

# Chionochloa bromoides

## COMMON NAME

coastal tussock, seabird tussock

## SYNONYMS

Danthonia bromides Hook.f.

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

Chionochloa bromoides (Hook.f.) Zotov

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

CHIBRO

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island where virtually confined to northern offshore islands and easterly headlands from the Bay of Islands south to the Poor Knights, Chickens and Mokohinau Islands. One westerly outlier occurs at Maunganui Bluff.

## HABITAT

Coastal on cliff faces, bluffs, rock stacks, and in petrel scrub. Well established plants often have their bases heavily burrowed by sea birds such as diving petrels.



Maunganui Bluff (November). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Maunganui Bluff (November). Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Gynodioecious, stout, pendent often sprawling, bright green tussock with persistent leaves and sheaths. **Leaf-sheath** to 150 mm, shining yellow, keeled, persistent and entire, becoming fibrous, margin abundantly long hairy below, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm; adaxially with many minute interrib hairs. **Ligule** to 1.5 mm. Leaf-blade to 500 × 10 mm, flat or shallowly U-shaped, smooth, persistent, adaxially glabrous except for long hairs on margin below and some short or long hairs, sometimes dense, at base. **Culm** to 700 mm, internodes glabrous. **Inflorescence** to 200 mm, very congested; rachis and main branches glabrous but with some long hairs at axils; pedicels short and densely hairy. **Spikelets** of up to 6 florets. **Glumes** acute or slightly awned, < adjacent lemma lobes, many prickly-teeth abaxially and a few adaxially; lower to 12 mm, 1–3-nerved, upper to 16 mm, 5-nerved. **Lemma** to 9 mm; hairs dense at margin and in all internerves though sometimes absent from all or some, less than or equal to sinus, prickly-teeth abundant abaxially and adaxially on lobes and margins; lateral lobes to 5 mm including awn to 3 mm or acute, rarely dividing from awn at sinus; central awn to 22 mm from indistinct straight column. **Palea** to 10 mm, prickly-teeth abaxially and on flanks. **Callus** to 1.5 mm, hairs to 5 mm. **Rachilla** to 0.5 mm. **Lodicules** to 1.75 mm. **Anthers** to 5.5 mm in male-fertile flowers, up to 3 mm in male-sterile flowers. **Male-fertile** flowers with stigma-styles to 3.5 mm, ovary to 1.5 mm. **Male-sterile** flowers to 5 mm, ovary 1.5 mm. **Seeds** to 3.5 mm.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

## FLOWERING

September–December

## FRUITING

November–March

## LIFE CYCLE

Florets are wind dispersed (Thorsen et al., 2009).

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Can be difficult. Best grown from fresh seed. Plants should be planted where they are to grow as they resent much root disturbance. Best in full sun, in a freely draining soil or on a stone wall. Dislikes humidity.

## THREATS

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a naturally uncommon, regional endemic.

## ETYMOLOGY

**chionochloa**: Snow grass

## ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.  
Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chionochloa-bromoides/>