



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Seabeach Dock *Rumex pallidus* Bigelow

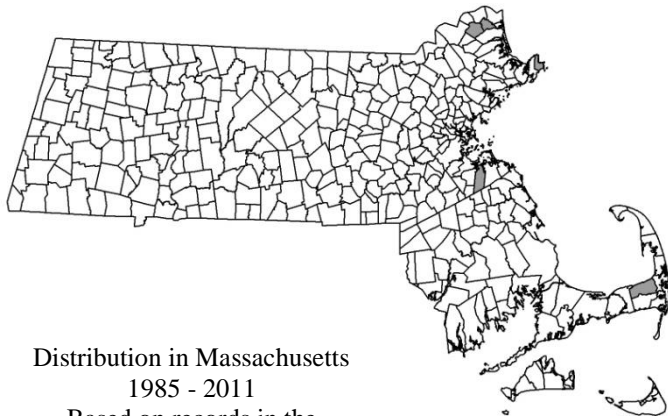
State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Seabeach Dock, a member of the Buckwheat family (Polygonaceae), is a medium-sized, herbaceous perennial with conspicuous branched racemes of many, small, crowded, greenish flowers. It grows from 2-7 dm (8 inches – 2.3 ft.) high, and its branched stem grows either obliquely upwards or reclines on the ground before ascending. Unlike most members of the genus *Rumex*, Seabeach Dock has leaves that are glaucous (having a whitish, waxy covering). These narrowly lanceolate leaves give the species its alternate common name of White Dock. Its small, greenish, frequently red-tinged flowers are each held on a jointed flower stalk. The plump, whitish achenes (dry, one-seeded fruits that retain their seeds) are nearly as long as the achene wings. Seabeach Dock fruits from mid-July to late September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*) often occurs with Seabeach Dock. However, *R. crispus* has wavy-edged leaves. It also has one large and two small achenes per flower, in contrast to the three similar achenes of *R. pallidus*.



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 1: 655.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1985 - 2011
Based on records in the
Natural Heritage Database

RANGE: The documented range of *R. pallidus* extends from Newfoundland to the lower St. Lawrence, Quebec, and south along the coast to Long Island.

HABITAT: Seabeach Dock is a plant of beaches and coastal swamps. Its habitats in Massachusetts include upper beaches with cobble, cobble and gravel, shale and shell, or gravelly sand substrates. Somewhat atypically, a station also occurs on a cobbly, exposed flat shore of the Merrimack River. Associated species include Seaside Goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*), Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Beach Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*), Wrinkled Rose (*Rosa rugosa*), and Dunegrass (*Elymus mollis*).

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS: *R. pallidus* is currently listed as Threatened in Massachusetts under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. There are nine current populations and six historic stations. In part, Seabeach Dock is rare here because Massachusetts is near the southernmost edge of its range. Nevertheless, heavy use of beaches by people and their vehicles poses a threat to Seabeach Dock. Seabeach Dock was present historically in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Updated 2015

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