

## MASON'S LILAEOPSIS

### *Lilaeopsis masonii*

**USFWS: Species of Concern**

**CDFG: Rare**

**CNPS: List 1B**

### Species Account

**Status and Description.** Mason's lilaeopsis (*Lilaeopsis masonii*) was State-listed as rare in November 1979. It is a federal species of concern and on CNPS' List 1B.1; found only in California, it is seriously threatened throughout its range. Trends for this species are undocumented, although it is likely declining or stable.

Mason's lilaeopsis is a small, up to 7.5 cm tall, rhizomatous, perennial herb in the carrot family (Apiaceae). The thread-like leaves with obscure internal cross-walls are tufted on creeping stems. The inflorescences consist of few to several-flowered umbels of tiny white or maroon flowers (Baldwin et al 2012, CNPS 2011).



**Range, Distribution, and Abundance.** Mason's lilaeopsis occurs in the northeastern portion of the San Francisco Bay area, in Alameda, Contra Costa, and Napa counties, as well as in Suisun Bay area, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin river-delta, in Solano, San Joaquin, and Sacramento counties (CNDDDB 2011, CNPS 2011). The total known population for this species is represented by approximately 155 occurrences throughout its entire known range (CNDDDB 2011).

**Habitat and Ecology.** Mason's lilaeopsis grows in regularly flooded tidal zones, on mud-banks and flats along erosional creek-banks, sloughs, and rivers (Fiedler and Zebell 1995; CSCC 2003), and in freshwater marshes, brackish marshes, and riparian scrubs that are influenced by saline water. It is a colonizing species, *i.e.*, it is one of the first species to begin growing on newly deposited or exposed sediments.

Mason's lilaeopsis occurs with other rare plants such as Suisun Marsh aster (*Aster lentus*), and delta tulle pea (*Lathyrus jepsonii* var. *jepsonii*). It blooms April through November (CNDDDB 2011, CNPS 2011).

**Population Levels and Occurrence in Plan Area.** Mason's lilaeopsis grows along the tidal mud banks of waterways within the Coastal Marsh vegetation of the Plan Area's Coastal Marsh Natural Community. Populations of Mason's lilaeopsis are known from all parts of Suisun Marsh and around Mare Island, from Dutchman's Slough in the west to Collinsville Slough in the east, and from Roe Island and Van Sickle Island in the south to Peytonia Slough in the north. It is also present in Barker Slough within the Jepson Prairie Preserve. Because it is a rhizomatous plant, the number of individuals in a population is difficult to determine. Population size is therefore often expressed as "several colonies" or as an "area." Reported colony sizes range from 5 m<sup>2</sup> to 700 m<sup>2</sup> (CNDDDB 2011).

Several portions of a natural population of Mason's lileopsis growing within an area proposed for a flood control basin were transplanted to portions of Barker Slough in 1989. By 1992, 98 percent of the transplanted populations were still alive and the average cover of the transplants had increased 11 percent. During the same time period, the undisturbed control populations had slightly decreased in average cover (McCarten and Ornduff, 1993).

**Threats to the Species.** Mason's lileopsis is threatened by erosion, bank and channel-stabilization, flood-control projects, development, agriculture, and, in some areas by trampling by fishermen and by water-hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), an extremely invasive aquatic plant (CNDDDB 2011, CNPS 2011).

### Literature Cited

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