

# Ranunculus simulans

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Diminutive, tufted, rosette-forming perennial herb spreading by numerous, slender, trailing and arching stolons; these rooting freely at nodes. Basal leaves 3-10 mm diameter, dark green to bronze-green, suborbicular, shallowly 3-lobed at apex, lobe apices rounded, sometimes bluntly toothed again on lobes, base truncate, glabrous or finely hairy, membranous; cauline leaves similar but smaller, opposite or in lax whorls. Flowers solitary; scapes hairy and short, up to 15 mm long at fruiting. Flowers 3-5 mm diameter. Sepals spreading, sparsely hairy. Petals 0-5, yellow, narrowly obovate; nectary single, 0.5-1.5 mm from petal base, covered by a triangular scale. Receptacle hairy. Achenes 5-15, 1.4-1.9 mm long, dull medium buff to orange, light nut brown or grey brown, elliptic, broadly elliptic or broadly obovate; surface finely though regularly punctate, beak 0.1-0.3 mm long, hooked to dorsal side or reduced to remnant stub.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from all other New Zealand indigenous and naturalised *Ranunculus* spp., by the small size, slender, arching and/or trailing stolons which root freely at the nodes, and leaves 3-10 mm diameter, with the flowers 3-5 mm diameter. Morphologically it is perhaps closest to *R. cheesemanii* Kirk but that species has leaves 7-35 mm diameter with 3-5 blunt teeth or that are shallowly blunt with entire lobes, flowers 6-10mm diameter with fugaceous petals and achenes between 2-2.5 mm long.

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known from Mt Taranaki, Kaimanawa and Ruahine Ranges. In the South Island recorded from north-west Nelson and Fiordland

## HABITAT

Lowland to alpine (0-1200 m a.s.l.), in damp seepages and pools within forest, along stream banks and in seepages and flushes in subalpine scrub and herbfield.

## THREATS

Currently believed to be a very uncommon, widely distributed and biologically sparse species. It is very easily overlooked. There is as yet no clear evidence of any past or ongoing declines of this species within its known range.

## GENUS

*Ranunculus*

## FAMILY

Ranunculaceae



Franklin Mountains, Fiordland. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

## AUTHORITY

Ranunculus simulans Garn.-Jones

## SYNONYMS

Ranunculus depressus var. stewartiae G.Simpson et J.S.Thomson

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

November - January

## FRUITING

January - April

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Unknown. Probably easily grown but likely to require pot culture to prevent it being over taken by taller plants and weeds within a garden environment.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FAC: Facultative

Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (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

## NVS CODE

RANSIM

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 32

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | Data Deficient | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Sparse

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Endangered | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, NS, OL, 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

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 Webb et al. (1988) and fresh specimens

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## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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## MORE INFORMATION

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

## PDF DATE

25 May 2026