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Two new species of hawkweed *Hieracium* from Ireland (Asteraceae)

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Abstract
Two new endemic species of hawkweed are described from Ireland. *Hieracium hibernicyclicum* (Irish Round-leaved Hawkweed) belongs to *Hieracium* section *Cerinthoidea* and differs from related species by having roundish outer rosette leaves with fine apiculate to spinulose teeth, numerous stellate hairs on the bracts and discoloured styles. It occurs across the north of Ireland. *Hieracium sligoensis* (Sligo Hawkweed) belongs to *Hieracium* section *Hieracium* and differs from related species by having elliptic to lanceolate, cuneate rosette leaves with stellate hairs beneath, no stem leaves or rarely one, a few-headed inflorescence, short (to 11 mm), obtuse involucral bracts with numerous glandular hairs and dense stellate hairs (simple hairs absent or very few), glabrous ligule buds and discoloured styles. It has been recorded in three places in Co. Sligo.

Keywords: endemic; *Hieracium* section *Cerinthoidea*; *Hieracium* section *Hieracium*; IUCN threat status

Introduction

Whilst preparing an illustrated key to Irish *Hieracium* (Rich, 2026), I found eight taxa which did not fit species included in Sell & Murrell's (2006) monograph of Irish and British *Hieracia*. Of these, six taxa are currently only known from one collection and may not be worth describing, but two are known from multiple collections. The latter two are here described as new species following the format of the descriptions in Sell & Murrell (2006) to allow comparison with other species. As far as is known, both species are endemic to Ireland which increases the number of Irish endemic *Hieracia* to eight (Rich *et al*., 2020).

Hieracium section *Cerinthoidea*

Within *Hieracium* section *Cerinthoidea* Monnier, I found repeated discrepancies between the descriptions of both *H. ampliatum* (W.R.Linton) Ley and *H. cyclicum* P.D. Sell and material that we had named and mapped as such from across the north of Ireland (McCosh & Rich, 2018). Further examination of material of these two *Hieracia* in the major herbaria **BEL**, **BM**, **CGE**, **DBN**, **E** and **NMW** and additional material that David McCosh and I had collected between 2006 and 2024 showed that none of this Irish material actually belonged to *H. ampliatum* or *H.*

cyclicum but instead belonged to a hitherto undescribed taxon which appears to be a new Irish endemic.

Hieracium hibernicyclicum T.C.G.Rich **sp. nov**.
Holotype: Benevenagh, main cliffs, C6873430330, VCH40, 21 June 2024, M. Flood, M. Jannink, L. Maddox, D. McFerran, R. & H. Northridge & T.C.G. Rich, collecting number 2024-164 (**BEL;** Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).
Vernacular name: Irish Round-leaved Hawkweed.

