

Annual Wild Rice *Zizania aquatica*

Description

Annual Wild Rice has very tall, hairless stems that may grow to 9 feet (3 meters) in height. The leaf blades are alternately arranged, linear to lance-shaped, pointed at the tip, not toothed on the margin, parallel-veined, and often well over 1 foot (30 cm) in length and up to 2 inches (5 cm) in width. The flowers are grouped in a large branched cluster at the top of the stem, with the female flowers located on the ascending upper branches and the male flowers located on the spreading or drooping lower branches. The small bracts subtending each female flower have an elongate bristle-like projection, or awn, up to 2.25 inches (6 cm) in length.



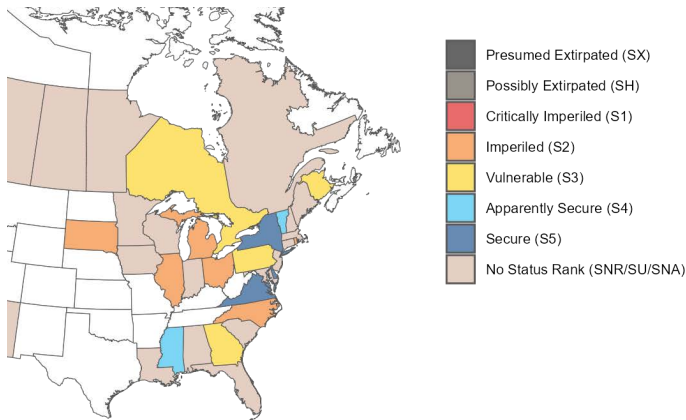
Photo source: PNHP

Distribution & Habitat

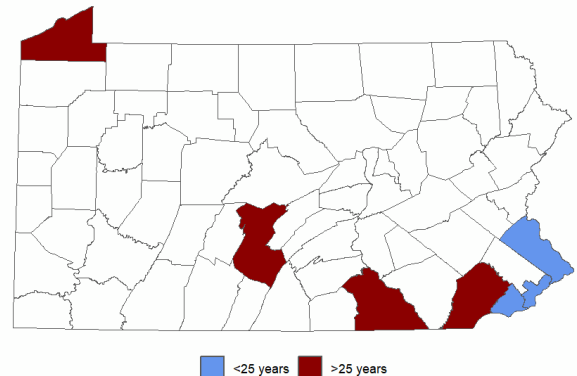
Annual Wild Rice has a range throughout much of North America, with part of the distribution expanded by deliberate introduction. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in several southeastern counties, as well as the counties of Erie and Huntingdon. Annual Wild Rice grows in marshes, particularly intertidal marshes along the Delaware River in southeastern Pennsylvania, as well as on shorelines and in shallow water elsewhere.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Indian Wild Rice (*Zizania aquatica*)



State Status & Conservation

Annual Wild Rice has a rarity status and suggested rarity status of rarity status of Rare. The species appears to have an ample number of populations and to be adaptable enough so as not to be endangered or threatened with extirpation, yet has a very localized distribution in the state. Some populations of Annual Wild Rice have threats from exotic species, dredging and filling, and water pollution.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 — Globally Secure; **S3** — Vulnerable

References



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

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- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- Rhoads, A. F. and W. M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
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