

Hippuridaceae

mare's-tail family

A monogeneric family, it has three North American species, one in Nova Scotia. It is an aquatic emergent. Bearing filiform leaves in whorls of 6–12, it is distinctive in shallow silty waters. The plants bear minute glandular pubescence scattered along the stems. Flowers are axillary and solitary, carried near the top of the plant. Wind-pollinated, some are perfect and some are unisexual. Calyx is reduced to a ridge around the ovary and the corolla is absent. The single style is stigmatic most of its length. Fruits are achenes.

Hippuris L.

Mare's-tail

It is as described above.

Hippuris vulgaris L.

Mare's-tail; hippuride vulgaire



Photo by Sean Blaney

Stems are simple, and those which bear flowers, erect. Leaves are filiform and sessile, arranged in whorls around the stem and reduced in size towards the top of the stem. Sometimes the submerged leaves are reduced to scales. Fruit is elliptic.

An aquatic plant, frequents the edges of ponds, swamp pools and in brackish water behind barrier beaches.

Widespread and locally abundant.

Ranges from Greenland to AK, south to CA, NM and NY; Eurasia.