

Natural Heritage Resource Highlight: Harper's Fimbry

Global Rarity Rank: G2 - Imperiled **State Rarity Rank:** S1 – Critically Imperiled

Legal Status: Federal Listing-Species of Concern / State Listing-Listed Endangered



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Harper's Fimbry (*Fimbristylis perpusilla*) is known only from York County in the coastal plain. This species is a tiny annual sedge that appears late in the season in ephemeral, summer dry bodies of water (coastal plain seasonal ponds). The fruiting period of the sedge is from July to October (Weakley et al., 2012). The extent and timing of seasonal water level fluctuations play a critical role in determining whether a population appears in a given season (Virginia Natural Heritage Program, 1988). Harper's Fimbry may lie dormant in the seed bank for several years until conditions are appropriate for germination (Kral, 1973, Wieboldt, 1991). Spotty distribution, limited habitat availability, and competition from other plant species all contribute to the conservation status of this plant. Filling and draining of the ephemeral ponds, logging and clearing associated with development activities, and road construction are threats to the habitat of Harper's Fimbry (Virginia Natural Heritage Program, 1988). This species is currently listed as endangered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). It is also tracked as a species of concern by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); however, this designation has no official legal status. As of 2025, there were two extant occurrences in Virginia.

Literature Cited

Virginia Natural Heritage Program. 1988. A status survey report for *Fimbristylis perpusilla* (Harper's *Fimbristylis*) in Virginia. Submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bureau of Plant Protection and Pesticide Regulation.

Weakley, A.S, J. C. Ludwig, and J.F. Townsend 2012. *Flora of Virginia*. Bland Crowder, ed. Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project Inc., Richmond. Fort Worth: Botanical Research Institute of Texas Press. page 1101.

Wieboldt, T.F. 1991. Harper's *Fimbristylis*. In *Virginia's Endangered Species: Proceedings of a Symposium*. K. Terwilliger ed. The McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, Blacksburg, Virginia. pp. 79 80.