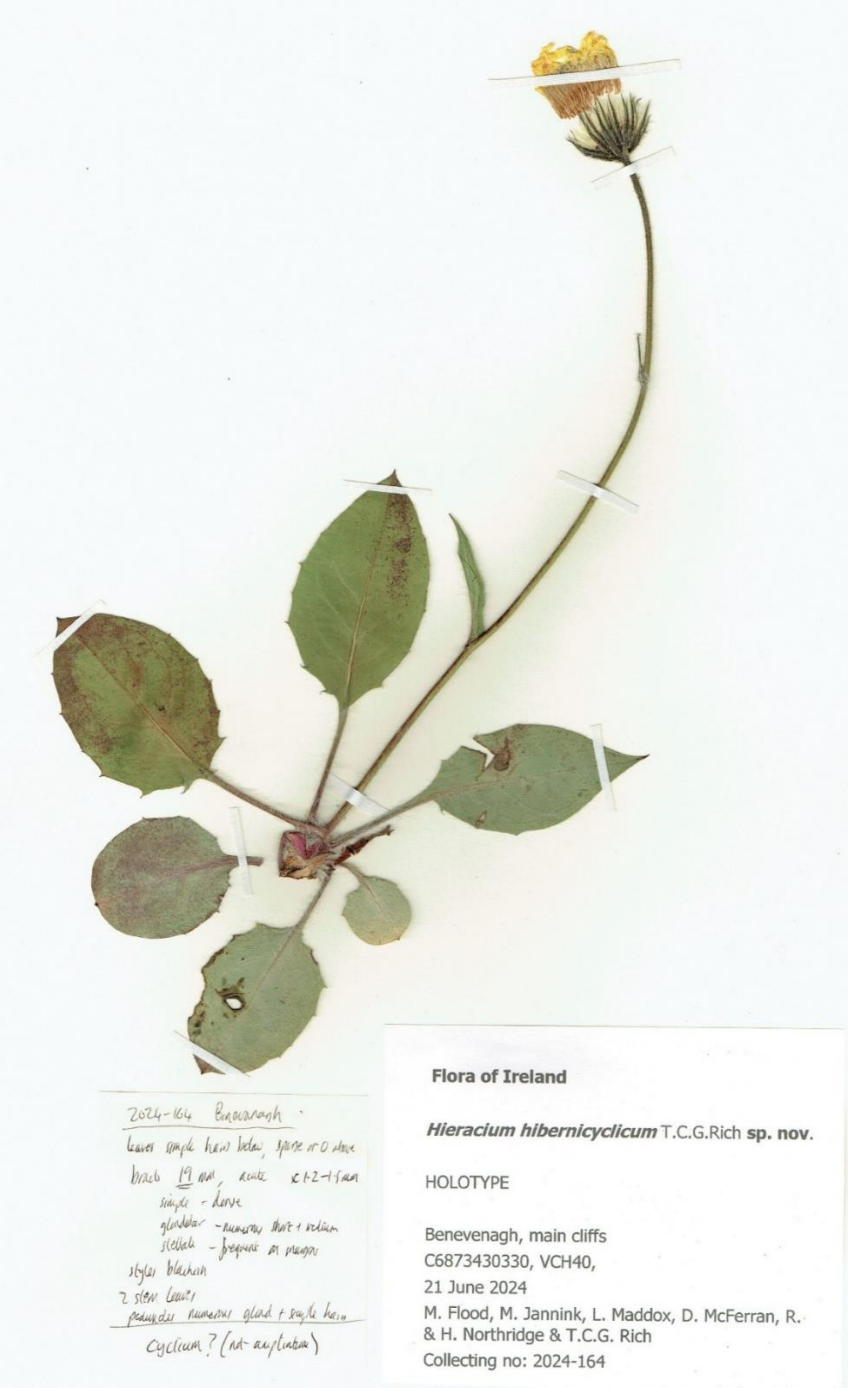

Figure 1. ***Hieracium hibernicyclicum*** **holotype (BEL)**

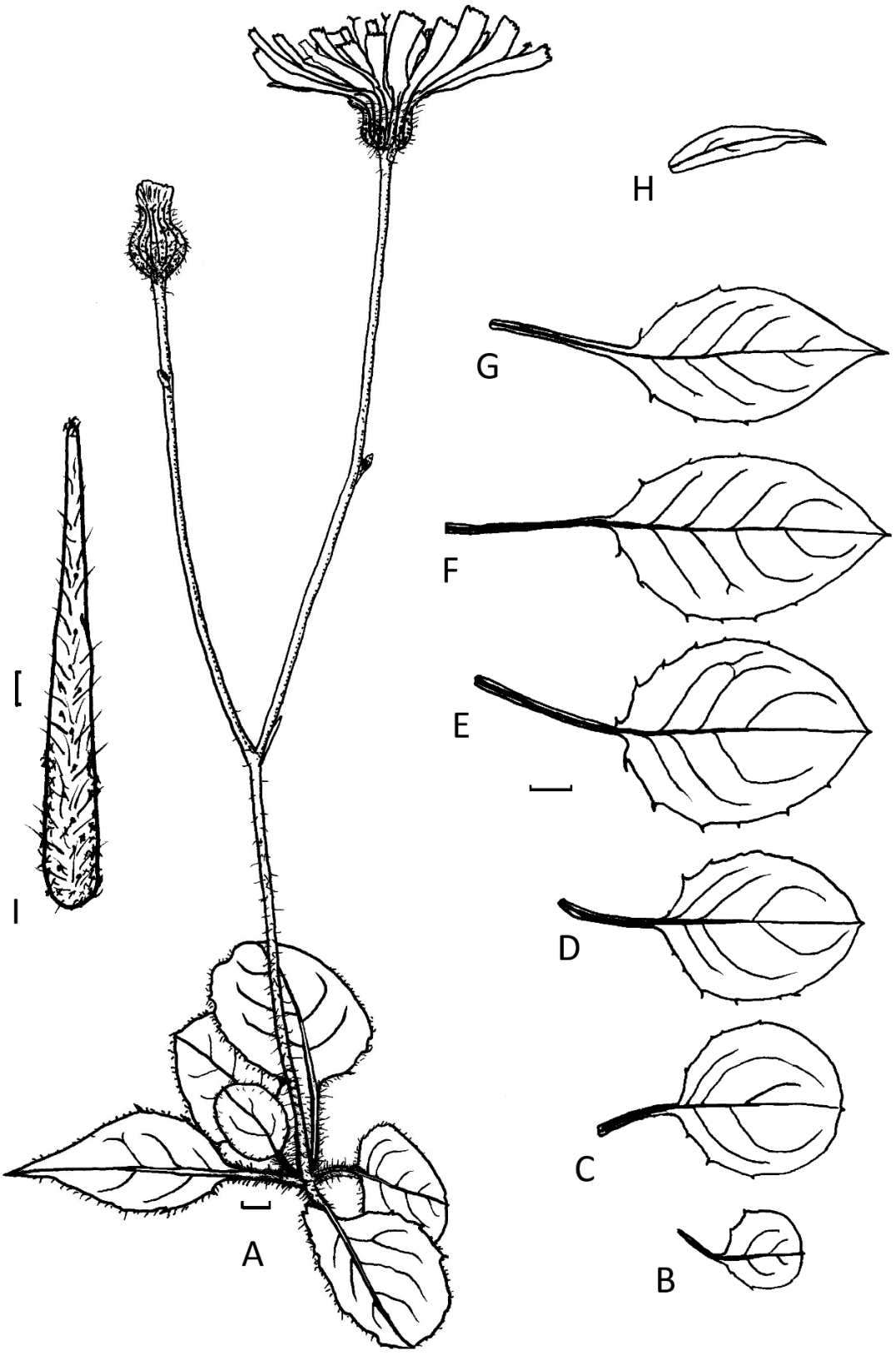

Figure 2. *Hieracium hibernicyclicum*: A, whole plant. B-G, rosette leaves from outer to inner (details of hairs not shown). H, stem leaf. I, involucral bract. Scale bars for plant and leaves 1 cm, for bract 1 mm. Del. T.C.G.Rich

Description

Plant phyllopodous perennial with branched stock. *Stem* to 45 cm, dull green to flushed reddish-purple; lower stem with numerous, long (to 3 mm), whitish simple hairs below, becoming fewer and shorter upwards with sparse stellate hairs, upper stem with sparse, shorter to 1 mm black-based simple hairs and sparse to numerous stellate hairs. *Rosette leaves* numerous, rather pale bluish-green on upper surface, paler or reddish-purple flushed beneath, rarely weakly spotted; outer rosette leaves with lamina to 4 x 3.5 cm (the outermost often much smaller), subrotund or broadly elliptical, apex rounded-mucronate, base rounded to truncate, margins subentire or remotely denticulate with fine apiculate teeth; inner rosette leaves with lamina to 6 x 4 cm, broadly ovate to elliptic, apex obtuse to acute, base rounded, margins remotely denticulate toward apex, shallowly dentate below with fine apiculate to spinulose teeth, the innermost leaves elliptic-ovate, acuminate at apex and cuneate at base; upper surface nearly glabrous or with sparse simple hairs especially near margins, lower surface with numerous medium and long simple hairs and with or without sparse to frequent stellate hairs; petioles up to 4 cm, with dense, long to 4 mm, pale simple hairs. *Stem leaves* 0–1(–2), the lowest like the innermost basal leaf and petiolate, or obovate-elliptic and just clasping stem, or reduced and bract-like in axil of branch, glabrous above or with a few simple hairs near the margins and many below. *Inflorescence* with (1–)2–5(–7) capitula, furcate-corymbose, often with a long lower branch; peduncles long, with frequent to numerous, short to medium 0.3–1.2 mm, pale, dark-based simple hairs, frequent to numerous, short to 0.5 mm, dark glandular hairs (often more numerous than simple hairs) and numerous to dense stellate hairs. *Capitula* 30–40 mm across, rarely stylose (i.e. ligules reduced), with rounded bases. *Involucral bracts* incumbent in bud, 12–16(–19) x 1.2–1.6(–1.7) mm, blackish-green with paler margins, linear-lanceolate, narrowing above the middle to an acute apex, and the innermost filamentous, with numerous to dense medium (to 1.2 mm), pale, dark-based simple hairs, numerous, short (to 0.4 mm) golden to dark glandular hairs, and sparse to frequent stellate hairs on the margins, at the base and often tufted at apex. *Ligules* yellow, with numerous, short simple hairs at tips in bud. *Styles* when fresh discoloured to blackish. *Receptacle pits* with margins dentate to ciliate-dentate. *Achenes* 3.5–4.0 mm, dark purplish-black.

Diagnosis

Outer rosette leaves subrotund to broadly elliptical, truncate- to rounded-based, ±glabrous above with sparse apiculate to spinulose teeth on the margins, the 0–1(–2) stem leaves which are either like the inner rosette leaves or reduced and semi-amplexicaul, the acute bracts to 16 mm with numerous stellate hairs on the margins and numerous simple and glandular hairs.

Relationship to other species

Hieracium hibernicyclicum is a typical member of *Hieracium* section *Cerinthoidea* with a basal rosette and few stem leaves which are clasping or shortly petiole, with dense, long white hairs below, the furcate-corymbose inflorescence with a few, large capitula and often a long lower branch, involucral bracts with numerous simple hairs, hairy ligule buds and discoloured styles.

It is most similar to *H. cyclicum* P.D. Sell and seems to be a related Irish variant. *Hieracium cyclicum* occurs from Northern Scotland to South-west Scotland

(McCosh & Rich, 2018) and shows a gradual transition from plants with elliptic leaves with marked, often cusped, teeth in Sutherland (from where it was described, holotype in **CGE**), to the much rounder-leaved, scarcely toothed plants on Arran. Most plants across this Scottish range also have the fine apiculate teeth like *H. hibernicyclicum* but have yellowish styles and few stellate hairs on the margins of the involucral bracts (rarely frequent stellate hairs). The Arran *H. cyclicum* plants are most similar to the Irish plants. A few specimens in **CGE** named by P.D. Sell when he described *H. cyclicum* have discoloured styles.

