



Carex nelsonii. (A) Inflorescences, (B) pistillate scales, (C) perigynia, (D) achenes. B through D: Left and center—dorsal views; right—ventral view.

***Carex nelsonii* Mack.**
Nelson sedge

HABIT: Loosely caespitose from short, slender, creeping rhizomes. **Culms:** Stiff, erect, fibrillose, brown, slightly dark red tinged at the base, 1.5-3 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, slightly **aphyllopodic**, dried leaves of previous year present.

LEAVES: 5-12, closely clustered near the base. **Blades:** Thick, flat with revolute margins, channeled at the base, short-attenuate, 3-4 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Whitish ventrally, truncate at the mouth.

BRACTS: Scalelike and inconspicuous or the lowest slightly prolonged, sheathless, shorter than the inflorescence.

SPIKES: 2-4, sessile, golden brown to reddish black, closely aggregated, more or less indistinguishable, forming a dense, oblong or obovoid head, 10-12 mm long, 5-10 mm wide. **Terminal:** **Gynaecandrous**, rather clavate at the base. **Lateral:** **Pistillate**, densely flowered; perigynia appressed.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Ovate or lance-ovate with the tip obtuse or slightly acute, shorter and narrower than the perigynia, black, often conspicuously rough-papillose, the midvein obsolete and upper margins slightly or nonhyaline.

PERIGYNIA: Oblong to oblong-obovoid, somewhat inflated, tapered to rounded at the base, abruptly contracted at the apex, papillate and ciliate-serrulate on the margins above, punctulate, yellow green, strongly blotched with dark reddish black, 4 mm long, 1.5 mm wide. **Nerves:** Absent except for the two lateral ribs. **Beaks:** Cylindric, sparsely ciliate-serrulate, reddish black, bidentate, 1 mm long.

ACHENES: Obovoid, trigonous, apiculate, substipitate, granular, yellowish green to brown, 1.5 mm long, 0.75 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Frequent in mountain meadows and on rocky slopes at **higher elevations**. Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. **July-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: *C. nelsonii*—In the Intermountain Region above 3,660 m in the Uinta Mountains of Utah; perigynia smaller (4 mm long, 1.5 mm wide), punctulate, granular, slightly compressed, and mostly dark except for the margins. *C. nova*—Occurs at elevations lower than 3,050 m; perigynia larger (2.8-4.5 mm long; 2-3.5 mm wide), flattened, membranous, and pale throughout except for the beak.