

Common Hemicarpa

Cyperus subsquarrosus

Description

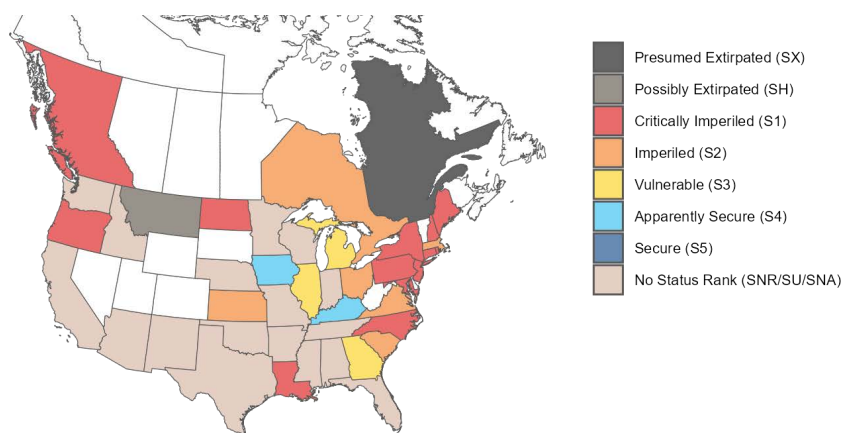
Common hemicarpa is a tiny annual herb that may grow to 4 inches (10 cm) in height, but often is less than 1 inch. It has a tufted appearance with very narrow, hair-like leaves. The minute flowers, appearing from July to September, are grouped in compact clusters that are ¼ inch or less in length. Each cluster is subtended by hair-like bracts that well exceed the length of the cluster.



Photo source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Distribution & Habitat

Common hemicarpa has a distribution throughout most of North America. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically only in a few widely scattered counties. It grows on sandy shorelines along Lake Erie and in scoured river beds and shores of the Susquehanna River in the eastern part of the state.

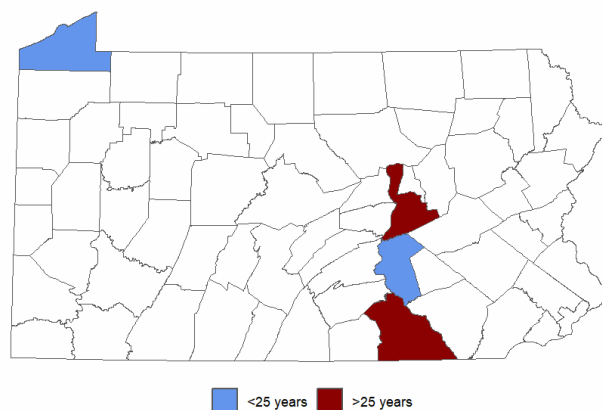
Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers common hemicarpa to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and the specialized habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. Fewer than 5 populations are known from the state.

Conservation Considerations

The viability of the known populations of common hemicarpa and its habitat will require maintaining the natural seasonal hydrologic fluctuations of the Susquehanna River and Lake Erie, as well as retaining the natural conditions of the shorelines and islands. Invasive species may be a threat in some locations.

Common Hemicarpa (*Cyperus subsquarrosus*)



NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Secure globally; S1 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2025.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. Vol. 1: 20.