Hieracium hibernicyclicum is similar to *H. ampliatum* (W.R. Linton) Ley but differs in having subrotund or broadly elliptical outer rosette leaves with fine apiculate to spinulose teeth, all bracts acute with more numerous glandular hairs (outer rosette leaves elliptical and dentate, some bracts obtuse and with few glandular hairs in *H. ampliatum*). The occurrence of *H. ampliatum* in Ireland requires further research (Rich, 2026).

It is also visually similar to *H. basalticola* Pugsley (section *Stelligera* Zahn; Rich *et al.*, 2010) which differs in being less hairy overall, and in having obtuse bracts and yellow styles.

Distribution and Habitat

Hieracium hibernicyclicum occurs on rocks on chalk, limestones and basalt rocks and cliffs rooted directly into the crevices, usually with other *Hieracium* species such as *H. anglicum* and *H. oxybeles*.

It has been widely recorded across the northern half of Ireland (Fig. 3); in addition to the holotype, details of the records are as follows:

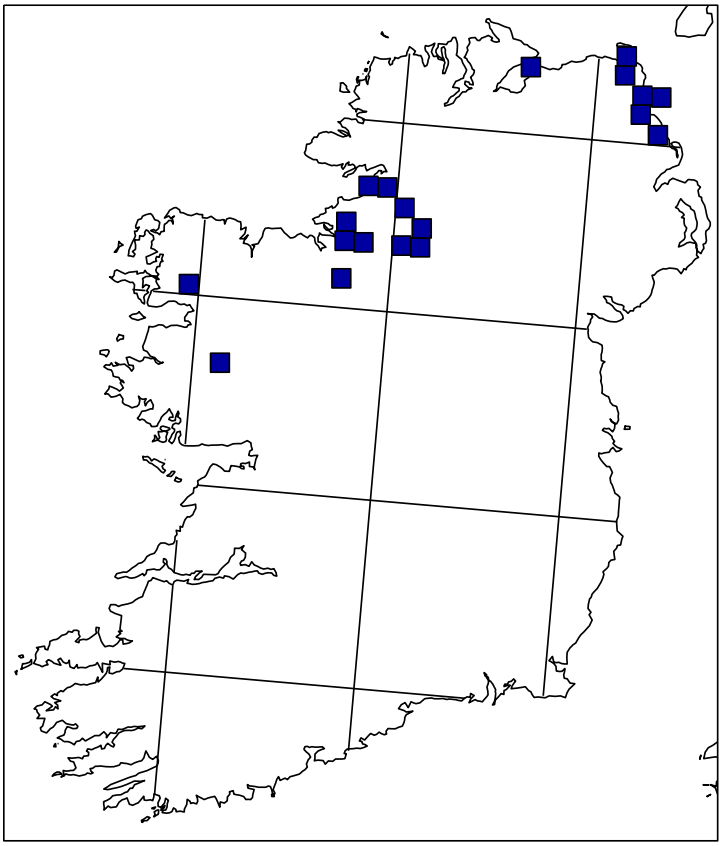

Figure 3. Distribution of *H. hibernicyclicum*

VCH26 East Mayo. Lough Mask, 1 July 1908, R. L. Praeger (**DBN**).
VCH27 West Mayo. Nephin Beg, Ben Gorm, 1 June 1990, C. Roden (**DBN**).
VCH28 Sligo. Cope's Mountain, Lugnagal, G733416, 5 July 2007, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich. (**NMW**). Kesh Corann, G706124, 1 July 2007, D.C.F. Cotton, J. Dunleary, R. Hodd & T. Rich (**NMW**).
VCH29 Leitrim. Doon Lough, G799366, 30 June 2007, D.C.F. Cotton, J. Dunleary, R. Hodd & T. Rich (**NMW**). Doonkelly, G804375, 30 June 2007, D.C.F. Cotton, J. Dunleary, R. Hodd & T. Rich (**NMW**).
VCH33 Fermanagh. Brookfield, east crag H1533 and west crag H1433, 20 June 2024, H. Carleton, M. Jannink, K. Keys & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Clyhannagh, cliff opposite road, H0990035351, 20 June 2024, H. Carleton, M. Jannink, K. Keys & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Coaghan townland, H120348, 10 June 2020, R. Northridge (**E**). Doagh Lake, south of, H05, 1 July 1904, R. L. Praeger (**DBN**). Gortmaconnell Rock, crag south of H1333 and south side H1333, 20 June 2024, H. Carleton, M. Jannink, K. Keys & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Killyhommon Cliffs, H115467, 4 July 2007, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich. (**NMW**). Knockmore, limestone cliffs, 4 July 1881, S. A. Stewart (**BEL**). Knockmore, H05, 28 July 1886, Anon. (**BEL**). Knockmore, limestone cliffs, H0950, 9 June 1974, P. Hackney (**BEL**). Knockmore, H0850, 11 July 1978, M.J.P. Scannell (**DBN**). Knockmore, H0850, 4 July 2007, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich. (**NMW**). Marble Arch, limestone rocks, 22 July 1872, S.A. Brenan (**BEL**). Marble Arch National Nature Reserve, crag, H1134 and H1234, 20 June 2024, H. Carleton, M. Jannink, K. Keys & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Tiranagher More, H025569, 4 July 2007, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich. (**NMW**).
VCH34 East Donegal. Cavangarden, undated, Anon. (**DBN**). Twomilestone, G890651, 3 July 2007, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich (**NMW**).
VCH39 Co Antrim. Caranure, D2747124954, 23 June 2024, M. Jannink, D. McNeill & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Crockanore, smaller east crags, D1992641367, 22 June 2024, M. Jannink & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Fair Head, Grey Man's Path, *c.*160 metres alt., D1843, 6 July 1983, P. Hackney (**BEL**). Galboly, chalk cutting, D30012436, 23 June 2024, M. Jannink, D. McNeill & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Galboly, west of hidden village, D2824, 23 June 2024, M. Jannink, D. McNeill & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Garron Tower, D22, 31 May 1924 (**BEL**). Glenariff, south side, Trap Rock, 1893 July 13, W.A. Shoolbred (**NMW**). Glenariff, Inver River, basalt rock face at D210192, D210192, 4 July 1987, P. Hackney (**BEL**).Glenariff, Inver River, D211192, 25 July 1991, J. Bevan, P. Hackney & A. McG. Stirling (**BEL**). Glendun, 1 June 1935, R.L. Praeger (**BM**). Knock Dhu, D339068, 20 June 2008, D.J. McCosh & T. Rich (**BM**). Knock Dhu, NE crags, D3406, 24 June 2024, D. Cassidy, M. Jannink, R. McCready, D. McNeill & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Murlough Bay, chalk cliff above at *c.