

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

ERIOPHORUM CHAMISSONIS
RUSSET COTTON-GRASS
Family: Cyperaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.
Agency Status: USFS R2 sensitive

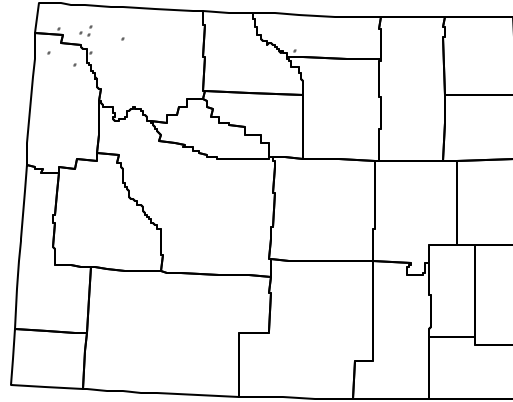
Heritage Rank:

Global: G5 State: S2
WYNDD Plant List: Peripheral (Low
Conservation Priority)

Description: Russet cotton-grass is a perennial graminoid with creeping rhizomes and non-tufted culms 30-70 cm tall. The basal and lower leaves have a well-developed sheath and short, narrow triangular to channeled blades up to 2 mm wide. Uppermost leaves are bladeless and borne near the middle of the culm. The inflorescence consists of a single, terminal spikelet with broad, dark brown, triangular outer scales and smaller fertile scales with dark centers and paler, membranous margins. Flowers have anthers over 1 mm long, triangular achenes with an abruptly-pointed style, and numerous cinnamon or reddish bristles that elongate in fruit to form a "cotton-ball" head (Dorn 1992; Hitchcock et al. 1969).

Synonyms: *Eriophorum russeolum*.

Similar Species: *Eriophorum scheuchzeri* has white bristles, dark scales without a pale margin, and anthers less than 1 mm long. *E. callitrix* has densely tufted culms (without rhizomes) and white bristles. Other *Eriophorum* species in Wyoming have branched inflorescences with 2 or more spikelets.



Wyoming distribution of *E. chamissonis*.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: May-August.

Distribution: Eastern Siberia to Newfoundland, south to Minnesota, northern Wyoming, and Oregon. In Wyoming, known from the Yellowstone Plateau and Absaroka and Bighorn ranges in Park, Sheridan, and Teton counties.

Habitat: In Wyoming, found in montane swamps and bogs at 7350-8320 feet.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 4 extant occurrences (most recently observed in 1999) and 5 historical records in Wyoming.

Abundance: Population size not known. Reported as "rare and scarce" at one location in the SE Absarokas and "sparse" at Preacher Rock Bog in 1999.

Trends: Not known, but at least 5 historical sites have not been relocated in recent years, suggesting a possible downward trend.

Protection status: At least 7 occurrences (4 of which are historical) occur in Yellowstone National Park. One population is also found in the Preacher Rock Bog Special Interest Area (Bighorn National Forest). Other

populations are found on public lands managed for multiple use.

Threats: May be sensitive to degradation of wetland habitats.

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by Bighorn and Shoshone National Forests and Yellowstone National Park.

References:

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Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, and M. Owenbey. 1969. Pt. 1. Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons, IN: Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Owenbey, and J.W. Thompson (eds). Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Publications in Biology 17(1): 1-914.

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