

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Plant Abstract**

**Element Code:** PDBOR0A1E0

**Data Sensitivity:** No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Cryptantha insolita* (J.F. Macbr.) Payson  
**COMMON NAME:** Unusual Cat's-eye; Las Vegas cryptantha  
**SYNONYMS:** *Oreocarya insolita* J.F. Macbride, *Cryptantha virginensis*  
**FAMILY:** Boraginaceae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** *Cryptantha insolita* (J.F. Macbr.) Payson, Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden 14(3): 273. 1927. *Oreocarya insolita* J.F. Macbride, Contributions from the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University 48: 28. 1916.

**TYPE LOCALITY:** United States of America, Nevada, Clark County, Las Vegas, open slopes.

**TYPE SPECIMEN:** HT: GH-97354. L.N. Goodding 2286, 04 May 1905, flower. IT: RM, NY.

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** *Cryptantha insolita* is 1 of 115 species in the genus *Cryptantha*. This species is in a large and difficult genus, and is very difficult to determine (Dr. Larry Higgins, Sul Ross Univ., Alpine Texas, in NatureServe 2001, 2004). It is synonymized under *Cryptantha virginensis* by Intermountain Flora (Cronquist et al. 1984). The taxon may since have been extirpated, rendering further taxonomic judgment difficult. (Nevada Natural Heritage Program, 2001).

**DESCRIPTION:** An herbaceous perennial with a taproot and 1-2 stems, 3-4 dm (12-16 in) tall. Leaves are spatula-shaped, 5-10 cm (2-4 in) long, and have appressed, spreading bristles. Flowers are white. Nutlets rather broadly ovate, 3-4 mm long.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:**

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Color photos of the Genus (USDA, NRCS 2002)  
Color photos of Isotype (*In* NYBG at  
<http://207.156.243.8/emu/vh/specimen.php?irn=579636> and =579637)

**TOTAL RANGE:** Bajadas north of Las Vegas, Nevada (an area currently undergoing rapid development), and potentially Arizona.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Potentially from the northwest portion of the State, but has not been confirmed.

## **SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**GROWTH FORM:** Perennial herb.

**PHENOLOGY:** Flowers probably in late spring from April-June.

**BIOLOGY:** Requires mature fruit for identification.

**HABITAT:** Light-colored, alkaline clay flats and rolling hillsides with creosote bush scrub at about 300-600 m elevation (NatureServe 2001).

**ELEVATION:** 984 – 2,000 ft (300-610 m).

**EXPOSURE:**

**SUBSTRATE:** Light-colored, alkaline clay flats.

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** Creosote and mixed warm desert shrub community.

**POPULATION HISTORY AND TRENDS:** Based on the Nevada Natural Heritage Program Rare Plant Fact Sheet (2001), there is 1 extant and 1 extirpated occurrence mapped in the state. The total estimated individuals are unknown, and the total estimated area is unknown. The trend is declining. Per NatureServe (2001, 2004), “Known from 2 collections: the type, made in 1905, and the most recent collection, made in 1942. Both collections were made in the bajadas north of Las Vegas, Nevada – an area which is currently undergoing rapid development. This species has been searched for without success and it may now be extinct.”

## **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:** None (USDI, FWS 1996)  
[C2 USDI, FWS 1993]  
[C2 USDI, FWS 1990]  
[C2 USDI, FWS 1985]  
[C2 USDI, FWS 1983]  
[C1 USDI, FWS 1980]  
[PE USDI, FWS 1976]  
[PR-EX USDI, FWS 1975]

**STATE STATUS:** None

**OTHER STATUS:** Fully Protected (State of Nevada)  
Special Status Species (BLM, Nevada)

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** Rapid development is the major threat to this species.

**PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN:**

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:**

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** Possibly BLM and or Private, in Nevada.

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **REFERENCES:**

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- USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1996. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant and Animal Taxa that are Candidates for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species; Proposed Rule; Notice of Review. Federal Register 61(40): 7596-7613.

**MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

Dr. Larry Higgins - Sul Ross University, Alpine, Texas.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Revised:** 2002-08-29 (SMS)  
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