



Carex heteroneura. (A) Inflorescence, (B) pistillate scales (scale on left with perigynium), (C) perigynia, (D) achenes. B through D: Left—dorsal view; right—ventral view.

Carex heteroneura (Mack.) Cronq.
Black sedge, blackened sedge, dark sedge

SYNONYM: *C. atrata* L.

HABIT: Dense, small to large tufts without creeping rhizomes. **Culms:** Slender and erect or nodding, 1.5-8 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **aphyllopodic**, dried leaves of previous year conspicuous.

LEAVES: 7-10, clustered near the base. **Blades:** Flat with slightly revolute margins, channeled above, 2-8 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Brownish-tinged, the basal sheath reddish-tinged, thin and hyaline ventrally, concave to convex at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest leaflike, sheathless, dark-auricled, shorter to longer than the inflorescence; upper reduced.

SPIKES: 2-7, erect or nodding, ovoid to oblong-ovoid, 10-24 mm long, 7-10 mm wide, crowded, but not densely capitate-clustered, sessile or the lowest often on a stiff peduncle. **Terminal:** **Gynaecandrous**, broadly clavate (pistillate flowers sometimes few). **Lateral:** **Gynaecandrous** (staminate flowers few); perigynia 15-20, appressed.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate or oblong-ovate with an acute to acuminate tip, longer or shorter than the perigynia and narrower, dark reddish brown to almost black with a lighter midrib and sometimes with whitish-hyaline margins.

PERIGYNIA: Broadly oval to obovate, flattened, glabrous or papillate-roughened, stramineous or suffused with dark purple or black with pale or greenish margins and usually darker center, 3-4 mm long, 1.5-3 mm wide. **Nerves:** Absent except for the two marginal nerves. **Beaks:** Slender, reddish black, scarcely cleft or bidentate, 0.5 mm long.

ACHENES: Trigonous, not sharply angled, tending to be short-stipitate, yellowish brown at maturity, 1.2-2.2 mm long, 0.75-1 mm wide, much smaller than the perigynium. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Common in wet meadows and on open, dry slopes at **moderate to high elevations**. Circumboreal. In North America extending south to southern Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, northern Arizona, western Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. **June-August**.

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 2.