

Eleocharis neozelandica

COMMON NAME

sand spike sedge, spikesedge

SYNONYMS

None

FAMILY

Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY

Eleocharis neozelandica Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

NVS CODE

ELENEO

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 30

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, EF, RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP, EF

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: EF, DP

2004 | Gradual Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to North Island and South Island. Scarce in the South Island and now only known from Farewell Spit.

HABITAT

Damp sand flats, often near streams or in places where fresh water filters through the sand at depth or where it is temporarily ponded.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous, widely creeping and mat-forming spike-sedge of damp sandy flats. **Rhizomes** brown, 1 mm diam. **Culms** 30–60–(80) × 0.5–1 mm, rigid, curved, sheaths membraneous, lower purple-brown, upper brown with orifice slight to very oblique, tapering to a sharp point. **Spikelets** 5–6–(8) × 1–4 mm, 4–10-flowered, broadly ovoid, acute to obtuse, broader than culm. **Glumes** 2.5–3.5 mm, ovate, obtuse, uninerved. **Hypogynous bristles** absent. **Stamens** (2)–3. **Style** 2-fid. **Nut** 1.5–2 × 1 mm., assymmetrically obovate, biconvex, narrowed in lower half, smooth, shining, golden-brown, style base persistent, small.



Kaitoke Beach, Great Barrier Island.
Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Kaitoke Beach, Great Barrier Island.
Photographer: Bec Stanley, Licence: CC BY-SA.

SIMILAR TAXA

Could only be confused with *E. gracilis* which may also grow in similar habitats. However, that species has hypogenous bristles, a trifid style and trigonous nuts. *E. neozelandica* has no hypogenous bristles, a bifid style and biconvex nut.

FLOWERING

Flowers may be found throughout the year

FRUITING

Fruit may be found throughout the year

LIFE CYCLE

Bristly nuts are dispersed by water and possibly wind and attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from division of whole plants and fresh seed but short-lived and difficult to maintain over time. Does best if repotted regularly with the soil kept damp. Does not persist for long in most garden situations.

THREATS

Vulnerable through natural perturbations of its sand flat habitat. Some populations have been lost due to coastal development and through the spread of weeds. Naturally an ephemeral species which does not generally persist for long at any particular site.

ETYMOLOGY

eleocharis: Charm of the swamp

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970) and Stanley (1999)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Stanley R. 1999. A new record for *Eleocharis neozelandica*. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 54: 2.

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/eleocharis-neozelandica/>