SOIL AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH HAZARDIA ORCUTTII (ASTERACEAE)

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ABSTRACT

Hazardia orcuttii (A. Gray) Greene is a 5–10 dm tall perennial shrub that is native to coastal sage scrub communities of southern California and northern Baja California. This species was listed as threatened by the California Department of Fish and Game in 2002 and is a federal candidate species, and the only known population in the U.S. is on a 1.6 ha mesa located in Encinitas, California. Very little is known about the general ecology of this species, thus, the goal of this research was to characterize the basic soil physical and chemical properties and plant community characteristics associated with this species. Research was conducted between January 2004 and July 2005 in 12.56 m² randomly-located plots that either contained or lacked H. orcuttii. Soil in plots containing H. orcuttii had significantly higher clay, soil organic matter, total N, and soil moisture content than plots lacking H. orcuttii, while plots lacking H. orcuttii had significantly more surface litter content. Significant differences were also observed in plant species abundance between plots containing and lacking H. orcuttii, indicating fundamental differences in plant community composition associated with patches of H. orcuttii. Our data support the notion that H. orcuttii is a soil endemic; however, it is unclear whether H. orcuttii prefers soil richer in clay or is restricted to these soils because of other factors. Given the restricted nature of H. orcuttii, and the proximity of the extant population to residential areas, habitat protection from human degradation and fire should be a high priority.

RESUMEN

Hazardia orcuttii (A.Gray) Greene es un arbusto perenne que mide 5–10 dm de alto que es nativo a la comunidad perteneciente de la salvia chaparro costeño en el sur de California y el la parte fronteriza de Baja California Norte. Esta especie fue enumerada como una que esta bajo de amenaza por el Departamento de California pescadería y casa en el 2002, y la única población en los Estados Unidos, está en una mesa de 1.6 ha ubicado en Encinitas, Calif. Poco se sabe sobre la ecología general de esta especie, así, el fin de esta investigación era de caracterizar las propiedades básicas físicas y químicas de la tierra y las características planta asociadas con esta comunidad de esta especie. Investigaciones fueron condujidas entre Enero 2004 y Julio 2005 en 12.56 m² en parcelas establecidas al azar unos conteniendo y otros careciendo H. orcuttii. Tierra en parcelas conteniendo H. orcuttii tenían significativamente alto niveles de barro, mater organica del suelo, nitrogeno total, y contenido de humedad del suelo que las parcelas careciendo H. orcuttii tenían significativamente mas contenido de revolucin al superficial. Diferencias significativas fueron observados en la abundancia de especie de plantas entre parcelas conteniendo y careciendo de H. orcuttii, indicando diferencias esenciales en el compuesto de la comunidad de las plantas asociado con parches de H. orcuttii. Nuestros datos apoyan la noción que H. orcuttii es endémica de la tierra sin embargo, no es claro si H. orcuttii prefiere tierra rico en barro o esta limitado a esta tierra por otros elementos. Dado por la naturaleza limitado de H. orcuttii, y la cercanía de la proximidad de una poblaciones que existe en áreas residenciales, protección de los hábitat degradantes causados por la humanidad y el fuego derian ser de alta prioridad.

Key Words: Asteraceae, biodiversity, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, human impacts, soil, threatened plants species.

Habitat loss reduced the extent of coastal sage scrub by 72% from 1970–1990 (Pryde 1992), causing some plant and animal species to become threatened or endangered. One such species, Hazardia orcuttii (A. Gray) Greene (Orcutt's Hazardia), is a 5–10 dm tall resinous evergreen shrub in the Asteraceae family that is native to maritime sage scrub-chaparral communities of southern California and northern Baja California (Hickman 1993) and was listed by the California Department of Fish and Game as threatened in August 2002 (Gogol-Prokurat and Osborne 2002).

Specimens collected between 1920 and 1985 indicate that the distribution of H. orcuttii ranged from Encinitas, California to Punta Colonet, Baja California, Mexico. The current distribution is uncertain (Gogol-Prokurat and Osborne 2002) and only two of the 13 previously documented Mexican populations have been located as of 2004. This plant naturally occurs in only one documented location in the United States, on a 1.6 ha mesa (elev. 90–120 m) approximately 5 km from the Pacific coast near Lux Canyon in the Manchester Conservation Area in Encinitas,
California. Moreover, plants are distributed in patches that occupy an approximately 0.15 ha area located in the SW corner of the mesa. The number of plants in this population has been estimated to be 50–700 (Oberbauer 1981; Gogol-Prokurat and Osborne 2002; Vourliotis et al. 2006). The population appears to be long established (based on field observations of plant size and woodiness), and voucher specimens from 1979 indicate that the population has been established at Lux Canyon for at least 30 yr. Hazardia orcuttii occurs in a sage scrub-chaparral habitat along with other perennial species such as Rhus integrifolia (Nutt.) W. H. Brewer & S. Watson., Adenostoma fasciculatum Hook. & Arn., and Artemisia californica Less. (nomenclature according to Hickman 1993).

