



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Saltpond Pennywort *Hydrocotyle verticillata* Thunberg

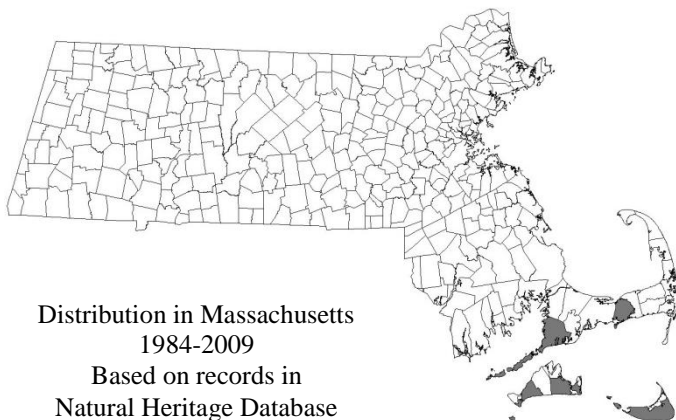
State Status: **Threatened**

Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: The Saltpond Pennywort, a member of the parsley family, is a small (4-6 in., 10-15 cm tall), delicate, aquatic herb with orbicular leaves up to 6 cm (2 1/4 in.) in diameter, commonly with 8 to 14 shallow lobes. There is no central, erect stem; rather, leafstalks and flowering shoots are produced at intervals along subsurface stems. The inflorescence is a simple spike up to 15 cm (6 in.) long, with 3 to 7 few-flowered whorls of 2 to 7 flowers each. Flowers are sessile, or on short stalks in var. *triradiata*. Flowers are produced when plants are stranded, July-September.

SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS: *H. umbellata* (Water Pennywort) is very similar to Saltpond Pennywort in size and leaf shape but the flowers differ. *H. umbellata* has only a single whorl of many flowers.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: Saltpond Pennywort grows along sandy to peaty margins (Salt Pond Marsh) of brackish ponds very near the ocean. Usually, these ponds are separated from the ocean by just a narrow sand barrier. Associated species may include *Spartina pectinata* (Prairie Cord-grass),



Schoenoplectus (formerly *Scirpus*) *americanus* (Olney's Threesquare), *Chenopodium glaucum* (Oak-leaved Goosefoot), *Pluchea odorata* (formerly *P. purpurascens*) (Saltmarsh Fleabane), and *Ranunculus cymbalaria* (Seaside Crowfoot).

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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RANGE: This species ranges along the coastal plain and piedmont from Massachusetts to Florida and Texas. It is also scattered westward to Oklahoma, Missouri, California, Utah, and Nevada. In addition, it is found in tropical America.

POPULATION STATUS: Saltpond Pennywort is listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act as Threatened. All listed species are protected from killing, collecting, possessing, or sale and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. In Massachusetts, this species has always been rare, presumably because of climatic limitations northward. Currently, there are 20 sites where it occurs; historically, there were an additional 5 sites where it occurred. The small size of most of the ponds leaves them vulnerable to hurricanes and other coastal processes.

Updated 2015

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