

Snake River goldenweed (*Pyrrocoma radiata*)



ENDANGERED



Flowers (left), habit (center), and habitat (right) of Snake River goldenweed. Photos by ODA staff (left and center) and Rebecca Currin (right). If downloading images from this website, please credit the photographer.

Family

Asteraceae

Taxonomic notes

Synonym: *Haplopappus radiatus*

Plant description

Snake River goldenweed is a perennial species with one to several stems 30-100 cm tall arising from a woody taproot. The plant is essentially glabrous throughout. Basal leaves are tufted, broadly elliptic, usually 15-50 cm long (including the petiole) and 5-20 cm wide. The numerous cauline leaves are sharply toothed and reduced, becoming sessile above, the lower leaves obovate, the upper ovate with a clasping base. Flowering heads are 2.5-4 cm wide and number 1-12, usually in an open corymbiform arrangement, the involucre approximately 2.5 cm high, with ovate-oblong, pale-margined loose bracts. Ray and disk florets are yellow, the ray florets 0.6-1.2 cm long and numbering 17-50, the disk corollas approximately 1.5 cm long, disk florets numbering 80-100 or more. The achenes are elongate with 40-60 rigid, unequal brownish pappus bristles.

Distinguishing characteristics

Snake River goldenweed is most closely related to *Pyrrocoma carthamoides*, which also occurs in the Snake River canyon. Snake River goldenweed is distinguished from this more widespread congener by glabrous stems and much wider basal leaves (5-20 cm wide versus 0.5-4 cm in *P. carthamoides*).

When to survey

Surveys should be completed when Snake River goldenweed is flowering, from June through July. On rare occasions, flowering has been observed as late as September.

Habitat

Snake River goldenweed inhabits dry, rocky, open soil with little other perennial vegetation. It typically occurs on south- to west-facing hillsides with gentle to steep slopes at elevations ranging from 610-1830 m (2000-6000 ft). It is found in slightly to very calcareous soils often overlaying a shale formation, usually in grazing-modified sagebrush/grassland communities.

Commonly associated species include *Achillea millefolium*, *Agropyron spicatum*, *Amsinckia tessellata*, *Artemisia tridentata*, *Astragalus cusickii*, *A. purshii*, *Balsamorhiza sagittata*, *Bromus tectorum*, *Cardaria draba*, *Collomia linearis*, *Crepis occidentalis*, *Elymus cinereus*, *Ericameria nauseosa* var. *speciosa*, *E. viscidiflora*, *Erigeron pumilus*, *Eriogonum* spp., *Erodium cicutarium*, *Gutierrezia sarothrae*, *Helianthus annuus*, *Mentzelia laevicaulis*, *Penstemon speciosus*, *Poa sandbergii*, *Purshia tridentata*, *Sisymbrium altissimum*, *Sitanion hystrix*, *Sphaeralcea munroana*, *Taeniatherum caput-madusae*, and *Tetradymia canescens*.

Range

Snake River goldenweed is a narrow endemic restricted to the lower Snake River Canyon and adjacent slopes in eastern Oregon and adjoining Idaho, within an area less than 48 x 64 kilometers (30 x 40 miles). It occurs in the Blue Mountains and Snake River Plain ecoregions.

Oregon counties

Baker, Malheur

Federal status

Species of Concern

Threats

Livestock grazing has been shown to negatively impact reproduction and population growth rate in Snake River goldenweed populations. Documented seed predation by insects and widespread herbivory by grasshoppers in particular have also had serious negative effects on this species. Competition from annual exotic weeds introduced by livestock grazing in Snake River goldenweed habitat poses an additional threat.

Did you know?

Snake River goldenweed was described by Nuttall in 1840 based on a type specimen believed to have been collected along the Snake River near Huntington, Oregon.

References

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