Ranunculus grahamii

COMMON NAMES
Graham's buttercup

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: RR
Jump to previous conservation statuses

Close up of flowers. Photographer: David A. Norton, Licence: CC BY-NC.

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Short, stout, erect, summer-green rosette-forming plant 70-120 mm tall. Rhizome stout, bearing numerous stringy rootlets. Leaves thick, fleshy, glaucous; radical leaves 3-4 or more; petioles 50-80 mm long with broad sheathing base, margins covered in white, sericeous hairs; blade 35-50 mm diam., glaucous, reniform, divided almost to base into 3 broadly cuneate segments, these again deeply lobed, succulent, coriaceous, glabrescent, margins with sparse long sericeous hairs. Flowering scape 1-3-flowered, 100-150 mm long, > leaves; bracts 1-2, similar to leaves but smaller and less divided. Flowers 20-30 mm diam.; sepals 5, broadly oblong, obtuse, external faces sericeous; petals golden yellow, 8-16, narrow-obovate, obtuse, nectaries near base, single or multiple; stamens numerous, in 2 or more series; receptacle broadly oblong or nearly orbicular. Achenes glabrous or sparsely hairy on body toward base. Body turgid, ovoid, 2.5-3.0(-3.5) mm long; surface dull, pale brown; beak 2.5-3.0 mm long, curved.

SIMILAR TAXA
Somewhat similar to R. haastii from which it differs by its restriction to high elevation rock crevices, ledges and cliff faces within the permanent snow line, rather than mobile scree, less divided leaves (leaves divided to ¾ rather all the way to the base), and less obviously flattened, sometimes partially winged achene beak.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, Mt Cook National Park within a very small area running from Malte Brun Range in the east to the main divide in the west as far south as Mt Nazomi.

HABITAT
A high alpine (2300 - 2800 m a.s.l.) species of rock crevices, ledges, and cliff faces within the permanent snow line. It has a very short growing season during mid to late summer.

THREATS
A very localised endemic of high alpine cliff and ledge habitats, within the permnent snow line. Because of its habitat and altitudinal range it is not often seen except by rock climbers, so exact numbers of plant sin the wild is unclear. It is believed to be at some risk from Thar and Chamois. Provided numbers of these browsing animals are kept low it is not believed to be seriously threatened.

GENUS
Ranunculus

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Ranunculus grahamii Petrie

SYNONYMS
None Known

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
February - March

FRUITING
March - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult. Should not be removed from the wild.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for November 2013 for the full story.

ETYMOLOGY
ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

NVS CODE
RANGRH

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, RR
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
Fisher, F.J.F. 1965: The alpine *Ranunculi* of New Zealand. *Bulletin, New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research 165*: 1-192.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (12 February 2007). Description based on Fisher (1965).

MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-grahamii/

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