



# Follow the Weeds: Assessing the Risk of Future Spread

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# What is risk assessment?

Predicting which plants will become problems and where they could spread.

- Which plants already present in California could be the next invaders?
- What species could cause problems if imported?
- Complicated in California due to our diverse geography

# Risk assessment and WMAs



- WMA members have a wealth of information on local weeds.
- However, formal survey data rare.
- Which species should WMAs worry about?
- Where should scarce funding be focused?

# Why this project?

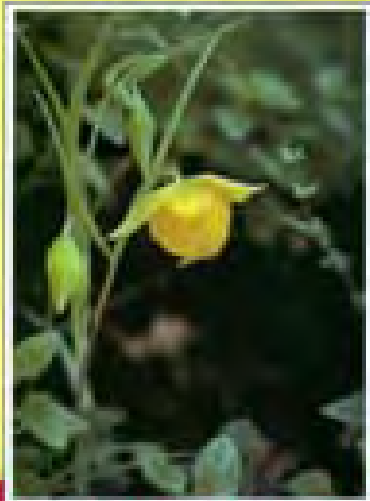
- Controlling invasive plants early in invasion reduces cost.
- No statewide data for most species
  - CDFWA focuses on A-rated weeds
- Cal-IPC Inventory rates 200+ invasive plants in California but spatial data is rough.

# Weed Risk Assessment for California

1. Where are weeds now?  
Survey data from WMAs
2. Where could they spread?  
Climate modeling
3. Which areas are most vulnerable?  
Compare surveys to models
4. What else could invade?  
Weeds from other Mediterranean ecosystems



