



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

Carex albonigra Mack.
Black-and-white scaled sedge

HABIT: Loosely tufted from short rhizomes. **Culms:** Stiff and erect, reddish-tinged at the base, 1-3 dm tall, exceeding the leaves, **phyllopodic**, dried leaves of the previous year conspicuous.

LEAVES: 6-12, clustered toward the base. **Blades:** Firm, short, flat, grayish green, seldom over 10 cm long, mostly 2-7 mm wide. **Sheaths:** Thin and hyaline ventrally, concave or V-shaped at the mouth.

BRACTS: Lowest leaflike, sheathless or short-sheathing, brownish red tinged at the base, equaling or shorter than the inflorescence; upper reduced.

SPIKES: 2-4, oblong, sessile or short-pedunculate, individually distinguishable, closely aggregated into a headlike inflorescence. **Terminal: Gynaecandrous**, 10-15(20) mm long, 6-8 mm wide. **Lateral: Pistillate**, closely flowered, 8-10 mm long, 4-6 mm wide; perigynia black or reddish black, appressed or ascending.

PISTILLATE SCALES: Broadly ovate with an acute to obtuse tip, equaling or shorter than the perigynia, usually concealing them, dark reddish brown or blackish purple with the upper margins often white-hyaline.

PERIGYNIA: Broadly elliptic-obovate to ovate, rounded to somewhat tapered at the base, slightly flattened, minutely papillate-roughened toward the beak, membranous, substipitate, reddish black, 2.5-3.5 mm long, 1.3-2 mm wide. **Nerves:** Absent except for the 2 marginal nerves. **Beaks:** Obscurely bidentate, 0.1-0.5 mm long.

ACHENES: Trigonous, sessile, 1.3-1.9 mm long, 0.7-1.3 mm wide. **Stigmas:** 3.

HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION: Frequent on open, often dry or rocky slopes and summits at **high elevations**. Alaska and Yukon south to Washington and California and east through Idaho, Nevada (White Pine and Elko Counties), Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. **July-August.**

SIMILAR SPECIES: See appendix, table 2.