

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

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: PD, TO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

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

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: TO

2004 | Gradual Decline

DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. New Zealand: North Island (Te Paki 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*).

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).



Photo by John Smith-Dodsworth.
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Thelypteris confluens at Karikari Beach.
Photographer: Bill Campbell, Date taken: 05/01/2008, Licence: CC BY-NC.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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 × 50–130 mm, pale green, yellow-green to dark-green, stiffly erect, rather brittle, fertile fronds slightly smaller than sterile. **Pinnæ** in 15–20–(30) pairs, the longest 30–70 × 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 PJ, Smith-Dodsworth JC. 2000. New Zealand Ferns and Allied Plants. David Bateman, Auckland, NZ. 168 p.
Cameron EK, Bellingham RM. 1998. *Thelypteris confluens* an addition to the Waitakeres. Auckland Botanical Society Journal 53: 38.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

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