

KARST POND XYRIS

Xyris longisepala Kral

Synonyms: none

Family: Xyridaceae (yellow-eyed grass)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



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Field Description: Tufted wiry herb. Leaves linear (6 - 25 cm long; 1 - 3 mm wide). Flowering stems (30 - 90 cm long) slender, sometimes twisted. Stem sheaths shorter than the leaves. Flowers have 3 yellow petals, opening in the afternoon. Seeds ellipsoidal (0.4 - 0.5 mm long) with a honeycombed texture.

Similar Species: Over 20 species of yellow-eyed grass occur in the Florida Panhandle. To the untrained eye, these plants can be difficult to distinguish. Karst pond xyris is similar in appearance to *X. smalliana*, but the latter is generally a taller plant (50 - 150 cm) with wider leaves (5 - 15 mm).

Related Rare Species: Six other species of yellow-eyed grass are endemic or listed in Florida (*Xyris calcicola*, *X. correlliorum*, *X. isoetifolia*, *X. louisianica*, *X. panacea*, and *X. scabrifolia*).

Habitat: Moist to wet sandy shores of sandhill upland lakes, sinkhole lakes and ponds.

Best Survey Season: Fall; July through September.

Range-wide Distribution: Northwest Florida and southeastern Alabama.

Conservation Status: Over half of known occurrences within Florida are within the Ecofina Creek Water Management Area. Several occurrences also are noted on Eglin Air Force Base. Often locally abundant, with hundreds to thousands of plants counted at some sites, but fluctuating greatly with variations in water levels. The species is sensitive to heavy disturbance around pond/lake edges.

Protection and Management: Avoid any heavy disturbance of surrounding uplands that would lead to increased erosion into the ponds/lakes. Any heavy disturbance to pond/lake edges such as clearing and mowing of vegetation and ORV use are severe threats to this species.

References: Kral 1983, Godfrey and Wooten 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.



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