Scientific Name: *Chondrilla juncea* Common name: Skeleton weed

QUESTION	COMMENTS	REFERENCE	RANKING
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	"An erect, much branched perennial herb, commonly 60 to 90 cm high. The stem is much branched almost from the base and plants growing close together become entangled." Such infestations may be a nuisance to people on foot.	P & C (2001)	**ML**
2. Reduce tourism?	In dense clumps the plant would have a minor negative impact on the aesthetics of an area.		**ML**
3. Injurious to people?	No	P & C (2001)	**L**
4. Damage to cultural sites?	Dense growth may produce a moderate negative visual effect.		**ML**
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
6. Impact water quality?	Terrestrial species.	P & C (2001)	**L**
7. Increase soil erosion?	"*Chondrilla juncea* is essentially a weed of cultivation and of open, waste areas with disturbed soils." The deep root system is likely to provide some soil stability. Not likely to contribute to soil erosion.	Groves *et al* (1995)	**L**
8. Reduce biomass?	Invader replaces biomass.		**ML**
9. Change fire regime?	"In autumn, aerial growth dies." Little or no change to fuel load. Not likely to affect the fire regime.	P & C (2001)	**L**
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC=Plains grassland (E); CMA=North Central; Bioreg=Victorian Riverina; VH CLIMATE potential. Occurs on temperate, sub-humid and semi-arid open scrublands. In Victoria, it occurs in small populations and is limited in distribution. Minor impact on ground-flora.	P & C (2001) Carr *et al* (1992)	**ML**
(b) medium value EVC	EVC=Hillcrest herb-rich woodland (D); CMA=North Central; Bioreg=Goldfields; VH CLIMATE potential. Impact as in 10(a) above.	P & C (2001) Carr *et al* (1992)	**ML**
(c) low value EVC	EVC=Heathy woodland (LC); CMA=Wimmera; Bioreg=Dundas Tablelands; VH CLIMATE potential. Impact as in 10(a) above.	P & C (2001) Carr *et al* (1992)	**ML**
11. Impact on structure?	"*Chondrilla juncea* is essentially a weed of cultivation and of open, waste areas with disturbed soils." Optimum growth in open plant communities with a minimum of shadowing and root competiton. In Victoria, its distribution is limited to small populations in mallee shrubland and lowland grassland & and grassy woodland. Affecting the lower stratum only.	Groves *et al* (1995) Carr *et al* (1992)	**L**
12. Effect on threatened flora?			

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	REFERENCE	RANKING
Fauna			
13. Effect on threatened fauna?			
14. Effect on non-threatened fauna?	"It is palatable and nutritious in the rosette stage and during flowering until the stems become lignified. Flowering stems are largely unpalatable." Minor effect on fauna spp. through reduced food source.	Groves *et al* (1995)	**ML**
15. Benefits fauna?	The rosettes are palatable and nutritious. "Seed harvesting ants are known to remove skeleton weed seeds, although they are also known to consume many seeds."	Groves *et al* (1995) P & C (2001)	**MH**
16. Injurious to fauna?	No	P & C (2001)	**L**
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	Not known as a food source to pests.		**L**
18. Provides harbor?	Not known to provide harbor.		**L**
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	"Competition for nitrogen and other nutrients by severe infestations is indicated by cereal yield losses as high as 50% in wet years and 80% in dry years." Serious impacts on yield.	Groves *et al* (1995)	**H**
20. Impact quality?	"In most cases, cereal grain is harvested before skeleton weed produces seeds."	P & C (2001)	**L**
21. Affect land value?	With the serious impact on agricultural yield in cropping areas and the difficulty in controlling the weed, the value of infested land may be seriously affected.		**H**
22. Change land use?	"The very deep root system and vigour of the plant makes skeleton weed difficult to control by the use of competing species. However, lucerne and other legumes are effective competitors in some areas and if a good stand can be established and carefully managed, the density of skeleton weed is considerably reduced over a number of years." Land would be unavailable for a number of years for cropping activities.	P & C (2001)	**M**
23. Increase harvest costs?	"Light infestations can cause appreciable wear and tear to harvest machinery as well as delays through breakdowns, whilst heavy infestations can prevent harvesting because the stems are so entangled that many moving parts of the machinery become jammed." Potential to affect harvest costs seriously.	Groves *et al* (1995)	**H**
24. Disease host/vector?	None evident.		**L**