



New Jersey Field Office

Northeast Region

NJ Field Office
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Sensitive Joint-vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*) [threatened]

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IN BRIEF

Habitat:
Fresh to slightly salty (brackish) tidal marshes

Main Threats:
Habitat loss
Habitat degradation
Sea level rise

Fun Fact:
Sensitive joint-vetch is so-named because its leaves fold slightly when touched.

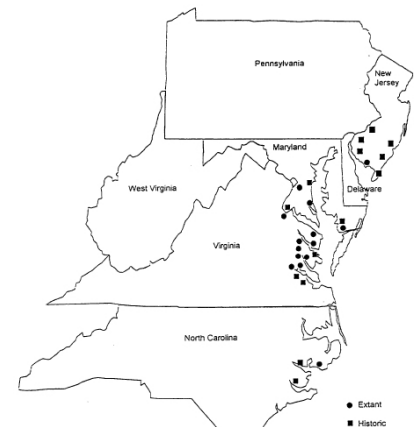


Overview

Sensitive joint-vetch was federally listed as a threatened species in 1992.

An annual member of the pea (legume) family, sensitive joint-vetch can grow up to 6 feet tall. This species has yellow, pea-type flowers growing on clusters (racemes) on short, lateral branches. Germination takes place from late May to early June. Plants flower from July through September, and into October in some years.

Sensitive joint-vetch inhabits the intertidal zone of fresh to slightly salty (brackish) tidal river segments, typically in areas where sediments accumulate and extensive marshes are formed. These tidal marshes are subjected to a cycle of twice-daily flooding that most plants cannot tolerate. Such habitats occur only along stretches of river close enough to the coast to be influenced by the tides, yet far enough upstream that river water is fresh or only slightly brackish. Bare or sparsely vegetated substrate appears to be a habitat requirement for

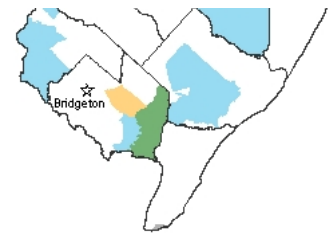


Sensitive joint-vetch distribution in the U.S. (click image for full-size)



vegetated substrate appears to be a habitat requirement for this species, which usually grows on river banks within 6 feet of the low water mark. The plant can also occur on accreting point bars and in sparsely vegetated microhabitats of tidal marsh interiors, such as low swales and areas of muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) eat-out. This species is typically found in areas where plant diversity is high and annual species are prevalent.

Threats to sensitive joint-vetch include dredging and filling of marshes, dam construction, shoreline stabilization, commercial and residential development, sedimentation, impoundments, water withdrawal projects, invasive plants,



Sensitive Joint-vetch (By Municipality)

- Current (Presently Known to Occur)
- Historic (May Still Be Present)
- Potential (May Be Present)
- Extirpated (No Longer Present)

Sensitive joint-vetch distribution in New

Last updated: January 28, 2014