*180 metres, D1941, 6 July 1983, P. Hackney (**BEL**). Murlough Bay, cliff above, D195417, 22 July 1991, J. Bevan, P. Hackney & A. McG. Stirling (**BEL**). Murlough Bay, below cliffs, D1872143173, 22 June 2024, M. Jannink & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*). Sallagh Braes, 1 August 1878 (**BEL**). Sallagh Braes, basalt rocks, 11 June 1893 and 27 June 1897, S.A. Stewart (**BEL**). Sallagh Braes, D341054, 20 June 2008, D.J. McCosh

& T. Rich (**E**). Sallagh Braes, D3305 and D3306, 24 June 2024, D. Cassidy, M. Jannink, R. McCready, D. McNeill & T. Rich (Rich 2024, as *H. cyclicum*).
VCH40 Londonderry. Benevenagh, 26 July 1886 (**BEL**). Benevenagh, 9 June 1974, P. Hackney (**BEL**).

Conservation status
Given its widespread occurrence in many sites across the north of Ireland it is assessed as IUCN (2022) Threat Status 'Least Concern'.

Hieracium* section *Hieracium
Hieracium sligoensis T.C.G. Rich **sp. nov**.
Holotype: sand dunes, Rosses Lower, G6336541824, VCH28 Sligo, 6 June 2026, T.C.G. Rich & M. Jannink (**DBN;** Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). Isotypes: **BEL**, **K**, **NMW**.
Vernacular name: Sligo Hawkweed.

Description
Plant phyllopodous perennial with branched stock. *Stem* to 50 cm, dull green to flushed reddish-purple; lower stem with sparse, medium (to 1 mm), whitish simple hairs and sparse stellate hairs, upper stem with numerous stellate hairs, and sparse (to 0.4 mm), black-based glandular hairs. *Rosette leaves* few to numerous, greyish-green on upper surface, paler or reddish-purple flushed beneath and on margins; outermost rosette leaves with lamina to 4 x 3 cm, subrotund to broadly elliptical, apex rounded or rounded-mucronate, base rounded to cordate, margins remotely denticulate; outer leaves with lamina to 10(–12) x 4(–6) cm, elliptical to elliptic-obovate or lanceolate, apex obtuse to apiculate, base rounded, margins remotely denticulate with a few, small, apiculate teeth near base or weakly sinuate-dentate; inner rosette leaves with lamina to 8(–10) x 4(–5) cm, lanceolate to elliptic-lanceolate or elliptic, apex acute to acuminate, base cuneate, margins remotely denticulate with small apiculate teeth or sinuate dentate at the base with a few large teeth; upper surface glabrous or with sparse, white, medium simple hairs especially near margins, lower surface with frequent medium simple hairs, and sparse stellate hairs especially near the midrib; petioles up to 10 cm when in deep moss, with dense, long (to 2 mm), pale simple hairs. *Stem leaves* usually 0 or 1, with lamina to 4 cm, lanceolate acuminate, entire or with a few large teeth near base or reduced and linear, sessile or with petioles to 1 cm. *Inflorescence* with (1–)2–4(–7) capitula, corymbose; peduncles with frequent, short (to 0.5 mm), dark glandular hairs and dense stellate hairs. *Capitula c*.25–30 mm across with rounded bases. *Involucral bracts* incumbent in bud, to 11 x 0.8–1.1(–1.2) mm, dark green with paler margins, linear-lanceolate narrowing above to an obtuse apex, the innermost acute, with few or no simple hairs (when present often on the shorter outer bracts only), numerous, short to medium (to 1.0 mm) golden to dark glandular hairs, and dense stellate hairs on the margins, one the face and sometimes tufted at apex. *Ligules* yellow, mostly glabrous at tips in bud, sometimes with one or two buds with one or two short simple hairs. *Fresh styles* discoloured drying blackish. *Receptacle pits* incise-dentate. *Achenes* 3.5–4 mm, dark purplish-black.

