Halocarpus biformis

COMMON NAMES
pink pine, yellow 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

FLOWER COLOURS
No flowers

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Dioecious, shrub or small tree up to 10 m tall. **Trunk** up to 0.3-0.6 m d.b.h. **Bark** silvery-grey to grey-brown to dark brown, often patterned with red-brown hammer marks where bark has flaked off, wood pinkish. **Foliage** dimorphic, change from juvenile to adult abrupt; juveniles and reversion shoots 10-20 mm × 1.5-3 mm (occasionally more) wide, soft, linear, acute, sometimes mucronate; petiole short, broad, twisted, midvein usually distinct; stomatal lines evident; adult leaves scale-like approximately 2 mm long, densely imbricate, appressed, obtuse, prominently keeled, rhomboid, margins hyaline. **Final branchlets** 3–4 mm diameter sub-tetragonous, not glossy, tips non-curved. **Male strobili** solitary, terminal, approximately 4 mm long, no wider than branchlet; apiculus triangular, obtuse, keeled. **Female cones** on separate plant from male strobili. Carpidia solitary or paired, towards apices of branchlets, resembling scale leaves, but subpatent. **Ovule** ovoid, compressed. Epimatium fused to carpidium at base, coriaceous, surrounding pendulous inverted ovule, integument membranous. **Receptacle** swollen, orange, succulent. **Seed** 2–3 mm long, black (when mature), about oblong in outline, compressed.

SIMILAR TAXA
Halocarpus bidwillii, which has slenderer branchlets 1-1.5mm, scale leaves not or hardly keeled on the back, fleshy arils are white.
Manoao colensoi, *Lepidothamnus intermedius*, and *Lepidothamnus laxifolius*, differ by the transition from juvenile to adult foliage being gradual.
Dacrycarpus dacrydioides and *Libocedrus bidwillii* differ by having juvenile foliage flattened into a single plane.
Similar to some species of whipcord *Veronica* without any fertile stages present; *V. lycopodioides* has scale leaves with parallel grooves either side of a strong keel, and an mucronate apex; *V. tetragona* has more or less glossy branchlets, with scale leaves lacking a keel or acute apex; *V. armstrongii* has spaced scale leaves which partially show the internode, each scale leaf also has a pale margin fringed with minute hairs.

Turoa, Ruapehu, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Turoa, Ruapehu, May. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (Coromandel Range, Raukumara Range, Te Uruwera through the Central Volcanic Plateau and Kaingaroa Plain south in a patchy distribution to Ruahine Range and Tararua Range), South Island (mostly west of main divide from Kahurangi Range south to Fiordland then patchy from Mount Cargill to Catlins), and Stewart Island.

HABITAT
Montane to subalpine scrubland, scrub, and forest.

GENUS
Halocarpus

FAMILY
Podocarpaceae

AUTHORITY
Halocarpus biformis (Hook.) Quinn

SYNONYMS
Podocarpus biformis Hook., Dacrydium biforme (Hook.) Pilg.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FRUITING
February-April

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

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’
biformis: From the Latin words, bis ‘twice’ & fōrmis ‘having form of’, meaning consisting of two forms.

NVS CODE
HALBIF

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 24

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, H. H. 1961. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer. Page 110.

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.

Wilson, H.D. and Galloway, T., 1993. Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand. Christchurch: Manuka Press. Pages 250-251.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by M.D. Ward (11 April 2024). Description from Allan (1961), Wilson & Galloway (1993).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026