

# Thelypteris confluens

## COMMON NAME

Marsh fern, swamp fern

## SYNONYMS

*Pteris confluens* Thunberg, *Aspidium thelypteris* var. *squamigerum* Schldl., *Aspidium squamigerum* (Schldl.) Fee., *Thelypteris palustris* var. *squamigera* (Schldl.) Weath., *Thelypteris squamigera* (Schldl.) Ching, *Nephrodium squamulosum* Hook.f., .

## FAMILY

Thelypteridaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Thelypteris confluens* (Thunb.) C.V. Morton

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

## ENDEMIC TAXON

No

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Ferns

## NVS CODE

THECON

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 70

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: PD, TO

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: TO

2004 | Gradual Decline

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. In New Zealand found in the North Island only from Te Pahi to the Waitakere Ranges in the west and Bay of Plenty in the east. Mainly near the coast but extending inland within wetlands associated with geothermally active systems. Outside New Zealand reported widely from Africa, India and Australia but apparently now highly threatened and close to extinction in Australia.

## HABITAT

Coastal, lowland and geothermally active eutrophic wetlands. Often found growing on the margins of lakes and slow flowing streams where it grows within “floating suds” that have developed from organic matter trapped amongst rafts of swamp millet grass (*Isachne globosa*) and raupo (*Typha orientalis*).



Photo by John Smith-Dodsworth.  
Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth



Thelypteris confluens at Karikari Beach.  
Photographer: Bill Campbell

## FEATURES

Long-rhizomatous, tufted fern. Often winter dormant and summer-green in cooler habitats. Stipes 100-500 mm long, yellow-brown, wiry, clad in sparse scales. Fronds 150-350 x 50-130 mm, pale green, yellow-green to dark-green, stiffly erect, rather brittle, fertile fronds slightly smaller than sterile. Pinnae in 15-20(-30) pairs, the longest 30-70 x 7-12 mm, fertile shorter and narrower, divided almost to midrib into onlong, round-ended, ultimate segments. Indusia with sparse to dense glandular hairs.

## SIMILAR TAXA

None

## FLOWERING

Spore bearing fronds may be found throughout the year

## FLOWER COLOURS

No flowers

## FRUITING

Spore bearing fronds may be found throughout the year

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from the division of whole plants and probably from fresh spores. Needs permanently wet ground and does best in sunny sites within a pond or in partially submerged pots.

## THREATS

Formerly common in lowland coastal wetlands, this species remains abundant only in those more remote western wetlands from the Kaipara Harbour north to Te Pahi. It is close to extinction and highly threatened in the Bay of Plenty, with perhaps the largest populations now left on remote Matakana Island. The main threat seems to come from wetland drainage, eutrophication and the often associated spread of faster, taller growing weeds. The species is also popular with fern collectors, and some of the better known and more accessible populations have been depleted or destroyed through fern collection. According to the recent Australian Fern Flora treatment of this species the best populations in Australasia now occur in New Zealand. Its future is not assured in Australia.

## WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (21 April 2011). Description adapted from Brownsey & Smith-Dodsworth (2000).

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Brownsey, P.J.; Smith-Dodsworth, J.C. 2000: New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. Auckland, David Bateman  
Cameron, E.K., Bellingham, R.M. 1998. *Thelypteris confluens* an addition to the Waitakeres. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 53: 38.

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/thelypteris-confluens/>