Little is known about the basic ecology, including population structure and habitat requirements of H. orcuttii; however, previous research suggests that H. orcuttii is restricted to soils with higher clay content (Oberbauer 1981). Research designed to determine the basic ecological requirements of H. orcuttii is needed to conserve this species (Gogol-Prokurat and Osborne 2002). Given the current status of this species the main objectives of this research were to characterize the soil physical and chemical properties and the plant community associated with the extant H. orcuttii population at Lux Canyon.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Site Description

Field measurements were conducted from January 2004–July 2005 at Lux Canyon (33°14'48"N, 117°15'6"W) in the Manchester Conservation Area in Encinitas, CA. Lux Canyon is approximately 5 km east of the ocean at an elevation that ranges from 10 m above sea level in the valley bottom to 100 m on the mesa top (Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) 2005). Vegetation consists of Diegan sage scrub and southern maritime chaparral (CNLM 2005), and the main soil types consist of Altamont clay (Typic Chromoxerert) on the mesa top and a loamy Huerhuero complex (Typic Hapludalf) on the eroded slopes and valley bottoms (Bowman 1973). Climate data obtained since 1998 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for Palomar Airport in Carlsbad, California located approximately 13 km north of Lux Canyon with similar coastal exposure indicates a maritime Mediterranean-type climate with warm-dry summers and cool-wet winters. Average annual rainfall is approximately 200 mm (7.9 in.) and average annual maximum and minimum temperature is 19.8 and 12.7°C, respectively. The wettest month is February with 64 mm of rainfall and the driest month is August with 0.4 mm rainfall.

Field Sampling and Data Collection

Field plots consisting of 12.56 m² permanent circular quadrats were randomly established in sub-sites containing H. orcuttii (n = 13 plots; hereafter referred to as “H. orcuttii plots”) and in adjacent sub-sites lacking H. orcuttii (n = 10 plots; hereafter referred to as “non-H. orcuttii plots”). As mentioned above, sub-populations of H. orcuttii are restricted to a 0.15 ha portion of the mesa top. Within this area circular plots were established within patches containing H. orcuttii and patches lacking H. orcuttii using a random coordinate system. We attempted to pair each plot containing H. orcuttii with a plot lacking H. orcuttii, but the spatial distribution of paths and shape of the vegetation fragments precluded an adequate paired-design resulting in unbalanced replication for H. orcuttii and non-H. orcuttii plots.

Measurements of plant species abundance were conducted over a total of 4 sample campaigns (January and July of 2004 and 2005) in the H. orcuttii plots and non-H. orcuttii plots described above. All individuals rooted within each plot (Chapman 1976; Barbour et al. 1999) were counted and measured for width along 2-axes (the maximum width and the axis perpendicular to the maximum width) and height from the ground surface to the top of the shrub (Bonham 1989).

Soil and surface organic matter (litter, which is dead plant matter >1 mm in diameter) was collected in April 2004 to coincide with the spring growing season and the main period of seed germination. Samples were obtained from the non-H. orcuttii plots (n = 10) and a subset of the H. orcuttii plots (n = 10) to preserve as much as possible the paired-sampling design between H. orcuttii and non-H. orcuttii plots. Surface litter was collected within a 31.25 cm² rectangular quadrat that was centered on a randomly chosen point in each plot. After litter removal, soil samples were obtained from surface (0–10 cm) and subsurface (30–40 cm) soil layers using a 173.5 cm³ bucket auger. Soil samples were transferred from the core samplers to polyethylene sample bags and immediately returned to the lab and stored at 4°C until analysis.

