

Lachnagrostis tenuis

COMMON NAMES

wind grass

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, EF, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Stiff, leafy tufts 180–360 mm tall, leaves narrow, more or less inrolled, panicles lax. **Branching** intravaginal. **Leaf-sheath** subcoriaceous, more or less obviously ribbed, glabrous, light brown. **Ligule** 1.0–3.2 mm, truncate, erose, minutely ciliate, undersides scabrid. **Leaf-blade** 20–120 × 0.3–0.9 mm, inrolled, undersides smooth, rarely scabrid near apex, upper surface ribbed and short-scabrid on ribs, margins smooth, apex obtuse. **Culm** 50–200 mm, usually included within uppermost leaf-sheath, internodes densely, finely scabrid below panicle. **Panicle** 30–120 × 20–120 mm, delicate, branches fine, scabrid, erect to spreading, bearing spikelets at tips. **Spikelets** 3–5 mm, light green to light brown. **Glumes** 1–3-nerved, elliptic-lanceolate, more or less acuminate, strongly keeled, keel finely scabrid in upper ½. **Lemma** 3.0–4.2 mm, more or less equivalent in length to glumes, firmly membranous, glabrous, papillose-scabrid, elliptic-lanceolate, lateral nerves sharply excurrent to c. 1 mm; central awn 3.5–6.5 mm, geniculate, emanating from lower one third of lemma. **Palea** 2.5–3.0 mm, c. ⅓ length of lemma, lanceolate, apex bifid, keels scabrid, margins submembranous, scabrid near apex. **Callus** hairs more or less dense, very short, 0.3–0.8 mm, about ¼ length of lemma. **Rachilla** prolongation 1.5–2.5 mm long, with very short hairs throughout except sometimes near tip, rarely completely glabrous. **Lodicules** 0.7–1.0 mm, lanceolate, acute. **Anthers** 0.5–0.9 mm. **Seed** 1.4–1.6 × 0.5–0.7 mm.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other New Zealand species of the genus by the intravaginal branching; glabrous lemma, and inrolled leaf-blades, that are 0.3–0.9 mm diameter, spikelets 3–5 mm long, and lemmas that are papillose-scabrid throughout (hand lens needed). The combination of narrow filiform leaves (rarely flat and to 2mm wide), geniculate awn, and glabrous lemma (though care must be taken as the hairy rachilla can give the adaxial part of the lemma a hairy appearance) distinguishes this species from any other coastal *Lachnagrostis*.

DISTRIBUTION

Apparently a local endemic. Confined to the South Island from Christchurch south along the Otago Coast to Bluff and on Stewart Island. At sites without grazing can be very common, though in the absence of a panicle it is very inconspicuous.

HABITAT

Coastal scrub and open ground and at sea level in salt marshes and other estuarine habitats. In saltmarshes it appears to prefer vegetated slightly raised sandy ground. Often in association with *Sellieria radicans*. The detached panicles accumulate along the strand line of estuaries.

THREATS

Threats to this species include grazing, competition with creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and *Elytrigia* spp. Some salt marsh habitat has been lost through reclamation.

GENUS

Lachnagrostis

FAMILY

Poaceae



AUTHORITY

Lachnagrostis tenuis (Cheeseman) Edgar

SYNONYMS

Deyeuxia billardi var. *tenuis* Cheeseman, *D. tenuis* (Cheeseman) Zotov

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

Unknown

FRUITING

Unknown

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown, but probably easy from fresh seed and rooted pieces.

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).

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

LACTEN

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: CI, DPR, DPS, DPT, NStr, RR, St, TL 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

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000)

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MORE INFORMATION

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

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