

Juncus kraussii subsp. australiensis

COMMON NAMES

sea rush

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Rushes & Allied Plants

FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dense to loosely tufted, dark brown to brownish-black, perennial herb.

Rhizome 5–8 mm diameter, horizontal sparingly branched. **Flowering stems** 0.3–1.2 m tall, 1.5–3.0 mm diameter, rather distant along rhizome, rigid, terete, light to dark yellow-brown, dark brown or brownish-black; internal pith continuous; basal bracts stiff, acute, red-brown, upper ones obviously larger, broader and mucronate. **Leaves** 1–2, terete, bright green, sheathing at base, similar to the stems but shorter. **Inflorescence** apparently lateral, open, irregularly-branched, branchlets numerous, rigid, almost equaling the pungent sheathing bract. **Flowers** 3 mm long, clustered at the branchlet apices; tepals rigidly stiff, red-brown, midrib green to light brown. **Stamens** 3 perfect, 3 aborted, rarely with 1 or more of the usually aborted inner ring functional; anthers twice as long as filaments. **Capsule** slightly > tepals, dark brown to almost black, ovoid, shining, mucronate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Most likely to be found growing with *Juncus acutus* L., an aggressive, introduced species with sharp-tipped bracts above the flower heads; *J. kraussii* differs in having open rather than densely compact inflorescence; flowers in small rather than large, compact clusters; and dark brown rather than red-brown capsules which are more or less equal to, rather than > in length to the tepals.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South and Chatham Islands. From Te Pahi to the Okarito in the west and Dunedin in the South. Inland in the North Island at Lake Rotorua, at Orakeikorako, and in the South Island at Mesopotamia, Rangitata River.

HABITAT

Primarily coastal where it is found in salt marshes, brackish stream, lagoon and river margins, estuaries. Also inland around geothermal vents at Lake Rotorua and Orakeikorako, and inland at the headwaters of the Rangitata River.



Pauatahanui Inlet. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 01/06/2006, Licence: CC BY.



Te Wherowhero Lagoon. Photographer: John Sawyer, Date taken: 01/12/2010, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS

Juncus

FAMILY

Juncaceae

AUTHORITY

Juncus kraussii subsp. australiensis (Buchenau) Snogerup

SYNONYMS

Juncus maritimus var. australiensis Buchenau

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–December

FRUITING

November–April

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Mucilaginous seeds are dispersed by attachment, wind and water (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and division of whole plants. An attractive species ideal in rock gardens and one that should be used more widely in coastal plantings, especially bordering saltmarshes.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY

juncus: From the Latin jungere 'to tie or bind', the stems of some species being used to make cord (Johnson and Smith)

NVS CODE

JUNKSA

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: OL, RR, NR 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

Johnson, A. T.; Smith, H. A. 1986. *Plant Names Simplified: Their pronunciation, derivation and meaning*. Landsman Bookshop Ltd, Buckenhill, UK.

Moore, L. B.; Edgar, E. 1970: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I. Government Printer, Wellington.

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 for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (1 September 2006). Description based on Moore & Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from Flora of New Zealand Online and is used under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand licence.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/juncus-kraussii-subsp-australiensis/>

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