

Narrow False Oats

Trisetum spicatum

Description

Narrow False Oats is a perennial grass that may grow to 1.5 feet (0.5 m) in height. The leaves are alternately arranged, consisting of a basal sheath portion that envelops the stem and a linear-shaped, flattened, and untoothed blade that is 2 to 5 inches (5-13 cm) in length, to ¼ inch (6 mm) in width, and pointed at the tip. The minute flowers, appearing in late spring and summer, occur in a dense and relatively narrow inflorescence that may reach 4 inches (10 cm) in length. The inflorescence contains many individual flower-bearing spikelets that average about ¼ inch (6 mm) in length. Individual spikelets contain two tiny flowers, each of which has an associated hair-like projection, or awn, that extends outside the spikelet.

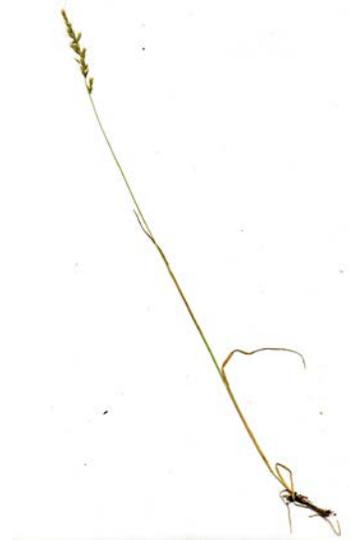
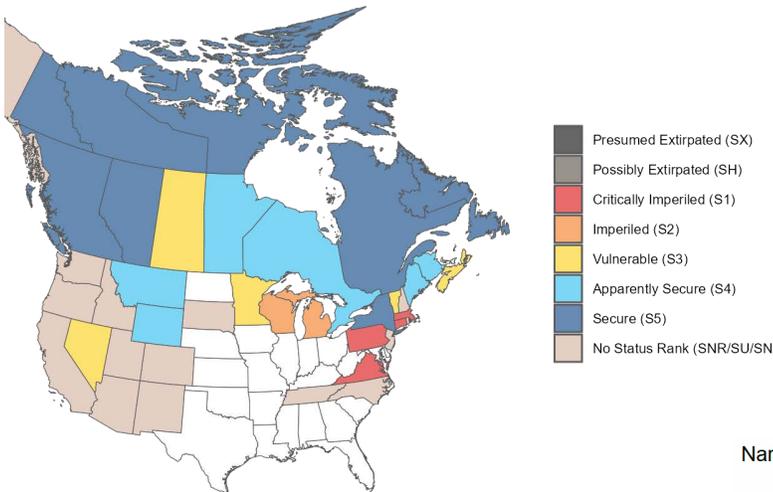


Photo source: PNHP

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Distribution & Habitat

Narrow False Oats has a transcontinental range across the cooler regions of North America. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in only a few counties. The species grows on rock outcrops and cliffs.

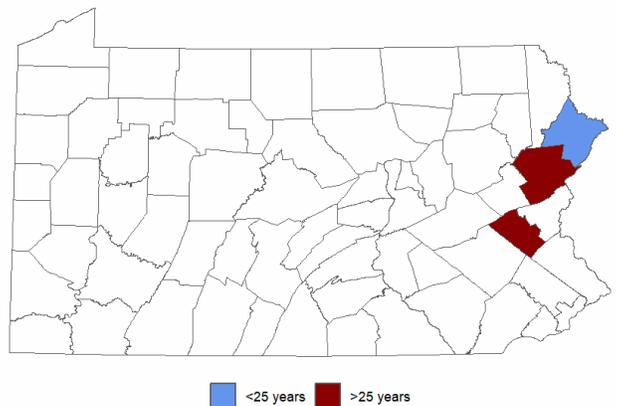
Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Narrow False Oats to be a species of special concern, based on the single population that has been confirmed. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered.

Conservation Considerations

The single population that is currently documented in the state appears to have the necessary protection to allow the species to thrive. Additional field surveys are needed to attempt to discover additional populations.

Narrow False Oats (*Trisetum spicatum*)



NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; 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 W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

