Ranunculus ranceorum

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: EF, RR, Sp
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Annual or short-lived perennial herb of lake shore marginal turf communities, forming diminutive rosettes up to 40 mm diam. Rarely solitary, frequently forming crowded patches comprising numerous smaller daughter offsets and seedlings. Rootstock stout, 2-4 mm diam., ascending, ± cylindrical, white, fleshy to succulent, apex covered with rotted, fibrous petiolar remnants, deeply and firmly rooted, branching at surface to form 1 or more rosettes. Petiole (5-)10(-20) mm long, fleshy to succulent, bronze green to bright green in exposed portion otherwise white, base grooved and broadly sheathing, otherwise weakly concave to flat or slightly convex on upper surface, margins usually bearing sparse, scattered, white, cobwebby hairs. Adult leaves (2.5-)9.0(-12.0) × (2.0-)7.0(-10.8), bright green, bronze green to dark green or dark green with brown veins, ± glossy, fleshy, broadly rhomboid, deltoid, to broadly ovate, lamina entire in seedlings and in initial emergent adult growth, otherwise 3-lobed to almost 3-foliate; lobe segments broad, concave, mostly entire, margins often finely though sparsely cobwebby hairy, glabrate. Peduncles initially sessile (sometimes remaining that way), or very short, up to 6 mm long, usually elongating slightly on fruiting, fleshy, ± succulent, up to 0.9 mm diam., white to green, glabrescent, bearing 2-4(-6) narrowly to broadly deltoid, entire, bracts. Flowers 2.5-7.0 mm diam., usually solitary or in scarcely separated pairst; sepals 5, caducous, 1.5-1.8(-2.0) mm long, green to greenish-white, broadly ovate to orbicular; petals 5 or absent, 0.8-1.3 mm, glossy yellow at apex only, ovate to almost spathulate, apex broadly obtuse to rounded; nectary 1, at base of petal, covered by an ovate scale, obscured by carpels; stamens 6-15; receptacle glabrous. Achenes 8-20, body 0.6-1.2 mm long, pale cream-brown, oblong to obovoid, convex on ventral and dorsal sides, cuneate at base; in cross section broadly ellipsoid; ventral margin rounded in upper 2/3 ± flattened to flat in basal 1/3, without any obvious ridge; dorsal surface rounded, prominently ridged, ridge hyaline, tapering toward beak, thickening toward base; surface glossy when fresh, distinctly punctuate, otherwise bearing irregular somewhat diffuse patches of caducous hairs; beak 0.05-0.10(-0.15) mm long, straight, weakly curved or hooked toward ventral side, often withered to a short black tipped stub, laterally compressed.



Locally common in upper sheltered lake side turfs with ice in silt and sand, Lake Manapouri. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 25/07/2025, Licence: CC BY.



A mature plant Ranunculus ranceorum, shoreline of Lake Manapouri. Photographer: Jesse Bythell, Date taken: 25/02/2007, Licence: CC BY-NC.

SIMILAR TAXA
R. ranceorum differs from R. recens Kirk by its smaller size, leaf, flower, achene size and shape, by its chromosome number, and habitat preferences. R. maculatus Cockayne et Allan, also a lake/tarn marginal turf plant is similar. It has a taller habit (up to 50 mm tall), usually with larger, elliptic, obovate to orbicular, glossy green dark brown blotched leaves, oblong-obovate petals, and longer purple-tipped achenes.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. South Island, Lakes Te Anau, Manapouri and possibly Te Au.

HABITAT
A species of lake side marginal turf communities where it occupies sites frequently flooded by up to 1.5 m of water for long parts of the year.

THREATS
A naturally uncommon plant of seasonal habitats. It is not clear if plants die after flooding or persist in an aquatic form until water levels recede. Although it is regarded here as a Naturally Uncommon/Range Restricted plant, its survival requires careful management of water levels at Lake Manapouri which is administered as an hydroelectric lake.

GENUS
Ranunculus

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Ranunculus ranceorum de Lange

SYNONYMS
Ranunculus recens var. lacustris G.Simpson

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December - April (depending on lake levels)

FRUITING
January - May (depending on lake levels)

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

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
ranceorum: Named after Brian and Chris Rance, botanists from Southland

NVS CODE
RANRAN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 32, 32 + f

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

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING
de Lange, P.J.; Murray, B.G. 2008: *Ranunculus ranceorum*, a new name and rank for *Ranunculus recens* var. *lacustris* G.Simpson, an elusive, rarely seen buttercup of the Fiordland lakes, South Island, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 46*: 1-11.

ATTRIBUTION
Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2006. Description from de Lange & Murray (2008).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION
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https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-ranceorum/ (Date website was queried)

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

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