

SPECIES AT RISK

in New Brunswick



Prototype Quillwort

Scientific name: *Isoetes prototypus*
N.B. Status: Endangered

Prototype Quillwort

Description & Biology

The Prototype Quillwort is a plant of our cool, clear lakes. It was recognized as a new species only in 1991. It looks like a tuft of quills, with its stiff, needle-like leaves that are attached as in a cluster at the base. The leaves are dark green in colour, turning to red-brown near the point of attachment. The leaves retain their green colour year round.

Quillworts, as a group, are regarded as primitive plants that are closely related to the ferns. They lack flowers and do not reproduce by seeds. Rather, they produce spores, which develop in small sacs called sporangia, at the base of the leaves.

Habitat & Survival

The Prototype Quillwort is an aquatic species that forms dense carpets on the bottom of lakes. It has a preference for spring-fed lakes where the water is cool and clear. To date it has been found at water depths of about two metres, and on varied substrates of mud, sand or gravel.

Sound shoreline stewardship practices, such as well-maintained septic systems and leaving natural vegetation along shorelines, are effective approaches to the conservation of this species.

Distribution

The Prototype Quillwort has thus far been found in only one lake in New Brunswick. Globally, it has been found in a small number of lakes located in Nova Scotia, Maine and New Brunswick.



NB Distribution of
Prototype Quillwort