

Myosurus minimus subsp. novae-zelandiae

COMMON NAME

New Zealand mousetail

SYNONYMS

Myosurus novae-zelandiae W.R.B.Oliv., *M. minimus* L. subsp. *minimus*

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Myosurus minimus subsp. *novae-zelandiae* (W.R.B.Oliv.) Garn.-Jones

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

NVS CODE

MYOMSN

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 16

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable | Qualifiers: DP, EF, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered | Qualifiers: DP, EF, RR, Sp

2009 | Threatened – Nationally Critical | Qualifiers: EF, Sp

2004 | Threatened – Nationally Endangered

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (formerly reported from the Hawke's Bay to Cape Palliser and Island Bay near Wellington, places where it is now believed extinct), South Island (known only from the eastern side, from Marlborough south to Lake Manapouri).

HABITAT

Lowland to upland. Damp and slightly salty depressions in pastures and short tussock grassland, on the margins of tarn and kettle holes, and in damp dune hollows, gravel flats and alluvium.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

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



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Spring to summer-green annual, forming tufts 10–80mm tall. **Leaves** 5–20, 10–35 × 1–2.5 mm, basal, fleshy to succulent, exstipulate, linear to linear-spathulate, obtuse, margins entire, bright to dark green, yellow-green, red-green or red. **Inflorescences** scapigerous, scapes 1–8, 1-flowered, 10–80 mm tall (including receptacle), erect to spreading, glabrous, fleshy, filiform, bright to dark green, yellow-green, red-green or red. **Flowers** greenish-yellow, apetalous. **Sepals** 5, minute, 0.5–0.8 mm long, 3-nerved, ovate to oblanceolate, green to greenish-yellow or green-red, **Stamens** 5, filaments 0.3–0.5mm long, greenish-white. **Receptacle** 3–15 mm long, elongating in fruit, oblong to oblong-linear, bearing numerous carpels. **Styles** 0.4–0.5 mm long. **Achenes** 20–50 (or more), 0.9–1.6 mm long, boat-shaped, body oblong to narrow-oblong, broader at apex, surface glabrous, dull, pale brown, yellow-brown to dark brown, beak 0.4 mm long. **Seed** 0.55–0.90mm, narrowly elliptic to elliptic, surface finely rugulose, semi-glossy, brown to dark brown.

SIMILAR TAXA

May be confused with *Limosella australis* R.Br. from which it differs by its greenish-yellow rather than white, lilac to pink flowers and by the conspicuous, elongated receptacles which bear numerous carpels (rather than the solitary subglobose capsules produced by *L. australis*). It may also be confused with *Plantago coronopus* L., which differs from mousetail by its dark green to brown-green, usually 1–4 lobed linear leaves, sparsely hairy leaves, and many flowered spikes.

FLOWERING

August–November–(January)

FLOWER COLOURS

Green, Yellow

FRUITING

September–February

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

A strict annual, easily grown from fresh seed. It does best in a small pot, partially submerged in water.

THREATS

Mousetail is probably a biologically sparse entity. However, virtually all of its known habitats are now being invaded by faster growing, taller or turf forming, perennial weeds such as *Plantago coronopus*. These weed invasions appear to be accelerated by changes in the surrounding hydrology, caused in turn, by changes in land use. In particular, the conversion of upland mixed sheep/cattle and sheep farms to dairy farms, especially within Canterbury and Otago, has increased the need for ground water. Canalisation and the widespread use of bore water is now visibly reducing the number of ephemeral wetlands, kettle holes and tarns once frequented by mousetail and other marginal turf plants.

ETYMOLOGY

minimus: Smallest (rather a misnomer)

novae-zelandiae: Of New Zealand

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared for the NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2006. Description by P.J. de Lange and subsequently published in de Lange et al. (2010).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

de Lange PJ, Heenan PB, Norton DA, Rolfe JR, Sawyer JWD. 2010. Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch. 471 p.

Ogle CC. 1985. Mouse-tail *Myosurus novae-zelandiae* a declining species? *Wellington Botanical Society Bulletin* 42: 57–61.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Myosurus minimus* subsp. *novae-zelandiae* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosurus-minimus-subsp-novae-zelandiae/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myosurus-minimus-subsp-novae-zelandiae/>