# Counties & Jepson Regions



The Jepson Manual  
HIGHER PLANTS OF  
CALIFORNIA

EDITED BY JAMES S. GILG



# 1. Where are weeds now?

## Current Abundance



Low



Moderate



High



Widespread



No Data

## Current Spread



Increasing rapidly



Increasing



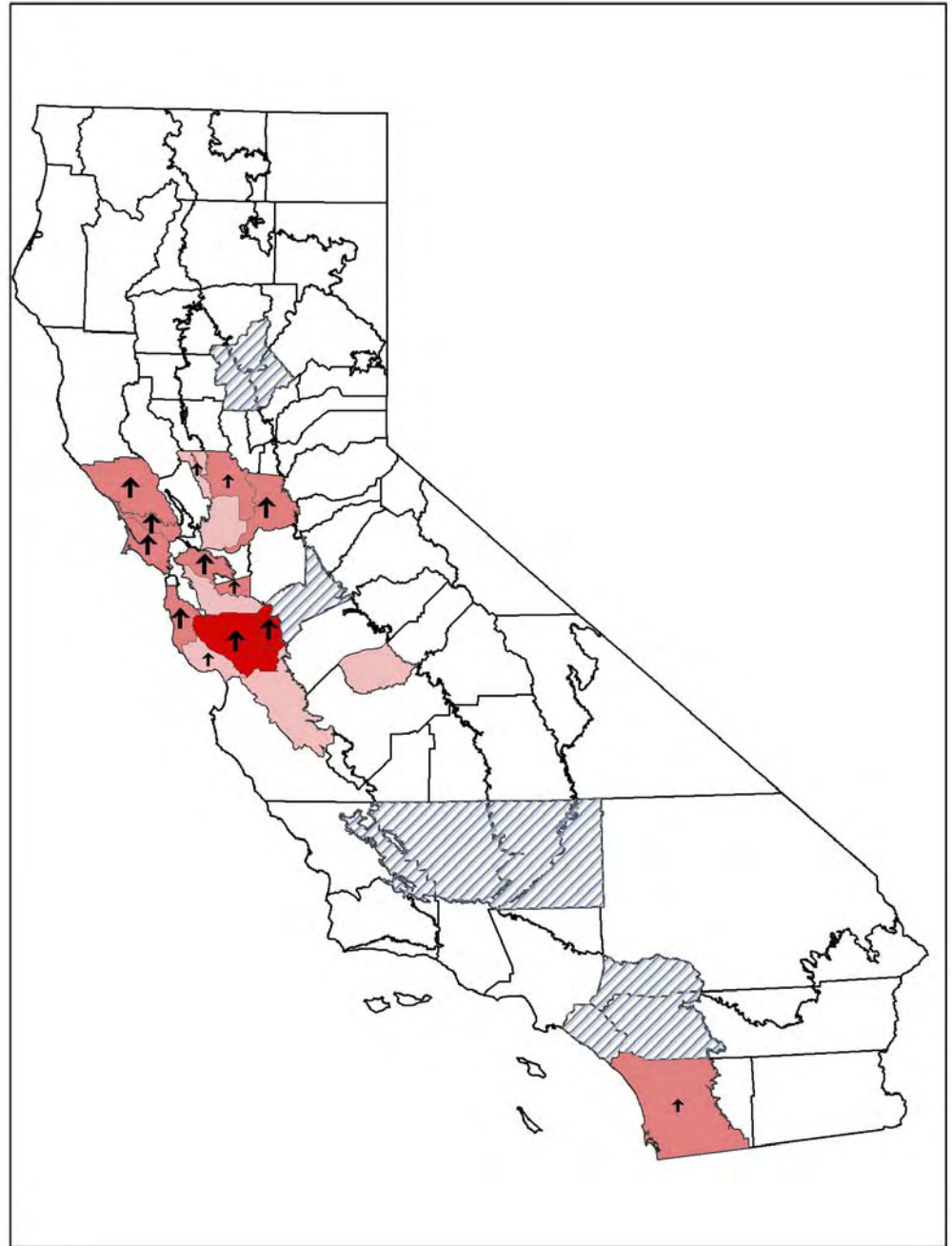
Declining





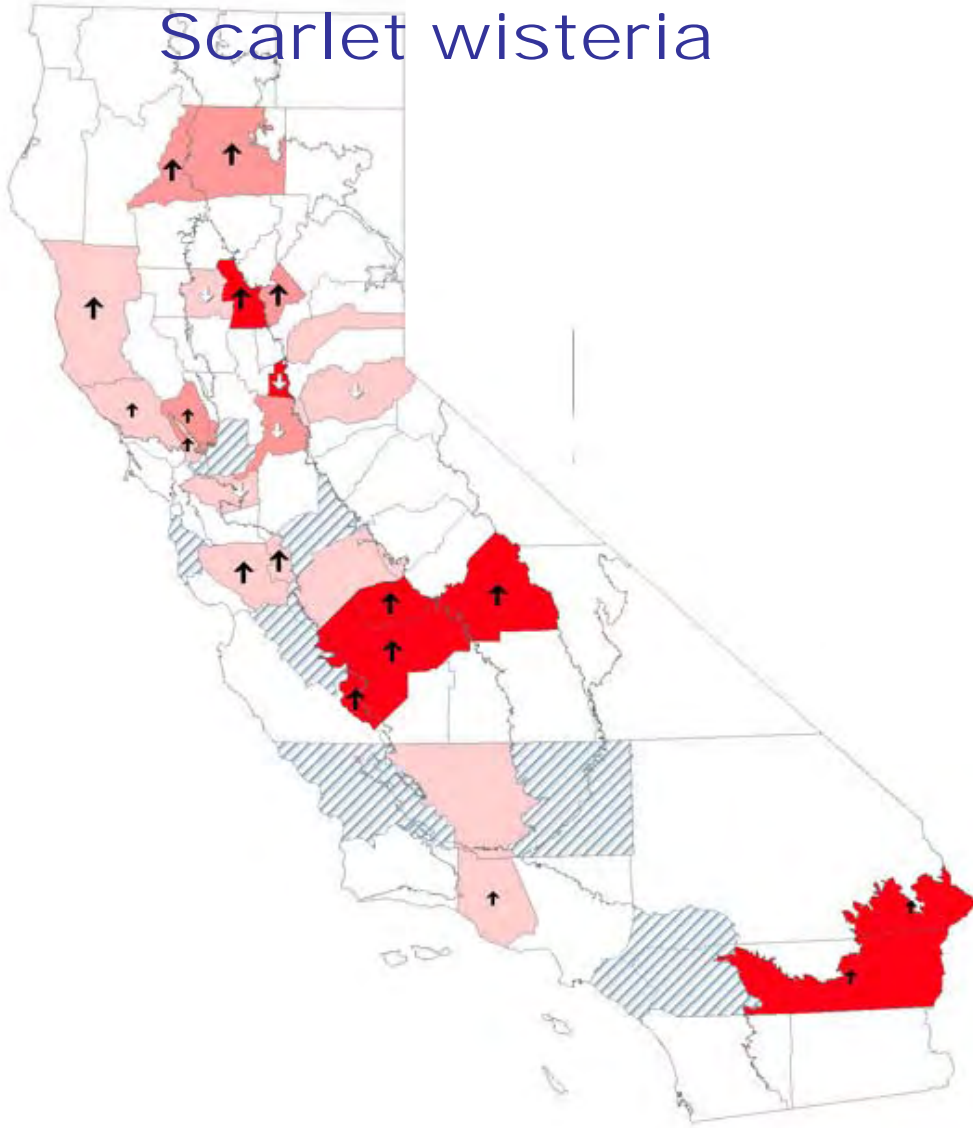


*Dittrichia graveolens*  
stinkwort





*Sesbania punicea*  
Scarlet wisteria





## 2. Where can weeds spread?

Climate is most basic determinant of where a plant can grow

Climate models predict where plants can spread based on where they already grow

- Compare native and introduced ranges
- Calculate temp. and moisture tolerance



# Climate models for California

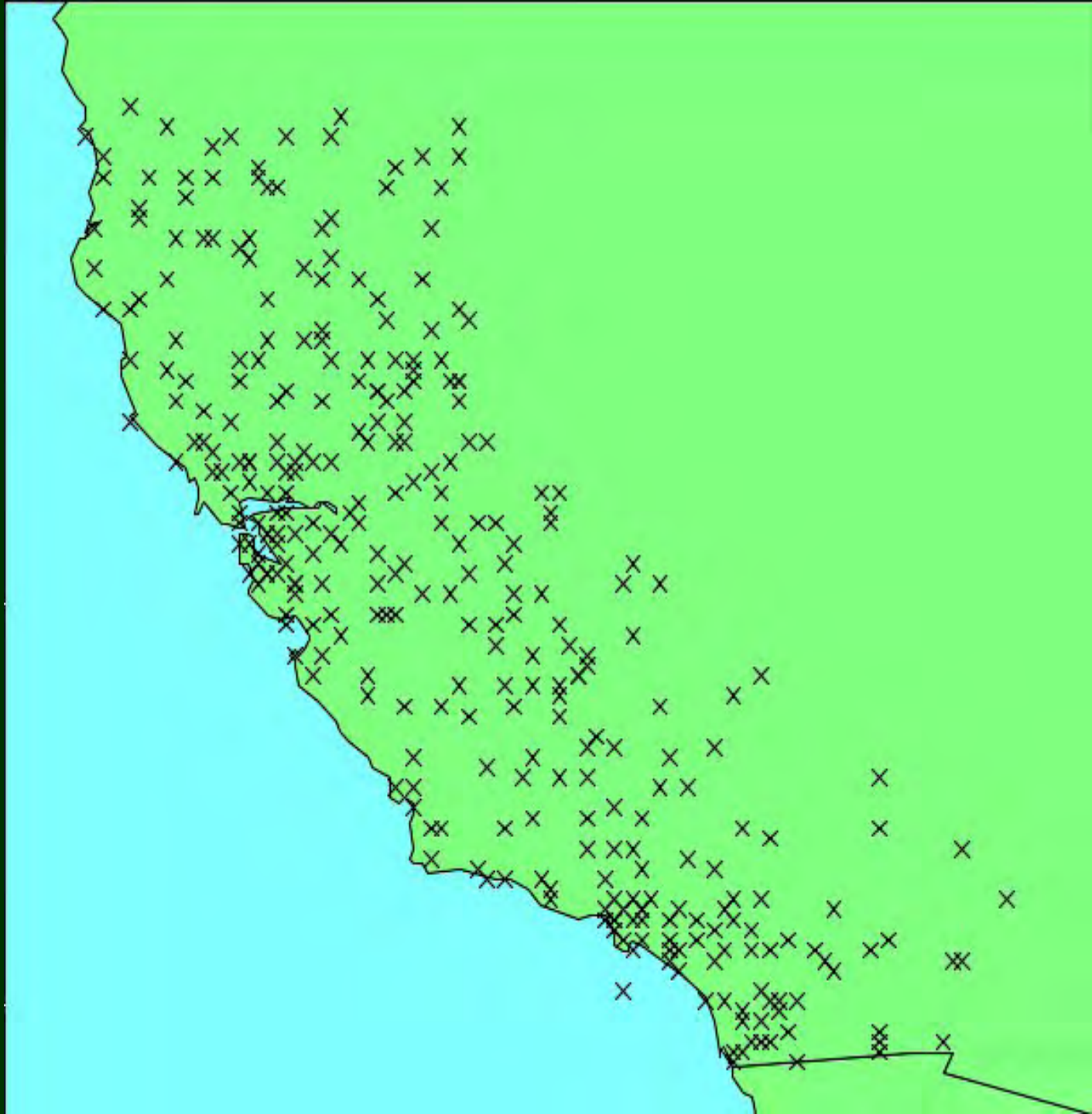
- *Sapium sebiferum*: Pattison and Mack 2008, Bower et al. in prep
- *Arbutilon theophrasti*: Holt and Boose 2000
- *Delairea odorata*: Robison 2007
- *Ulex europaea*: Steinmaus 2002, Hall 2007

