

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Source: Endangered and Threatened Species of the Southeastern United States (The Red Book) FWS
Region 4 -- As of
2/91

LARGE-FLOWERED SKULLCAP

(*Scutellaria montana*)

FAMILY: Lamiaceae

STATUS: Endangered, Federal Register, June 20, 1986

DESCRIPTION AND REPRODUCTION: This is a perennial herb of the mint family growing 30 to 55 centimeters (12 to 22 inches) tall with opposite leaves that are 5 to 8 centimeters (2 to 3 inches) long and 3 to 5 centimeters (1 to 2 inches) wide. Blue and white flowers appear in May and early June. The fruit, a light brown nutlet, matures in late June or early July.

RANGE AND POPULATION LEVEL: Large-flowered skullcap occurs in northwestern Georgia Counties in Floyd (four populations); Gordon (one population); and Walker (two populations), and in two southeastern Tennessee Counties, Hamilton (two populations) and Marion (one population). Historically, large-flowered skullcap is also reported from Catoosa County, Georgia, and overall was probably a more widespread species.

Less than 7,000 plants are known to exist, with over 90 percent of these occurring at two of the 10 known sites. These two sites are at least partially protected. One of these sites, located in Floyd County, Georgia, contains about 1,300 plants with about 1,100 of these being on land owned by The Nature Conservancy. The remainder of this population occurs on adjacent unprotected lands. The other large site, located in Marion County, Tennessee, contains about 5,000 plants, about 20 percent of which are on land owned and managed by the Tennessee Department of Conservation's Division of Forestry. The remainder of this site is on private property. One privately-owned site in Floyd County, Georgia, contains about 250 plants and is the third largest population. The seven remaining sites have populations ranging from 4 to 60 plants.

HABITAT: This mint is found only at the southern end of the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province in Georgia and Tennessee. It occurs on dry to slightly moist rocky slopes under a canopy of mature hardwoods (primarily oaks and hickories). All known sites show little or no evidence of disturbance due to logging or grazing by livestock. Increment boring of trees on these sites demonstrates that the trees are from 70 to over 200 years old, depending on the site.

REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS: The most significant potential threats to the large-flowered skullcap are logging, wildfires, livestock grazing, and residential development. Approximately 80 percent of the site with the largest known population has been subdivided for future residential development. A large portion of the second largest population is on protected land owned by The Nature Conservancy, but about 200 plants at this site, and all of the third largest population, occur on privately-owned land and are currently afforded no protection from future timber harvesting or land use changes. All remaining populations are extremely small and are vulnerable to even slight modifications of their habitat. Large-flowered skullcap is covered under State plant protection laws in both Georgia and Tennessee, but the State regulatory mechanisms provide little or no protection against the habitat disturbances that are the primary threat to this species. A final threat to large-flowered skullcap is its small numbers and limited distribution. In some populations loss of even a few individuals through natural fluctuations in numbers or through human-induced habitat alterations could eliminate the population and thereby reduce the likelihood that the species will continue to exist.

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: In the heavily populated, farmed, and timbered area of the Ridge and Valley Province where large-flowered skullcap occurs, the mature, undisturbed hardwood stands that the plant requires are quite limited. Long-term preservation of large-flowered skullcap may depend largely on how effective these areas can be protected. Cooperation between both public and private interests will likely be necessary if this is to be successful. Workers at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia, are presently conducting detailed demographic and autecological studies on this plant.

REFERENCES:

Collins, J.L. In preparation. The Taxonomy, Distribution, and Rarity of *Scutellaria montana* Chapm. (Lamiaceae).

Epling, C. 1942. The American Species of *Scutellaria*. Univ. Calif. Publ. Bot. 20(1):1-146.

Kral, R. 1983. A Report on Some Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Forest-Vascular Plants of the South. Tech. Publ.

R8-TP-2. USDA--Forest Service. Pp. 1010-1013.

McCollum, J.L., and D.R. Ettman. 1977. Georgia's Protected Plants. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. 66 pp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1986. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Endangered Status for *Scutellaria Montana* (Large-flowered Skullcap). Federal Register 51(119):22521-22524.