Sample Processing and Data Analysis

Plant species density was quantified as the number of individuals per species per unit plot area and cover was quantified as the area of each shrub species per plot divided by the area of the
plot. The area (A) of each individual shrub was calculated as πD²/4, where D is the average diameter of each individual calculated from the measurements of maximum and perpendicular width. Frequency of occurrence was calculated as the number of plots that a particular species was encountered. Indices of relative abundance were calculated from the estimates of absolute abundance by dividing a given absolute abundance for a particular species by the total abundance of all species. These relative indices were combined to yield an estimate of the index of relative importance (IRI), which was calculated as the sum of the individual relative density, cover, and frequency of occurrence indices (Chapman 1976; Barbour et al. 1999).

Soil samples were sieved to remove rocks and organic matter ≥2 mm in size prior to laboratory analyses. Litter samples were passed through a 1 mm sieve to remove mineral debris, dried at 70°C for 1 wk, weighed, and ground to pass through a 40 mesh sieve. Total N and P content of soil and litter was quantified using micro-Kjeldahl methods (Bremner 1996). Percent gravimetric soil water was calculated as \( [(M_f - M_d) / M_d] \times 100 \) where \( M_f \) was the fresh mass of soil and \( M_d \) was the mass of soil after drying at 105°C (Robertson et al. 1999). Percent soil organic matter was quantified by combusting soil at 700°C for 1 h in a muffle furnace (Nelson and Sommers 1996). Soil bulk density was calculated as the mass of dry soil per unit volume (Robertson et al. 1999). Soil particle size distribution was measured using the Bouyoucos hydrometer method (Gee and Bauder 1986).

Cluster analysis was used to assess the similarity in community composition between the habitats containing and lacking \( H. \) \( orcuttii \). For this analysis, the plot values of the IRI of each species were used to determine the degree of similarity between the discrete plots, and the “Euclidean Distance” method was used to determine the relative distance between each plot (Hintze 2005). Soil physical and chemical data were analyzed using a 2-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with site (\( H. \) \( orcuttii \) vs. non-\( H. \) \( orcuttii \) plots) and depth (0–10 and 30–40 cm) treated as fixed effects. Data were tested for normality and homoscedasticity using the Anderson-Darling and Levene’s tests, respectively. Data violating assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were LN-transformed to fulfill the assumptions of ANOVA. Cluster analysis and ANOVA were performed using NCSS (version 2004, Kaysville, Utah, USA). Differences in litter pool biomass and N and P content between \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) and non-\( H. \) \( orcuttii \) plots were analyzed with a randomized-t-test (Sokal and Rohlf 1995) using MS-Excel (Christie 2004).

**RESULTS**

**Soil Physical and Chemical Properties**

Sand content of surface (0–10 cm) and subsurface (30–40 cm) soil in areas lacking \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) was significantly higher than in areas containing \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) (Fig. 1A; \( F_{1,36} = 16.79; P < 0.001 \)). Clay content of soil in areas with \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) was significantly higher than in areas lacking \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) (Fig. 1B; \( F_{1,36} = 13.25; P < 0.005 \)). Differences in particle size distribution were large enough that plots containing \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) were characterized as having a sandy clay loam soil while plots lacking \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) were characterized as having a sandy loam soil. Plots containing \( H. \) \( orcuttii \) also had significantly higher soil water content (Fig. 2A), especially in the sub-surface, and a significantly higher soil organic matter (SOM) content (Fig. 2B). Total soil N content (Fig. 3A) was significantly higher in plots containing \( H. \) \( orcuttii \), especially in the surface soil.
layer. In contrast, total soil phosphorus (P) content was similar for plots with and without *H. orcuttii* (Fig. 3B).

The N and P concentration of surface litter was not statistically different between *H. orcuttii* and non-*H. orcuttii* habitats; however, because surface litter biomass was nearly 3-times higher in non-*H. orcuttii* plots (*P = 0.003; Fig. 4A), litter N and P pools sizes were significantly higher in non-*H. orcuttii* plots (Fig. 4B, C). Thus, while *H. orcuttii* plots had significantly higher SOM and total soil N, plots lacking *H. orcuttii* had a significantly higher surface litter pool and litter N content.

Community Composition

Cluster analysis of the sample plots indicated two discrete vegetation assemblages (Fig. 5) based on the importance values (IRI) of the plant species. The first group consisted of all of the plots lacking *H. orcuttii* ("B" plots; Fig. 5), while the second major grouping consisted of the plots where *H. orcuttii* was present ("A" plots; Fig. 5). This clustering described the maximum variation in the sample plots (r = 0.89), and indicated two discrete sub-communities at Lux Canyon.