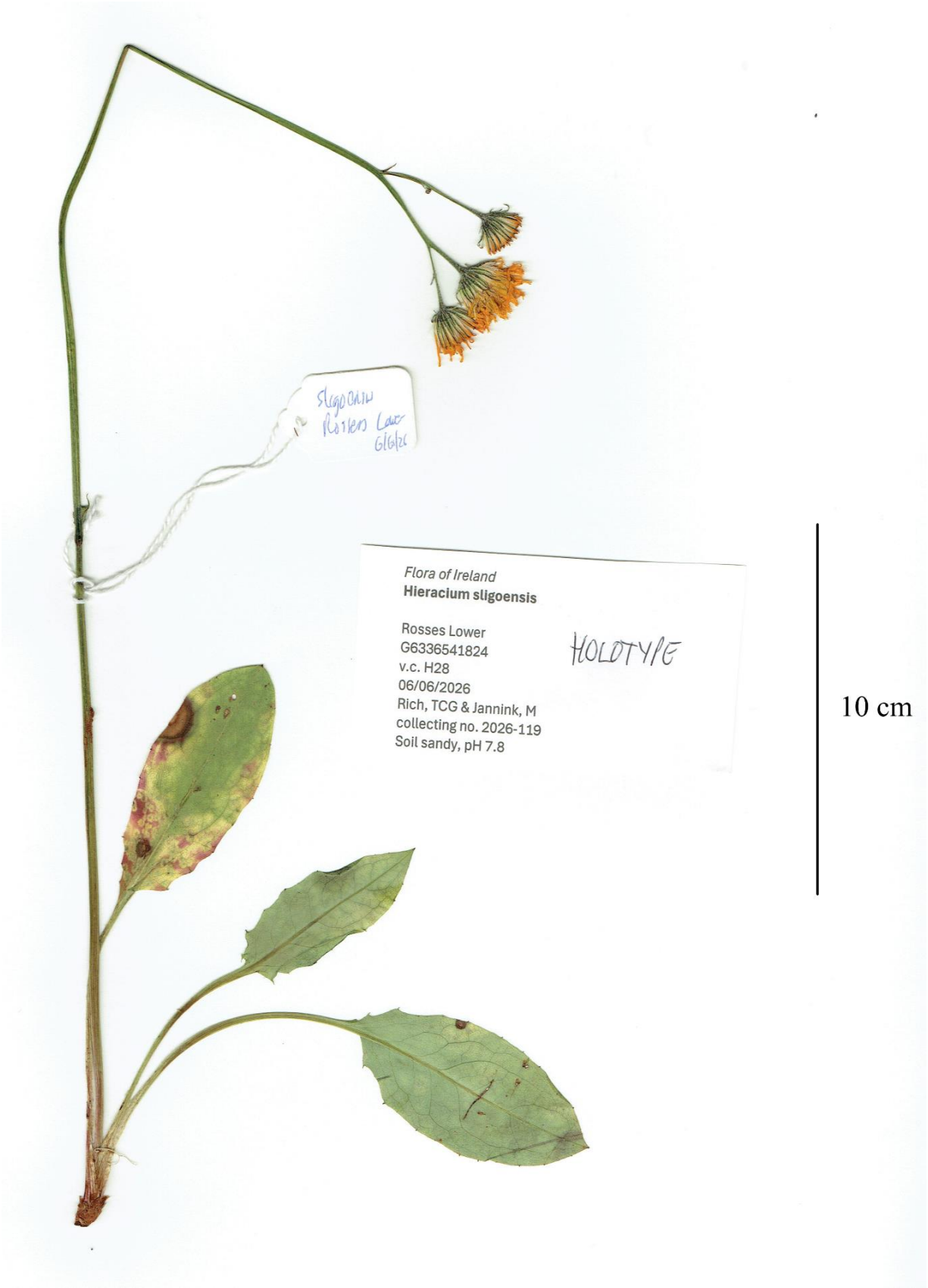

Figure 4. *Hieracium sligoensis* holotype (DBN)

