

**WRITTEN FINDINGS OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD**

Scientific Name: *Hieracium pilosella*

Common Name: Mouseear hawkweed

Legal Status: Class B (a) regions 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10  
(b) region 5 except Thurston Co.  
(c) Thurston Co. lying within T17N, R1W, S31; T16N, R2W, S30 W1/2; T16N, R3W, S25 SE1/4; T16N, R3W, S36, N1/2; T16N, R2W, S31, NW 1/4.

Description and Variation: Mouseear hawkweed is a member of the composite family. The plant is a perennial spreading by leafy runners which root to form new plants. Mouseear hawkweed forms basal rosettes of hairy spatulate leaves. The upper surface is smooth and green while the lower is whitish, woolly with dense star-like hairs. Plants contain a milky juice. A solitary yellow flower head about one inch wide terminates a hairy leafless stalk. Achenes are oblong and ribbed with a pappus of fine tawny bristles.

Economic Importance: Mouseear hawkweed is a serious problem in the meadows and pastures of the eastern United States where it grows in dense mats and excludes more desirable vegetation such as forage and native plants. New Zealand considers this weed a pasture threat.

Geographic Distribution: In Washington, the only known extant population occurs on a proposed Natural Area Preserve, Rocky Prairie in Thurston County. University of Washington historical herbaria collections from Clark County and several Oregon sites exist. Occurs in England, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

Habitat: Grasslands. In England it occurs in areas of low rainfall with well-drained sandy soils low in nutrients. In New Zealand it has spread predominantly in the dry intermountain basins where a semi-continental climate exists. Mouseear hawkweed is reportedly intolerant of shade.

History: Introduction to Rocky Prairie is unknown.

Growth and Development: Perennial.

Reproduction: Seed and stolons.

Response to Herbicide: 2, 4 - D plus clopyralid is effective. Read and follow current herbicide labels and recommendations for control.

Response to Cultural Methods: According to a Nature Conservancy Stewardship Abstract, mouseear hawkweed management should include rotational grazing and establishment of

competitive grasses and forbs such as white, alsike and red clovers, smooth brome and tall outgrass. Combined with a fertilization regime (see Abstract), mouseear hawkweed will be suppressed.

Biocontrol Potentials: none known

References:

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Watt, A.S. 1981b. Further observations on the effects of excluding rabbits from grassland A in East Anglica, Breckland: the pattern of change and factors affecting it. *Journal of Ecology* 69:509-536.

*\* References available from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board office in Kent.*

Justification for Inclusion on the Washington State Noxious Weed List: This hawkweed, like orange and yellow hawkweed is an aggressive weed of range, pasture and meadow. The limited occurrence in Washington provides the opportunity to stop this species before it spreads throughout the state as it has done in the eastern United States. This plant threatens native plant communities and if allowed to spread would be one more noxious weed of range and pasture in Washington. Prevention of all seed production of *Hieracium pilosella* is feasible and in the best interest of the state.