Some species were common to both sub-communities, including *Adenostoma fasciculatum*, *Artemisia californica*, *Eriogonum fasciculatum* Benth., *Quercus dumosa* Nutt., *Rhus integrifolia*, and *Deinandra fasciculata* (DC.) Greene (Table 1). However, *A. fasciculatum*, *Q. dumosa*, and *R. integrifolia* had higher mean values of IRI over the 2-year field study in non-*H. orcuttii* plots, while *E. fasciculatum*, *Dudleya edulis* (Nutt.) Moran, and *D. fasciculata* were more abundant in *H. orcuttii* plots (Table 1). Other species including *Mimulus aurantiacus* Curtis, *Xyloccocus bicolor* Nutt., *Yucca schidigera* Ortgies, and *Y. whipplei* Torr. were conspicuously lacking in *H. orcuttii* plots, while *Lotus scoparius* (Torr. & A. Gray) Ottley, *Ferocactus viridescens* (Torr. & A.
Gray) Britton & Rose, and Baccharis pilularis DC. were observed only in _H. orcutti_ plots (Table 1).

Significant differences in total density and cover were also apparent between _H. orcutti_ and non- _H. orcutti_ plots (Fig. 6). Plots lacking _H. orcutti_ had significantly higher cover in 2004 (Fig. 6A), which explains in part the significantly higher surface litter pool (Fig. 4A). Plots lacking _H. orcutti_ also had significantly lower density than _H. orcutti_ plots during each measurement campaign (Fig. 6B) suggesting that, on average, non- _H. orcutti_ plots were dominated by fewer but larger shrubs. One of the most abundant shrubs in plots lacking _H. orcutti_ was _A. fasciculatum_ (Table 1), which is a chaparral shrub that can reach heights of 2 m and an area of 3–4 m² (Munz 1974; Riggan et al. 1988).

Temporal variations in stand cover and density were relatively higher in _H. orcutti_ plots than in non- _H. orcutti_ plots. For example, _H. orcutti_ plots experienced a nearly 4-fold increase in stand cover (Fig. 6A) and a more than 5-fold increase in stand density (Fig. 6B) between July 2004 and January 2005. Over the same period plots lacking _H. orcutti_ experienced no increase in stand cover (Fig. 6A) and a 2-fold increase in stand density (Fig. 6B). Thus, _H. orcutti_ plots experienced larger temporal variation in overall plant species abundance than non- _H. orcutti_ plots, which may have implications for _H. orcutti_ recruitment and survival.

Temporal variation in the index of relative importance (IRI) of the six dominant shrub species (excluding _H. orcutti_) present in both

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**Fig. 4.** Mean (±SE) litter biomass (A) and total litter N (B) and P (C) pool sizes in plots where _Hazardia orcutti_ was present or absent (n = 10 plots per subsite). Also shown are the results of a randomized t-test, where the probability of committing a type-I error (P-value) was calculated over 1000 iterations.

