

# Little-spike Spike-rush

## *Eleocharis parvula*

### Description

Little-spike Spike-rush is a diminutive perennial herb typically only a few inches in height. The leaves are reduced to scales that are located at the base of the stem, which is the main photosynthetic portion of the plant. The flowers, appearing from June to September, are microscopic in size and are grouped together inside a scaly cluster at the top of the stem. The individual fruits are only about 1 millimeter in length and are 3-sided.

### Distribution & Habitat

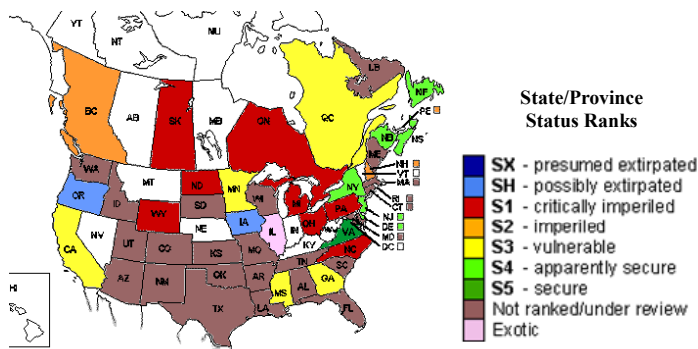
Little-spike Spike-rush has a range throughout North America. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in a few southeastern counties and in Erie County. Little-spike Spike-rush grows in intertidal marshes, mudflats, and on shorelines. The intertidal populations are subjected to daily cycles of exposure and inundation.



Photo source: Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

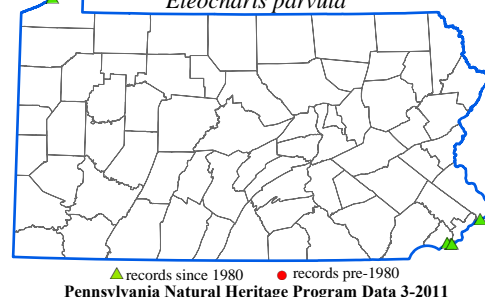
### North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2010



### Pennsylvania Distribution

*Eleocharis parvula*



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2011

### State Status & Conservation

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) has assigned Little-spike Spike-rush a rarity status of Endangered, based on the limited number of populations that have been confirmed, the small population sizes, the limited state range, and the specialized habitat. The known populations have threats from exotic species, dredging and filling, and water pollution.

### NatureServe conservation status ranks

**G5** — Globally Secure; **S1** — Critically Imperiled in Pennsylvania

### References

- NatureServe. 2011. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2011.
- 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. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 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.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program