Ranunculus limosella

COMMON NAMES
mud buttercup

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Violet/Purple, Yellow, Red/Pink

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Small perennial herb. Leaves in rosettes, tufted along a slender, creeping, buried stem; linear to spoon-shaped, not toothed, hairless, with long stems, up to 14cm long when permanently submerged. Flowers yellow to purple, solitary, 6-8mm diameter, with 4 linear petals and 4 spreading sepals; on stalks 1-2cm tall.

Wairewa/Lake Forsyth, Banks Peninsula. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 14/02/2015, Licence: CC BY-NC.

Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 31/03/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
Limosella lineata. Leaves of mud buttercup are linear to spoon-shaped, slightly curved, with a smaller leaf sheath that *Limosella lineata*, which has purely linear leaves. Other buttercups have toothed or lobed leaves. Mud buttercup has buried stems, while *Limosella lineata* stems creep along the surface.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North and South Islands from Lake Whangape south.

HABITAT
Coastal to lowland. Usually found in raupō (*Typha orientalis*) dominated wetlands where it grows in still moderately deep to deep water.

THREATS
Habitat modification, eutrophication from uncontrolled nutrient run off, fertilisers, and drains are major porblems throughout its range. Invasive aquatic weeds are a problem in many areas.

GENUS
Ranunculus

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Ranunculus limosella Kirk

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Easy to grow from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Best in a pond or kept in semi-submerged pots.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
OBL: Obligate Wetland
Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available

ETYMOLOGY
ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound
limosella: From the Latin 'limosus' mud, refers to the habit of growing in mud

NVS CODE
RANLIM

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 48

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP
2012 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: DP
2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Gradual Decline
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, RR, 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.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2003).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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MORE INFORMATION
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-limosella/

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