**Fig. 5.** Cluster analysis of the index of relative importance (IRI) values of plant species observed in plots containing (A1-13) and lacking (B1-10) _Hazardia orcutti_.
TABLE 1. MEAN (±1SD) INDEX OF RELATIVE IMPORTANCE (IRI) FOR ALL SPECIES OBSERVED IN 12.56 m² PLOTS CONTAINING (PRESENT; N = 13) AND LACKING (ABSENT; N = 10) HAZARDIA ORCUTTII AT LUX CANYON, ENCINITAS, CALIFORNIA. Data were collected over 4 sampling campaigns conducted in January and July of 2004 and 2005. IRI was multiplied by 100; — not observed. Nomenclature and habitat data according to Hickman (1993).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adenostoma fasciculatum Hook. &amp; Arn.</td>
<td>28.9 ± 23.3</td>
<td>66.8 ± 9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemisia californica Less.</td>
<td>64.6 ± 36.4</td>
<td>49.9 ± 8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudleya edulis (Nutt.) Moran</td>
<td>13.8 ± 5.2</td>
<td>5.3 ± 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eriogonum fasciculatum Benth.</td>
<td>42.7 ± 22.1</td>
<td>14.0 ± 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardia orcuttii (A. Gray) Greene</td>
<td>32.4 ± 15.5</td>
<td>37.6 ± 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferocactus viridescens (Torr. &amp; A. Gray) Britton &amp; Rose</td>
<td>7.3 ± 2.0</td>
<td>5.5 ± 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammillaria aurantiaca Curtis</td>
<td>1.5 ± 1.1</td>
<td>17.0 ± 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opatia littoralis (Engelm.) Cockerell</td>
<td>2.2 ± 1.1</td>
<td>4.6 ± 1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quercus dumosa Nutt.</td>
<td>13.4 ± 7.6</td>
<td>47.6 ± 18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhus integrifolia (Nutt.) W. H. Brewer &amp; S. Watson</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.8 ± 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xylococcus bicolor Nutt.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.6 ± 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucca schidigera Orties</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.8 ± 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucca whipplei Torr.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus scoparius (Torr. &amp; A. Gray) Optley</td>
<td>8.2 ± 3.4</td>
<td>9.9 ± 12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deinandra fasciculata (DC.) Greene</td>
<td>55.6 ± 79.2</td>
<td>1.2 ± 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marah macrocarpus (A. Gray) B. L. Rob.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.9 ± 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dichondra occidentalis House</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.1 ± 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centaurea venustum (A. Gray) B. L. Rob.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.7 ± 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anagallis arvensis L.</td>
<td>0.3 ± 0.6</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chionocharis parviflora Wats.</td>
<td>5.8 ± 11.5</td>
<td>10.9 ± 21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zagadenus fremontii (Torr.) S. Watson</td>
<td>0.4 ± 0.9</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dichostemma pulchella (Salish.) Heller</td>
<td>0.9 ± 1.7</td>
<td>0.5 ± 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccharis pilularis DC.</td>
<td>0.4 ± 0.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eriophyllum confertiflorum (DC.) A. Gray</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnaphalium californicum DC.</td>
<td>0.4 ± 0.7</td>
<td>1.8 ± 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnaphalium sp.</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.3</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryptantha sp.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.5 ± 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanomeria sp.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.5 ± 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle</td>
<td>8.6 ± 16.0</td>
<td>5.8 ± 7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown annual</td>
<td>0.9 ± 1.7</td>
<td>1.2 ± 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown herbaceous perennial</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown grass</td>
<td>10.7 ± 18.7</td>
<td>2.3 ± 3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

plot types revealed substantial changes in shrub species composition over 2004–2005, especially in the H. orcuttii plots (Fig. 7). In H. orcuttii plots, A. fasciculatum and D. fasciculata exhibited 3–4-fold increases in IRI during the study period, while A. californica and E. fasciculatum experienced a 2–3-fold decline in IRI (Fig. 7). In contrast, plots lacking H. orcuttii experienced substantially less temporal variation in relative abundance; however, R. integrifolia was an obvious exception (Fig. 7). These data indicate rapid and dynamic species turnover in H. orcuttii plots and more stable community dynamics in non-H. orcuttii plots.

**DISCUSSION**

**Soil Physical and Chemical Properties**

Some soil physical and chemical properties at Lux Canyon were significantly different between plots containing and lacking H. orcuttii. One potentially key difference was soil texture, where H. orcuttii plots had significantly higher clay content and lower sand content than non-H. orcuttii plots (Fig. 1). This observation is supported by previous research and is consistent with the notion that H. orcuttii may be a soil endemic (Oberbauer 1993). Gravimetric soil water content was significantly higher in H. orcuttii plots (Fig. 2A), which presumably reflects the higher clay content of the soil. Soil texture controls a variety of processes that control plant species distribution, including soil water holding capacity, nutrient retention, organic matter stabilization, seed germination, and seedling recruitment (Baskin and Baskin 1990; Oberbauer 1993; Schimel et al. 1985; Kluse and Doak 1999; Walck et al. 1999; Hook and Burke 2000). However, it is unclear why H. orcuttii at Lux Canyon is restricted to soil with higher clay content. For example, percent germination of H. orcuttii seeds was actually higher in soil types that had lower clay content (Miller 2008); thus, H. orcuttii is
apparently not restricted to soil with higher clay content because of seed germination.

_Hazardia orcutti_ plots had higher soil organic matter (SOM) content than non-__H orcutti__ plots (Fig. 2B), which presumably indicates differences in plant species composition and/or rooting depth between habitats (Jobbágy and Jackson 2000). The increase in SOM was apparently not due to an increase in aboveground litter input because the surface litter pool was nearly 3-fold lower in _H. orcutti_ plots (Fig. 4A). Rather, _H. orcutti_ plots had a higher abundance of shrubs associated with coastal sage scrub (Table 1), which typically have a shallower, more horizontally-distributed root system than species characteristic of evergreen chaparral (Heilmers et al. 1955). _Hazardia orcutti_ plots also had higher total soil N, suggesting higher overall fertility compared to non-__H orcutti__ plots (Marion and Black 1988). Given that SOM represents a large pool of N in terrestrial soils (Hook and Burke 2000), these results presumably reflect the significantly higher SOM content observed in _H. orcutti_ plots.

