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# A CHECKLIST OF THE VASCULAR PLANTS OF THE ARCATA MARSH & WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA)

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The Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary is located at the north end of Humboldt Bay. It consists of 307 acres of freshwater and salt marshes, mud flats, tidal sloughs, grassy uplands, and five miles of paths. It is also the home of the city's wastewater treatment facility. The Visitor Center is just off South G St. in Arcata. The marsh is a popular area for birders because it is located along a major migratory pathway.

This plant list rests largely on two prepared in the 1990's by Joan Elk and Louise Watson. I have updated scientific names and family assignments, and have added a few plants noticed on my many pleasant walks at the marsh. The Friends of the Arcata Marsh has published a very useful photographic guide to 101 of the common plants of the area. It may be purchased at the Interpretive Center.

The entry for each plant consists of three elements: scientific name, common name, and a code that shows its nativity, growth form, and duration. You will not need a decoder ring. A = annual; I = introduced; N = native; P = perennial; S = shrub; SS = subshrub; T = tree; V = vine. Thus NA is a native annual, IT is an introduced tree, etc.

Plants bearing the symbol ✧ have appeared on one or more older checklists, but they have not otherwise been documented for Humboldt County or even northwestern California. If you know where I might find them in the marsh, please contact me at [jps2@humboldt.edu](mailto:jps2@humboldt.edu).

## FERNS

**BLECHNACEAE • DEER FERN FAMILY**  
*Woodwardia fimbriata* • Western chain fern • NP

**DENNSTAEDTIACEAE • BRACKEN FERN FAMILY**  
*Pteridium aquilinum* • Bracken fern • NP

**EQUISETACEAE • HORSETAIL FAMILY**  
*Equisetum arvense* • Common horsetail • NP

**SALVINIACEAE • FLOATING FERN FAMILY**  
*Azolla filiculoides* • Mosquito fern, water velvet • NA

## CONIFERS

**CUPRESSACEAE • CYPRESS FAMILY**  
*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* • Port Orford-cedar • NT  
*Cupressus macrocarpa* • Monterey cypress • IT  
*Juniperus chinensis* • Low juniper • IS ✧  
*Sequoia sempervirens* • Coast redwood • NT  
*Thuja plicata* • western red-cedar • NT

**PINACEAE • PINE FAMILY**  
*Picea sitchensis* • Sitka spruce • NT  
*Pinus muricata* • Bishop pine • NT  
*Pinus radiata* • Monterey pine • IT  
*Pseudotsuga menziesii* • Douglas-fir • NT

## FLOWERING PLANTS

**ACERACEAE • MAPLE FAMILY**  
*Acer macrophyllum* • Big leaf maple • NT

**ALISMATACEAE • WATER PLANTAIN FAMILY**  
*Alisma triviale* • Northern water plantain • NP

**AMARANTHACEAE • PIGWEED FAMILY**  
*Atriplex patula* • Spear saltbush • NA  
*Salicornia depressa* • Pickle weed • NPSSS

**AMARYLLIDACEAE • AMARYLLIS FAMILY**  
*Allium neopolitanum* • White or daffodil garlic • IP  
*Allium triquetrum* • False garlic, wild onion • IP  
*Narcissus* sp. • Narcissus, daffodil

**APOCYNACEAE • DOGBANE FAMILY**  
*Vinca major* • Periwinkle • IVS

**AQUIFOLIACEAE • HOLLY FAMILY**  
*Ilex aquifolium* • English holly • IST

**ARACEAE • ARUM OR PHILODENDRON FAMILY**  
*Arum palaestinum* • Solomon's-lily • IP

**ASPARAGACEAE • HYACINTH FAMILY**

*Brodiaea coronaria* • Harvest brodiaea • NP  
*Triteleia laxa* • Ithuriel's spear • NP

**ASPHODELACEAE • DAY-LILY FAMILY**

*Kniphofia uvaria* • Red-hot poker • IP

**BERBERIDACEAE • BARBERRY FAMILY**

*Berberis darwinii* • Darwin's barberry • IS

**BETULACEAE • BIRCH FAMILY**

*Alnus rubra* • Red alder • NT

**BORAGINACEAE • BORAGE FAMILY**

*Borago officinalis* • Common borage • IA

**CAPRIFOLIACEAE • HONEYSUCKLE FAMILY**

*Lonicera involucrata* • Twin berry • NS

**CARYOPHYLLACEAE • CARNATION FAMILY**

*Cerastium glomeratum* • Sticky mouse-ear • IA  
*Spergularia rubra* • Purple sand spurrey • IAP  
*Stellaria media* • Common chickweed • IAP

