

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

SISYRINCHIUM PALLIDUM
PALE BLUE-EYE-GRASS
Family: Iridaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None;
formerly a C2 candidate for listing under the
Endangered Species Act.

Agency Status: USFS Region 2: Sensitive

Heritage Rank:

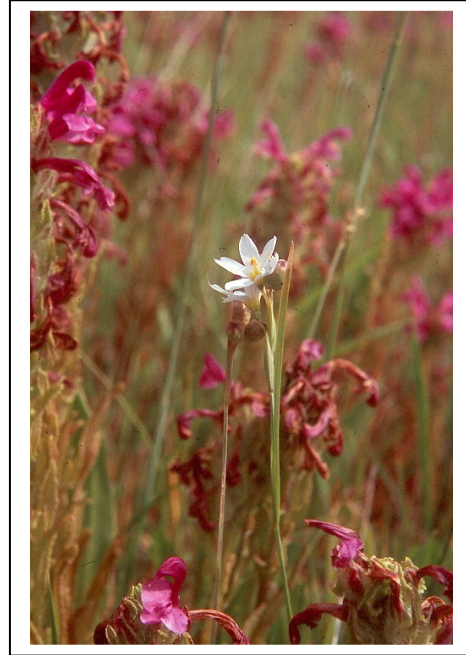
Global: G2G3 State: S2S3

Range Context: Regional endemic/ core
Wyoming Contribution Rank: High

Description: Pale blue-eyed grass is a single-stemmed or tufted perennial herb, usually less than 30 cm tall. The smooth-margined, erect leaves are shorter and usually narrower than the stem. One to five flowers are borne in a terminal inflorescence subtended by a pair of unequal, flattened, leaf-like bracts. The inner bract is often half as long as the outer bract and has a conspicuous membranous margin for its entire length. The petals and sepals are pale blue with a yellow base and 7.5-10 mm long. Fruits are brown capsules 3-5 mm long (Cholewa and Henderson 1984; Fertig et al. 1994).

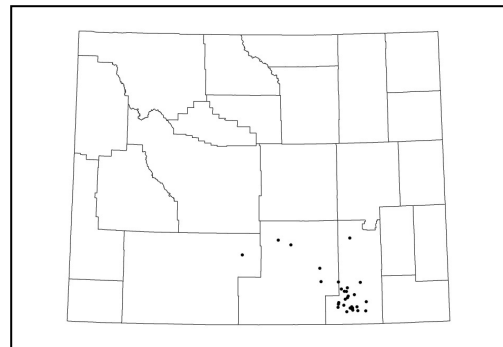
Similar Species: *Sisyrinchium montanum* differs in having darker, blue-purple flowers and inner bracts that lack a membranous margin at their tips. *S. campestre* also has pale blue flowers, but is not known to occur west of the eastern Great Plains. *S. idahoense* var. *occidentale* typically has shorter bracts and dark blue flowers.

Flowering/Fruiting Period: Flowers from mid June-mid July. Fruits present late June-late August.



Above: *Sisyrinchium pallidum*. By B. Heidel.

Distribution: Regional endemic of southeastern Wyoming and north-central Colorado. In Wyoming, known from the Laramie, North Platte, and Great Divide basins in Albany, Carbon and Sweetwater counties.



Wyoming distribution of *Sisyrinchium pallidum*

Habitat: Wet meadows, stream banks, roadside ditches, and irrigated hay meadows where standing water is available through the early growing season (elevation 6500-7900 feet). Often found on slightly alkaline soil. Often associated with *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Juncus balticus*, *Dodecatheon*

pulchellum, *Pedicularis crenulata*, and *Pyrocoma lanceolata*.

Associated Rare Species: *Carex parryana* var. *unica*

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 30 locations in Wyoming, of which 29 have been discovered or relocated since 1990 (most recently in 2007).

Abundance: Hartman (1992) found the species to be locally abundant and estimated the population in Wyoming to be ca 250,000 individuals.

Trends: Trend data unknown. Plants may be increasing due to the creation of suitable habitat by irrigated agriculture.

Protection status: One occurrence is protected in Mortensen Lake National Wildlife Refuge and one on Chain Lakes Wildlife Management Area. Another is found immediately outside of Hutton Lake NWR. It is also on federal land managed for multiple use, and state and private lands used for agriculture.

Threats: Primary threats are habitat disturbance and groundwater depletion. Secondary potential threats include ORV activity, roads, noxious weed invasion, herbicides, mineral and energy developments.

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by the BLM Rawlins Field Office, Mortensen Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department. May also occur on Hutton Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

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