

Ranunculus macropus

COMMON NAME

swamp buttercup

SYNONYMS

Ranunculus longipetiolatus Colenso

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus macropus Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

RANMAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 96

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Data Deficient

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Gradual Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North and northern South Islands. In the North Island formerly widespread from the northern Waikato south to Wellington. Most recent collections come from the western Waikato, Rotorua Lakes District and East Cape to Hawke's Bay. In the South Island, apparently always scarce, and there seem to have been few collections made over the last 20 or so years. Recently (2010) a population was found at Canadian Flats on the Taieri River in Otago, and scattered populations are present in wetlands on the Canterbury Plains west of Christchurch, and at Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland. Usually found in raupō (*Typha orientalis*) dominated wetlands where it grows in still moderately deep to deep water.

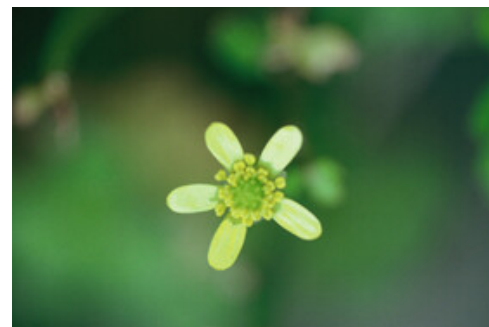
WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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



Flower, Taupo Swamp. Plimmerton.
Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken:
01/12/1976, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Close up of flower of *Ranunculus macropus*, Ex
Cult. March 1989, from swamp near Gisborne.
Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC
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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Semi-aquatic to aquatic herb. Rosettes tufted on stout creeping stems. Basal leaves on very stout petioles (7-15-30(-40) mm x 5-10 mm, arising from bulbous nodes. Leaves ternate (15-)-20-40(-80) mm wide, leaflets sessile or shortly stalked, cuneiform, shallowly 3-fid, apices crenate, serrate or entire, lateral leaflets slightly to distinctly larger than terminal, cauline leaves few, similar to basal but smaller. Flowers (1-)-3-5 per stem, 10-15(-20) mm diam., pedicels glabrous. Sepals spreading or weakly recurved, glabrous. Petals (1-)-3-5(-7), dark yellow, oblong to broadly oblong, shortly clawed, nectary single, 0.5-1(-1.5) mm from petal base. Receptacle with basal collar of bristles. Achenes 15-50(-65), hardly flattened, glabrous 1.5-2 mm, beak straight, 1-1.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Confused with *R. amphitrichus* and *R. glabrifolius*. Species hybridizes with *R. amphitrichus*, the progeny of which are fertile (P. J. de Lange pers. obs.). Species is distinguished by the larger flower, with broad, irregularly spaced, oblong petals, whose nectary scale is virtually obscured by a dense cluster of carpels when viewed from above. In good habitat and growing conditions *R. macropus* is a very robust plant with very large, ternate leaves borne on stout petioles.

FLOWERING

September - April (but sporadic flowering may occur at anytime of the year)

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

October - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from the division of whole plants and from fresh seed. A wetland species which requires permanently damp but sunny situations, Good in shallow ponds.

THREATS

Threatened by wetland drainage, modification and the spread of weeds. In large parts of its former range hybrids are now more commonly encountered than the actual species.

ETYMOLOGY

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

macropus: Big foot

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

This species seems to be a shy flowerer, and is more often found in a sterile, vegetative state than reproductive. This trait is carried over into F1 hybrids. Hybrids are common wherever wetlands containing this species and *R. amphitrichus* have been modified, e.g, the wetlands of the lower Waikato. The taxonomic distinctiveness of *Ranunculus macropus* needs further study. It is truly, as Cheeseman (1925) makes clear a 'critical species'.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2003). Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) and fresh specimens.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer

Cheeseman, T.F. 1925: *Manual of the New Zealand Flora*. Wellington, Government Printer.

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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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-macropus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

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