

Macrothelypteris torresiana

BIOSTATUS

Native

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp

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CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tufted, often stout yellow-green to blue-green fern up to 2 m tall in good conditions. **Stipes** to 0.8 m, glaucescent when fresh, basally swollen and covered in scales, glabrate to glabrous otherwise. **Fron**d **laminae** broadly ovate, 2–3-pinnate, up to 1.2 × 0.8 m, light green, yellow-green to blue-green and very soft when fresh. **Primary pinnae** 200–400 × 70–130 mm, tapering apices, shortly stalked. **Ultimate segments** oblong, obtuse, bearing numerous, fine, 1–1.2 mm long, non-glandular, whitish hairs.

Indusia sparsely covered with short, glandular hairs.

SIMILAR TAXA

Very distinctive and unique within the Thelypteridaceae due to its 2–3-pinnate fronds covered in long non-glandular hairs. Within the New Zealand fern flora it is most likely to be confused with *Hypolepis dicksonioides* (Endl.) Hook., plants of which have a somewhat similar frond shape and growth habit but which can be distinguished immediately from *M. torresiana* by their green to yellow-green, never blue-green fronds copiously covered in glandular sticky hairs, and absence of an indusia.

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: Kermadec Islands (Raoul Island), North Island (Hikurua / de Surville Cliffs, North Cape). Widespread in the old world tropics from Madagascar, northern and north-eastern Australia, across the Pacific to Hawaii and the Marquesas. New Zealand would appear to be its world southern limit.

HABITAT

A weedy, short-lived, opportunistic species colonising recently disturbed ground such as slip scars, debris flows, landslides, the ground around tree falls, and exposed clay banks, roadside cuttings and the margins of ditches.

THREATS

Not Threatened. This species reaches its world southern limit in New Zealand. On the Kermadec Islands it is known only from Raoul Island where its abundance depends largely on the presence of suitably disturbed habitats. This fern is a short-lived, somewhat weedy, opportunist which colonises recently disturbed ground. Provided such habitats are created it is usually present but its abundance always varies. Little is known about its status at the North Cape Scientific Reserve, Te Pahi.

GENUS

Macrothelypteris

FAMILY

Thelypteridaceae



Sori. Raoul Island. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 08/05/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Raoul Island. Photographer: Peter J de Lange, Date taken: 10/05/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Macrothelypteris torresiana (Gaudich.) Ching

SYNONYMS

Thelypteris uliginosa (Kunze) Ching; *Thelypteris torresiana* (Gaudich.) Alston; *Lastrea torresiana* (Gaudich.) T.Moore; *Nephrodium setigerum* sensu Cheeseman; *Polystichum torresianum* Gaudich. in Freyc.; *Aspidium uliginosum* Kunze; *Dryopteris setigera* sensu Cheeseman; *Dryopteris uliginosa* (Kunze) C.Chr.

ENDEMIC TAXON

No

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Extremely easy from fresh spore and in ideal conditions it can be rather weedy, often self sowing and establishing itself within urban gardens. Plants tend to be short lived and are very cold sensitive. In Auckland plants have established in the grounds of the University of Auckland, usually on pots or in pots holding other plants. These plants die back in winter but if well established enough resprout when warmer conditions return.

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 124$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF, SO, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: SO, EF

2004 | Sparse

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ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange for NZPCN (1 June 2013)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/macrothelypteris-torresiana/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/macrothelypteris-torresiana/>

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25 May 2026