Halocarpus bidwillii

COMMON NAMES
bog pine

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Trees & Shrubs - Gymnosperms

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION
Much-branched, shrubs or small trees. Foliage distinctly dimorphic (less obvious in adults but usually evident in shaded foliage and on basal branches). Branchlets initially 4-angled, slender (thread-like), leaves bronze-green, yellow-green (often red-tinged). Fruits comprising a dark dark brown, black-brown to dark purple-brown seed sitting within a fleshy, waxy white cup.

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, spreading or erect, much-branched shrub or small tree up to 4.8 m tall. **Trunk** 0.3–0.4 m d.b.h, usually multiple, rarely solitary, sometimes spreading. **Bark** firm, flaking in irregular shards, exposed surface grey, usually covered in lichens, undersides red to red-brown. **Branches** spreading, bases sometimes layering on contact with soil (in extreme examples give rise to a ring of clonal shrubs surrounding 'parent'); branchlets initially tetragonous, becoming ± terete with age, 1.2–2.0 mm diameter. **Foliage** dimorphic; juveniles linear, coriaceous, rigid, apetiolate, spreading,; lamina 5.0–10.0 × 1.0–1·5 mm, bronze green to yellow-green, sometimes tinged red, obtuse to subacute, midvein distinct; adults leaves closely imbricate, coriaceous; lamina 1–2 mm long, obtuse to subacute. **Male strobili** solitary, terminal and sessile, 2.8–4.6 mm long; apiculus obtuse. **Female cones** sessile, terminal, each surrounded by leaf-like, elongated bracts (1–5 of which are fertile), and terminating in a central sterile appendage. **Carpidia** solitary or paired, subterminal, larger than associated bracts. **Epimatium** adnate to base of carpidium; dorsiventrally compressed and striated, initially green, maturing dark-brown to black with the region around the micropyle swelling to form a fleshy, waxy-white (very rarely yellowish), persistent aril collar at the proximal end of the carpidium; the aril cupular to v-shaped under seed. **Seed** glabrous, smooth, 3.0–4.5 mm long (including aril), dark brown, black-brown to dark purple-brown, glossy, ovate-oblong, compressed.

Mt Ruapehu, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Mt Ruapehu, April. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Easily recognised when fruiting by the waxy white (very rarely yellowish) arils subtending the seed. Vegetatively it is distinguished from the other *Halocarpus* by the smaller much-branched shrub to small tree growth habit, weakly keeled leaves (prominently so in *H. biformis*), and more slender, initially tetragonous, branchlets. The seeds of *Halocarpus bidwillii* are distinguished from *H. biformis* (with which it most often confused) by the ventral and dorsal surfaces usually prominently longitudinally grooved (sometimes only on the ventral surface) (see Webb & Simpson 2001).

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (from the Central Volcanic Plateau and Kaingaroa Plain south but distribution patchy), South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura. Records of *Halocarpus bidwillii* from Te Moehau (Colville, Coromandel Peninsula) are referable to *H. biformis*.

HABITAT
Lowland to subalpine (strictly montane to alpine in the North Island). A shrub or small tree of wetland margins, bogs, poorly draining heathland, frost-flats, river beds and also dry, stony ground and tussock grassland. *Halocarpus bidwillii* can be locally dominant.

THREATS
Not Threatened—though uncommon and in decline within some parts of its North Island, eastern and southern South Island range.

GENUS
Halocarpus

FAMILY
Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY
Halocarpus bidwillii (Kirk) Quinn

SYNONYMS
Dacrydium bidwillii Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–December

FRUITING
February–June

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL
Arrilate seeds are dispersed by frugivory (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easily grown from seed. Can be struck from semi-hardwood and hardwood cuttings—but often fickle. best grown in an open site in a well drained but moist soil. Dislikes drought and humidity.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

halocarpus: From the Greek hals ‘sea’, ‘salty’ and karpos ‘fruit’
bidwillii: Named after the botanist - John Carne Bidwill (born 1815 and died 16 March 1853)

NVS CODE

HALBID

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 18

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP
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

Allan HH. 1961. Flora of New Zealand, Volume I. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Psilopsida, Lycopsida, Filicopsida, Gymnospermae, Dicotyledones. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 1085 p.
Quinn CJ. 1982. Taxonomy of *Dacrydium* Sol. ex Lamb. emend. de Laub. (Podocarpaceae). *Australian Journal of Botany 30(3)*: 311–320. https://doi.org/10.1071/BT9820311.
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. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001.
Webb CJ, Simpson MJA. 2001. Seeds of New Zealand Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons. Manuka Press, Christchurch. 428 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 12 November 2014: Description adapted from Allan (1961), Quinn (1982), Webb & Simpson (2001) and fresh and dried specimens.
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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/halocarpus-bidwillii/

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