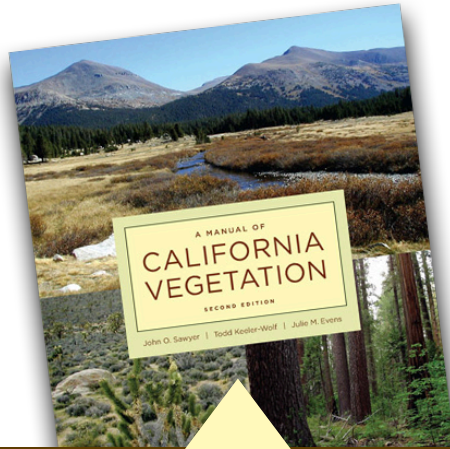




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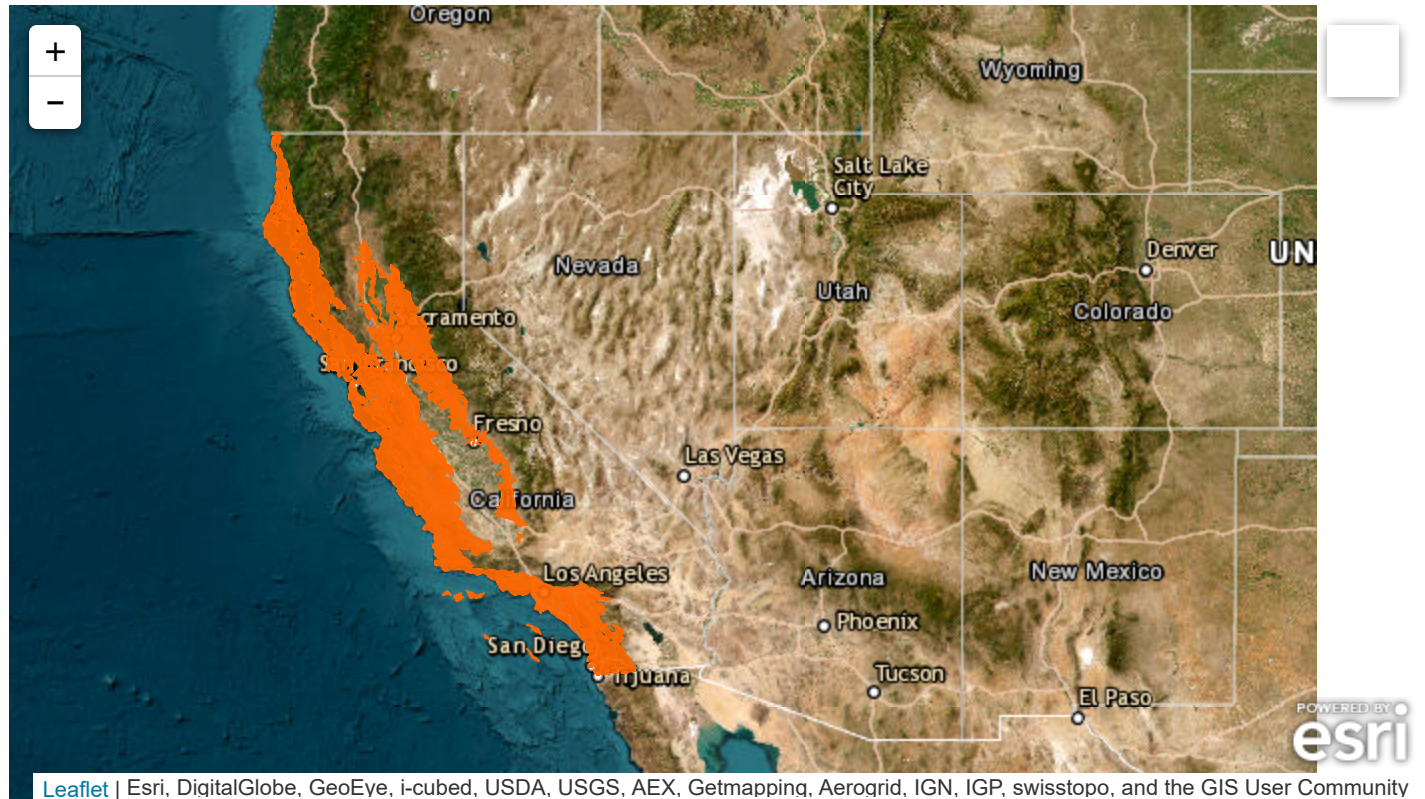
California Native Plant Society

