

# Bull Sedge

## *Carex bullata*

### Description

Bull sedge is a grass-like plant that forms colonies. The aerial stems are triangular in cross-section, purple-tinged near the base, and stand 1 to 3¼ feet (3-10 dm) tall. The leaves have linear, elongated blades that are smooth, light green, and about 1/8 inch (2-4 mm) wide. The flowers are unisexual, grouped in 1 to 3 male spikes at the top of the stem and 1 or 2 bur-like female spikes below. The female spike consist of individual inflated sac-like structures, or perigynia, which are about 3/8 inch (6 to 10 mm) long, arranged around the spike into 8 to 12 vertical rows, and contain the triangular fruit.

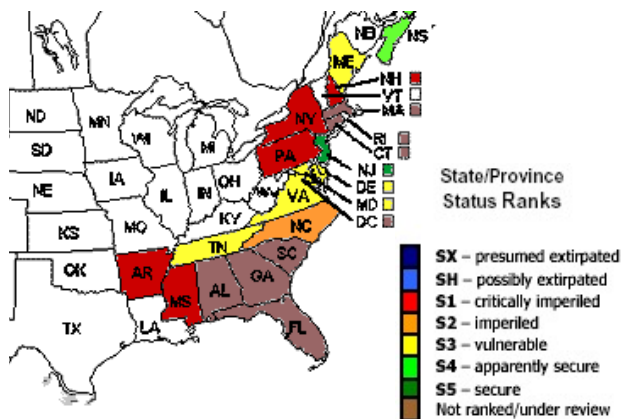
### Distribution & Habitat

Bull sedge has a distribution centered mainly on the coastal plain from Newfoundland south and west into Arkansas. In Pennsylvania, this species occurs on a western border of its range and has been documented historically in a few eastern counties. It grows in swamps, seepages, boggy wetlands and along streamlets.



Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

North American State/Province Conservation Status  
Map by NatureServe 2014



### Current State Status

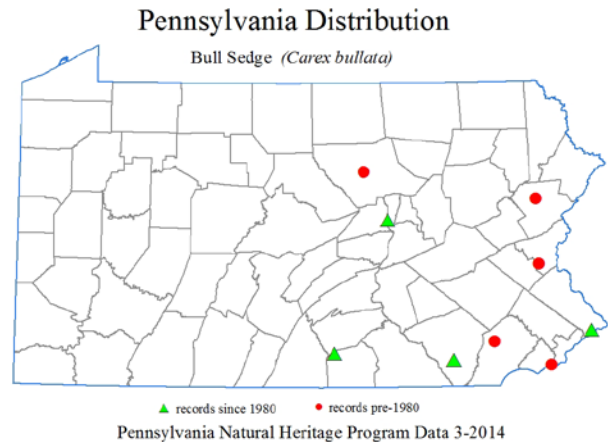
The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers bull sedge to be a species of special concern, based on the very few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and its wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. Fewer than 5 populations are currently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

### Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of bull sedge and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands.

### NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S1 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania



### References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program