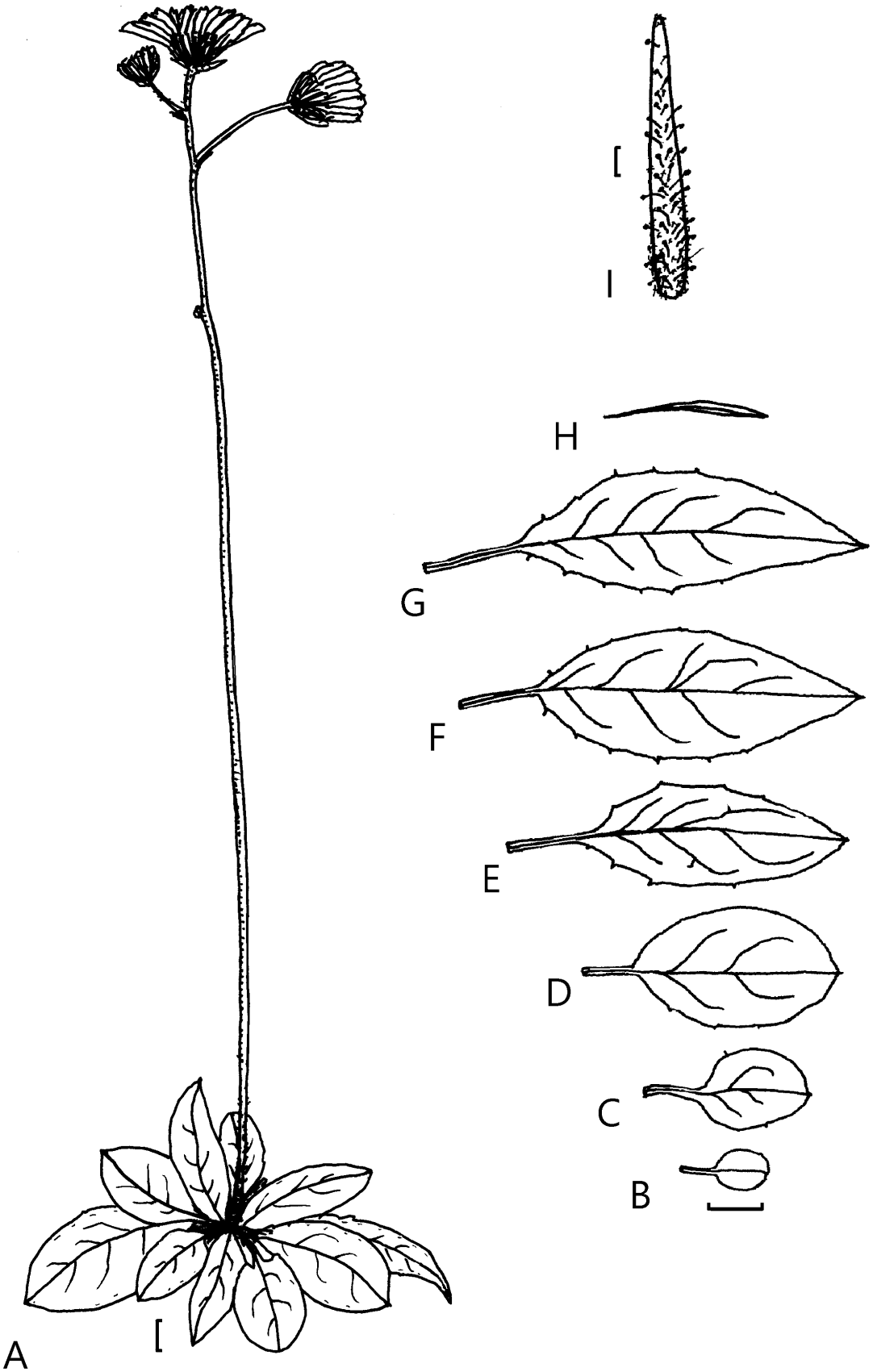

Figure 5. *Hieracium sligoensis*, Carrowkeel. A, whole plant. B-H, rosette leaves from outer to inner (details of hairs not shown). I, stem leaf. Scale bars for plant and leaves 1 cm, for bract 1 mm. Del. T.C.G.Rich

Diagnosis
Rosette leaves elliptic to lanceolate, cuneate with stellate and simple hairs beneath, stem leaves 0 or 1, a few-headed inflorescence, short to 11 mm, obtuse involucral bracts with numerous glandular hairs and dense stellate hairs (simple hairs absent or very few), ligule buds glabrous and discoloured styles.