# Our climate modeling

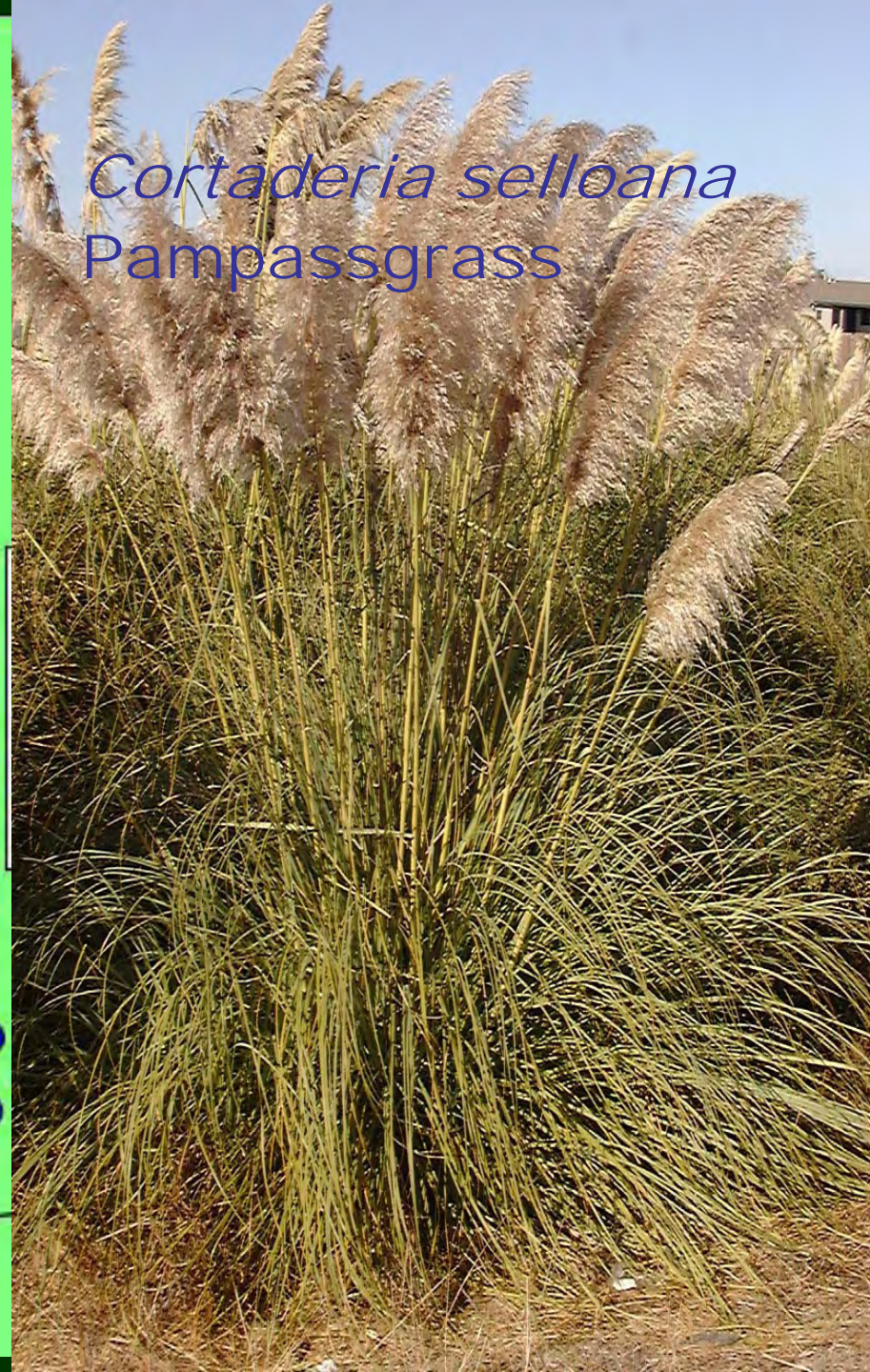
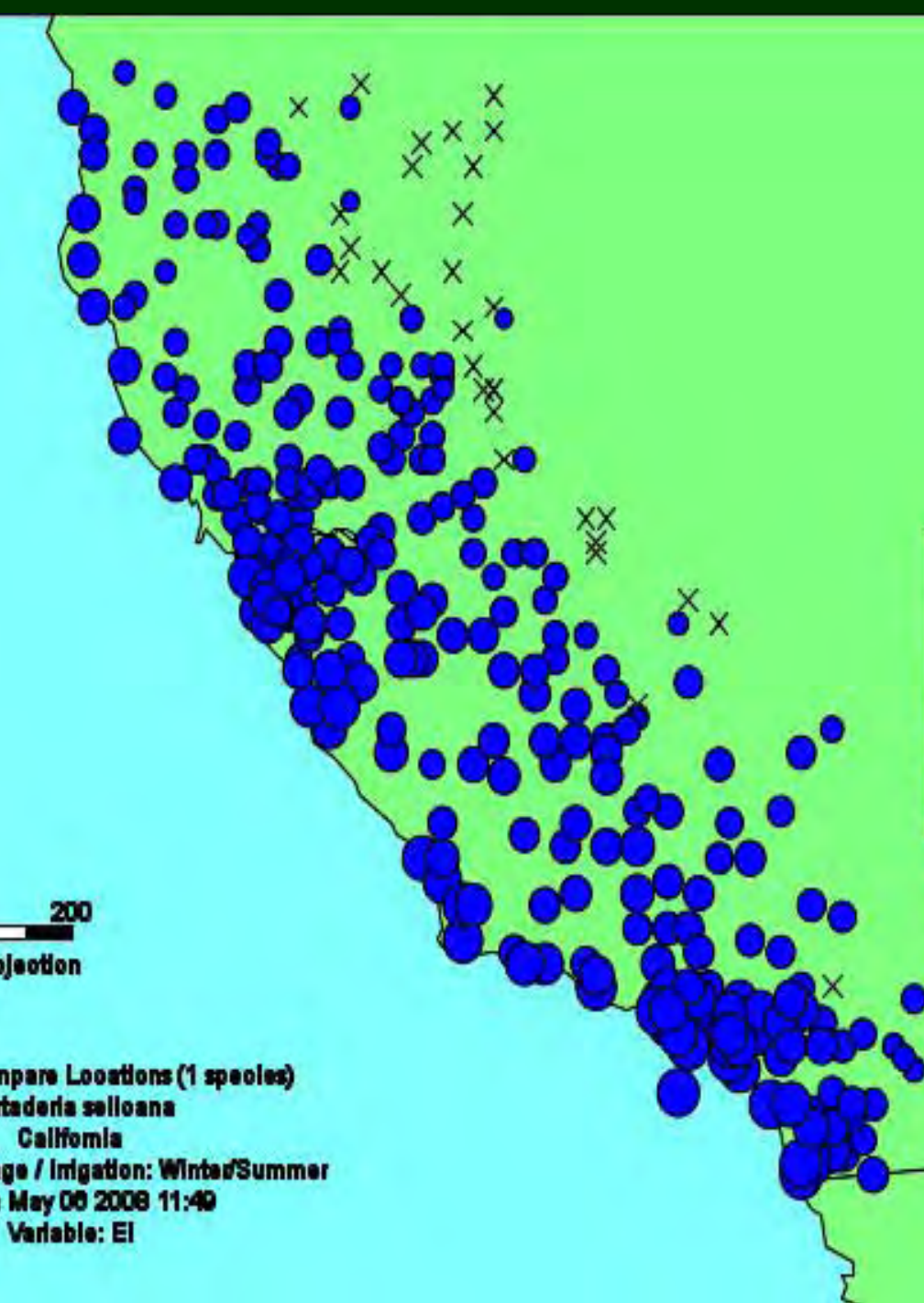
- 36 plants from Cal-IPC Inventory
  - **Researched native and intro ranges**
- California weather station data added into CLIMEX software
  - **“Ecoclimatic index” 0 - 100**



