Ranunculus viridis

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: OL
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Perennial herb forming rosettes 80-100 mm diameter, or compact patches up to 300 mm diameter. Rhizome stout, 4-8 mm diameter, apex covered in long persistent, fibrous petiolar remnants; roots numerous, fleshy 1.5 mm diameter. Petiole 15-30 mm long, base broadly sheathing, covered in fine cobwebbed hairs, deeply grooved on upper surface. Leaves 20-40 mm diameter, bright green above paler beneath, both surfaces very glossy, deltoid to orbicular or sub-reniform, thick and rigidly firm, lamina divided about 3/4 of the way into the 3-5-lobed segments, sparsely hairy, lobe apices surmounted by a penicillate hair tuft. Flowers 25-30 mm diameter, solitary intially on very short peduncles; these elongating at fruiting to c.30-50 mm length and broadening toward apex; ebracteate, green, usually purple-stained at base, clad in fine, cobwebbed hairs. Flowers with 5 sepals, these 15 mm long, greenish-yellow, finely hairy beneath, glabrescent above, broadly oblong-obovate, apices emarginate; petals 5 not or scarcely exceeding sepals, 10-12 x 6-8 mm, basal third green otherwise bright yellow, oblong to oblong-obovate, apex cucullate, base abruptly narrowed; nectary comprising 3 pits per petal with the central pit the largest; receptacle glabrescent, pale yellow-green. Fruiting head compact, 12 mm diameter, globose to ovoid. Achenes numerous, 1.9-2.6 mm long, semi glossy brown, obovate to broadly obovate, beak straight, tapering, 2-2.6 mm long.



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SIMILAR TAXA
Part of a small group of alpine ranunculi, with which species it shares some broad similarities with R. pinguis and R. sericophyllus. Ranunculus pinguis and R. viridis both have somewhat similar sparingly pilose to glabrous leaves, broad leaf segments and rather short petals which taper toward the base. Ranunculus viridis resembles R. sericophyllus in having penicillate hair tufts on the leaf segments and apices; the presence of fine cobwebbed hairs on the petiole bases and scapes, deeply divided leaves, broad petals, and especially by the 3 nectary pits. In some respects it is intermediate between both these species, but as it is allopatric from both and forms a stable, true breeding population, its claim to species rank seems clear. In other respects it is close to R. recens from which it differs by the flexible, softly hairy, rather than rigidly brittle, sparsely, stiffly hairy leaves; by the presence of penicillate hair tufts on the leaf segment apices (absent in R. recens); scapes 20 cf 10 mm long; brown rather than red straight rather than hooked achenes. It is allopatric from R. recens which On Stewart Island is a coastal species found only on sandy beaches and dune systems.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. Stewart Island, Tin Range

HABITAT
Subalpine (c.700 m a.s.l.) in damp shaded sites, on ledges, hollows, crevices and clefts of rock outcrops in subalpine scrub.

THREATS
This species is an extremely narrow-range endemic, which so far is only known from a very small area on the upper slopes of Mt Allen, on the Tin Range.

GENUS
Ranunculus

FAMILY
Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY
Ranunculus viridis H.D.Wilson et Garn.-Jones

SYNONYMS
None

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
December - March

FRUITING
December - May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Unknown from cultivation. However, likely to be rather difficult to maintain.

PLANT OF THE MONTH
This plant has been featured as a Plant of the Month – see Trilepidea: NZPCN newsletter for May 2017 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
viridis: From the Latin viridis ‘green’

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, OL
2012 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, OL
2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: DP, OL, St
2004 | Range Restricted
Jump to current conservation status

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.
Wilson, H.D.; Garnock-Jones, P. J. 1983: Taxonomic notes on Stewart Island Ranunculus including two new species. *New Zealand Journal of Botany 21*: 341-345.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2006. Description adapted from Wilson & Garnock-Jones (1983) - see also de Lange et al. (2010).

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): Ranunculus viridis Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-viridis/ (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-viridis/

PDF DATE

25 May 2026