**COMPOSITAE • ASTER FAMILY**

*Achillea millefolium* • Yarrow • NP  
*Anaphalis margaritacea* • Pearly everlasting • NP  
*Anthemis cotula* • May weed, dog-fenne • IAL  
*Arctotheca calendula* • Cape weed • IAP  
*Baccharis pilularis* • Coyote brush • NS  
*Cirsium arvense* • Canada thistle • IP  
*Cirsium vulgare* • Bull thistle • IP  
*Cotula coronopifolia* • Brass buttons • IP  
*Erigeron canadensis* • Horse weed • NA  
*Glebionis coronaria* • Garland chrysanthemum • IA  
*Grindelia hirsutula* • Humboldt Bay gum plant • NP  
*Helminthotheca echioides* • Bristly ox tongue • IAP  
*Hypochaeris radicata* • Rough cat's ear • IP  
*Jaumea carnosa* • Fleshy jaumea • NP  
*Lapsana communis* • Nipplewort • IA  
*Layia carnosa* • Beach layia • NA  
*Leontodon saxitilis* • Hawkbit • IP  
*Leucanthemum vulgare* • Oxeye daisy • IP  
*Madia sativa* • Coast tarweed • NA  
*Matricaria discoidea* • Pineapple weed • IA  
*Pseudognaphalium stramineum*  
 • Cotton-batting plant • NAP  
*Senecio hydrophilus* • Marsh ragwort • NP  
*Senecio glomeratus* • Australian fireweed • IAP  
*Senecio minimus* • Coastal fireweed • IAP  
*Silybum marianum* • Milk thistle • IAP  
*Sonchus asper* • Prickly sow thistle • IA  
*Sonchus oleraceus* • Common sow thistle • IA  
*Symphotrichum chilense* • California aster • NP  
*Taraxacum officinale* • Dandelion • IP  
*Tragopogon porrifolius* • Purple salsify • IP

**CONVOLVULACEAE • MORNING GLORY FAMILY**

*Calystegia sepium* • Hedge bindweed • IV ✨  
*Calystegia silvatica* • Large bindweed • IV  
*Cuscuta salina* • Marsh dodder • NV

**CRUCIFERAE • MUSTARD FAMILY**

*Brassica rapa* • Field mustard • IAP  
*Brassica nigra* • Black mustard • IA  
*Cardamine oligosperma* • Bitter cress • NAP  
*Nasturtium officinale* • Water cress • NP  
*Raphanus raphanistrum* • Jointed wild radish • IAP

**CYPERACEAE • SEDGE FAMILY**

*Bulboschoenus robustus* • Alkali bulrush • NP  
*Carex lyngbyei* • Lyngby's sedge • NP  
*Carex obnupta* • Slough sedge • NP  
*Cyperus eragrostis* • Umbrella sedge • NP  
*Eleocharis macrostachya* • Pale spike-rush • NP  
*Eleocharis palustris* • Common spike-rush • NP  
*Eleocharis parvula* • Dwarf spike-rush • NP  
*Schoenoplectus californicus* • California bulrush • NP  
*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*  
 • Soft-stem rush • NP  
*Scirpus microcarpus* • Small-fruited bulrush • NP

**DIPSACACEAE • TEASEL FAMILY**

*Dipsacus fullonum* • Fuller's teasel • IP

**FRANKENIACEAE • FRANKENIA FAMILY**

*Frankenia salina* • Alkali-heath • NP ✨

**GARRYACEAE • SILK-TASSEL FAMILY**

*Garrya elliptica* • Coastal silk-tassel • NST

**GENTIANACEAE • GENTIAN FAMILY**

*Zeltnera trichantha* • Centaury • NA

**GERANIACEAE • GERANIUM FAMILY**

*Geranium dissectum* • Cut-leaved geranium • IA  
*Geranium molle* • Doves-foot geranium • IA

**GRAMINEAE • GRASS FAMILY**

*Agrostis stolonifera* • Redtop, creeping bent grass • IP  
*Aira elegans* • European hair grass • IA  
*Anthoxanthum odoratum* • Sweet vernal grass • IP  
*Avena barbata* • Slender wild oat • IA  
*Briza maxima* • Big rattlesnake grass • IA  
*Briza minor* • Little rattlesnake grass • IA  
*Bromus diandrus* • Rippgut brome • IA  
*Calamagrostis canadensis* • Blue joint • NP  
*Cortaderia jubata* • Pampas grass • IP  
*Cynosurus echinatus* • Dogtail grass • IA  
*Dactylis glomerata* • Orchard grass • IP  
*Deschampsia caespitosa* • Tufted hair grass • NP  
*Distichlis spicata* • Salt grass • NP  
*Echinochloa crusgalli* • Barnyard grass • IA  
*Elymus repens* • Quack grass • IP  
*Festuca arundinacea* • Tall or alta fescue • IP  
*Festuca californica* • California fescue • NP  
*Festuca myuros* • Annual fescue • IA  
*Festuca perennis* • rye grass • IAP  
*Holcus lanatus* • Common velvet grass • IP  
*Hordeum brachyantherum* • Meadow barley • NP  
*Hordeum jubatum* • Foxtail barley • NAP  
*Parapholis incurva* • Sickie grass • IA  
*Poa annua* • Annual blue grass, winter grass • IA  
*Poa unilateralis* • Ocean-bluff blue grass • NP  
*Polypogon monspeliensis* • Rabbit's-foot grass • IA  
*Spartina densiflora* • Chilean cord grass • IP

