

Convolvulus waitaha

COMMON NAMES

grass convolvulus

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Lianes & Related Trailing Plants - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizomatous, lianoid, decumbent, spreading perennial herb. Stems, spreading, often ascending, up to 800 mm long, sparse to densely covered in retrorse hairs. Leaves in rosettes and alternate on stems 6-17 x 5-12 mm, deltoid, deltoid-ovate, to broad-oblong, green; glabrous or with scattered hairs near lamina/petiole junction, margins entire to undulate, irregularly lobed, base truncate, rarely oblique; apex retuse rarely obtuse to subacute. Pedicel 8-18 mm long, sparsely hairy. Sepals 3.6-4 x 2.1-2.6 mm, obovate to ovate, green both surfaces glabrous. Corolla 10-16 mm wide when open, white, comprising five fused lobes, mid-petalline band green. Capsule 5-6 x 5-6.5 mm, papery, globose, with 2-4 seeds. Seeds broadly obovate 3.1-3.9 x 2.3-3.3 mm, brown, with grey nut-brown. Surface covered in distinct but irregular ridges and tubercles.

SIMILAR TAXA

Convolvulus verecundus Allan and *C. fracto-saxosa* Petrie, from which it is distinguished by longer lianoid stems (up to 800 mm); usually glabrous, green leaves; corolla > 18 mm diam., when open; the pale green mid-petaline band; and by the seed coat being densely covered in distinct irregular tubercles and ridges.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. Easterly in the North Island and South Island. In the North Island known from an old record from the Hawke's Bay, otherwise from Cape Palliser west to Tongue Point. In the South Island it occurs from Marlborough south to Otago.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland (1 - 500 m a.s.l.), almost, but not strictly coastal. A species of short tussock grassland, introduced lightly browsed pastures, boulder banks, talus slopes and amongst fine gravel. It frequently grows with and tolerates introduced grasses and herbs.

THREATS

Not Threatened, though it has declined from the North Island, and is now only known with certainty from the vicinity of Cape Palliser.

GENUS

Convolvulus



Godley Head, Port Hills, Christchurch.
Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken:
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Godley Head, Port Hills, Christchurch.
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FAMILY

Convolvulaceae

AUTHORITY

Convolvulus waitaha (Sykes) Heenan, Molloy et de Lange

SYNONYMS

Convolvulus verecundus subsp. waitaha Sykes

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October - February

FRUITING

December - March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

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

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed. Plants grow best in well drained, fertile soils in full sun, and make an excellent pot plant. This species does not thrive in humid climates.

ETYMOLOGY

convolvulus: From Latin convolvere, which means to twine around

waitaha: Named for the location in Canterbury, from the Maori wai 'water' and taha 'to pass to one side', meaning a backwater.

NVS CODE

CONWAI

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 22$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

Reed, A. W. 2002: *The Reed Dictionary of New Zealand Place Names*. Reed Publishing. Auckland.

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* 11: 285-309.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/convolvulus-waitaha/>

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