

Lachnagrostis billardierei subsp. billardierei

COMMON NAMES

sand wind grass

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stiffly tufted, glaucous to bluish-green perennial grass, 100–600 mm tall, with capillary-branched panicles sometimes overtopped by leaves. Branching intravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** papery, with wide membranous margins, closely striate, smooth but sometimes scaberulous above on nerves, light brown to amber. **Ligule** 1.0–4.5 mm, tapered above, entire to erose, undersides scabrid. **Leaf-blade** 50–240 × 2.5–10.0 mm, flat, harsh, scaberulous on ribs and on margins throughout, more or less abruptly narrowed to firm, more or less blunt, more or less cucullate apex. **Culm** 40–400 mm, erect, or decumbent at base, included within uppermost leaf-sheath, internodes densely finely scabrid. **Panicle** 60–240 × 100–240 mm, purple-green to wine-red, lax, with long, whorled, ascending branches, later spreading and panicle becoming as broad as long; rachis and branches scaberulous, spikelets single at tips of ultimate panicle branchlets, on pedicels thickened above. **Spikelets** 4–6 mm, pale green, purple-green or red-green. **Glumes** 1–3-nerved, narrow-lanceolate, acuminate, usually smooth, sometimes sparsely scabrid, margins wide, hyaline, mid-nerve scabrid. **Lemma** 3–4 mm, ±  length of glumes, smooth, or often scabrid above (especially on nerves), membranous, shining, elliptic-lanceolate, lateral nerves excurrent to short awns 0.5–1.0 mm long; central awn 4.5–9.0 mm, fine, geniculate from lower third of lemma (rarely middorsal). **Callus** hairs more or less dense, very short, 0.3–0.7 mm, c. one-tenth length of lemma. **Rachilla** prolongation 0.5–1.0 mm, tipped by a thick tuft of hairs 1.0–1.5 mm and more or less equivalent in length to palea. **Lodicules** slightly > 0.5 mm, lanceolate, acute. **Anthers** 0.5–1.0 mm. **Seed** 1.3–1.8 × 0.5–0.8 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other New Zealand species by the intravaginal branches; by the flat leaf-blades, 2.5–10 mm wide; by the spikelets 4–6 mm long; and by the glabrous lemma that is smooth below and often scabrid on the nerves.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. Common throughout New Zealand and Australia.

HABITAT

Mainly coastal (rarely inland). On sand dunes, cobble and boulder beaches, on cliff faces, in free draining sites along estuarine river banks, and fringing coastal ponds and lagoons. Sometimes on limestone or calcareous sandstone bluffs well inland.



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



Waitohu Beach, north of Otaki. Nov 2010. Photographer: Robyn Smith, Licence: CC BY-NC.

GENUS

Lachnagrostis

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Lachnagrostis billardierei (R.Br.) Trin. subsp. billardierei

SYNONYMS

Agrostis billardierei R.Br., Deyeuxia billardierei (R.Br.) Kunth, Calamagrostis billardierei (R.Br.) Steud.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August–February

FRUITING

December–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Best in full sun.

ETYMOLOGY

lachnagrostis: From “lachne” (wool) referring to the distinctive callus hairs of this genus and “agrostis” by which Trinius (1820) actually meant “a grass” (not an Agrostis). So the generic name means “a hairy (woolly) grass” not “a hairy (woolly) Agrostis” as is often incorrectly stated (see Gardner 2014).

billardierei: Named after Jacques Houttou de Labillardiere (1755–1834), 19th century French botanist who described several New Zealand plants

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 56

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

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The 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 Critical | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, DPS, DPT, RR, Sp Help

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Otago conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation Status of Indigenous Vascular Plants in Otago, 2025](#)" Jarvie S et al. (2025) report.

Northland: 2026 | Regionally Not Threatened Help

Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The Northland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of indigenous vascular plants in Northland | Taitokerau](#)" Ford et al. 2026 report.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 p.
- Gardner RO. 2014. Notes on the wind grass *Lachnagrostis filiformis* (Poaceae). *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 69: 168–170.
- Trinius CB. 1820. *Fundamenta Agrostographiae*. J.G.Huebner, Vienna.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April June 2005. Description modified from Edgar & Connor (2000).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/lachnagrostis-billardierei-subsp-billardierei/>

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25 August 2026