

Forked Rush

Juncus dichotomus

Description

Forked rush is a perennial herb with rounded, slender stems that may be from 1 and 3 feet (3-9 dm) tall. The leaves are elongate, about 1/16 inch (2 mm) wide, rounded in cross-section and indented or channeled near the top, and only about 1/3 to 1/2 as long as the length of the stem. The flowers, appearing in late spring and summer, are grouped in an open branched cluster at the top of the stem... Flowers have 6 pointed petals and sepals that average about 3/16 inch (5 mm) long. The petals and sepals remain around the fruit, a brownish, many-seeded capsule, as it ripens.

Distribution & Habitat

Forked rush has a range mostly near the coastal from Maine south into Florida and west into the southwestern states. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in some southern, particularly southeastern, counties. It grows in moist to damp old fields, openings, clearings, and open woods.

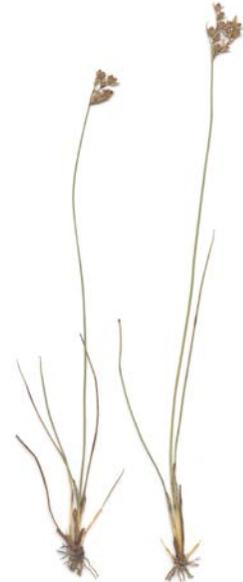
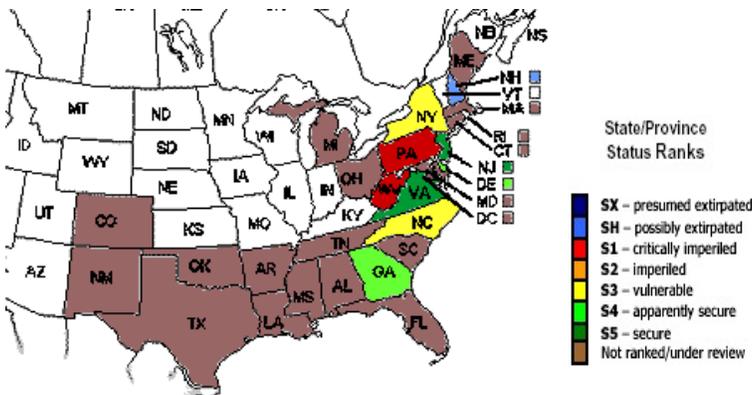


Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers forked rush to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. About 15 populations are currently known from the state.

Conservation Considerations

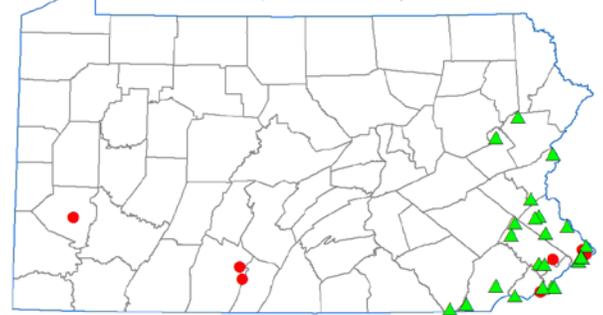
The viability of populations of this species and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting the natural hydrology around wetlands. Active management – such as fire, mowing, or invasive species removal – may be required to maintain the proper successional stage at sites where it grows.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S1 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Distribution

Forked Rush (*Juncus dichotomus*)



▲ records since 1980 ● records pre-1980
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2014

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. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