Surface litter was more than 3-times higher in non-__H. orcutti__ plots, which has important implications for the germination and recruitment of _H. orcutti_. For example, the germination and seedling recruitment of _Chorizanthe pungens_ Benth. var. _hartwegiana_ Reveal and Hardham (Polygonaceae) is reportedly inhibited by chaparral vegetation, possibly as a result of allelopathy and/or the development of a larger surface litter pool that alters the microclimate and reduces light availability at the soil surface (Kluse and Doak 1999). Results from germination experiments indicate that percent germination of _H. orcutti_ seeds was significantly lower in complete darkness, which may simulate light conditions under a deep surface litter layer (Miller 2008). While there are substantial seasonal variations in the production of aboveground litter and the size of the surface litter pool in coastal sage scrub and chaparral (Vourlisit et al. 2009), the difference in the litter pool between plots containing and lacking _H. orcutti_ observed in April coincides with the most active time for seed germination for chaparral and coastal sage shrubs. The relatively larger surface litter pool observed in non-__H. orcutti__ plots may inhibit seed germination and/or seedling recruitment, which may be one important mechanism causing _H. orcutti_ to be restricted to more clay-rich soils.

Community Composition

Our results indicate fundamental differences in species composition between _H. orcutti_ and non-__H. orcutti__ plots (Fig. 5). These differences are presumably due in part to spatial variations in soil texture, which exerts a strong influence on soil water availability and plant species distribution (Westman 1981). _Hazardia orcutti_ plots had significantly lower cover and higher density (Fig 6) and more rapid and dynamic species turnover (Fig 7) than plots lacking _H. orcutti_, and it is possible that these interspecific dynamics affect _H. orcutti_ recruitment, survival, and fecundity. For example, the higher temporal variation in species composition in _H. orcutti_ plots implies higher variation in the intensity of competitive interactions, availability of “safe sites” important for _H. orcutti_ recruitment, and/or available resources (Menges 1990; Watson et al. 1994; Kluse and Doak 1999; Walck et al. 1999). Similar interspecific controls on plant growth, fecundity, and recruitment have been observed for other Asteraceae including _Coreopsis lanceolata_ L. (Folgate and Scheiner 1992), _Ratibida columnifera_ (Nutt.) Wooton & Standl. (Vargas-Mendoza and Fowler 1998), _Solidago shortii_ Torr. & A. Gray (Walck et al. 1999) and _Deinandra conjugens_ (D. D. Keck) B. G. Baldwin (Bauder et al. 2002). Presumably similar processes may be important in limiting the local distribution of _H. orcutti_.

![Graph](image-url)
Conclusions and Conservation Recommendations

Rabinowitz et al. (1986) define a rare species as one that has a restricted geographic range, narrow habitat tolerance, and/or low local abundance. Hazardia orcutti appears to possess all three of these traits. For example, the only known extant U.S. population of *H. orcutti* is restricted to a 1.6 ha mesa near Lux Canyon, Encinitas, CA. Within this narrow geographic range, *H. orcutti* individuals appear to be restricted to patches of soil with high clay content, but it is unclear whether *H. orcutti* is restricted to clay soils because of intrinsic (i.e., seed germination and/or recruitment) or extrinsic (interspecific competition) factors. Knowledge of why *H. orcutti* is restricted to more clay-rich soils will undoubtedly inform and improve the success of future conservation efforts. Estimates from 2002 indicated approximately 600 plants at Lux Canyon (Gogol-Prokurat and Osborne 2002), while more recent estimates (Vourilhès et al. 2006) indicated a population size of 510 individuals, suggesting that the population has declined since 2002. The low local abundance, restricted geographic range, and narrow habitat tolerance suggest that *H. orcutti* is rare by all criteria.

Protection of Lux Canyon from human degradation and fire should be a high priority. The Lux Canyon site is used for recreation purposes, and human activities lead to the creation of paths, trampling, and damage of vegetation, accumulation of waste, and urban runoff. These threats increase the potential for catastrophic fire, which can either damage or completely eliminate that only known U. S. population of *H. orcutti*.

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