



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

www.mass.gov/nhesp

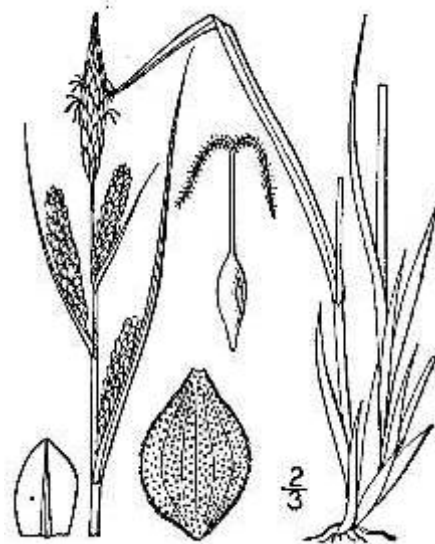
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Shore Sedge *Carex lenticularis* Michx.

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

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Shore Sedge is a grass-like perennial herbaceous plant in the Sedge family that grows in 8-24 in. (20-60 cm) tall dense, vase-shaped clumps. The numerous, pale-green leaves are long and very slender (1-3 mm), considerably overtopping the culms (stems) and flower spikes. The flowering culms are slender, upright and sharply three-angled; each bears a single, terminal staminate (male) spike and 3 to 8 cylindrical pistillate (female) spikes. Both types of spikes are 1/2-1 in. (1.5-3 cm) long, and are usually bunched together. The flower spikes are composed of overlapping scales distinctively colored dark brown with bold green midstripes. The lens-shaped achenes (dry, 1-seeded fruits) are enclosed in egg-shaped perigynia (seed sacs) which, in this species, are gray-green. Flowering occurs from July to August.

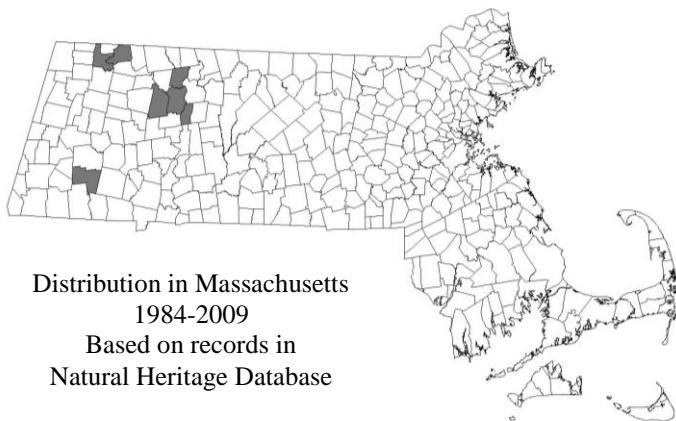
SIMILAR SPECIES: To positively identify members of the genus *Carex*, a technical manual should be consulted. The genus *Carex* is large and complex (ca. 160 species in Massachusetts) and two close relatives of Shore Sedge, Tussock Sedge (*Carex stricta*) and Twisted Sedge (*Carex torta*), may be found growing with it. Both resemble Shore Sedge in growth habit and leaf, but are much leafier and usually form denser tussocks. Tussock Sedge has duller brown scales and longer, more widely



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: 422.

spaced flower spikes that stand above the leaves. The spikes of Twisted Sedge are also less crowded and noticeably arching or drooping. Neither possesses the conspicuously raised nerves that are found on the perigynia of the Shore Sedge.

HABITAT: In Massachusetts, Shore Sedge appears to be restricted to wet, sandy or gravelly beaches of cold ponds and lakes; or to the exposed rock cobble on islands of large rivers. In the latter case, the cobble bars are flooded and submerged every spring and uncovered when the water level drops in summer. Co-occurring species include Reed-bentgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), Prairie-dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*), Spike-sedges (*Eleocharis* spp.) and the aforementioned sedges.



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

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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RANGE: Shore Sedge is distributed across North America from Newfoundland, Labrador and Hudson's Bay to Alaska, south into the mountains of California, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, across to Minnesota, Michigan, and Massachusetts.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS:

Shore Sedge is listed as a Threatened species in Massachusetts. There are 5 current verified sites (since 1984) and 6 recorded historical sites. Shore Sedge is primarily a northern species that reaches its southernmost range limit in Massachusetts. Here it is confined to a dynamic and unpredictable habitat, in populations that are small or isolated. Severe alterations to its habitat, by river damming or diversion, or by pondshore development, are likely contributors to its rarity.

Updated 2015

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