

Ranunculus brevis

SYNONYMS

Ranunculus depressus Kirk nom. illeg.

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus brevis Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

RANBRE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, east of the main divide.

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine (300-1200 m a.s.l.). Usually in shallow muddy, sparsely vegetated pools, or in swamps, river, tarn or lake margins. Never common.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Often diminutive tufted, non-rhizomatous perennial herb up to 50 mm tall of open muddy ground, tarn margins, shallow pools and swamps. Plants occasionally producing offset rosettes. Leaves 10–30 mm long, brown-green to bronze-green, deltoid, 1-2-ternatifid, segments linear, finely hairy. Flowers solitary, up to 10 mm diameter, borne on short (up to 40 mm long) erect, hairy scapes. Sepals spreading, glabrous or with sparsely hairy. Petals 5, 2–2.8 x 0.5–1 mm, yellow, oblong-obovate; nectary single, positioned about 1 mm from petal base; scale semi-lunate. Receptacle hairy. Achenes few, body 1.2–2 mm long, scarcely flattened, glabrous, beak 0.3–0.5 mm long, curved at tip.



Opuha River catchment. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 23/10/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Opuha River catchment. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 23/10/2022, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA

Morphologically very distinct and unlikely to be confused with any other *Ranunculus* found within its wetland habitat. The distinctive brownish-green 1-2-ternatifid leaves with linear segments, small solitary flowers (up to 10 mm diameter), hairy receptacle, and achenes with the body much > than the beak serve to distinguish it. Plants from gravel-bottomed subalpine tarns at several locations in Central Otago are similar to this species, but are almost glabrous and have flattened linear ultimate segments of the leaf. The identity of these Otago plants (pictured above in the last photo) is currently unresolved.

FLOWERING

October - February

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

November - March

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in full sun in damp soil but prone to powdery mildew and inclined to be short-lived.

THREATS

Not very well known. Apparently rather uncommon and sparsely distributed throughout its known range. It is probably threatened by the spread of taller, faster growing wetland weeds, pasture grasses, and habitat loss through drainage or changes in the local hydrologic regime due to irrigation and/or other changes in local land use.

ETYMOLOGY

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

brevis: Short

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2003). Description based on Webb et al. (1988) and fresh specimens.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV*. Christchurch, DSIR Botany Division.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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