322  
NOAA  
weather  
stations

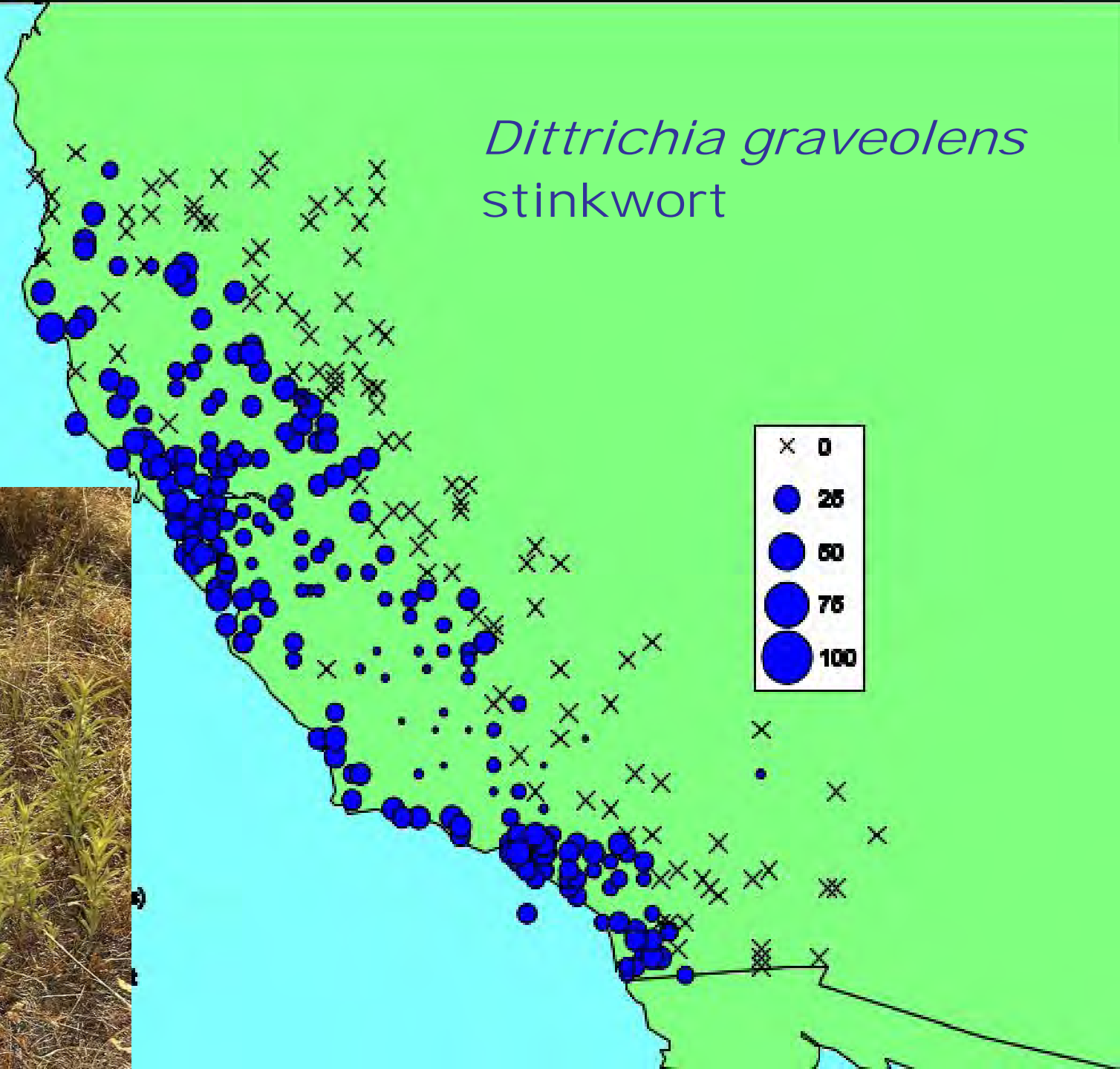








*Dittrichia graveolens*  
stinkwort



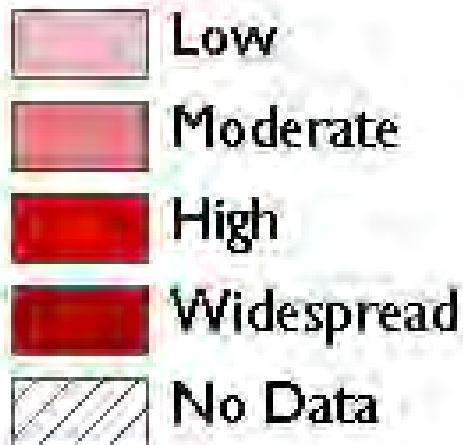
*Sesbania punicea*  
Scarlet wisteria



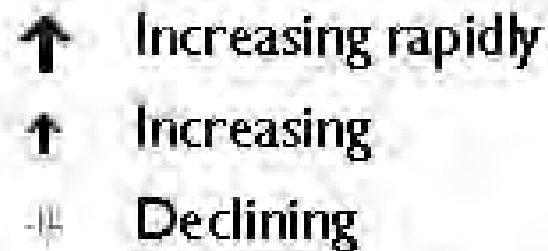


### 3. Which areas are most vulnerable?

#### Current Abundance



#### Current Spread



#### Potential Suitability

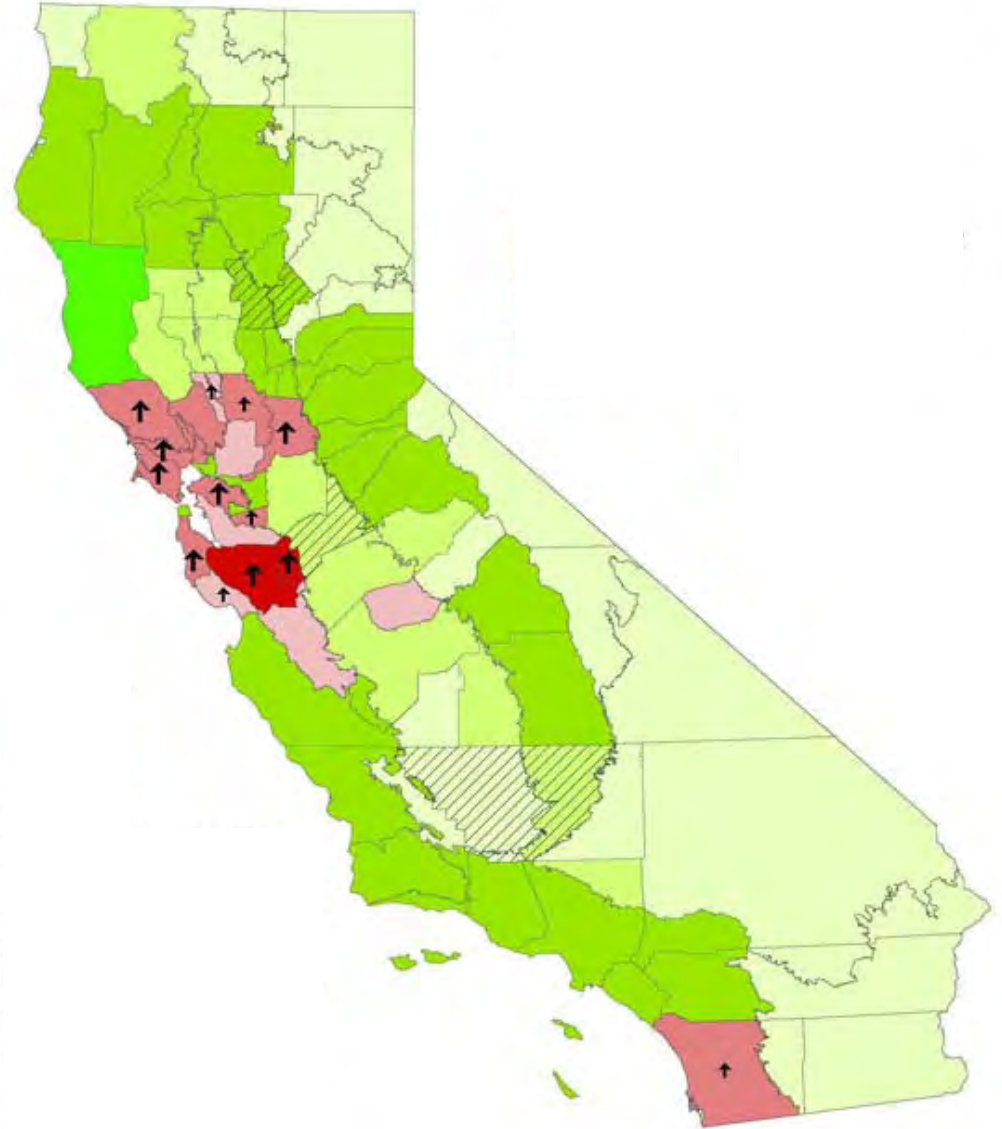






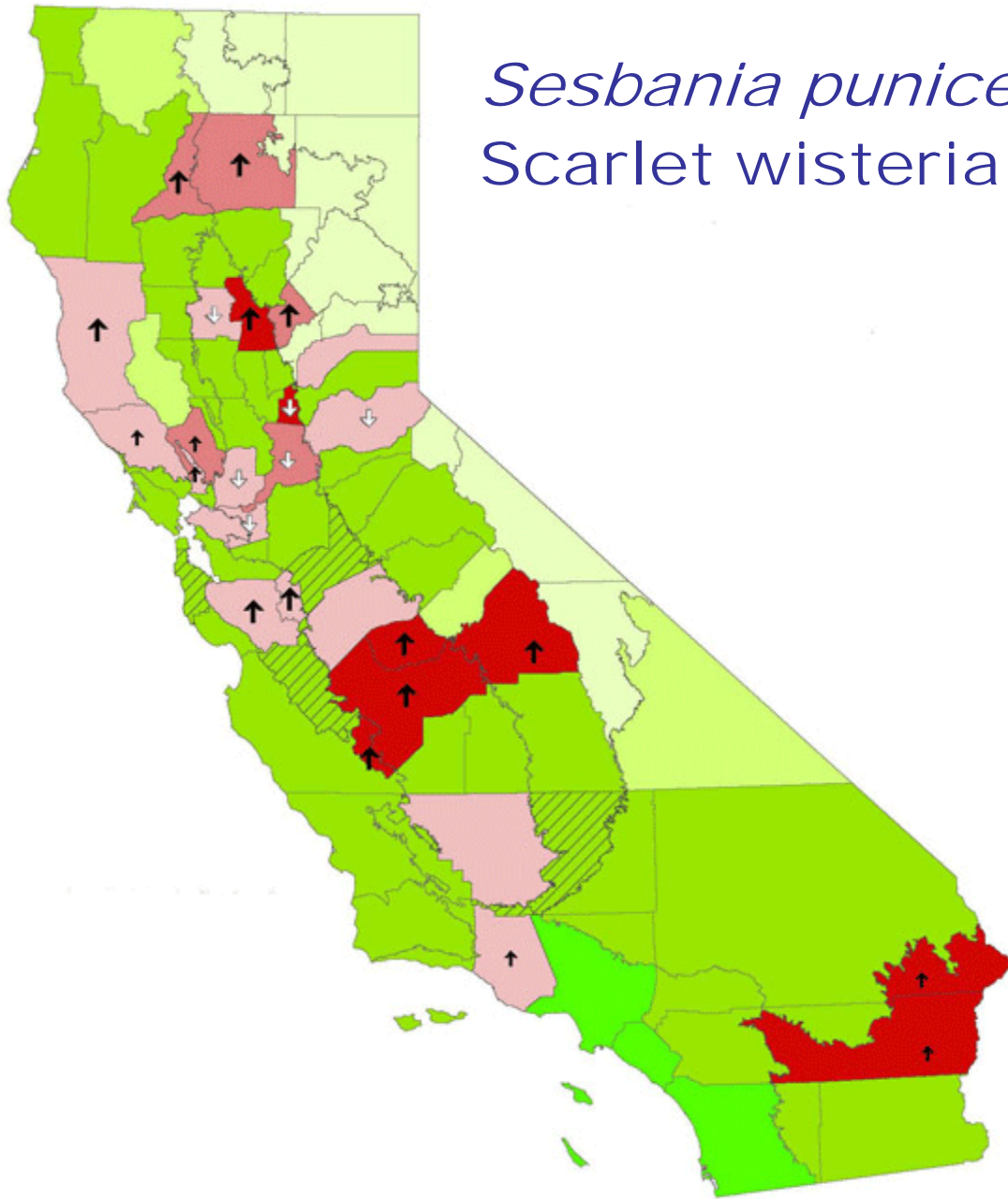


*Dittrichia graveolens*  
Stinkwort





*Sesbania punicea*  
Scarlet wisteria





Cal-IPC > Invasive Plants > Mapping > statewide maps > **Statewide Weed Maps**

## Statewide Maps

Cal-IPC, in partnership with the California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, UC Davis, and the state's network of Weed Management Areas (WMAs), has begun conducting statewide surveys of wildland weed distribution and trend, the purpose is to create rough statewide maps that provide a landscape-level assessment of where each weed is currently found, and whether it's spreading.

