

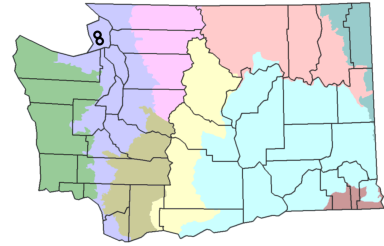
Microseris bigelovii (A. Gray) Sch. Bip.

coast microseris

Asteraceae - aster family

status: State Possibly Extirpated

rank: G4 / SX



General Description: Annual with milky juice, 3-60 cm tall, hairless or roughened with small, branlike scales, with 1 to several erect or curved-ascending leafless flower stalks. Leaves all basal, up to 25 cm long, linear, margins usually with spreading, linear lobes, but sometimes smooth.

Floral Characteristics: Flower heads ligulate, solitary, borne on leafless stalks; flowers 5-100, yellow or orange. Involucre 5-14 mm long, subtended by small bracts. In WA it has been observed flowering in May.

Fruits: Achenes 2.5-5.5 mm long, grayish straw-colored to light or medium brown, widest at the middle, and squared off or slightly narrowed towards the tip. Pappus of five silvery to blackish scales, 1-4 mm, triangular to lanceolate, tapering to a hairlike awn.

Identification Tips: *M. bigelovii* flowers tend to open only in the cool of morning; later, its involucre closes tightly around the head, and the stalk bends downward until the next morning. The stalks also droop when the flowers are in bud, and for a period between anthesis and seed shed. *Agoseris heterophylla* is a common annual in western WA, distinguished by its hairy herbage, oblanceolate leaves, and prominently beaked achenes with capillary bristles. In contrast, *M. bigelovii* achenes lack beaks and have awned scales instead of capillary bristles, its herbage is not hairy, and its leaves are linear.

Range: Coastal from southern Vancouver Island, B.C., to CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Grasslands on old dunes, glacial deposits, in small crevices, and on rock, usually with very little soil, 2-3 m (6-10 ft) above the high tide line. Associated species include red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), seaside goldfields (*Lasthenia maritima*), and gumweed (*Grindelia hirsutula*).

Comments: Known from one historical record from 1923 and one occurrence from 1983. No individuals have been seen in WA since 1983. Shoreline erosion and invasion of weedy species may have contributed to the demise of the populations. This species is also rare in OR and endangered in Canada.

References: Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 1; Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 19; Hickman 1993.

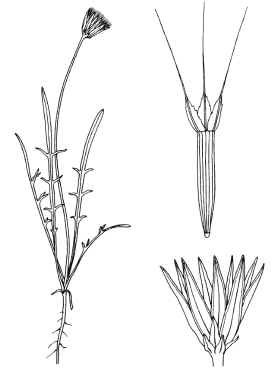


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