, 2006.

RECOVERY PLAN: [Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon](#)

DESCRIPTION

Contra Costa (*Lasthenia conjugens*) goldfields is a showy, spring annual herb in the aster family (Asteraceae). It grows to a height of 4-12 inches and usually has an infrequently branched stem. The leaves are opposite, light green, and have a feather-like arrangement, with narrow clefts extending more than halfway toward the stem.

Yellow flowers bloom from March to June. Contra Costa goldfields can be distinguished from similar goldfields by examining the flowers. The partially fused phyllaries (floral bracts, which are reduced leaf-like structures at the base of a flower) and the lack of a pappus (a seed appendage in some species that aids dispersal by acting like a little parachute) distinguish this species from Fremont's goldfields (*L. fremontii*) and [Burke's goldfields](#) (*L. burkei*), which it otherwise closely resembles.



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See Hickman (1993) in [California Plant References](#) for a detailed description of the species (which was considered extinct when his volume was written).

DISTRIBUTION

Contra Costa goldfields grows in vernal pools within open grassy areas in woodlands and valley grasslands from sea level to 1,500 feet. Currently, 22 populations are believed to be extant in Mendocino, Napa, Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, Solano and Monterey counties. See a [distribution map](#) (PDF 453KB) from the draft recovery plan.

THREATS

This species has been extirpated from Santa Barbara and Santa Clara counties by agricultural land conversion, urbanization and creek channelizing. Nearly all of the remaining populations are imminently threatened by urban development or agricultural land conversion.

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Crawford, J.C. and R. Ornduff. 1989. Enzyme electrophoresis and evolutionary relationships among three species of *Lasthenia* (Asteraceae: Heliantheae). *American Journal of Botany*. 76(2): 289-296.

Ornduff, R. 1976. Speciation and Oligogenic Differentiation in *Lasthenia* (Compositae). *Systematic Botany* 1(1):91-96.

California Plant References www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/plant_spp_accts/plant_references.htm

Both photographs are from [CalPhotos](#), the best source of pictures of California native plants. The website contains information on how to get permission to use larger versions of these and other images of the species.

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825
Phone (916) 414-6600
FAX (916) 414-6713
www.fws.gov/sacramento

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