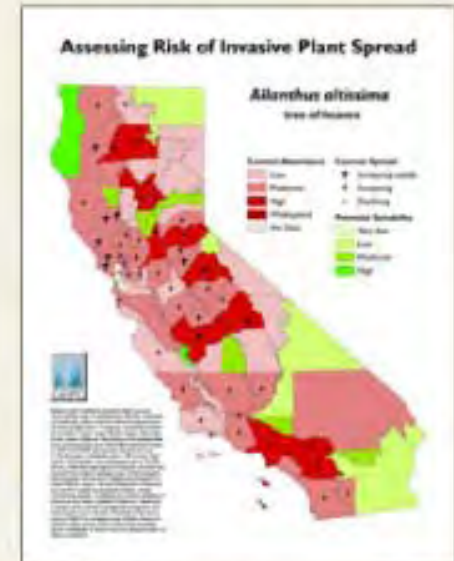
Mapped survey data for each plant is available below. (Surveys to date have covered 36 of the species in the Cal-IPC Inventory.) The maps are the product of input from those working in the field locally, and are not meant to be definitive; ongoing input is welcome (contact [info@cal-ipc.org](mailto:info@cal-ipc.org)).

The data in these maps will be used in conjunction with modeling to predict the extent to which each plant might spread in the state. This information can be used to support "early detection/rapid response" activities.

Abundance is rated in four cover classes, spread in three. Polygons are determined by combining county boundaries with major Jepson vegetation regions. Surveys were conducted summer 2007.

Help collect data for all of the invasive plants in our Inventory. Download the [California County Weed Survey \(Excel\)](#) with instructions.

Download [survey data \(Excel\)](#) shown on maps.



Sample map.

