

Schoenus pauciflorus

COMMON NAMES

bog rush, sedge tussock

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rush-like sedge up to 1 m tall. Rather variable with respect to colour and stature, ranging from stout dark red plants to flaccid bright green specimens. **Rhizome** short, hard and lignaceous, up to 4 mm diameter.

Culms 0.1–1.0 m tall, 0.5–1.8 mm diameter, densely tufted, caespitose, longitudinally striate, grey-green, wine red to bright green. **Leaves** reduced to numerous, dark red-purple (rarely green) basal sheaths, the uppermost 40–140 mm long, the mucro much elongated with toothed margins. **Panicle** 15–30 mm long, more or less elongated, bearing 1–9 spikelets at the tips of erect, slightly scabrid branchlets, the whole subtended by a stiff bract overtopping the panicle. **Spikelets** 5 mm long, 2–4-flowered, lanceolate. **Glumes** 4–6, lanceolate, 2–3 lowermost smaller, empty, membranous and colourless or occasionally brown, upper glumes darker brown with pale centres, margins hyaline, without cilia.

Hypogynous bristles 6, filiform, almost equal in length to style, scabrid, persistent. **Stamens** 3. **Style-branches** 3, style often persistent. **Nut** 2.0–2.5 mm long, slightly less than 1 mm wide, elliptic-oblong, greenish brown to red-brown, lighter brown at the angles, glossy, smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the other rush-like *Schoenus* species by the more or less compact panicle which is subtended by a very long bract which consistently overtops the panicle, and also by the brown rather white or pale cream nuts.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. North Island, South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Chatham Islands and Auckland Islands. Uncommon north of Rotorua.

HABITAT

Coastal to alpine (up to 1800 m a.s.l.). However, mostly montane to alpine in northern two-thirds of its range. Common in damp seepages along cliff faces, in swamps, in seepages within forest, within mires and around lake tarn and stream sides. Sometimes colonises poorly drained pasture.

GENUS

Schoenus

FAMILY

Cyperaceae



Hooker valley, January. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Mount Torlesse. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Licence: CC BY-NC.

AUTHORITY

Schoenus pauciflorus (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Chaetospora pauciflora Hook.f.

TAXONOMIC NOTES

There is good cytological and molecular evidence that *S. pauciflorus* comprises at least two species.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

September–April

FRUITING

November–June

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces and the division of whole plants. Can be grown from fresh seed but seed is often slow to germinate. Rather variable and as a horticultural subject it would require some selection of the diversity of forms present in the wild.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

schoenus: Rush

pauciflorus: Few flowers

NVS CODE

SCHPAU

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n= 28, 56

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened [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

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

ATTRIBUTION

Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/schoenus-pauciflorus/>

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