

Chionochloa defracta

COMMON NAMES

Red Hills snow tussock

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, St

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tussocks of variable stature, some robust with long leaves, others slender with shorter, narrow leaves; culm internodes hairy; leaves stiff, scabrid, deciduous. **Leaf-sheath** to 250 mm, fracturing into short segments, shining light brown at base, long (4 mm) and short deciduous inter-rib hairs above, margin long hairy above, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm. **Ligule** to 0.8 mm. **Leaf-blade** to 750 × 1.3 mm diameter, acicular rush-like, midrib evident, falling with part of sheath, abaxially with long hairs aside midrib below becoming very scabrid above, adaxially with weft of long hairs at base, abundant prickles and papillae above; margin thick, below with long (up to 4 mm) hairs interlocking across leaf-blade, scabrid above. **Culm** to 650 mm; lower internodes densely hairy, less so above, hairy below inflorescence. **Inflorescence** to 200 mm, narrow and strict, very scabrid and with a few long hairs at branch axils and below spikelets. **Spikelets** of up to 6 lightly purpled florets. **Glumes** acute or shortly awned, scabrid above, less than or equal to adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 11 mm, 3-nerved, upper to 13 mm, 5–7-nerved. **Lemma** to 5.5 mm; hairs dense at margin and aside central nerve, often in all internerves or sometimes few or absent, greater than or equal to sinus; lateral lobes to 4.5 mm including awn to 2 mm, or acute, scabrid above; central awn to 11 mm from 2.5 mm twisting column. **Palea** to 8 mm. **Callus** to 1 mm, hairs to 4 mm. **Rachilla** to 1 mm, very occasionally short hairy. **Lodicules** to 1 mm. **Anthers** to 3.5 mm. **Ovary** to 1 mm; stigma-styles to 3.5 mm. **Seeds** to 3.5 mm.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: South Island (mineral belt of Nelson and Marlborough).

HABITAT

Upper montane to alpine. An ultramafic endemic which often is the dominant species within grassland. Also in scrub, and open forest or on ultramafic scree.

THREATS

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a naturally uncommon, regional endemic.

GENUS

Chionochloa

FAMILY

Poaceae



Asbestos Quarry, Takaka Valley, Kahurangi National Park. Photographer: Simon Walls, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Asbestos Quarry, Takaka Valley, Kahurangi National Park. Photographer: Simon Walls, Date taken: 29/01/2014, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa defracta Connor

SYNONYMS

None (first described in 1991)

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

NVS CODE

CHIDEF

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, St

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/chionochloa-defracta/>

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