Common Name: ALTAMAHA SKULLCAP

Scientific Name: *Scutellaria altamaha* Small

Other Commonly Used Names: pineland skullcap

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Rarity Ranks: G2G3/S1?

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial herb with erect, densely hairy, 4-angled stems, 12 - 25 inches (30 - 65 cm) tall. **Leaves** 1 - 2 inches (2.5 - 5 cm) long and ½ - 1⅜ inches (1.4 - 3.4 cm) wide, opposite, oval or lance-shaped, hairy, with bluntly pointed tips and finely toothed margins; surfaces are densely covered with minute glandular dots, the upper surface dull green and nearly hairless, the lower surface pale green with hairy, conspicuous veins; **leaf stalk** absent or very short. **Flower clusters** crowded at the top of the stem. **Flower** about ½ inch (1.1 - 1.6 cm) long, pale blue, covered with glandular hairs and dots, with an erect tube; a rounded, notched, down-curved lower lip; and a larger, hood-like upper lip; inside the flower tube, there is a line of hairs at the bend; **stamens** extend slightly beyond the upper lip, with hairy anthers at the tip. A small green cup (**calyx**), with a bump on the upper side, surrounds the base of the flower and the maturing fruit. **Fruit** consists of 4 tiny nutlets enclosed by the calyx.

Similar Species: Two other skullcaps with hairy stems occur in Georgia. Hairy skullcap (*Scutellaria elliptica*) has longer leaf stalks and non-glandular, coarsely toothed leaves. Hoary skullcap (*Scutellaria incana*) is 24 – 39 inches (60 - 100 cm) tall, with leaf stalks about ⅜ - 1¼ inches (1 - 3 cm) long.

Related Rare Species: See large-flowered skullcap (*Scutellaria montana*), Ocmulgee skullcap (*S. ocmulgee*), and showy skullcap (*S. serrata*) on this website. Five other species of skullcap are also of Special Concern in Georgia: *S. arenicola*, *S. leonardii*, *S. mellichampii*, *S. nervosa*, and *S. saxatilis*.

Habitat: Sandy, pine-oak woodlands.

Life History: Altamaha skullcap is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually. Otherwise, little else is known about the life history of this species. Other skullcap species are typically pollinated by bees; wasps are known to cut holes in the base of some skullcap flower tubes and suck out

nectar without carrying out the pollination that bees do. Fruits are small nutlets that are dispersed by gravity and small animals.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (June–early July).

Range: Georgia and South Carolina.

Threats: Fire suppression, clearing, and logging in longleaf pine forests. Conversion of habitat to pine plantations, pastures, and development.

Georgia Conservation Status: Four populations are known from Georgia but none have been seen in more than 40 years.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect sandhills and other longleaf pine woodlands from clearing and conversion to pine plantations. Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years during the growing season.

Selected References:

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Small, J.K. 1898. Studies in the botany of the southern United States, XIII. Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club 25(3): 134-151.

Weakley, A.S. 2008. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, northern Florida, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill. http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm

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