

UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE

DECEIVING SEDGE



Haylee Bregoff

Scientific Name: *Carex saliniformis*

Common Name(s): Deceiving Sedge, Salt Sedge, Santa Cruz Sedge

Global Rarity: Imperiled

State listing: Imperiled; CA Rare Plant Rank 1B.2

UCSC Rarity: Very rare



General Description

The Deceiving Sedge is a perennial, grass-like plant that occurs in communities in wet openings in coastal prairie, northern coastal scrub, both fresh and saline wetlands, as well as some wet forest openings on the UCSC campus. This sedge features up to four lateral female spikelets (clusters of flowers) and one terminal male spikelet along a slender stem that can reach to about 15 cm in height. The Jepson eFlora (Zika et al. 2015) describes *C. saliniformis* as “weakly separated” from *C. hassei*, a more wide-ranging species, and that further studies are required.



Identification

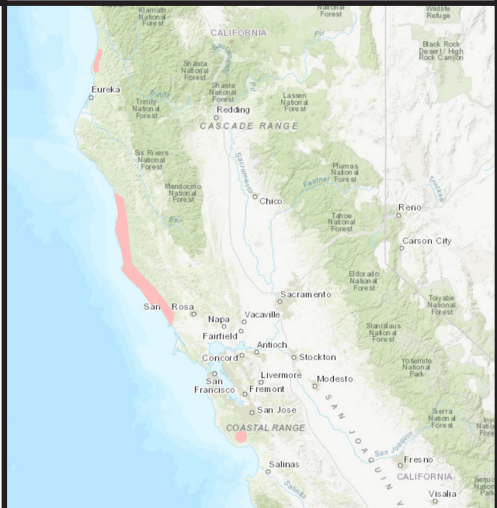
Perigyna: Reddish-brown or purple-splotched near tip when mature; beak indistinct, absent, or up to 0.3 mm, with an unnotched tip.

Bracts: Usually longer than inflorescence (cluster of spikelets)

Leaves: Grass-like blade 2-5 mm wide

Geographic Range

The Deceiving Sedge is endemic to the California coast, occurring in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties in the north and Santa Cruz County in the south. The plant was assumed extirpated from Santa Cruz County in the 1960s until several colonies were found in UCSC forested sites.





UCSC Distribution

Several colonies were found within forested areas of UCSC's Upper Campus in the year 2000, over 30 years since the species was presumed extirpated in the county. Their status is unknown at the time of this guide's publication.

Life history

The Deceiving Sedge is a perennial monocot belonging to the Cyperaceae family. This species is rhizomatous, meaning the plants have underground, lateral stems which can develop into new plants. The Deceiving Sedge can be observed blooming between May to July, typically within wet soils in open habitats or openings within forested habitats. It hosts at least 5 butterfly/moth species.

Threats

Statewide:

1. Habitat loss from coastal development
2. Competition with non-native and invasive plants
3. Changes in hydrology due to climate change
4. Grazing, mowing, road construction, and maintenance

UCSC campus:

1. Degradation of coastal prairie due to unmanaged succession, recreation impacts, and invasive species
2. Potential future development projects

Conservation Status

California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Rank 1B.2

Fairly endangered in California. Some populations occur on lands managed by California State Parks, though many populations require monitoring to determine their status. Although conservation efforts are being made small populations are vulnerable to stochastic events.

Ways you can help

1. Support coastal prairie protection
2. Support and raise awareness for the CA Native Plant Society
3. Volunteer with habitat restoration projects
4. Document the plants you encounter with the iNaturalist app

References and Photo Credits

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