

# Chionochloa lanea

## COMMON NAME

Stewart Island snow tussock

## SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1991)

## FAMILY

Poaceae

## AUTHORITY

Chionochloa lanea Connor

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

## NVS CODE

CHILAN

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Stewart Island.

## HABITAT

Coastal to alpine. Usually in montane to alpine grassland and scrub in wet, boggy, or peaty sites. Descending to almost sea level in the south on cliffs and boulder falls.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Table Hill, Stewart Island. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.



At Table Hill, Stewart Island. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, slender tussock with abundant, long hairy, dull sheaths, and shiny, slender, deciduous leaves. **Leaf-sheath** to 150 mm, compressed, entire, persistent, covered with long (4 mm) interlacing internerve hairs, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm. **Ligule** to 1 mm. Leaf-blade to 450 × 2 mm, V-shaped, or convolute, disarticulating at ligule, abaxially glabrous, adaxially with very short hairs at base and prickle-teeth and papillae above; margin smooth. **Culm** to 600 mm, internodes glabrous, slightly compressed, sheath with few or no long hairs. **Inflorescence** to 100 mm, pulvinate, few spikelets, abundantly long hairy. **Spikelets** of up to 6 florets. **Glumes** glabrous, acute, > adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 10 mm, 3-nerved, upper to 14 mm, 5-nerved. **Lemma** to 5 mm; hairs dense at margin and few or none aside central nerve, glabrous elsewhere, < sinus; lateral lobes up to 6 mm, linear-triangular; central awn up to 15 mm from twisting column to 2 mm. **Palea** to 6 mm. **Callus** to 0.8 mm, hairs to 3 mm. **Rachilla** to 1 mm. **Lodicules** to 1 mm. **Anthers** to 3.5 mm. **Ovary** to 1 mm; stigma-styles to 4 mm. **Seeds** to 1.5 mm.

## MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

## FLOWERING

November–December

## FRUITING

December–April

## LIFE CYCLE

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

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and from rooted pieces but very slow to establish. Prefers a damp soil, and is best grown in semi-shaded conditions. In the northern part of its New Zealand this species rarely flowers.

## THREATS

Range Restricted Stewart island endemic which is abundant throughout its known range. Plants are browsed by white-tailed deer but otherwise seem secure.

## 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-lanea/>