

Yellow Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus flabellaris*)

Plant Species of Concern

State Rank: S2 (impaired), Global Rank: G5 (secure)

Identification

Yellow water-crowfoot is an aquatic perennial that usually grows submersed in water. Its floating stems are 12 to 27 inches (3-7 dm) long and can root to the ground at their lower nodes. This species belongs to the buttercup family. The leaves are mostly submersed. Submersed leaves are finely dissected and have a bushy, feathered appearance. Those that are emergent have 3 lobes and are roughly kidney shaped in outline. The flowers resemble buttercups and are held above the water's surface singly or in small clusters. Flowers bloom in May and have 5 to 8 shiny, yellow petals that are ¼ to ⅝ inch (7-15 mm) long. The small seed-like fruits have a curved beak on one end.

Habitat

Yellow water-crowfoot occurs throughout much of the continental United States. It is absent from the extreme Southeast and from some Rocky Mountain States. It can be found growing in the shallow water of slow streams, marshes, and ponds or growing on their muddy shores.

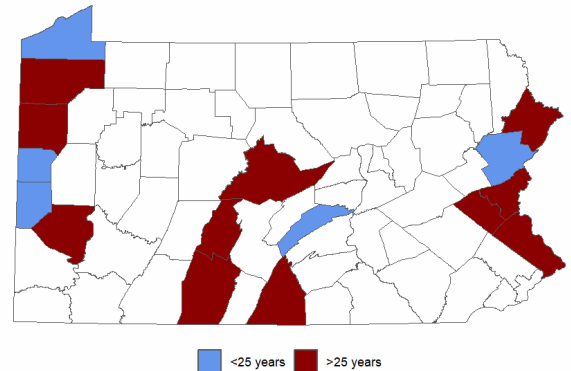
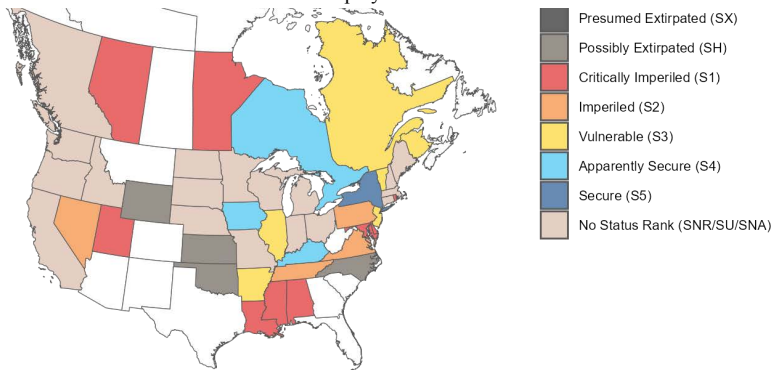


photo source: Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium, UWSP
Joanne Kline

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North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Status

The PA Biological Survey considers the yellow water-crowfoot to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few confirmed occurrences and the specialized wetland habitat. It has been assigned a rarity status of Threatened.

Conservation

Conservation of yellow water-crowfoot will depend upon the protection of existing populations and maintenance of their wetland habitat. This may include removing invasive plants and creating buffers to help protect populations from the effects of run-off or flooding. Sustaining appropriate water levels will also be important for maintaining high quality habitats.

References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2007.
- Rhoads, A. F. and W. M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Rhoads, A. F. and T. A. Block. 2000. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

