

## Rose Mallow

(*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*)

### Legal Status

*Federal:* None

*State:* None



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*Global and State Conservation Status:* G4S2.2: Global Rank, G4 = Apparently Secure: Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors; 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:* 2.2; 2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere. 0.2: Fairly endangered in California.

*Recovery Plan:* None.

### Species Description and Life History

Rose mallow (*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*) is a 1 to 2 m tall perennial rhizomatous clonal member of the mallow family (Malvaceae) (Hickman 1993). This species is distinguished by its perennial life form, and 6 to 10 cm cordate leaves (Hickman 1993). Rose mallow is hairy, has toothed leaves, and large, bell-shaped, white or rose flowers with red bases at the top of the stems (Hickman 1993).

### Habitat Requirements and Ecology

Rose mallow occurs in freshwater marshes and swamps, and on floodplains and slough islands, and along the banks of rivers and creeks from 0 to 120 m (0 to 394 ft) in elevation (CNPS 2001; CDFG 2007). This species blooms from June to September (CNPS 2001). The associated species growing with the Yolo County population of rose mallow include Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii* ssp. *fremontii*), willow (*Salix* spp.), and California buttonwillow (*Cephalanthus occidentalis* var. *californicus*) (CDFG 2007).

## **Species Distribution and Population Trends**

### *Distribution*

Rose mallow is a California native species and its distribution, as defined by Calflora 2007, is based 209 recorded observations. Suitable habitat is present within Yolo County in many of the wetland and riparian drainages of the Central Valley floor. There are two known populations in Yolo County in the Yolo Bypass area (CDFG 2007), and other populations occur immediately north, south, and east of the County line in Sutter, Sacramento, and Solano counties (CDFG 2007, CNPS 2007). The range of rose mallow includes Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Sutter, Sacramento, Solano, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin counties and additionally the southern county of Riverside (CNPS 2001).

### *Population Trends*

Population trends of rose mallow have not been well documented and it is unclear whether this species is in decline. According to the CNPS (2001), occurrences of rose mallow in California are limited and the species is at risk throughout its range.

## **Threats to the Species and Other Conservation Issues**

The primary threat to rose mallow is the loss of marsh, floodplain, and riparian habitat within the range of the species. Other threats include development, agriculture, recreation, channelization of the Sacramento River and its tributaries (CNPS 2001). Rose mallow is a perennial plant that grows in areas that are often deeply inundated during the flood events in the bypass and subjected to intense soil disturbance or scour by flood waters. Research should address inundation tolerance, the species ability to persist in highly disturbed soils and to 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:**

Cathy Little, HT Harvey & Associates  
John Gerlach, TAIC

### **References**

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