

Seabeach Amaranth

Range: endemic to sand dunes and flats on the barrier islands along the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to central South Carolina: DE, MA, MD, NC, NJ, NY, RI, SC, VA

Endangered species listing: 1993

Federal recovery plans: 1996

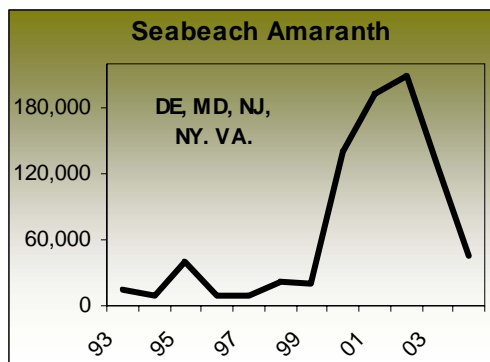
Status since listing: Increased



The seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*) is beach species which formerly occurred in 31 counties in nine states from Massachusetts to South Carolina. By 1988, it occurred only in the Carolinas. Its decline was caused by beach development, dune stabilization and enhancement projects, off-road vehicles, recreation, exotic species and hurricanes. Hurricanes and storms reduce and eliminate populations, but also create new habitat by reducing competing ground cover. The natural recolonization of New York in 1989 and 1990 may have been aided by severe winter storms.

The amaranth traps sand, initiating dune formation and creating suitable habitat for other plants, such as sea oats and beach grass. Numerous shorebirds, including the least tern, Wilson's plover, black skimmer, Caspian tern, and the endangered piping plover and roseate tern, nest in seabeach amaranth stands.

Since being placed on the endangered species list, the amaranth has recolonized New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Numbers increased dramatically from 14,899-17,174 in 1993 to 46,108-48,668 in 2004. While the species fluctuated dramatically (well over 100,000 plants in 2000, 2001, 2003 and less than 50,000 in 1999, 2002 and 2004), the trend between 1993 and 2004 was clearly upward.



Northeast Highlight: Extirpated from New York around 1960, the amaranth naturally recolonized in 1990 with 331 plants and increased to 30,381 in 2004. Most amaranth sites are within areas fenced to protect endangered piping plovers. Extirpated from New Jersey in 1913, recolonization took place in 2000 at four sites within Gateway National Recreation Area and several sites on Monmouth County municipal beaches. The latter sites were created by a 1995 beach nourishment project by

the Army Corps of Engineers. The 2000 population was 1,039; the 2005 population was 5,795.