

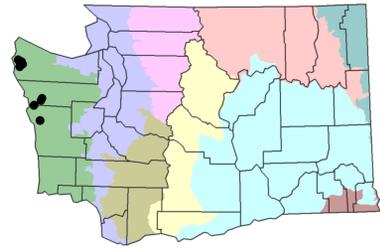
# ***Plantago macrocarpa*** Cham. & Schltldl.

Alaska plantain

Plantaginaceae - plantain family

status: State Sensitive, BLM strategic, USFS strategic

rank: G4 / S2



**General Description:** Stout perennial with a heavy root; hairless except for the upper part of the flower stalk and main axis of the inflorescence, which have long woolly hairs, at least when young. Leaves all basal, entire, elongate, several-nerved, (5) 10-45 cm long including the petiole, (0.5) 1-3.5 cm wide.

**Floral Characteristics:** Peduncles leafless, 1 to several, 1-6 dm tall. Inflorescence a dense spike when flowering, 1.5-4 cm long, elongating to 3-10 cm in fruit. Thin bracts subtending each flower are broadly elliptic or ovate, 3-4 mm long. Sepals 4, not fused. Corolla tube hairless, with 4 spreading lobes, each 1.5-2 mm long. Anthers 4, protruding beyond the corolla.

**Fruits:** Capsules indehiscent, falling whole, 6-7 mm long. Seeds 2, 4-5 mm long, black, minutely roughened. Fruits mostly from May to June.

**Identification Tips:** Fruits are helpful for identification; the indehiscent capsules of *P. macrocarpa* are unique in the genus. *Plantago major* has shorter capsules (2.5-4 mm long) that open near or below the middle at maturity, 6-30 seeds, and shorter leaves (4-18 x 2.5-3 cm wide, with a well-defined, broadly elliptic to ovate blade). The leaves of *P. macrocarpa* are elongate, without a well-defined separation between the narrowly elliptic blade and petiole.

**Range:** AK south to OR.

**Habitat/Ecology:** Lakeshores, wetlands, bogs, and seasonally flooded sites near the coast; usually scattered in small clumps in wet, peaty soil among sphagnum moss. Most sites are open with very few trees or shrubs. Associated species include salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), alpine bog laurel (*Kalmia microphylla*), sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), bog Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), camas (*Camassia quamash*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* spp.), beargrass (*Xerophyllum tenax*), arctic starflower (*Trientalis europaea* ssp. *arctica*), and ferns. Elevations in WA: 3-300 m (10-1000 ft).

**Comments:** Known from a small number of occurrences, with small numbers of individuals in each population. This species is also rare in OR.



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