

Poa pusilla

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Slender, often delicate, open, perennial tufts, 5 – c. 35 cm, with few, very narrow, flaccid, bright green leaves, and slender, long-creeping rhizome; branching extravaginal; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** greenish purple becoming light brown, ± membranous, distinctly keeled, ribs strong, whitish, shaggy pubescent-scabrid, or minutely scabrid throughout or only near hyaline margins, occasionally with a few longer hairs on margins near ligule, rarely completely glabrous. **Ligule** 0.2–0.5 mm, truncate, ciliate, sometimes erose, abaxially with minute hairs. **Leaf-blade** (1)–5–15–(25) cm × c. 0.5 mm diameter, folded, rarely flat and wider, margins inrolled, abaxially distinctly ribbed, glabrous, adaxially with scattered short hairs especially on midrib, tip subacute to curved, scabrid on midrib. **Culm** 3–30–(50) cm, very slender, erect or drooping above, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 1.5–8.5 cm; branches spreading, few, filiform, scabrid, bearing 1–4 spikelets at tips. **Spikelets** 3–7.5 mm, 2–5–(7)-flowered, yellow-green, faintly purplish. **Glumes** subequal, 2–4–(4.5) mm, 3-nerved, narrow elliptic- to ovate-lanceolate, acute or subacute, smooth, midnerve and sometimes lateral nerves sparsely scabrid. **Lemma** 2–4–(5) mm, 5-nerved, oblong- to ovate-elliptic, obtuse, midnerve with long silky crinkled hairs in lower ½, sometimes scabrid above hairs, lateral nerves usually with conspicuous silky hairs near base or in lower ½, internerves usually smooth, rarely finely scabrid, with hyaline band at slightly erose tip. **Palea** 2–3.5 mm, keels short ciliate-scabrid, interkeel short pubescent-scabrid, flanks smooth to scabrid. **Callus** with thick tuft of long, silky crinkled hairs. **Rachilla** (0.3)–0.6–0.8 mm, with scattered long hairs. **Lodicules** c. 0.5 mm. **Anthers** 1–2 mm. **Caryopsis** c. 1 × 0.5 mm. 2n= 28.

DISTRIBUTION

North Island: throughout; South Island: throughout but rarely recorded from eastern plains and dry inland basins; Stewart Island; Three Kings Islands.

HABITAT

Lowland to subalpine, in open forest, scrub, tussock grassland, in stony places or on sand dunes.

GENUS

Poa

FAMILY

Poaceae



In cultivation ex Woodhill. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.



In cultivation ex Woodhill. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 29/10/2007, Licence: CC BY.

AUTHORITY

Poa pusilla Bergg.

SYNONYMS

Poa pusilla Berggr. var. *pusilla*; *Poa seticulmis* Petrie; *Poa pusilla* var. *seticulmis* (Petrie) Cockayne; *Poa anceps* var. *debilis* Buchanan; *Poa anceps* var. *æ minima* Buchanan; *Poa anceps* var. *gracilis* Cheeseman

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

pusilla: Small

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

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

NVS CODE

POAPUS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 28$

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Declining | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NStr, PF, RR 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 At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, Sp 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. 2010. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses, 2nd edition. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (28 December 2021). Brief description, Distribution, Habitat, Features and copied from Edgar & Connor (2010).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-pusilla/>

