

Chionochloa juncea

COMMON NAMES

North Westland snow tussock

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tall, rush-like, red tussock with swollen bases from rootstock clothed in old leaf-sheaths, leaves persistent, ultimately falling below sheath with one fracture. **Leaf-sheath** to 150 mm, dark brown, entire, persistent, internerves hairy but often appearing glabrous, margin long hairy above, apical tuft of hairs to 4 mm. **Ligule** to 0.5 mm. Leaf-blade to 700 × 1 mm, acicular rush-like, finally falling with top part of sheath, abaxially glabrous sometimes with long hairs below aside prominent, shining, hollow keel, becoming glabrous, adaxially with weft of long hairs at base, prickle-teeth above; margin with long hairs below glabrous above. **Culm** to 900 mm, internodes glabrous. Inflorescence to 200 mm, open, spikelets on long, pulvinate, flexuous branches; rachis and branches sparsely short hairy below becoming glabrous except for few hairs at axils and below spikelets. **Spikelets** of up to 6 purplish florets. **Glumes** glabrous, < adjacent lemma lobes; lower to 11 mm, 3-nerved, upper to 12 mm, 5-nerved. **Lemma** to 5.5 mm; hairs dense on margin, very few aside central nerve, glabrous elsewhere, < sinus; lateral lobes up to 4 mm, including awn up to 2.5 mm; central awn up to 10 mm, reflexed from 1 mm flat column. **Palea** to 6 mm. **Callus** to 1 mm, hairs to 3 mm. **Rachilla** to 0.8 mm. Lodicules to 0.5 mm. **Anthers** to 3.5 mm. **Ovary** to 0.5 mm; stigma-styles to 2 mm. **Seeds** to 2 mm.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Westland (Denniston and Stockton Plateaus).

HABITAT

Montane to subalpine. Locally common in scrub, tussock grassland and swampy ground overlying coal measures.

THREATS

Widespread within the coal measures of North Westland. In most places it is secure, however, open cast coal mining now threatens some large populations.

GENUS

Chionochloa

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Chionochloa juncea Zotov



Denniston, Westland. Photographer: Kelvin Lloyd, Licence: All rights reserved.



Denniston Plateau. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 15/02/2014, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

Danthonia raoulii var. teretifolia Petrie; Danthonia rigida var. teretifolia (Petrie) Zotov

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown in an acidic, damp soil in full sun or partial shade. Plants dislike drying out and will not tolerate drought or long periods of humidity. Very slow growing. An unusual tussock whose rush-like foliage is very attractive.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

chionochloa: Snow grass

junceae: Rush-like

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

CHIJUN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 42

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: RR

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-junceae/>

