



Wild Resource Conservation Program

ENDANGERED

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Conservation

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Northeastern Bulrush

Scirpus ancistrochaetus Schuyler



Photo Credit: The Nature Conservancy

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS: This tall, leafy plant with erect stems reaches 47 inches in height. The clusters of brown flowers have no petals but are surrounded by six rigid, barbed bristles, which is the identifying characteristic of this plant. Another field clue that helps to distinguish this from other bulrushes is the arching rays of the flower cluster.

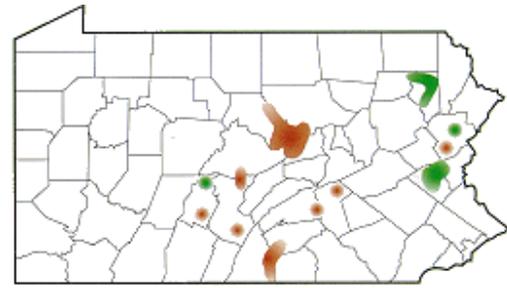
BIOLOGY-NATURAL HISTORY: The northeastern bulrush is a perennial member of the Sedge Family (*Cyperaceae*). It's considered a "leafy" bulrush because of its conspicuous leaves, unlike those of most other bulrushes. This plant was identified as a new species in 1962, by Dr. Alfred E. Schuyler of the Pennsylvania Academy of Natural Sciences. Flowering stems are produced from short, woody, underground rhizomes. Flowers appear in June and July, and seeds set between July and September. It most often reproduces vegetatively, when new plants develop on stems that have fallen to the ground.

PREFERRED HABITAT: The northeastern bulrush is found in small wetlands, usually one acre or less, where the water level is high in spring and drops through the summer. Its range includes Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

REASONS FOR BEING ENDANGERED: The unusual wetlands this species requires are impounded or drained for development. Even slight variations in the natural fluctuation of the water table can destroy this plant. Several historical sites in eastern Pennsylvania were destroyed by agricultural activities, development and quarrying. Hydrological studies should be done to determine the degree of impact of nearby activities on these fragile ecosystems. At present, 26 populations are known to be in Pennsylvania, most have been discovered since the species was listed and brought to the attention of ecologists.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS: On June 6, 1991, the northeastern bulrush became the second Pennsylvania plant to

be listed as a federally endangered species. It is one of five species that will be inventoried and monitored through a cooperative agreement with the USF&WS. A five-year plan has been developed to further understand the species, so conservation measures can adequately protect the plants and habitat. Populations on state forest lands may be included within the Public Wild Plant Sanctuary Network.



 = verified after 1980  = historical occurrences

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