

# Carex litorosa

## COMMON NAME

sea sedge

## SYNONYMS

*Carex littoralis* Petrie, *Carex australis* Kirk

## FAMILY

Cyperaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Carex litorosa* L.H.Bailey

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

## NVS CODE

CARLIT

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 48

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

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

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Declining

2004 | Serious Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to North, South and Stewart Islands.

## HABITAT

Coastal in salty, brackish marshes and on sandy, tidal river banks.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

## FEATURES

An upright sedge to 800 mm tall (but usually smaller), that forms pale green or reddish, dense tussocks with curly tops. Leaves are flat on one side, curved on the other and slightly serrated along the edge, 1.5 mm wide and about the same length as the flower stem. Flower stems are cylindrical and upright, with light brown spikes.



*Carex litorosa*. Photographer: Cathy Jones



Whitiau Scientific Reserve, Whangaehu River mouth. Photographer: Colin Ogle

### **SIMILAR TAXA**

*Carex divisa*, which also grows in saltmarshes but has blue-grey leaves, and smaller, compact black spikes borne on long stems near the apex of the leaves of each tussock.

### **FLOWERING**

October to December

### **FRUITING**

December to April (but seedheads long persistent)

### **LIFE CYCLE**

Nuts surrounded by inflated utricles are dispersed by granivory and wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

### **PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE**

Easy from fresh seed and by the division of whole plants. Very easy to grow in a range of substrates.

### **THREATS**

Habitat loss through coastal development. Encroachment by weeds is a serious problem in the North Island, especially from species such as *Spartina*, tall fescue and *Carex divisa*.

### **ETYMOLOGY**

**carex**: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.

**litorosa**: From the Latin *littus* 'shore', meaning shore-loving or growing on the shore

### **ATTRIBUTION**

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 2 September 2003.

### **REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

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

### **NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION**

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### **MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-litorosa/>