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WMAs

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Contact Us



# Climate change and weeds

Possible effects of climate change:

- Distributions shift to higher elevations and higher latitudes
- Increased CO<sub>2</sub> -> increased growth
- Increased fire -> habitat type conversion
- 66% of native CA plants could lose >80% of their range (Loarie et al. 2008)

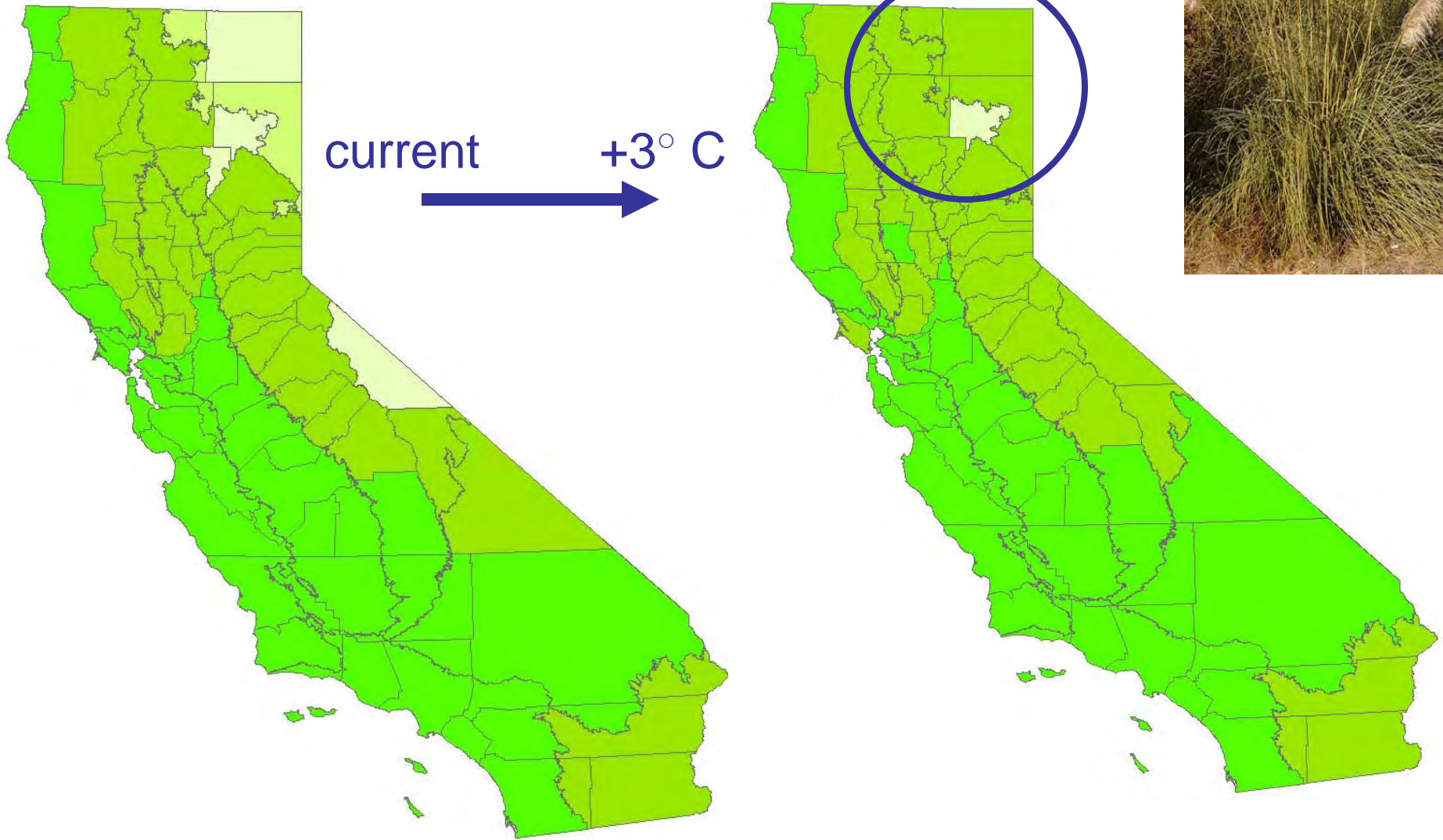
# Our climate change models

Based on 3° C increase

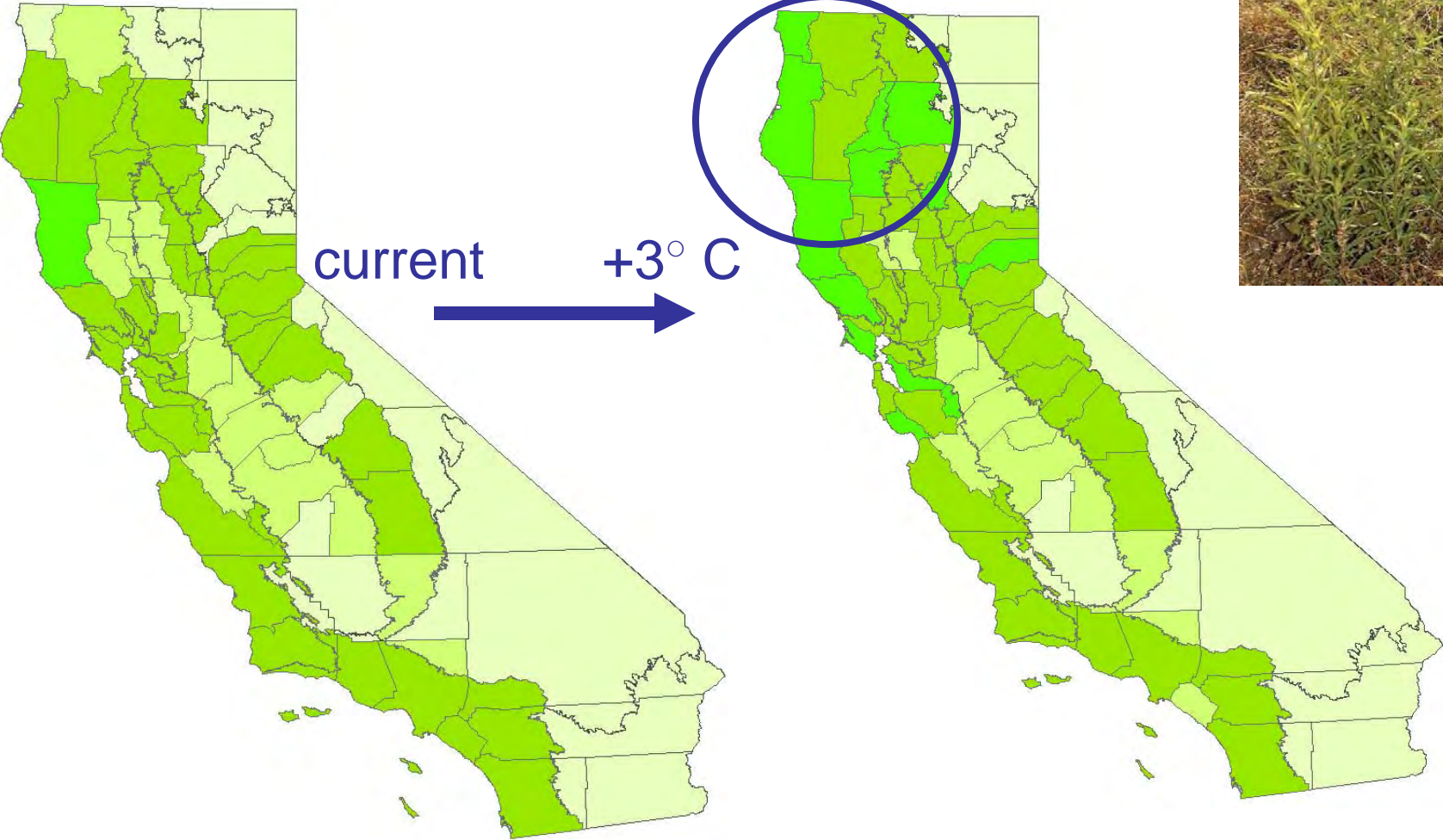
Compared predictions to ecoclimatic index  
under current conditions



