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# Conserving South Carolina's At-Risk Species:

## *Species facing threats to their survival*

### Cape Fear spatterdock (Yellow pond-lily)

(*Nuphar lutea* ssp. *sagittifolia*)



Cape Fear spatterdock / Copyright - Les Mehrhoff / [www.discoverlife.org](http://www.discoverlife.org)

### Description

Cape Fear spatterdock is an aquatic perennial herb with rhizomes buried in the mud below the water. Leaf blades either float on the surface of the water or are submerged beneath it. Floating blades are more than 3 times as long as wide. Submerged blades are very thin, flaccid, and crisped, having somewhat the texture and appearance of thin leaf lettuce. Submerged leaves are about the same shape as the floating leaves. Petioles are terete (round in cross-section) and leaves are 3-lobed and sagittate (arrow-shaped or V-shaped). Tips of the lobes are sometimes rounded. Flowers are green and yellow, 2–3 cm in diameter, and usually held above the surface of the water.

### Range

This species occurs in southeastern Virginia, eastern North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina. It is locally abundant on shallow bars along rivers such as the Northeast Cape Fear, Black, and Waccamaw, forming dense colonies in Lake Waccamaw. In South Carolina, it has been reported from Dillon, Florence,

Georgetown, Horry, and Marion counties. Even with its narrow range of scattered occurrences, it can be locally abundant.

### Habitat

This aquatic plant inhabits primarily coastal-plain blackwater streams (usually near cypress) or tidal estuaries, and can occasionally be found in lakes or brownwater streams. According to Weakley (2015), it is especially known from shallow bars of the Northeast Cape Fear, Black and Waccamaw Rivers.

### Status

NatureServe's Rounded Global Status for the species is T2 - Imperiled. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the species in April 2010 and in September 2011, issued a 90-day finding that the petition presented substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing may be warranted. The species is currently being reviewed for possible Endangered Species Act listing.

### Threats

Cape Fear spatterdock is threatened by water quality problems, recreational boating, siltation from timber harvesting, turbulence, and shore development. Being an aquatic plant, it is difficult to protect effectively.

### Management/Protection Needs

Conservation recommendations include: increased survey effort; research to understand life history, habitat requirements, genetics, and possible propagation techniques; identification and protection of critical habitats; encouragement of responsible land stewardship practices; responsible land-use planning; and education and outreach.

### References

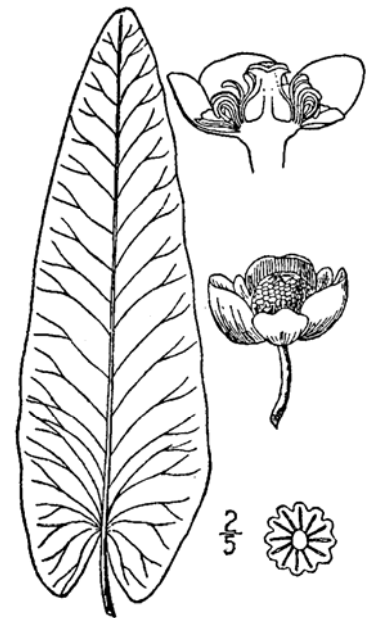
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Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 2: 79.