

About MNAP
Focus Areas
Communities, Plants and Animals
Natural Communities and Ecosystems
Rare Plants
Invasive Plants
Ecological Inventory and Monitoring
Rare Animals
State and Global Rarity Ranks
Survey Forms
Maps, Data, and Technical Assistance
Ecological Reserves

Maine Natural Areas Program

Crassula aquatica (L.) Schoenl.

Pygmyweed

- State Rank: S2S3
- Global Rank: G5
- State Status: Special Concern

Habitat: Margins of pools and on fresh to tidal shores. [Open water (non-forested, wetland)]

Range: Newfoundland to St. Lawrence River, south to Maryland; Louisiana to Texas, locally northward.

Aids to Identification: Pygmyweed is a tiny, tiny herbaceous plant which grows as sprawling mats on the sandy and muddy bottoms of estuaries and shallow shores. The weak stems may be up to 10 cm long, but usually trail across the ground surface: the entire plant thus stands often only 2 cm high. The small leaves, approximately 0.5 cm long, are borne in opposite pairs on the stem, and join each other at the base. The tiny, inconspicuous flowers are borne in the leaf axils.



Ecological characteristics: *Crassula aquatica* is a species of fresh to brackish shores. In Maine, it is exclusively intertidal, growing only slightly above the low tide line; it is thus covered and uncovered twice daily by the tides, but spends much of its time submerged. Little is known about the specific ecological requirements of the species. At two known Maine stations it grows in muddy crevices of rock outcrops in the intertidal zone.

Phenology: An annual, flowers in late summer.

Family: Crassulaceae

Synonyms: *Bulliarda aquatica* (L.) DC.; *Hydrophila aquatica* (L.) House; *Tillaea angustifolia* Nutt.; *Tillaea aquatica* L.; *Tillaeastrum aquaticum* (L.) Britt.

Known Distribution in Maine: This rare plant has been

documented from a total of 16 town(s) in the following county(ies): Kennebec, Lincoln, Penobscot, Sagadahoc, York.

Reason(s) for rarity: Sporadic through much of range, and near northern limit. Also possibly overlooked.

Conservation considerations: Prevent degradation of estuary habitat from other uses.



Credits



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