Relationship to other species
Hieracium sligoensis is a typical member of *Hieracium* section *Hieracium,* with a basal rosette and usually no stem leaves, the corymbose inflorescence with a few, small capitula, involucral bracts with numerous glandular hairs, ligule buds glabrous and discoloured styles.

Within section *Hieracium* it belongs to the informal '*H. exotericum* group' in lacking simple hairs on the involucral bracts, of which there are nine other species in Ireland all probably introduced weeds (Rich 2026). *Hieracium grandidens* and *H. sylvivagum* differ in having large mammiform teeth on the rosette leaves. *Hieracium exotericum* sensu stricto, *H. oblongum*, *H. seriflorum* and *H. subaequialtum* differ (amongst other characters) in having few or no stellate hairs on the bracts. *Hieracium cinderella, H. neosparsum* and *H. sublepistoides* differ (amongst other characters) in having acute involucral bracts.

Material we collected in 2007 was originally named as *H. sanguineum* which differs in having numerous simple hairs on the bracts and cordate to truncate leaf bases.

Distribution and habitat
Hieracium sligoensis appears to be endemic to Sligo but could occur more widely in the Sligo-Leitrim limestones (Fig. 6) though I have not traced any other localities in the herbaria consulted. It has been recorded from three sites:

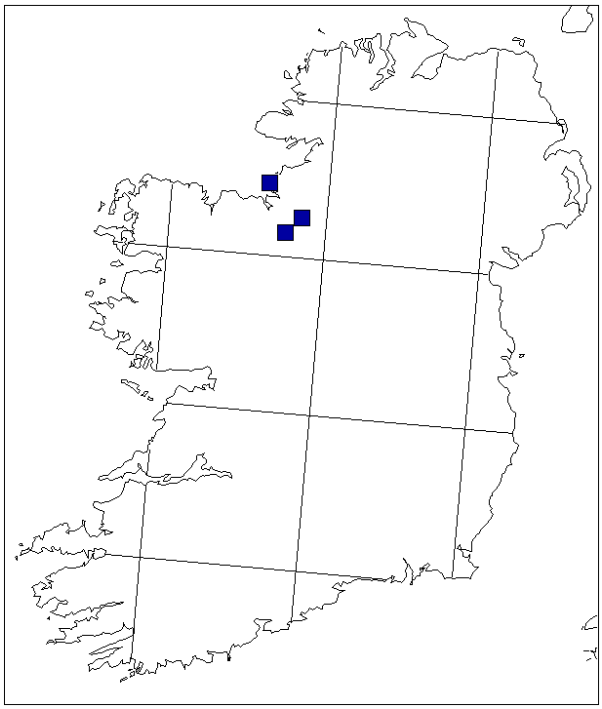

Figure 6. Distribution of *H. sligoensis*

Boleyhownagh: It was first collected from limestone rocks at G826207 on 1 July 2007 by D. Cotton, J. Dunleavy, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich (**NMW**). In 2026, one plant whose inflorescence had been eaten by sheep was found on the limestone quarry cliffs above the road with *H. basalticola* and *H. anglicum* (rare) at G8270520774 at 260 m altitude. Associated species were *Arabis hirsuta, Asplenium ruta-muraria, Asplenium trichomanes, Draba incana, Festuca rubra* and *Koeleria macrantha*.

Carrowkeel: It was first collected from limestone cliffs at G7411 on 1 July 2007 by D. Cotton, J. Dunleavy, R. Hodd, L. Houston & T. Rich (**NMW**). In 2026, two plants (possibly the same individual) were found at G7488011429, on cliffs with aspect 280 degrees and altitude *c.*300 m. Associated species were *Campanula rotundifolia, Carex flacca, Festuca rubra, Galium verum, Hieracium anglicum, H. basalticola*, *H. flocculosum, Hypochaeris radicata, Taraxacum* sp. and *Thymus drucei.*

Rosses Lower: It was first collected here on 4 July 2007 by D. Cotton & J. Dunleavy (**NMW**). In 2026, a large population of perhaps 1000 plants, half of which were flowering, was found over *c.*100 m x 50 m around G633418 at *c.*5 m altitude on the steeper sand dune banks, on slopes of all aspects. It was often growing in *c.*10 cm deep moss (most unusual for *Hieracium*) but did also occur on stable open sand. Associated species were *Ammophila arenaria, Anthoxanthum odoratum, Avenula pubescens, Crepis capillaris, Dactylis glomerata, Daucus carota, Festuca rubra, Galium verum, Holcus lanatus, Lotus corniculatus, Plantago lanceolata, Poa pratensis* agg*., Ranunculus acris, Rosa spinosissima, Taraxacum* sp. and *Veronica chamaedrys*. The soils were derived from wind-blown sand and the one soil sample measured was pH 7.8.

Conservation status

Given its rarity with virtually all the population of *c.*1000 plants confined to one site, it is provisionally assessed as IUCN (2022) Threat Status 'Vulnerable'.

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