

Ranunculus macropus

COMMON NAMES

swamp buttercup

BIOSTATUS

Native

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Semi-aquatic to aquatic herb. Rosettes tufted on stout creeping stems. Basal leaves on very stout petioles (7-)15-30(-40) mm x 5-10 mm, arising from bulbous nodes. Leaves ternate (15-)-20-40(-80) mm wide, leaflets sessile or shortly stalked, cuneiform, shallowly 3-fid, apices crenate, serrate or entire, lateral leaflets slightly to distinctly larger than terminal, caulien leaves few, similar to basal but smaller. Flowers (1-)3-5 per stem, 10-15(-20) mm diam., pedicels glabrous. Sepals spreading or weakly recurved, glabrous. Petals (1-)3-5(-7), dark yellow, oblong to broadly oblong, shortly clawed, nectary single, 0.5-1(-1.5) mm from petal base. Receptacle with basal collar of bristles. Achenes 15-50(-65), hardly flattened, glabrous 1.5-2 mm, beak straight, 1-1.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

Confused with *R. amphitrichus* and *R. glabrifolius*. Species hybridizes with *R. amphitrichus*, the progeny of which are fertile (P. J. de Lange pers. obs.). Species is distinguished by the larger flower, with broad, irregularly spaced, oblong petals, whose nectary scale is virtually obscured by a dense cluster of carpels when viewed from above. In good habitat and growing conditions *R. macropus* is a very robust plant with very large, ternate leaves borne on stout petioles.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North and northern South Islands. In the North Island formerly widespread from the northern Waikato south to Wellington. Most recent collections come from the western Waikato, Rotorua Lakes District and East Cape to Hawke's Bay. In the South Island, apparently always scarce, and there seem to have been few collections made over the last 20 or so years. Recently (2010) a population was found at Canadian Flats on the Taieri River in Otago, and scattered populations are present in wetlands on the Canterbury Plains west of Christchurch, and at Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

HABITAT

Coastal to lowland. Usually found in raupō (*Typha orientalis*) dominated wetlands where it grows in still moderately deep to deep water.

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp, DPR, DPS, DPT, RR

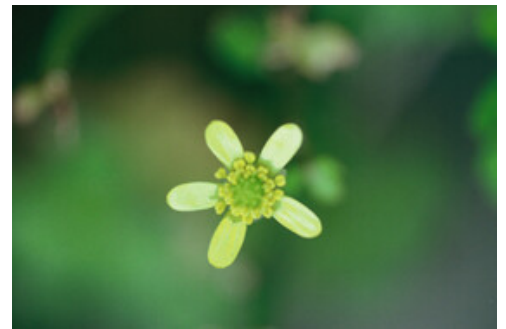
THREATS

Threatened by wetland drainage, modification and the spread of weeds. In large parts of its former range hybrids are now more commonly encountered than the actual species.

DETAILED TAXONOMY



Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. Photographer: Melissa Hutchison, Date taken: 16/02/2021, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Close up of flower of *Ranunculus macropus*, Ex Cult. March 1989, from swamp near Gisborne. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Licence: CC BY-NC.

FAMILY

Ranunculaceae

AUTHORITY

Ranunculus macropus Hook.f.

SYNONYMS

Ranunculus longipetiolatus Colenso

TAXONOMIC NOTES

This species seems to be a shy flowerer, and is more often found in a sterile, vegetative state than reproductive. This trait is carried over into F1 hybrids. Hybrids are common wherever wetlands containing this species and *R. amphitrichus* have been modified, e.g, the wetlands of the lower Waikato. The taxonomic distinctiveness of *Ranunculus macropus* needs further study. It is truly, as Cheeseman (1925) makes clear a 'critical species'.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

ECOLOGY

FLOWERING

September - April (but sporadic flowering may occur at anytime of the year)

FRUITING

October - July

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy from the division of whole plants and from fresh seed. A wetland species which requires permanently damp but sunny situations, Good in shallow ponds.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

OTHER INFORMATION

ETYMOLOGY

ranunculus: From the Latin 'rana' frog, meaning little frog and probably refers to the plants typical marshy habit where frogs abound

macropus: Big foot

NVS CODE

RANMAC

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 96

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Data Deficient

2012 | Data Deficient

2009 | Data Deficient

2004 | Gradual Decline

REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Allan, H.H. 1961: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer
Cheeseman, T.F. 1925: *Manual of the New Zealand Flora*. Wellington, Government Printer.
Webb, C.J.; Sykes, W.R.; Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1988: *Flora of New Zealand*. Vol. IV. Christchurch, DSIR Botany Division.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (30 August 2003). Description based on Allan (1961), Webb et al. (1988) and fresh specimens.

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-macropus/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ranunculus-macropus/>

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15 October 2024