

Amphibromus fluitans

COMMON NAME

water brome

SYNONYMS

Amphibromus gracilis P.Morris of Australia is now regarded as a synonym of *A. fluitans*.

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Amphibromus fluitans Kirk

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

AMPFLU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 42$

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: EF, TO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: EF, TO

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand, North and South Islands. In the North Island it is known from Ninety Mile Beach and Karikari Peninsula to Paekakariki and Lake Wairarapa. In the South Island known only from Maher's Swamp, near Punakaiki and from Lake Tekapo. Present in Australia where it is very uncommon. The largest populations of the species seem to be at the Waihora and Arohaki lagoons, at Lake Rerewhakaaitu in wetlands on the north eastern and eastern margin of Lake Wairarapa.

HABITAT

Coastal to montane in moderately fertile, seasonally dry wetlands or along the edges of shallow lakes and lagoons.



Plants flowering on semi-dried mud of seasonal pond, Lake Wairarapa. Photographer: Colin Ogle



Close up of spikelets, Lake Wairarapa, Boggy Pond. Photographer: Colin Ogle

FEATURES

Somewhat flaccid to weakly tufted, stoloniferous, semi-aquatic grass, forming circular grey-green mats 70-400 x 150 mm on muddy ground (up to 400 mm tall when growing up through surrounding vegetation). Culms decumbent, rooting at lower nodes, erect or floating above. Leaf-sheath papery, smooth or scabrid, often wholly scabrid toward culm apex. Ligule 1.5-5 mm, long-tapered, acute, initially entire, becoming lacerate. Leaf-blade 50-125 x 0.6-3 mm, grey-green, flat or inrolled, upper surface somewhat scabrid, shallowly ribbed, undersides notably more scabrid and prominently ribbed, apex acute. Culm internodes mostly smooth, rarely scabrid below nodes. Panicle 65-13 mm, erect, initially enclosed below by uppermost leaf-sheath, at fruiting often expanding entirely above leaves; branches and pedicels scabrid. Spikelets 15-25 mm, 3-6-flowered, pale green. Glumes unequal, glabrous, obtuse margins ciliate-scabrid; lower 2-3 mm, 1-nerved, narrowly lanceolate, upper 2-4 mm, 3-nerved, ovate-lanceolate. Lemma 4-5.5 mm, 7-nerved, firm, green, margin rather wide, hyaline, minutely scabrid or hairy; lemma lobes 2, obtuse; awn 7-18 mm, straight, arising from lemma midpoint. Palea < lemma, keels stiffly ciliate, interkeel glabrous. Seeds 1.5-2 x 0.5-0.7 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Sterile specimens of creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera* L.) are most similar and often grows in the same habitat. Creeping bent has fleshy leaves and the leaf blade tends to be wider than the sheath. Kneed foxtail (*Alopecurus genicuatus* L.) is also similar in the vegetative state but it is larger and coarser. Sweetgrasses (*Glyceria* species) have long thin (often blue-green coloured) leaves with cross-veinlets and they tend to float on water.

FLOWERING

September - May (dependent on water levels)

FRUITING

September - July (dependent on water levels)

LIFE CYCLE

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and the division of rooted pieces. Can be grown in dry ground but prefers damp soil. Good in a pot, and an unusual and attractive grass for a pond or slow flowing stream

THREATS

Habitat loss through wetland drainage, stock grazing and competition from weeds.

ETYMOLOGY

fluitans: From the Greek fluito (floating)

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connon (2000).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: Flora of New Zealand Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 pp.
- Gardner, R. 2000. Notes towards an excursion Flora. *Amphibromus fluitans* (Poaceae). Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 55: 54-55
- Ogle, C.C. 1987. A rarely seen native grass *Amphibromus fluitans*. Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin, 43: 29-32
- Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/amphibromus-fluitans/>