



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered Species  
Program**

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*Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

**Long-bracted Green Orchid  
*Coeloglossum viride*  
(L.) Hartman**

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

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** The Long-bracted Green Orchid is a circumpolar orchid found in moist woods across northern United States and throughout Canada. It is a hairless, succulent perennial, growing from a palmate root. It has two or more glossy cauline leaves, obovate to oblanceolate, that become smaller up the stem and grade into the long, wide-spreading lanceolate bracts beneath each flower. In Massachusetts, this orchid blooms mid-May to mid-July, with 7 to 70 flowers in a spike-like raceme. Its obscure greenish flowers (which may be tinged with purple) and their peduncles (stems) are shorter than the subtending bracts. The petals of the flowers are often hidden by the incurving green sepals. The fruits are ascending ellipsoid capsules. It can be confused with the rarer *Platanthera flava* var. *herbiola*.

**DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE:** In Massachusetts, Long-bracted Green Orchid is known historically from Middlesex, Worcester, and the western counties, as well as Norfolk County. Six current populations are known to occur in Franklin and Worcester Counties. Additional populations are likely in Berkshire County, though these have not been observed recently.

**HABITAT DESCRIPTION:** Long-bracted Green Orchid is found in wet-mesic to mesic deciduous and mixed deciduous and evergreen acidic woods, swamps, bogs, fens and wet meadows. This species appears to be more common in slightly disturbed areas, and less common in mature forests. Associated species may include *Hydrophyllum virginianum*, *Asarum canadense*, *Viola canadensis*, *Tiarella cordifolia*, *Trillium erectum*, *Polystichum acrostichoides* and *Cystopteris fragilis*.

**THREATS:** The primary threat to Long-bracted Green Orchid is changing hydrology in its habitat. Either an increase in surface water depth or a lowering of the water table will have negative effects on the populations.

Changes can be the result of anthropogenic activities including logging, construction, filling of wetlands, changing surface water flows from upland areas, or might be the result of beaver activities. In addition, it prefers a disturbed, partially open habitat, so that as a forested swamp matures, the plants become shaded and decline. Both of these are important factors in this species' rarity in Massachusetts.

**REFERENCES:**

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

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife**

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