

Ranunculus maculatus

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Short, tufted, sparsely hairy to glabrate perennial up to 50 mm tall forming small solitary or multiple rosettes. Petioles of cauline leaves up to 16 mm long, sheath 14 x 3 mm, membranous, very hairy, petioles and sheath mottled purple-green or completely purple-black. Cauline leaves 9 x 10 mm, dark green flecked with dark brown, brown, purple-brown or black, broadly elliptic, obovate-cuneate, obovate or orbicular, deeply 3-lobed, sparsely hairy or glabrous (hairs if present concentrated toward lamina margins). Scape apparently sessile to subsessile at flowering, elongating to 50 mm or toward the apex where glabrous. Flowers solitary, 8-10 mm diameter; sepals 5, 3 x 2 mm, broad-ovate, sparsely hairy to glabrous spreading at maturity, fugaceous; petals 5, 5 x 2 mm, yellow, oblong-obovate to spatulate; nectary single, 1-1.5 mm from petal base, shallow, pocket-like. receptacle hairy. Achenes 15-25, 1.5-1.9 mm long, dull brown, often blotched dark purple-brown or completely dark purple-brown, elliptic, ovate-elliptic or obovate-elliptic; beak usually curled or hooked to dorsal side, sometimes straight, 0.2-0.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Belongs to a group of ranunculi where although the flowers are sessile to subsessile the peduncle greatly elongates after flowering. Of those species *R. maculatus* is perhaps closest to *R. royi* G.Simpson from which it differs by the 3-lobed, rather than 3-5-lobed leaves which are either glabrous or scattered with fine hairs particularly toward the lamina margins. In *R. royi* the leaves are densely and evenly covered in hairs, and while the lobes of *R. maculatus* are entire those of *R. royi* are always toothed or crenate. In *R. maculatus* the peduncles are always glabrous toward the extremities. Fruiting specimens of *R. maculatus* have 15-25 achenes rather than the 25-35 seen in *R. royi*.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island from south western Canterbury to Otago and northern Southland.

HABITAT

Montane to alpine in turf on lake and tarn margins, in bogs, seepages amongst short tussock grasses and in alpine flushes and cushion bogs.

THREATS

Not Threatened. An apparently widespread, and at times locally common but generally biologically sparse species.

GENUS

Ranunculus



Dunstan Range. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.



Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 14/03/2023, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus maculatus Cockayne et Allan

SYNONYMS

None

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

November - February

FRUITING

December - April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed but prone to powdery mildew in moist or humid climates.

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

maculatus: From the Latin maculatus 'blotched'

NVS CODE

RANMCL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 32

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally At Risk – Regionally Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DPS, DPT, NS, NStr, RR, Sp, 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

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer

Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: *Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV*. Christchurch, DSIR Botany Division.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2003). Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) and fresh specimens.

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-maculatus/>

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