

Delta Tule Pea

(*Lathyrus jepsonii* var. *jepsonii*)

Legal Status

Federal: None

State: None



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Global and State Conservation Status: G5T2S2.2: Global Rank, G5 = Secure: Common; widespread and abundant; T-Rank, T2 = Same as state rank but related only to the status of the subspecies throughout its range; State Rank S2 = Imperiled: Imperiled in the state because of rarity due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state; State ranks in California often also contain a threat designation attached to the S-rank, S2.2 = threatened.

CNPS List: 1B.2; 1B: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. 0.2: Fairly endangered in California.

Recovery Plan: None.

Species Description and Life History

Delta tule pea (*Lathyrus jepsonii* var. *jepsonii*) is a glabrous climbing perennial herb, up to 2.5 m (8 feet) tall, with winged stems and is a member of the pea family (Fabaceae) (Hickman 1993). It is identified by the number of leaflets, its glabrous winged stem, and pink to pink-purple flowers. It tends to grow over other vegetation because of its climbing habit. The leaves have small narrow, stipules, 10-16 leaflets, and coiled branched tendrils (Hickman 1993).

Habitat Requirements and Ecology

Delta tule pea occurs in freshwater and brackish marshes and swamps from 0 to 4 meters (0-13 ft) in elevation (CNPS 2001). It grows in areas that are often deeply inundated during the flood events and are subjected to intense soil disturbance by the flood waters. This species blooms from May to September (CNPS 2001).

Species Distribution and Population Trends

Distribution

Delta tule pea is endemic to California and its distribution is based on 113 observations (Calflora 2007). There are no documented occurrences in Yolo County but there are recorded occurrences in Sacramento and Solano counties just outside of the Yolo County border (CDFG 2007, CNPS 2007). The range of Delta tule pea extends from Napa, Solano, and Sacramento counties in the north, to Contra Costa, Alameda, San Joaquin counties in the south, to Marin County in the west.

Population Trends

Population trends of Delta tule pea have not been documented. It is unclear whether this species is in decline. According to the CNPS (2001) most known occurrences are small, and occurrences of Delta tule pea in California are highly limited and the species is at risk throughout its range.

Threats to the Species and Other Conservation Issues

The primary threat to Delta tule pea is the loss of marsh and floodplain habitat within the range of the species. Potential ways this habitat could be eliminated or degraded include agriculture, water diversions, and erosion (CNPS 2001). Research should address inundation tolerance, the species ability to persist in highly disturbed soils. Investigate patterns of germination and growth when floodwaters recede, flowering period, pollination biology, seed production, seed dispersal, and seed germination.

Contributors to this species account:

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References

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Hickman, J.C. (ed.). 1993. The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.