

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

DRABA PECTINIPILA
COMB-HAIR WHITLOW-GRASS
Family: Brassicaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None
(formerly
a C2 candidate for listing under the
Endangered Species Act)
Agency Status: None (formerly listed as
Sensitive in USFS Region 2 but dropped
due to taxonomic questions raised by
Rollins [1993]).

Heritage Rank:

Global: G1Q State: S1
WYNDD Plant List: Regional endemic
(High conservation priority)

Description: Comb-hair whitlow-grass is a
mat-forming perennial herb with flowering
stems to 15 cm high. Leaves are
predominantly basal with linear blades 3-12
mm long and less than 1.5 mm wide.
Leaves, flowering stems, pedicels, and fruits
are pubescent with distinctive doubly-
pectinate hairs (hairs appear like 2 combs
arranged back to back). Flowers are
arranged in a raceme and have 4 yellow
petals 3-5 mm long. Fruits are oblong to
lanceolate siliques with tapered tips and
styles 0.3-0.8 mm long (Rollins 1953; Dorn
and Dorn 1980; Lichvar 1983; Fertig et al.
1994).

Synonyms: *D. oligosperma* var. *pectinipila*.

Similar Species: *Draba juniperina* has
longer, narrower styles 0.8-1.5 mm long. *D.*
oligosperma has glabrous stems and
pedicels and fruits that are either glabrous or
have simple (unbranched) hairs. *D. incerta*

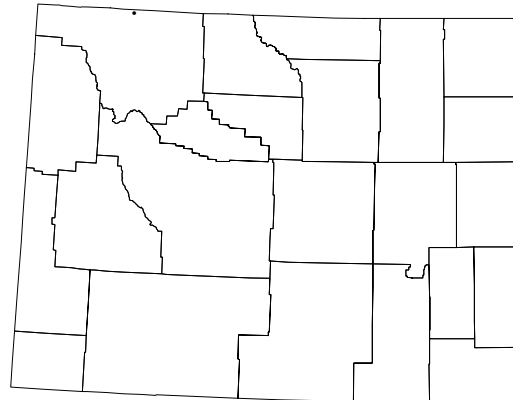


Above: *D. pectinipila* by W. Fertig.

has wider leaves and fruit (Dorn 1978;
Lichvar 1983; Dorn 1992).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: July-August.

Distribution: Endemic to the Clay and
Beartooth Buttes area of the Beartooth
Plateau of northwestern Wyoming and the
mountains of central Colorado. Additional
reports from Montana and British Columbia
need confirmation.



Above: Wyoming distribution of *D. pectinipila*.

Habitat: Rocky subalpine and alpine
limestone cliffs at 9840-10,080 feet. Co-
occurs with several other rare mustard
species, including *Draba porsildii* var.
brevicula, *D. paysonii*, & *D. globosa*.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from a single occurrence in Wyoming, most recently observed in 1999.

Abundance: Abundance estimated at 60 plants by Dorn and Dorn (1980). Population found to be more widespread in 1996 survey by Fertig and Mellmann-Brown, who estimated the population size at 500-750 plants in 10 acres of habitat in 3 main locations (Fertig 1997).

Trends: Trends poorly known, but thought to be stable at present. More plants are known today than in the recent past, but this may be due to better sampling. Long-term data are lacking.

Protection Status: This species is found within the Absaroka/Beartooth Wilderness Area and the potential Beartooth Butte Research Natural Area.

Threats: Not threatened by livestock grazing (Dorn and Dorn 1980). Low population size and a small range make it vulnerable to human disturbance and chance natural events.

Managed Areas: Entire range is within Shoshone National Forest.

Notes: Rollins (1993) has reduced this taxon as a synonym of *D. oligosperma*, citing pollen fertility studies by Mulligan and Findlay (1970) that suggest that the *D. oligosperma* complex is agamospermous, with segregate taxa simply representing asexual lines. No pollen fertility studies have been conducted on *D. pectinipila* to confirm if it truly is agamospermous.

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