

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Plant Abstract

Element Code: PDAST2E1T0

Data Sensitivity: No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Cirsium mohavense* (Greene) Petrak

**COMMON NAME:** Mohave thistle, Mojave thistle

**SYNONYMS:** *Carduus mohavensis* Greene

**FAMILY:** Asteraceae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** *Cirsium mohavense* (Greene) Petrak, Botanisk Tidsskrift 31(1): 68. 1911. *Carduus mohavensis* Greene, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci of Philadelphia 44: 361. 1892 [1893].

**TYPE LOCALITY:**

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** HT: NDG (s.n.). Parish 1834.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** *Cirsium mohavense* is 1 of 101 species in the genus *Cirsium* in North America, and 1 of 24 in Arizona. The population in La Paz County, Arizona, was previously identified in error as *Cirsium wrightii*, which is from the southeastern part of the state. "*Cirsium* is a particularly complex genus taxonomically, with both introduced and indigenous species. The indigenous members are especially difficult, due in part to hybridization, mainly within species groups." (Welsh et al., 1993).

**DESCRIPTION:** Herbaceous short-lived perennial or biennial with a stout stem, 6-25 dm (2-8.2 ft) tall. Flowers are phlox-pin to white, or light pink-purple. The lobes of the leaves are tipped with yellow spines. The leaves and stems are covered with white, wooly hairs.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:** In the far eastern Mohave Desert, the stout-stemmed, broad-headed New Mexico thistle, *C. neomexicana*, has white to pale pink flowers. The cobwebby thistle, *C. occidentale* var. *californicum*, occurs in the Death Valley National Monument (elevations 4,000-5,000 ft), and has white blossoms that are larger than those of *C. mohavense*, and the stems are up to 7 ft. high. (Jaeger, 1969).

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Line drawing (Jaeger, 1969).

Color photo (Gary A. Monroe, White Mountains, CA., in

[http://plants.usda.gov/cgi\\_bin/large\\_image\\_rpt.cgi?imageID=cimo\\_001\\_avp.tif](http://plants.usda.gov/cgi_bin/large_image_rpt.cgi?imageID=cimo_001_avp.tif))

Color photo of flower (Gary A. Monro, White Mountains, CA., in

[http://plants.usda.gov/cgi\\_bin/large\\_image\\_rpt.cgi?imageID=cimo\\_002\\_ahp.tif](http://plants.usda.gov/cgi_bin/large_image_rpt.cgi?imageID=cimo_002_ahp.tif))

**TOTAL RANGE:** Western North American, in the states of Arizona, California, and Nevada.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Santa Maria River, La Paz County.

### **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**GROWTH FORM:** Perennial or biennial herb.

**PHENOLOGY:** Flowers in summer.

#### **BIOLOGY:**

**HABITAT:** Restricted to wetland habitats in the Mohave Desert region; common at perennial springs. Found in moist, low canyons, streambanks, and poorly drained alkaline flats, seeps and springs in the desert (NatureServe, 2001).

**ELEVATION:** 1,400 - 1,480 ft (427-451 m) in Arizona. Through its range it can be found at elevations from 1,312 – 9,186 ft (400-2802 m) (CalFlora, 2002). NatureServe (2001) indicates elevation ranges from 1,394 - 5,988 ft (425-1825 m).

**EXPOSURE:**

**SUBSTRATE:**

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Creosote Bush Scrub, Alkali Sink. Associated species include: *Atriplex* sp. (saltbush), *Baccharis salicifolia* (willow-leaf false-willow), *Populus fremontii* (Fremont cottonwood), *Prosopis* sp. (mesquite), and *Tamarix* sp. (tamarisk).

**POPULATION HISTORY AND TRENDS:** Unknown. In 1980, it was common at perennial springs in the Grapevine Springs complex (ARIZ 228353, Butterwick and Hillyard).

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None  
**STATE STATUS:** None  
**OTHER STATUS:** None (USDI, BLM AZ 2005)  
[Bureau of Land Management Sensitive (USDI, BLM 2000)]

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** The Mohave Desert wetland habitats that this plant is often found in, are rare and often threatened by water pumping, water diversions, and by livestock, feral horse and burro grazing (NatureServe, 2001).

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:**

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Surveys to determine the status, range and life history of this plant are needed.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** BLM – Kingman Field Office.

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **REFERENCES:**

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- USDI, Bureau of Land Management. 2000. Arizona BLM Sensitive Species List. Information Memorandum No. AZ-2000-18.
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**MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Revised:** 2002-05-09 (SMS)  
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