

ATLANTIC  
COASTALPLAIN  
FLORA

# Water-pennywort

*Hydrocotyle umbellata*

**STATUS**

Not Listed



Not Listed



Special Concern



Endangered



Not Listed



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## Species Description

Green leaf undersides, erect form, and flower cluster

Water-pennywort has roundish leaves with shallow lobes that are 1-3 cm wide and with green undersides. Each leaf attaches singularly to a slender stem that grows horizontally along the substrate. Depending on water levels, its leaves float on the surface of the water (leaf stalks can be over 1 m long) and/or stand erect (10-30 cm high). Clusters of small white flowers (~12 per cluster) can be observed in low water years on flower stalks that originate from the stem.



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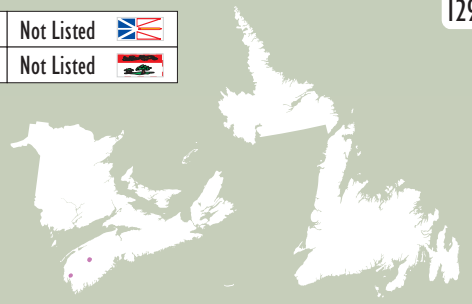
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Occurs on the shorelines of three lakes in southwest Nova Scotia.



## Habitat

Water-pennywort is found on sand or gravel lakeshores above and below the waterline. It generally grows in substrates that are acidic and nutrient poor, in areas subjected to disturbances such as wind, ice scour and water fluctuations. Disturbances such as these reduce competing vegetation.

Water-pennywort is found both floating on the water and along the lake shoreline. It flowers between July and September in low water years.

## Interesting Points

- Lakeshore ACPF species require fluctuating water conditions to reduce competition (high) and stimulate flowering (low).
- Water-pennywort has not been observed to produce seeds in NS.
- This species is only found on three lakes in all of Canada! It is found on Kejimikujik Lake, Wilson's Lake and Springhaven Duck Lake.



Leaf stalk well over one metre



Flower cluster

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## Similar Species

### Floating Heart

(*Nymphoides cordata*):  
Found in similar habitat; heart shaped leaves are notched to leaf centre; stem not erect in shallow water, and leaf undersides purple.



Floating Water-pennywort leaf (l), Floating Heart (r)

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### American Pennywort

(*Hydrocotyle americana*): Only other pennywort species in NS; more terrestrial habitat, multiple leaves on each leaf stalk and less erect and robust.



American Pennywort

Floating Heart

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## Threats to Survival

- Shoreline and shrub-zone alterations (removal of trees and shrubs, infilling, rock walls, mowing/raking, docks/launches, lawns, decks, patios, OHVs) can destroy or degrade suitable habitat.
- Nutrient run-off can increase lake nutrient levels which encourages the growth of common, weedy plant and algal blooms (page 140).

## How You Can Help 6 of 13

Become an ACPF steward and help with plant surveys and water quality monitoring. These efforts collect meaningful long-term data on species distribution, habitat changes and population levels. To get started contact the organizations listed below under stewardship, which work collaboratively on ACPF projects in SW Nova Scotia.



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ACPF Volunteer Monitoring Workshop



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Lakeshore surveys on Lac de l'École



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Water-pennywort monitoring on Keji Lake

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** AC CDC (506) 364-2658, or NS DNR (902) 679-6091

**Info:** [www.speciesatrisk.ca/coastalplainflora](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/coastalplainflora)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or [www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings)

**Stewardship:** Nova Scotia Nature Trust: [nature@nsnt.ca](mailto:nature@nsnt.ca), MTRI: [info@merseytobeatric.ca](mailto:info@merseytobeatric.ca), Parks Canada (Kejimikujik): [volunteer.keji@pc.gc.ca](mailto:volunteer.keji@pc.gc.ca), TREPA: [www.trepa.com](http://www.trepa.com)