**GROSSULARIACEAE • GOOSEBERRY FAMILY**

*Ribes menziesii* • Canyon gooseberry • NS  
*Ribes sanguineum* • Pink flowering currant • NS

**HALORAGACEAE • WATER MILFOIL FAMILY**

*Myriophyllum aquaticum* • Parrot's feather • IP

**HIPPURIDACEAE • MARE'S-TAIL FAMILY**

*Hippuris vulgaris* • Mare's-tail • NP

**HYDROCOTYLACEAE • WATER-PARSNIP FAMILY**

*Hydrocotyle ranunculooides* • Water-parsnip • NP

**HYPERICACEAE • ST. JOHN'S WORT FAMILY**

*Hypericum perforatum* • Klamath weed • IAP

**IRIDACEAE • IRIS FAMILY**

*Crocosmia x crosmiiflora* • Montbretia • IP  
*Iris douglasiana* • Douglas' iris • NP  
*Iris pseudacorus* • Yellow iris • IP ✧  
*Ixia maculata* • Ixia • IP  
*Sisyrinchium bellum* • California blue-eyed-grass • NP  
*Watsonia angusta* • Watsonia • IP ✧

**JUNCACEAE • RUSH FAMILY**

*Juncus balticus* var. *ater* • Baltic rush • NP  
*Juncus bufonius* • Toad rush • NA  
*Juncus effusus* • Soft rush • NP  
*Juncus lescurii* • Salt rush • NP

**JUNCAGINACEAE • ARROW-GRASS FAMILY**

*Triglochin maritima* • Seaside arrow-grass • NP

**LABIATAE (LAMIACEAE) • MINT FAMILY**

*Mentha pulegium* • Pennyroyal • IP  
*Mentha spicata* • Spearmint • IP  
*Stachys ajugoides* • Hedge-nettle • NP  
*Stachys bullata* • Hedge-nettle • NP

**LAURACEAE • LAUREL FAMILY**

*Umbellularia californica* • California bay • NST

**LEGUMINOSAE • BEAN FAMILY**

*Cytisus scoparius* • Scotch broom • IS  
*Genista monspessulana* • French broom • IS  
*Lathyrus latifolius* • Perennial sweet pea • IV  
*Lotus corniculatus* • Bird's-foot trefoil • IP  
*Lotus formosissimus* • Seaside bird's-foot trefoil • NP  
*Lupinus arboreus* • Yellow bush lupine • IS  
*Lupinus bicolor* • Miniature or dove lupine • NA  
*Medicago lupulina* • Black medick • IA  
*Medicago polymorpha* • California bur clover • IA  
*Melilotus officinalis* • White sweet clover • IP  
*Melilotus indicus* • Sour clover • IP  
*Trifolium microcephalum* • Maiden clover • NA  
*Trifolium pratense* • Red clover • IP  
*Trifolium repens* • white clover • IP  
*Vicia americana* • American vetch • NP  
*Vicia hirsuta* • Hairy betch • IA  
*Vicia sativa* • Common vetch • IA

**LEMNACEAE • DUCKWEED FAMILY**

*Lemna minuta* • Least duckweed • NP

**LINACEAE • FLAX FAMILY**

*Linum usitatissimum* • Common flax • IA

**LYTHRACEAE • LOOSESTRIFE FAMILY**

*Lythrum hyssopifolium* • Hyssop loosestrife • IAP

**MALVACEAE • MALLOW OR COTTON FAMILY**

*Malva neglecta* • Common mallow, cheeses • IAP

**MONTIACEAE • MINER'S-LETTUCE FAMILY**

*Calandrinia ciliata* • Red maids • NA

**MYRICACEAE • WAX-MYRTLE FAMILY**

*Myrica californica* • Wax-myrtle • NST

**ONAGRACEAE • EVENING-PRIMROSE FAMILY**

*Epilobium angustifolium* • Narrow-leaved fireweed • NP  
*Epilobium ciliatum* • willow herb • NP  
*Fuchsia hybrida* • Hybrid fuchsia • IS ✧  
*Oenothera glazioviana* • Evening-primrose • IP

