

Chiloglottis cornuta

COMMON NAMES

bird orchid, ant orchid

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Terrestrial, glabrous herbs. Plant at flowering 40-100 mm tall, at fruit up to 300 mm tall, the mature fruiting capsule held well above the floral bract. **Tubers** ovoid. **Stem** erect, fleshy. **Leaves** 2–(3), usually closely spaced together, otherwise spreading, fleshy, petiolate, petioles short (5–10 mm long); lamina 30–100 × 10–30 mm, green, oblong, oblong-lanceolate to elliptic; apex acute to subacute, base cuneate to attenuate. **Flowers** 1–(2), erect, usually wedged between or just above leaves. **Floral bract** with long cylindrical sheath; bract attached well below ovary, the intervening portion elongating as fruit ripens; lamina equal in length or greater than ovary, green, sometimes larger, giving the appearance of a third leaf. **Perianth** 15 mm tall, green, more or less fleshy. **Sepals** shortly tailed (caudate); dorsal sepal ovate-lanceolate; lateral sepals much narrower, more or less channelled. **Petals** slightly shorter again, ovate-lanceolate, erect to spreading. **Labellum** broadly to narrowly triangular, on irritable short claw; margins entire, calli dark green to reddish, more or less globose, with a mainly median/central distribution, two of the calli often forming inturned auricles near the base. **Column** elongate, erect, almost as long as lip, the foot ending in a transverse thickening; wing narrow to level of stigma, from there wider and extending almost to anther apex in a broad, usually incurved lobe. **Anther** terminal, apiculate, prominent, discoid, pollinia coherent, finely granular. **Stigma** prominent, discoid, rostellum small, median.

SIMILAR TAXA

Chiloglottis valida is a somewhat similar vagrant species to New Zealand. It is a much larger plant with dark green to almost brown green leaves and greenish-purple to purple-brown flowers. The labellum is ovate-cordate rather than broadly to narrowly triangular, and much more irritable. *Chiloglottis valida* is strictly insect-pollinated, and lacking its natural pollination vector rarely sets seed in New Zealand. *Chiloglottis cornuta* is predominantly selfing, so it freely produces capsules. Both species may be found growing together.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands, Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku. Also Australia (New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania).



Pinehaven, Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 16/12/2007, Licence: CC BY.



Queens Park, Invercargill. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 05/11/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC.

HABITAT

Widespread in usually moist, partially shaded situations in lowland to montane (up to 1000 m a.s.l.) indigenous forest or shrubland, rarely fringing wetlands or found growing within mires and peat bogs. Rarely subalpine to alpine. Often found in plantation forestry, especially under pines where it may on occasion grow intermixed with *Chiloglottis valida* (D.L.Jones) Szlach.

GENUS

Chiloglottis

FAMILY

Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY

Chiloglottis cornuta Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Simpliglottis cornuta (Hook.f.) Szlach.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

Miller & Clements (2014) show that the segregate genera *Myrmechila* and *Simpliglottis* proposed by Szlachek (2001) and Jones & Clements (2005) should be reduced to synonymy within *Chiloglottis*. That treatment is followed here.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–May

FRUITING

October–July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in a cool, moist, deep, well drained, gritty soil, mulched with well rotted pine needles and bark. Does better in dappled light than full sun. An attractive species which flowers readily in cultivation.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACU: Facultative Upland

Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

cornuta: Knobbed

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

Key to native orchids of New Zealand

NVS CODE

CHICOR

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Jones DL, Clements MA. 2005. Miscellaneous Nomenclatural Notes and Changes in Australian, New Guinea and New Zealand Orchidaceae. *The Orchadian* 15: 33–42.

Miller JT, Clements MA. 2014. Molecular phylogenetic analyses of Drakaeinae: Diurideae (Orchidaceae) based on DNA sequences of the internal transcribed spacer region. *Australian Systematic Botany* 27: 3–22.

<https://doi.org/10.1071/SB13036>.

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Szlachekto DL. 2001. Genera et Species Orchidalium 1. *Polish Botanical Journal* 46: 11–26.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (10 April 2007). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chiloglottis-cornuta/>

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