

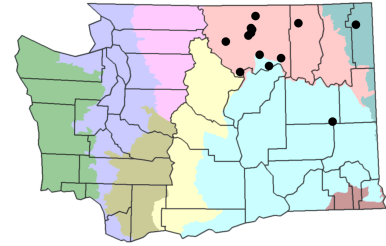
Carex sychnocephala J. Carey

many-headed sedge

Cyperaceae - sedge family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G4 / S2



General Description: Plants tufted, with inconspicuous rhizomes. Stems slender, 3-angled, 8-40 cm. Leaves flat or nearly so, 1.2-3 mm wide.

Floral Characteristics: Spikes several, gynaeandrous, sessile, closely crowded; heads green to pale brown, ellipsoid or ovoid. Bracts sheathless, appressed to ascending, one or more of the lower ones enlarged and leaflike, 5-20 (25) cm long, at least (3) 5 times as long as the inflorescence. Female scales shorter than the perigynia, colorless to golden, translucent, thin, midrib firm, tip pointed or awned. Perigynia pale green, gold, or light brown, narrowly lanceolate, (4.6) 5.5-7.3 x 0.7-1.2 mm, 5-7 times as long as wide, with 3-12 nerves dorsally, 0-9 nerves ventrally, and narrowly winged margins less than 0.2 mm wide. Beak elongate, narrow, margin fringed with small teeth, tip 2-toothed and flat; distance from beak tip to achene 3-5 mm. Stigmas 2. Flowers June to August.

Fruits: Achenes lenticular, elliptic to ovate, 1-1.8 x 0.6-0.8 mm, with a short point at the tip.

Identification Tips: The bracts at the base of the spikes are long and leaflike, much longer than the inflorescence, giving this sedge a distinctive appearance. Similar species have bracts not more than 5 cm, and not more than 2 times as long as the inflorescence.

Range: AK, much of Canada, southward to WA, MT, CO, MO, and NY.

Habitat/Ecology: Moist or wet ground adjacent to marshes or lakes, on a wide variety of substrates: rocky, sandy, silty, and at least moderately alkaline soils. Associated species include ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), bulrushes (*Schoenoplectus* and *Bolboschoenus* spp.), golden dock (*Rumex maritimus*), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), foxtail barley (*Hordeum jubatum*), and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Elevations in WA: 360-1040 m (1170-3400 ft).

Comments: Threats include hydrologic alteration, recreational development, forest encroachment, and excessive livestock grazing. The plants are eaten by cattle, but generally do not get uprooted and can withstand some trampling. This taxon may have been extirpated from NY and is rare in several states and Canadian provinces.

References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 23.



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the Sedges of the Pacific Northwest
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