

# Ranunculus acraeus

## SYNONYMS

None - first described December 2006.

## FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

## AUTHORITY

Ranunculus acraeus Heenan et P.J.Lockhart

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, RF

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Not Threatened

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, North Otago (Barrier Range, St Marys Range, St Bathans Range, Kakanui Mountains and Ida Range) and in south-west Canterbury (Hall Range, Godley River valley).

## HABITAT

A high alpine species of stable, coarse rock-fields of greywacke and non-foliated schist.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Robust, summer-green, rhizomatous herb, up to 40 cm high, forming patches up to 1 m across. Rhizomes numerous, stout, 10–12 mm diameter, regularly branched. Lamina 60–75 × 75–130 mm, broadly reniform or broadly orbicular, grey to grey-green, sparsely covered with pilose hairs, glabrate or glabrous, divided into 3 primary segments; margin crenate, teeth 2–9 mm long, broadly obovate, oblong to broadly oblong, apices obtuse, margin red; petiole 50–250 × 5–9 mm, fleshy, terete; sheath 15–40 mm, moderately to densely covered with pilose hairs. Inflorescence 80–400 × 5–14 mm, yellow-green to green, terete, with 1–6 flowers, each flower subtended by a leafy bract. Bracts similar to leaves, sessile, smaller toward distal flowers. Peduncles glabrous. Flowers 40–50 mm diameter. Sepals 6–7, 20–22 × 8–11 mm, yellow-green to light green, oblong, oblong-elliptic or broadly elliptic, hairy on abaxial surface, glabrous on adaxial surface. Petals 16–27, 22–27 × 5–13 mm, yellow, narrowly to broadly oblanceolate, apex obtuse, nectary a simple pit. Stamens 110–139, glabrous; filament 1.6–8.5 × 0.7–1.4 mm, translucent; anthers 1.8–2.8 mm long, cream. Carpels 126–171. Achenes 6.4–7.3 × 2.7–3.4 mm, yellow-brown; beak curved to ventral side, laterally compressed, tapering toward a point at apex.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Closest to *R. piliferus* (F.J.F.Fisher) Heenan et P.J.Lockhart from which it is can be distinguished by its finely crenate leaf and bract margins, glabrous peduncle; by the 6–7 abaxially hairy, adaxially glabrous sepals, and allopatric distribution.



Awakino skifield. Photographer: Neill Simpson, Licence: All rights reserved.



Hawkdun Range, December. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## FLOWERING

November - January

## FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

## FRUITING

December - January

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

## THREATS

Uncommon. Known from c.200 plants on St Marys Range, 2 plants each on the Barrier Range and Hall Range, and an unknown number of plants at the other localities which are based on old herbarium specimens. At all recently visited sites plants are at risk from or are browsed by Thar and Chamois. Because it is a high alpine, and has been confused in past literature with other more common species, this species threat status is qualified as Data Poor (DP)

## ETYMOLOGY

**ranunculus:** From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## NOTES ON TAXONOMY

It is further distinguished from *R. piliferus* on molecular (DNA) grounds (see Heenan et al. (2006; N.Z.J.Bot. 44: 425-441.)

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 October 2008). Description by P.B. Heenan based on Heenan et al. (2006).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Heenan, P.B; Lockhart, P.J.; Kirkham, N.; McBreen, K.; Havell, D. 2006: Relationships in the alpine *Ranunculus haastii* (Ranunculaceae) complex and recognition of *R. piliferus* and *R. acraeus* from southern New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 44: 425-441.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Ranunculus acraeus* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-acraeus/> (Date website was queried)

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-acraeus/>