A Manual of California Vegetation Online

Baccharis pilularis Shrubland Alliance

Coyote brush scrub

USDA Ecological Section Map



Summary Information

- **Primary Life Form:** Shrub
- **Elevation:** 0-1500 m
- **State Rarity:** S5
- **Global Rarity:** G5
- **Distribution:** USA: CA, OR (NatureServe). Baja California, Mexico (TJM2)
- **Endemic to California:** No
- **Endemic to California Floristic Province and Deserts:** Yes
- **Date Added:** 1995/11/01



Related Links

» [Feedback](#)

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Characteristic Species

Baccharis pilularis, *Frangula californica* and/or *Garrya elliptica* is dominant to co-dominant in the shrub canopy with *Artemisia californica*, *Ceanothus thyrsiflorus*, *Corylus cornuta*, *Diplacus aurantiacus*, *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, *Eriophyllum staechadifolium*, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Holodiscus discolor*, *Lotus scoparius*, *Lupinus arboreus*, *Morella californica*, *Rubus ursinus*, *Salvia apiana*, *Salvia leucophylla* and *Toxicodendron diversilobum*. Emergent trees may be present at low cover including *Pinus muricata*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Quercus agrifolia* or *Umbellularia californica*.

Vegetation Layers

Shrubs < 3 m; canopy is variable. Herbaceous layer is variable.

Membership Rules

- *Baccharis pilularis* > 15% shrub cover over grassy understory; *B. pilularis* relative cover > 50% than other shrub species (Keeler-Wolf et al. 2003a).
- *Baccharis pilularis* > 50% absolute cover in the shrub layer (Borchert et al. 2004).

- *Frangula californica* > 30% relative cover in the shrub canopy with *Baccharis pilularis*, *Toxicodendron diversilobum* and other shrubs in mesic uplands (Keeler-Wolf et al. 2003a, Sikes et al. 2023, Sikes et al. 2025).
- *Garrya elliptica* > 50% relative cover in the shrub canopy with *Baccharis pilularis* and other shrubs (Buck-Diaz et al. 2021, Keeler-Wolf et al. 2003a, Sikes et al. 2023).
- *Baccharis pilularis* > 50% relative cover in the shrub canopy, or > 30% with *Frangula californica*, *Toxicodendron diversilobum*, and/or *Rubus* spp. (Buck-Diaz et al. 2021, Sikes et al. 2021, Sikes et al. 2023, Sikes et al. 2025).
- *Baccharis pilularis* > 50% relative cover in the shrub overstory. Willows may be present with lower cover (Buck-Diaz et al. 2012).

Habitats

Coastal bluffs, terraces, stabilized dunes of coastal bars, spits along the coastline, river mouths, stream sides, open exposed slopes, ridges, gaps in forest stands. Soils are variable, sandy to relatively heavy clay.

Other Habitat, Alliance and Community Groupings

MCV (1995): Coyote brush series

NVCS (2009): *Baccharis pilularis* shrubland alliance

Calveg: Coyote brush, North coastal scrub

Holland: Northern dune scrub, Northern coastal bluff scrub, Northern (Franciscan) coastal scrub, Northern coyote bush scrub, Northern silk-tassel scrub, Diablan sage scrub

Munz: Coastal sage scrub, Northern coastal scrub

WHR: Coastal scrub

CDFW CA Code: 32.060.00

National Vegetation Classification Hierarchy

Formation Class: Mesomorphic Shrub and Herb Vegetation (Shrubland and Grassland)

Formation Subclass: Temperate and Boreal Shrubland and Grassland

Formation: Temperate and Boreal Scrub and Herb Coastal Vegetation

Division: Pacific Coast Scrub and Herb Littoral Vegetation

Macro Group: Vancouverian Coastal Dune and Bluff

Group: California Coastal evergreen bluff and dune scrub

Remarks [\(more\)](#)

Life History Traits of the Principal Species [\(more\)](#)

Fire Characteristics [\(more\)](#)

Regional Status [\(more\)](#)

Management Considerations [\(more\)](#)

Associations [\(more\)](#)

References [\(more\)](#)