



## Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

[www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp)

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

## Black-fruited Woodrush *Luzula parviflora* (Ehrh.) Desv. *ssp. melanocarpa* Michx.

State Status: **Endangered**  
Federal Status: **None**

**DESCRIPTION:** Black-fruited Woodrush is a perennial herb, 15-36 inches (0.4-1m) tall. It has one to several flowering stems arising from a basal tussock of leaves. Basal leaves are flat, glabrous (smooth) or nearly so, pale green, and about 1/2" wide. Stem leaves are much smaller. Terminal brownish flower clusters occur on curved-spreading, drooping branches. Fruits are dark brown and less than 1/8" long. Flowering season is mid-June through July; fruiting occurs from July through September.

### SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS:

Woodrushes look superficially like grasses and sedges. Like grasses, woodrushes have stems rounded in cross-section; most sedges are triangular. Unlike either family, woodrushes clearly have flower parts in 3s – 3 sepals and 3 petals which all look alike, and 3 or 6 stamens. The only other woodrush in Massachusetts which resembles *L. parviflora* is Sylvan Woodrush, *L. acuminata*, of rich mesic forests. It is smaller than *L. parviflora* (only 4-15 inches or 10-40 cm. tall) with longer flowers and fruits (1/8-1/4 inches) and simple unbranched flower stalks.



Photo by Bryan Connolly, NHESP

**HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS:** Black-fruited Woodrush is found only at high elevations in this state. Growing in scattered colonies containing a few individuals, *Luzula parviflora* inhabits roadsides, trailsides, and natural openings in boreal forests. In other states, it favors cold, mossy banks, dry, open, montane woods, and alpine clearings.

**RANGE:** Black-fruit Woodrush is circumpolar; our subspecies ranges from Labrador to Alaska, south to the mountains of New England, New York, northern Michigan, Wyoming, and California.

**POPULATION STATUS:** Black-fruited Woodrush is listed as Endangered in Massachusetts. Currently, there is only one known population in the state which has existed at least since 1906. Reasons for this species' rarity include scarcity of suitable habitat and its occurrence here at the southeast edge of its range.



Distribution in Massachusetts  
1984-2009  
Based on records in  
Natural Heritage Database

Updated 2015

**A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan**

## Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

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