

Craspedia diversicolor

COMMON NAMES

Wakanui woollyhead

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: CI, CD, OL

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Rosette-forming herb with oblanceolate leaves varying in colour from olive-green, grey to dark red. Leaf hairs very thin, appressed to flocculent. Flower heads on stems up to 250 mm tall. Flower head (capitula) white with dark red-purple anthers.

FLOWER COLOURS

White

SIMILAR TAXA

Allied to *Craspedia lanata* from which it differs by the rosette leaves which vary in colour from olive-green, grey to dark red, and are covered with a thin, appressed to flocculent, lanate indumentum, and whose florets have a white corolla and dark red-purple anthers (Breitwieser & Ford 2022).

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Canterbury Plains, formerly scattered over the plains in a few locations but now only known from Wakanui Beach (Wakanui Gully) (Breitwieser & Ford 2022).

HABITAT

Known from one site where it grows on the edge of a terrace on coastal cliffs in exotic grassland and shingle, at 20 m a.s.l. However, within its historic range it once grew within short tussock grassland and waste land with patches of bare soil, from 10 to 180 m a.s.l. (Breitwieser & Ford 2022).

THREATS

Craspedia diversicolor as *Craspedia* (qq) (CHR 167368; Wakanui)] was assessed as 'Threatened-Nationally Critical' (Criteria A1, Population <250 mature individuals, with a decline rate of 10%–30%), with the qualifier 'OL' (one location) by the New Zealand Indigenous Vascular Plant Threat Listing Panel (de Lange *et al.* 2018). Breitwieser & Ford (2022) provide evidence of historic decline and local extinction from five other sites on the Canterbury Plains. Beyond documenting these local extinctions, the assessment of de Lange *et al.* (2018) was not challenged by Breitwieser & Ford (2022).

GENUS

Craspedia

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Craspedia diversicolor Breitw. et K.A.Ford



Wild plant, Canterbury. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 08/10/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC-SA.



cultivated. Photographer: Jane Gosden, Date taken: 08/10/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SYNONYMS

None - first described in 2022

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Early November to early December

FRUITING

Late November to mid-December

EXTRA INFORMATION

See brief article in July 2022 *Trilepidea* [Four new species of woollyhead \(Craspedia\) described from the eastern South Island](#) (p. 2).

ETYMOLOGY

craspedia: Craspedia is named for the Greek 'Kraspedon', meaning an edge, hem or border, because of the woolly fringes of the leaves of the type species.

diversicolor: Derived from Latin. Epithet is in reference to the colour variation exhibited by the leaves of *Craspedia diversicolor*.

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Breitwieser I, Ford KA. 2023. Four new species of *Craspedia* (Compositae/Asteraceae, Gnaphalieae) from the South Island of New Zealand, all characterised by dark red-purple anthers. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 61(2–3): 131–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0028825X.2022.2095919>.

de Lange PJ, Rolfe JR, Barkla JW, Courtney SP, Champion PD, Perrie LR, Beadel SM, Ford KA, Breitwieser I, Schonberger I, Hindmarsh-Walls R, Heenan PB, Ladley K. 2018. Conservation status of New Zealand indigenous vascular plants, 2017. *New Zealand Threat Classification Series 22*. Department of Conservation, Wellington, NZ. 82 p. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/nztcs22entire.pdf>

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (17 July 2022).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/craspedia-diversicolor/>

PDF DATE

25 May 2026