**Wilsonia humilis**

**Family:** Convolvulaceae  
**Botanical Name:** *Wilsonia humilis*, R.Br., Prodr. 490 (1810)  
**Common Name:** Silky wilsonia  
**Commonwealth Status:** *(EPBC Act)* Not Listed  
**Tasmanian Status:** *(TSP Act)* rare

**Description**  
A slender woody plant with a short, erect, underground stem bearing stout, woody roots and a number of prostrate stems, distinguished by its imbricates leaves, mat-forming habit and silvery-grey appearance. **Stems:** The stems may spread along the ground for 15–30 cm or more before rooting at the tips and again spreading. The main stems have many short side branches. **Leaves:** The leaves are crowded onto the short branches, overlapping like roof-tiles and arranged in two opposite rows and stalkless (Plate 1). They are 1.5–3 mm long, thick, concave and egg-shaped or oblong with rounded tips, and grey-green with silky hairs. **Flowers:** The flowers are stalkless and solitary near the tips of the short branches. They are white in colour, and have a 4–6 mm long corolla tube with 2–3 mm long spreading lobes, and 5 exserted stamens. Flowering is mainly in spring to summer. **Fruit:** Capsule, c. 3 mm long, with one or two seeds (description from Curtis 1967 and Walsh & Entwisle 1999).

**Distribution and Habitat**  
*Wilsonia humilis* occurs throughout temperate Australia (Walsh & Entwisle 1999). In Tasmania, the species is locally common within salt marshes in the Pitt Water – Sorell area near Hobart, with occurrences at Moulting Lagoon, Cape Portland and Flinders Island (Curtis 1967, Kirkpatrick & Glasby 1981, Schahinger & Smith 2008). Small colonies have also been recorded from Boomer Marsh near Dunalley (Curtis & Somerville 1947) and, atypically, from the margins of a (brackish) wetland in the Northern Midlands where it co-occurs with the rare *Wilsonia rotundifolia* (J.A. Smith 2010, pers. comm.). The species’ coastal habitat includes graminoid and succulent salt marsh (Plate 1), with species such as coast speargrass (*Austrostipa stipoides*), glassworts (*Sarcocornia* spp., *Sclerostegia arbuscula*), and creeping brookweed (*Samolus repens*).

**Key Sites and Populations**  
Key sites include Coal River, Duckhole Rivulet, Iron Creek Bay (Sorell), Long Point (Moulting Lagoon), Long Point Road on Flinders Island, Cape Portland, Boomer Bay and Tunbridge.
Wilsonia humilis

Plate 1. Wilsonia humilis: (left) leaf detail; (right) forming solid (grey) mats within a mosaic of graminoid and succulent salt marsh at Iron Creek Bay (Images by Richard Schahinger)

Known Reserves
Populations at Iron Creek Bay and Boomer Bay are within Public Reserves — both areas have been recommended to become Conservation Areas (CLAC Project Team 2005). Populations at Railway Point (Pitt Water), Long Point and Tunbridge are covered by conservation covenants under the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002.

Ecology and Management
The species’ salt marsh habitat may be at risk from the following (Kirkpatrick & Glasby 1981; Schahinger & Smith 2008):

- landfill;
- catchment modification;
- fire;
- grazing;
- off-road vehicles;
- weed invasion, especially African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*);
- rising sea levels associated with climate change.

Conservation Status Assessment
There is no need for a reassessment of the species’ conservation status at this time.

Further Information
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**Tasmanian Distribution**  
(As per Threatened Species Section records, January 2010)

![Map of Tasmanian Distribution](image)

1:25 000 Map Sheets  
Cranbrook, Dunalley, Ellinthorp, Hobart, Leventhorpe, Lyme Regis, Mayfield, Richmond, Sorell.

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**View**  

**Contact details**  
Threatened Species Section, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (03) 6233 6556; fax (03) 6233 3477.

**Permit**  
It is an offence to collect, disturb, damage or destroy this species unless under permit.