Ranunculus lobbii

English names Lobb's water-buttercup, Lobb's water crowfoot

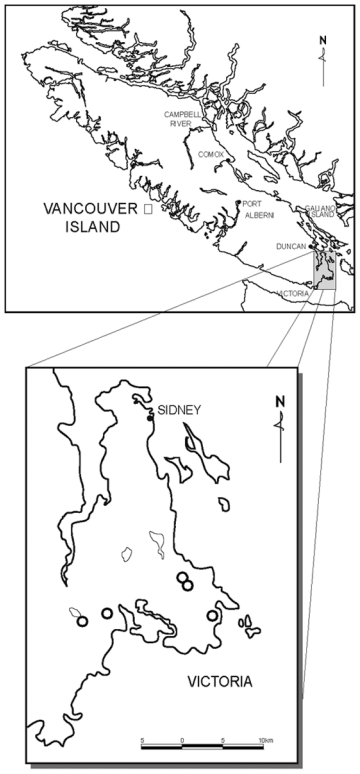
Scientific name *Ranunculus lobbii*

Family Ranunculaceae (Buttercup)

Other scientific names *Ranunculus aquatilis* var. *lobbii; Rannunculus hydrocharis* var. *lobbii, Ranunculus hederaceus* var. *lobbii, Batrachium lobbii*

Risk status
BC: possibly extirpated (SH); red-listed
Canada: possibly extirpated (NH); COSEWIC: not yet assessed
Global: apparently secure (G4)
Elsewhere: California – vulnerable/imperilled (S3.2); Oregon – apparently secure (S4)

Range/known distribution
Lobb's water-buttercup is known from southwestern British Columbia and in 2 separate regions in Oregon and California. In Canada, the range of Lobb's water-buttercup was restricted to coastal areas next to Victoria on southeastern Vancouver Island. There were at least 5 historic populations. Lobb's water-buttercup has not been seen since 1948 and may be extirpated from Canada.



Distribution of *Ranunculus lobbii*
o known historic sites

Ranunculus lobbii

Field description

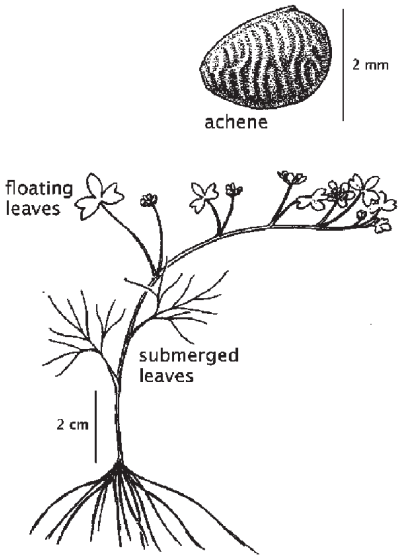
Lobb's water-buttercup is an **aquatic annual** measuring 20-80 cm long. The stems and flower-stems are smooth with few branches and are either submerged under the water or float on the surface. The **submerged leaves**, which may be inconspicuous, are divided into **three parts of thread-like segments**. The **floating leaves are divided into three oblong to round lobes** that either lack teeth or have 2-3 rounded teeth. The leaves measure 5-8 mm in length by 8-15 mm in width. The **flowers are white** with five petals (4-6 mm long). The flowers produce 2-7 plump achenes (fruit) with a sharp-point rather than a beak.

Identification tips

Lobb's water buttercup can be easily distinguished from other aquatic buttercups. White water-buttercup (*Ranunculus aquatilis*) has hairy flower stems and produces 10-80 achenes per head whereas Lobb's water-buttercup has smooth stems and produces only 2-7 achenes. White water-buttercup does not occur in Garry oak ecosystems. Lesser spearwort (*R. flammula*) has yellow flowers and entire leaves compared to Lobb's water buttercup, which has white flowers and dissected leaves.

Jorg Fleige

Ranunculus lobbii



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Life history

Lobb's water-buttercup is an annual plant that requires wetlands for growth and reproduction. Herbarium labels show the plants flowered in April or May, although in California and Oregon flowering can occur as early as March. Little else is known of its life history or population dynamics. As with many annuals, population sizes may have fluctuated dramatically from year to year in response to varying weather patterns. Banked seeds may have been important to the persistence of populations.

The leaves of Lobb's water-buttercup can cause minor skin dermatitis on contact.

Habitat

In the United States, Lobb's water-buttercup is known from shallow vernal pools, marshy areas or swamps at low elevations (less than 300m). Specific details of habitat requirements in Canada are lacking since this species has not been observed since 1948. General habitat descriptions on herbarium labels include: "swamp", "shallow water", "black muck on pasture" and "marshy hollow".

Why the species is at risk

No populations are currently known in Canada. Lobb's water buttercup was historically found in highly specialized habitats that were probably never common in Garry oak and associated ecosystems. Development for agriculture and urban expansion has likely destroyed much of the suitable habitat. Lobb's water-buttercup has no obvious dispersal mechanisms for spreading into appropriate sites isolated by unsuitable habitat.

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What you can do to help this species

Management practices should be tailored to the specific circumstances at the site. Potential management tools will depend on the specific circumstances and may require experimentation on artificially established populations prior to implementation. **Before taking any action, expert advice must be obtained and no action taken without it. Please refer to the introductory section of this manual.**

Public and private landowners should be made aware of new populations of this species if they are discovered, and appropriate management practices suggested.

References

British Columbia Conservation Data Centre. Botany Program. 2008. Database containing records of rare plant collections and observations in the province of British Columbia.

For further information, contact the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, or see the web site at: www.goert.ca.

*Refers to non-native species.