**PAPAVERACEAE • POPPY FAMILY**

*Eschscholzia californica* • California poppy • NAP

**PLANTAGINACEAE • PLANTAGO FAMILY**

*Plantago lanceolata* • English plantain • IP  
*Plantago major* • Common plantain • IP

**PLUMBAGINACEAE • LEADWORT FAMILY**

*Limonium californicum* • sea-lavender • NP

**POLEMONIACEAE • PHLOX FAMILY**

*Leptosiphon filipes* • Filiform linanthus • NA

**POLYGONACEAE • KNOTWEED FAMILY**

*Polygonum aviculare* • Common knotweed • IP  
*Polygonum lapathifolium* • Willow smart weed • NA  
*Rumex acetosella* • Sheep-sorrel • IP  
*Rumex conglomeratus* • Clustered dock • IP  
*Rumex crispus* • Curly dock • IP  
*Rumex persicarioides* • American golden dock • NA  
*Rumex pulcher* • Fiddle dock • IP

**POTAMOGETONACEAE • POND WEED FAMILY**

*Potamogeton crispus* • Curly-leaved pond weed • IP  
*Stuckenia pectinata* • Sago pond weed • NP

**PRIMULACEAE • PRIMROSE FAMILY**

*Anagallis arvensis* • Scarlet pimpernel • IA  
*Glaux maritima* • Sea milkwort • NP

**RANUNCULACEAE • BUTTERCUP FAMILY**

*Ranunculus californicus* • California buttercup • NP  
*Ranunculus repens* • Creeping buttercup • IP

**RHAMNACEAE • BUCKTHORN FAMILY**

*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* • Blue blossom • NS  
*Frangula purshiana* • Cascara sagrada • NS

**ROSACEAE • ROSE FAMILY**

*Cotoneaster* sp. • Cotoneaster • IS  
*Crataegus phaenopyrum*  
• Washington hawthorn • IS ✧  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia* • Toyon • NST  
*Holodiscus discolor* • Ocean spray • NS  
*Malus* sp. • Wild apple • IST  
*Oemleria cerasiformis* • Oso berryNS  
*Physocarpus capitatus* • Ninebark • NS  
*Potentilla anserina* • Pacific silver weed • NP  
*Prunus subcordata* • Oregon or Klamath plum • NT  
*Prunus cerasifera* • Cherry plum • IT  
*Prunus persica* • Peach • IT  
*Rosa banksiae* • Lady Bank's rose • IS ✧  
*Rubus armeniacus* • Himalaya berry • IS  
*Rubus laciniatus* • Evergreen blackberry • IS  
*Rubus parviflorus* • Thimbleberry • NS  
*Rubus ursinus* • California blackberry • NV

**RUBIACEAE • BEDSTRAW FAMILY**

*Galium mollugo* • Smooth bedstraw • NP ✧

**RUPPIACEAE • DITCH-GRASS FAMILY**

*Ruppia maritima* • Wigeon-grass • NP

**SALICACEAE • WILLOW FAMILY**

*Salix alba* • Golden willow • IT  
*Salix hookeriana* • Coastal willow • NS  
*Salix sitchensis* • Sitka or velvet willow • NS

**SAMBUCACEAE • ELDERBERRY FAMILY**

*Sambucus racemosa* • Red elderberry • NS

**SCROPHULARIACEAE • FIGWORT FAMILY**

*Castilleja ambigua* • Humboldt Bay owl's-clover • NA  
*Cordylanthus maritimus* • Bird's-beak • NA  
*Digitalis purpurea* • Foxglove • IP  
*Parentucellia viscosa* • yellow gland weed • IA  
*Scrophularia californica* • California figwort • NP  
*Triphysaria eriantha* var. *rosea* • johnny-tuck • NA  
*Veronica anagallis-aquatica* • Water speedwell • IP

**TYPHACEAE • CAT-TAIL FAMILY**

*Typha latifolia* • Broad-leaved cat-tail • NP

**UMBELLIFERAE • CARROT FAMILY**

*Angelica hendersonii* • Henderson's angelica • NP  
*Cicuta douglasii* • Western water hemlock • NP  
*Conium maculatum* • Poison or spotted hemlock • IP  
*Daucus carota* • Queen Anne's lace, wild carrot • IP  
*Foeniculum vulgare* • Sweet fennel • IP  
*Heracleum lanatum* • Cow parsnip • NP  
*Oenanthe sarmentosa* • Water-parsley • NP

**URTICACEAE • NETTLE FAMILY**

*Urtica dioica* • Stinging nettle • NP

**VERBENACEAE • VERVAIN FAMILY**

*Verbena lasiostachys* • Western verbena • NP

**SOURCES**

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