*Cortaderia selloana* pampassgrass

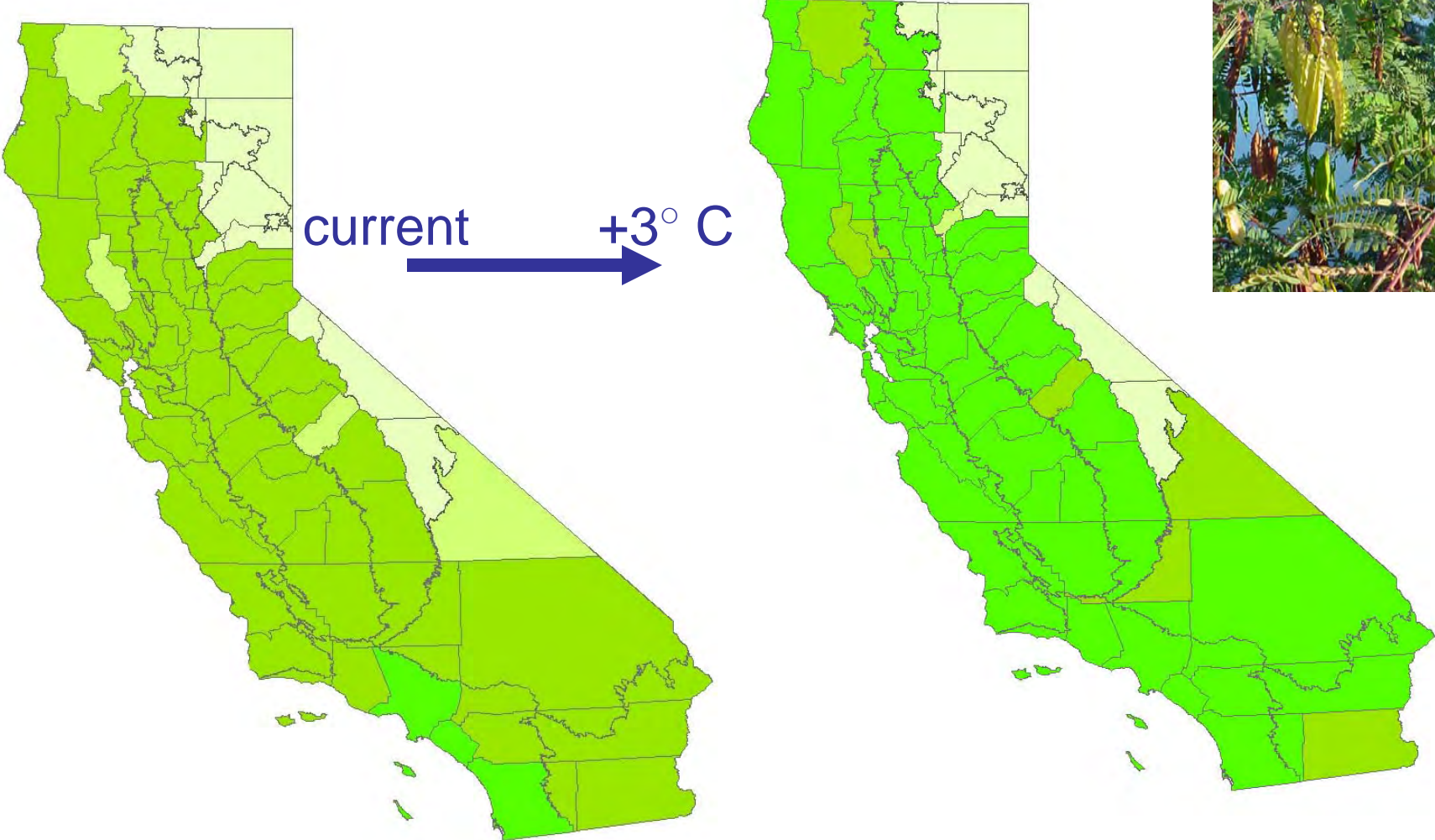


*Dittrichia graveolens* stinkwort





*Sesbania punicea* scarlet wisteria



# Climate change and weeds

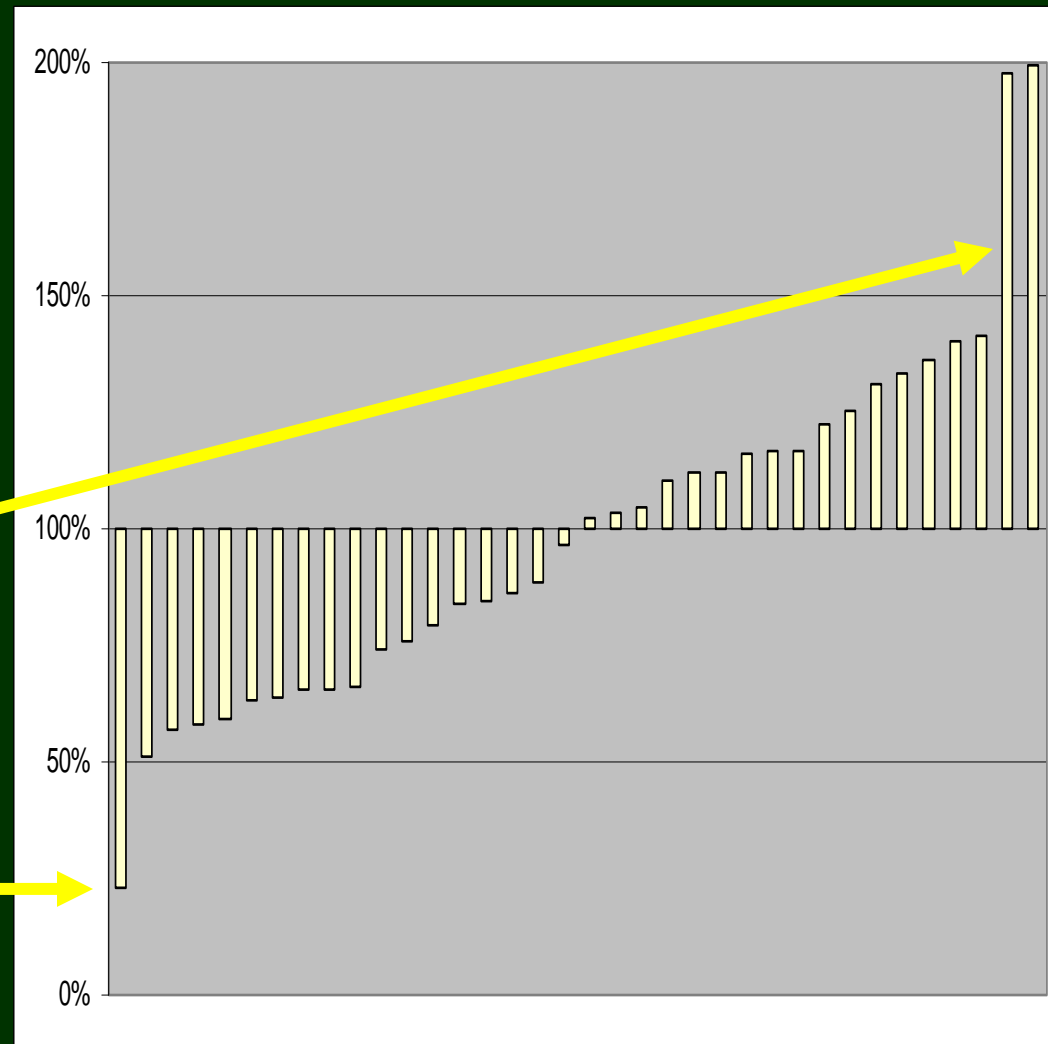
Overall "ecoclimatic index" for 36 modeled weeds was virtually unchanged (+2%)

