

BRIEF NOTE

RUPPIA MARITIMA, NEW FOR THE FLORA OF OHIO¹

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Ruppia maritima L. (Ruppiaceae), a submersed aquatic halophyte, has not previously been reported as part of the flora of Ohio (Braun 1967, Weishaupt 1971). We collected specimens of this species with flowers and fruits on 26 September 1980 from a shallow saline pond located on the property of the Morton Salt Company at Rittman, Wayne County, Ohio (long. 81° 47' 30", lat. 40° 57' 30"; SW ¼ Sec. 12, T18N, R13W).

Muenschler (1944) and Fernald (1950) indicate that *R. maritima* is broadly distributed in Atlantic and Gulf coastal environments of eastern North America, and that it is also associated with saline ponds of the western half of North America. It has also been obtained from saline ponds in western New York. Svenson (1927) hypothesized that this distribution of halophytes around the Great Lakes could only be related to salinization during a post-pleistocene submergence in New York and the St. Lawrence Valley where saline conditions have persisted to the present time. He concluded that human agencies may be the most important factor in the dispersal of these plants. Schofield (1959) reported the occurrence of *R. maritima* in the James Bay region of Canada. As suggested earlier for *Spergularia marina* (Riehl and Ungar 1980), we can only explain the disjunct inland distribution of *R. maritima* through long distance dispersal by man or migrating birds.

A large population of *R. maritima* was found growing in shallow waters along the margin of a small saline pond on the

Rittman marsh. In September 1980 most plants were in flower, and some contained mature fruits. By November, 2 m along the edge of the pond had dried exposing dense populations of *R. maritima*. The waters of the pond had a pH of 8.5, an electrical conductivity of 16.0 mmhos/cm/ at 25C, and a dissolved solid content, determined gravimetrically, of 10,803 ppm. No other submersed flowering plants were found in this pond and adjacent shallow saline ponds did not contain *R. maritima*, indicating that even locally there is a disjunct distribution of this species.

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