

## *Carex buxbaumii* Wahl.

Buxbaum's sedge  
Cyperaceae (Sedge Family)

**Status:** State Watch

**Rank:** G5S3

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1969): Culms arising singly or few together from well-developed creeping rhizomes, mostly 12 to 40 inches tall, strongly aphyllopodic, not surrounded by old sheaths from previous years. Leaves glabrous, elongate, mostly 1/16 to 1/8 inch wide. Spikes mostly 2-5, approximate or somewhat remote, erect or loosely ascending, sessile or with more or less well-developed peduncle, the terminal spike gynaeandrous, 1/2 to 1 1/4 inch long, the lateral ones pistillate, about the same length or somewhat shorter. Bract subtending the lowest spike sheathless or nearly so, from distinctly shorter to somewhat longer than the inflorescence. Pistillate scales lanceolate to lance-ovate, brown to purplish black with a usually paler midrib, surpassing the perigynia, tapering to an awn-tip <1/16 to 1/8 inch long. Perigynia 1/8 to 3/16 inch long, beakless or very short beaked, rather narrowly elliptic to sometimes elliptic-obovate or elliptic-ovate, up to barely over half as wide as long, firm walled, not strongly flattened, light gray-green, densely papillate all over, with prominent marginal nerves and 6-8 inconspicuous or obscure nerves on each face. Stigmas 3, achene trigonous, <1/16 inch long, somewhat narrower and much shorter than the perigynial cavity.

**Identification Tips:** *Carex buxbaumii* has a 3-sided achene, with the female flowers above the male flower on the same terminal spike. *C. scopulorum* var. *bracteosa* and *C. scopulorum* var. *prionophylla* have convex achenes and a terminal male spike. *C. spectabilis* is lacking the prominent awn on the scales and the uppermost spike is either male or male and female. *C. arcta* has an inflated perigynium, with the terminal spike male.

**Phenology:** Identifiable June through August.

**Range:** Circumboreal, but relatively uncommon. The species is scattered throughout Washington in all physiographic provinces except the Columbia Basin and Blue Mountains.

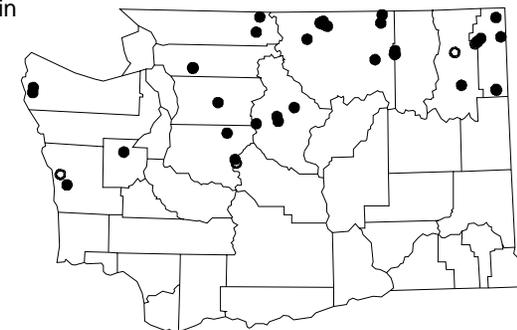
## *Carex buxbaumii*

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Known distribution of  
*Carex buxbaumii* in  
Washington



● Current (1980+)  
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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**Habitat:** Peat bogs, marshes, wet meadows, and other wet places. In Washington, the species is found at elevations ranging from 700 to 6200 feet. It may be found with *Sphagnum* sp., *Eriophorum* sp., *Spiraea douglasii*, *Carex utriculata*, *Equisetum* sp., *Potentilla palustris*, *Picea engelmannii*, *Salix* sp., and *Pinus contorta*.

**Ecology:** *Carex buxbaumii* requires a moist environment, including being rooted in saturated soil. Any changes to the hydrology of a site would be detrimental to the species. The species is an obligate wetland species (USFWS 1988).

**State Status Comments:** There are fewer than 50 occurrences in Washington.

**Inventory Needs:** Additional inventory is needed throughout the state.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Hydrologic change is the greatest threat to the species. Additional potential threats include recreation (ORV use, hiking, horseback riding) and grazing.

### **References:**

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1969. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 1: Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 914 pp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1988. National list of vascular plant species that occur in wetlands. USFWS Biological Report 88 (24).

