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# Maine Natural Areas Program

## Geocaulon lividum (Richards.) Fern.

### Northern Comandra

- State Rank: S3
- Global Rank: G5
- State Status: Special Concern

**Habitat:** In moss or damp humus, often in alpine or subalpine areas. [Coastal non-tidal wetland (non-forested, wetland); Alpine or subalpine (non-forested, upland)]

**Range:** Labrador and Newfoundland to Alaska, south to northern New England and northern New York.

**Aids to Identification:** This perennial herb grows to 10-30 cm, with veiny, rounded or blunt leaves, 1-4 cm long. The flowers grow on stalks from the leaf-axils in groups of 3, usually 2 of the 3 flowers bear pollen only, so only one flower of each cluster will actually develop into a fruit. The petals are greenish-purple and triangular. The fleshy fruit is juicy, 5-10 mm thick, and orange-yellow to red in color.



**Known Distribution in Maine:** This rare plant has been documented from a total of 19 town(s) in the following county(ies): Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Washington.

**Reason(s) for rarity:** Disjunct from principal range. Inconspicuous and easily overlooked when not in fruit.



**Ecological characteristics:** In Maine this species typically occurs in nutrient poor areas, such as peatlands or krummholz, often in association with ericaceous vegetation.

**Phenology:** Flowers June - August.

**Family:** Comandraceae

**Synonyms:** *Comandra lividum* Richards.



**Conservation considerations:** Maintain hydrology of its wetland habitats. Some populations in the Mahoosucs may be subject to heavy recreational (hiking) impacts.


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