Winners:

- castor bean (*Ricinus communis*) +99%
- fountaingrass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) +98%

Loser:

- Chinese tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*) -77%







# A few caveats

- Weather station data are individual points, while WMA surveys extrapolate to entire county
  - **Stations are not distributed evenly**
- Does not consider other factors
  - **Soils, competition, geographic barriers**

## 4. What else could invade?

Best predictor of a species' invasiveness here is invasiveness elsewhere

- **5 Mediterranean-type ecosystems: Mediterranean, W. Australia, S. Africa Cape region, central Chile, California**
  - Compiled lists of invasive plants
  - Compared to records from California
  - Definition of "invasive" varies





# California data

- Jepson Online Interchange & Consortium of California Herbaria
- CalFlora
- Ornaments: Sunset Garden Book, Plant Locator





# International weeds - results

774 listed in other Mediterranean regions

391 not  
naturalized

383  
naturalized

319  
eliminated

143  
ornamental

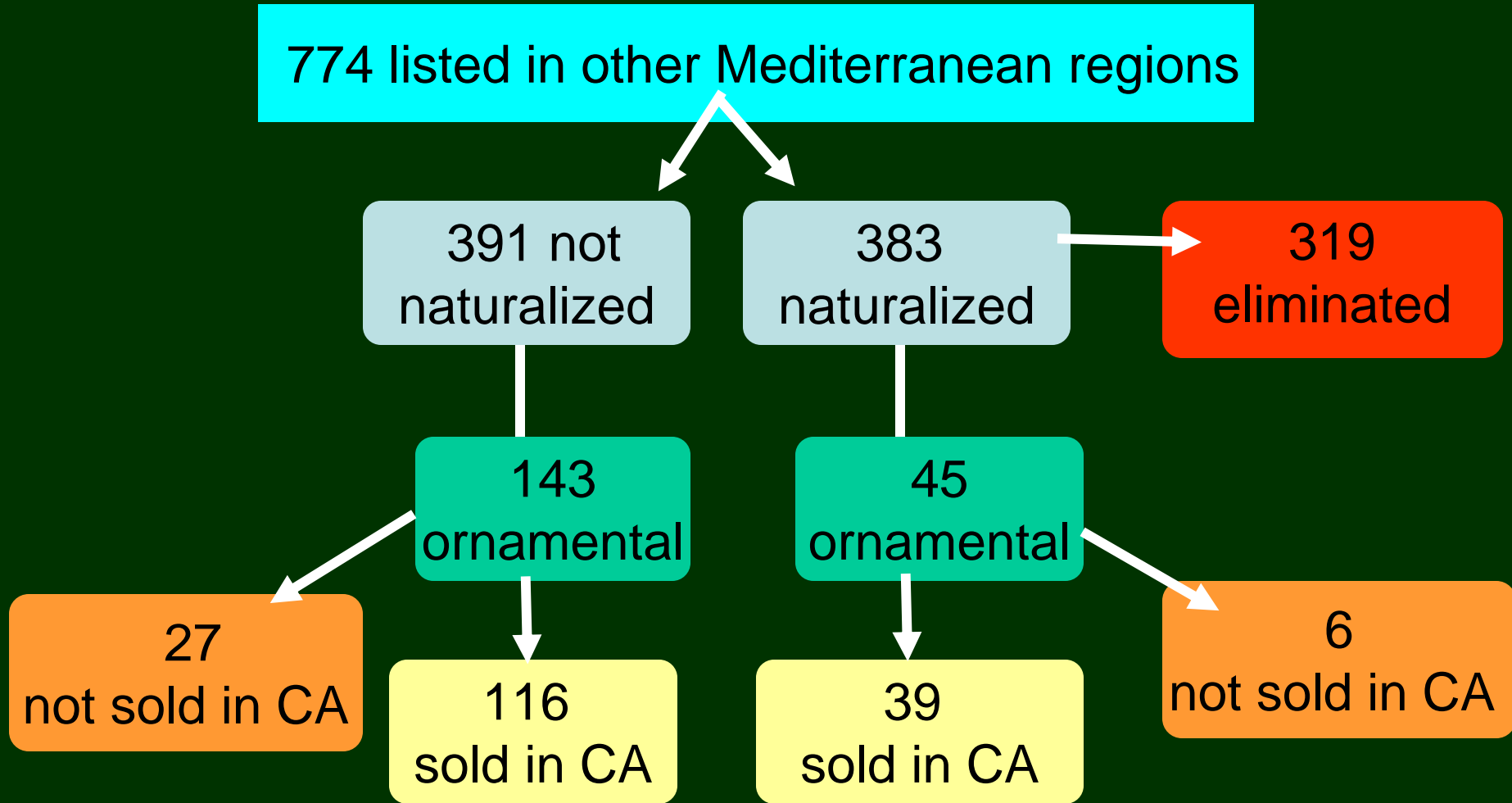
45  
ornamental

27  
not sold in CA

116  
sold in CA

39  
sold in CA

6  
not sold in CA





# Example:

*Rhamnus alaternus*

Italian buckthorn

- Cal-IPC Red Alerts 2008
- Invasive in Australia
- Ornamental species sold in California





# Connecting with other Cal-IPC projects

## Early detection

- Regional Early Detection networks (e.g. Bay Area)

## Cal-HIP & PlantRight

- Refining information on weeds
- List of plants to screen

## Research Needs Assessment

- Climate change identified as area needing study



# Next Steps

## Mapping:

- Post maps of all species on website
- Create tools for generating online maps

## Predictions:

- Provide “watch lists” to WMAs
- Model additional species (pending \$\$)
- Add more detail to models (pending \$\$)

## International Weeds:

- Assess with Cal-HIP screening tool



A photograph of a person standing in a field of purple flowers. The person is wearing a white t-shirt, blue shorts, and a blue cap. They are standing on a white tarp or bag. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

# Thank you to...

WMAs for  
survey data

UC Integrated  
Pest  
Management  
(funding)

Steve Schoenig, CA Dept.  
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Len Liu, GIS consultant

Jon Hall, Cal Poly SLO

Rob Klinger, UCD

Mike Pitcairn, CDFA

Bertha McKinley, Cal-IPC

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