

## SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

*Senecio psilocarpus* swamp fireweed

**Group:** Magnoliophyta (flowering plants), Magnoliopsida (dicots), Asterales, Asteraceae

**Status:** *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* **endangered**  
*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999:* Vulnerable

**Endemic:** Found in Tasmania and elsewhere

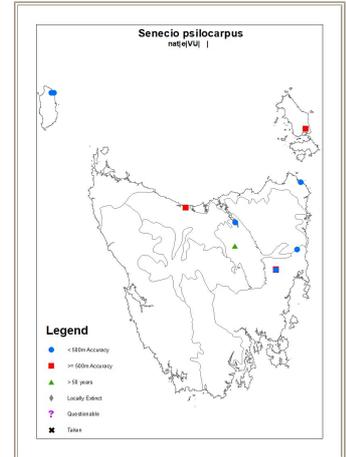
**Status:**



*Senecio psilocarpus* (swamp fireweed) is a semi-aquatic perennial herb, detected in Tasmania from six widely scattered sites. The total population in Tasmania is likely to number fewer than 250 plants and occupy less than 1 ha in total, placing the species at risk from chance events, the risk exacerbated as plants may not be seen or only persist in low numbers in between disturbance events. Agricultural activities on private land risk the loss or degradation of habitat and may explain the fragmented distribution of the species in Tasmania. The most important needs of the species are to prevent overgrazing by stock, competition from weeds, and changed hydrology at known localities, as well as destruction of habitat by clearing, inundation or severe degradation.

### Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.



### Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The known range of the swamp fireweed includes six widely scattered sites in the northern half of the State, including King and Flinders islands (see distribution map, above). The potential range of the species is unlikely to extend significantly beyond the currently known range. However, the species has not been well surveyed, particularly in herb-rich wetlands at low altitudes known localities.
- Habitat for swamp fireweed corresponds to 'wetland' in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit. See 'Other bush types' in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit for more information on this vegetation type.
- Habitat characteristics for swamp fireweed includes the following elements: swampy habitats including broad valley floors associated with the Midlands river systems (Cressy area), edges of farm dams amongst low-lying grazing/cropping ground (Forth area), herb-rich native grassland in a broad swale between stable sand dunes (Nook Swamps, King Island), adjacent to wetlands in native grassland (Mount William), herbaceous marshland (Dukes Marshes), and low-lying lagoon systems (Flinders Island).

### What to avoid

- Clearing of habitat for pasture and cropping
- Loss and/or modification of habitat through dam construction and irrigation schemes
- Overgrazing by stock
- Invasion of habitat by weeds

### Surveying

Key	Survey reliability more info
<b>M</b>	Best time to survey
M	Potential time to survey
M	Poor time to survey
M	Non-survey period

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

<i>Senecio psilocarpus</i>	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
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swamp fireweed	S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A
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- Flowers are required to confirm the identity and aid detection of this semi-aquatic perennial herb. The species flowers from November to March. Collections of *Senecio psilocarpus* from Tasmania have been made from November through to February. The species has been observed to proliferate following fire and plants may not be seen or only persist in low numbers in between disturbance events
- In Tasmania *Senecio psilocarpus* is known from six widely scattered sites in the northern half of the State, including King and Flinders islands. It occurs in swampy habitats including broad valley floors associated with rivers, edges of farm dams amongst low-lying grazing/cropping ground, herb-rich native grassland in a broad swale between stable sand dunes, adjacent to wetlands in native grassland, herbaceous marshland and low-lying lagoon systems. On mainland Australia, *Senecio psilocarpus* occurs in high-quality herb-rich wetlands on generally treeless plains that can be inundated in winter with up to 60 cm or more of water, but are almost dry in summer.

### Helping the species

- In order to recognise the species if it occurs on your property, learn to identify swamp fireweed. If in doubt, seek expert assistance with identification.
- If you live or work in the area where the species occurs (see distribution map, above), look out for and record any observations of the species. All records of this species can provide important information on distribution and abundance
- If you are interested in knowing for certain whether the species occurs on your land, organise a formal survey. You may need to employ an ecological consultant to do this. Your local Bushcare or Field Naturalist club may be able to assist you with a survey.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the NRE Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species.
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- Habitat for swamp fireweed corresponds to 'wetland' in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit. See 'Other bush types' in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit for more information on this vegetation type.
- For long-term protection of localities on private land – consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant. See the NRE Private Land Conservation Program for more details.
- See the 'What is Needed' section in the swamp fireweed Listing Statement for a full list of conservation management actions for this species.

### Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- Extensive clearing of low-lying ground for the development of pasture and cropping is an important historical and ongoing threat to swamp fireweed. This may explain the current patchy distribution of the species.
- To prevent loss of habitat – avoid clearing of wetland and other poorly-drained habitat for conversion to pasture and cropping land.

### Dam construction

- Construction of dams and irrigation schemes have the potential to destroy wetland and other poorly-drained habitat through inundation and/or downstream alteration in flow regimes and hydrology.
- To prevent loss of habitat – avoid inundation or modification of habitat through construction of dams.

### Weed establishment

- Most populations are in close proximity to agricultural land and are vulnerable to weed invasion.
- To prevent degradation of habitat – prevent establishment and spread of weeds in areas of habitat.

### Stock Grazing

- Most populations are in close proximity to agricultural land and are vulnerable to overgrazing and trampling by stock.
- To prevent degradation and loss of habitat – protect areas of habitat from overgrazing and trampling by stock by fencing.

### Use of chemicals

- To protect populations – ensure all weed control operations in and adjacent to habitat are appropriately managed to avoid off-target damage to swamp fireweed.

### Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

**Cite as:** Threatened Species Section (2025). *swamp fireweed (Senecio psilocarpus): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Senecio-psilocarpus.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 16/10/2025.

**Contact details:** Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

**Permit:** A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.