Carex longifructus

COMMON NAMES
bastard grass, hook sedge

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, DPS, DPT
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Sedges

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Somewhat flaccid-leaved, openly caespitose, stoloniferous, rather long-spreading sedge. **Stolons** rather fine, < 0.5 mm diameter. **Culms** 30–200 × 0.5 mm, rather rigid, glabrous, basal bracts very light brown or straw coloured. **Leaves** 3–7 per culm, rather flaccid, equal to or < culms, slightly < 1 mm wide, involute to channelled, involute when dry, midrib distinctly thickened and paler, lamina with margins scabrid near leaf apex. **Spike** 10–15 × 2–4 mm, female flowers 5, close-set, internodes 1–1.5 mm long. **Glumes** slightly ≤ length of utricles, deciduous, lanceolate, acute, membranous to chartaceous, midrib pale green. **Utricles** 4.5–5.5 × 1 mm, trigonous with a prominent lateral nerve, or subtrigonous and almost smooth, elliptic-lanceolate, olive-green, spreading when ripe, stipe indistinct, scarcely narrowed, up to 1 mm long, beak tapering, 1.5 mm long.

SIMILAR TAXA
A distinctive species distinguished from other New Zealand hook sedges, by the very narrow tapered leaves, and rather short spikes with relatively long utricles. In Flora II of the New Zealand Flora Series, *Carex longifructus* (as *Uncinia longifructis*) keys out near *C. drucei* (Hamlin) K.A.Ford (as *Uncinia drucei*) from which it differs by its leaves being < 1 mm rather than > 1 mm wide, and by the olive-green rather than dark brown coloured utricles. *Carex drucei* prefers drier forested habitats and rock outcrops than the deep moss, mossy peat shaded habitats preferred by *C. longifructus*. It is also a much less spreading, more shortly stoloniferous plant than *C. longifructus*. Exact relationships amongst the New Zealand hook sedges have yet to be determined, and will almost certainly require a full phylogenetic analysis.

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. North and South Islands. In the North Island known from the Raukumara, Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. In the South Island locally known from Nelson, Marlborough, Westland, Canterbury, North Otago, said to be more common in Fiordland.

HABITAT
A species of shaded slopes and peaty hollows within montane forest and subalpine scrub. Exact habitat preferences are not known.

Spike. Alpha, Tararua Range. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 03/03/2008, Licence: CC BY.

Glume (left) and utricle, adaxial view. Alpha,

THREATS
Believed to be a naturally uncommon, ecologically sparse species. However it is poorly known from large parts of its reported range. Further survey to ascertain its exact status is much desired.

GENUS
Carex

FAMILY
Cyperaceae

AUTHORITY
Carex longifructus (Kük.) K.A.Ford

SYNONYMS
Uncinia longifructus (Kük.) Petrie; Uncinia tenella var. longifructus Kük.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
No

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
October–December

FRUITING
October–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Unknown. Probably easily grown in a moist, peaty soil.

WHERE TO BUY
Not commercially available.

ETYMOLOGY
carex: Latin name for a species of sedge, now applied to the whole group.
longifructus: From the Latin longus 'long' and fructus 'fruit'

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to indigenous and naturalised Carex in New Zealand

NVS CODE
CARLGF

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 88

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, Sp
2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP
2004 | Sparse
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Otago: 2025 | Regionally Data Deficient | Qualifiers: TL 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

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by Peter J. de Lange 17 August 2006. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).
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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/carex-longifructus/

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