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Maine Natural Areas Program

Scirpus longii Fern.

Long's Bulrush

- [State Rank](#): S2
- [Global Rank](#): G2G3
- [State Status](#): Threatened

Habitat: Meadows, swamps, and fresh marshes. [Open wetland, not coastal nor rivershore (non-forested, wetland)]

Range: Along the coastal plain, North Carolina and southern New Jersey, north to Massachusetts, disjunct in Maine and western Nova Scotia.

Aids to Identification: Bulrushes of the genus *Scirpus* are leafy-stemmed sedges with terminal inflorescences of numerous, small spikelets. The reduced flowers, which are subtended by narrow perianth bristles, mature into an achene (single-seed, dry, indehiscent fruit). *Scirpus longii* is closely related to members of the *S. cyperinus* complex, the wool-grasses. These get their name from the long, smooth perianth bristles give the spikelets a wooly appearance. When in fruit, *S. longii* is easily separated from other species. Its achenes are red to red-brown (vs. white to yellow-gray). The inflorescence is subtended by dark, glutinous-based leafy bracts (vs. pale to dark, non-glutinous bracts). Vegetatively, *S. longii* is identified by its long, stout rhizomes and vase-like growth of leaves. Identification of this sedge is difficult unless it is in flower, and it usually only flowers after exposure to fire.



Ecological characteristics: In Maine, this species typically grows in sedge-dominated acidic fens. It rarely produces flowering and fruiting stems; flowering appears to be triggered by fire or drought.

Phenology: Fruits June.

Family: Cyperaceae

Synonyms: None noted.

Known Distribution in Maine: This rare plant has been documented from a total of 4 town(s) in the following county(ies): Oxford, York.

Reason(s) for rarity: At northern limit of range.

Conservation considerations: Maintain hydrologic

integrity of its fen (usually lakeshore fen) habitat, including natural fluctuations.

For more information, see the [New England Wild Flower Society's Conservation Plan for *Scirpus longii*-pdf link-165 KB](#).



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