

Poa foliosa

COMMON NAMES

muttonbird poa

SYNONYMS

Festuca foliosa Hook.f.; *Poa foliosa* (Hook.f.) Hook.f. var. *foliosa*; *Festuca foliosa* var. *â* Hook.f.

FAMILY

Poaceae

AUTHORITY

Poa foliosa (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Grasses

NVS CODE

POAFOL

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 28

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, SO

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, SO

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Stewart Island/Rakiura (north-eastern Titi Islands), Solander Island, Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands, Campbell Island, and Macquarie Island (Australian Territory but part of the New Zealand Botanical region).

HABITAT

Coastal, usually near sea bird nesting grounds, often on steep slopes, sometimes in turf near shore.



Poa foliosa. Photographer: Alan Stewart, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Enderby Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, robust, green tussocks up to 1.5 m tall, arising from short, narrow, woody stolons, with shoots covered at base by abundant fibrous remnants of sheaths. **Branching** extravaginal; leaf-blades persistent. **Leaf-sheath** light brown, coriaceous, glabrous, closely striate, keel prominent above. **Ligule** 1–3 mm, apically glabrous, entire, rounded, abaxially finely scabrid. **Leaf-blade** 150–500 × 1–6 mm, coriaceous, tough, flat, abaxially smooth with prominent midrib and many lateral ribs, adaxially short-scabrid, bearing two prominent ridges along centre; margins thickened, smooth, tip entire, smooth, semi-pungent. **Culm** 200–600 mm, internodes glabrous. **Panicle** 100–250 mm, dense, with all branches, except the longer ones, bearing spikelets almost to base; rachis and branches mostly smooth. **Spikelets** 5.5–9.0 mm, 3–6-flowered, light greenish brown. **Glumes** subequal, long-acuminate, membranous, except for thickened nerves, smooth, but with a few prickle-teeth on nerves above and occasionally on margins; lower 3–6 mm, 1–3-nerved, narrow-lanceolate, upper 4.0–6.5 mm, 3-nerved, narrow elliptic-lanceolate. **Lemma** 5–7 mm, 5-nerved, acute or with midnerve very shortly excurrent, scabrid except near base, midnerve ciliate to more than halfway, outer lateral nerves, internerves, and margins with minute hairs in lower 1/3. **Palea** 3.5–4.5 mm, keel rather densely ciliate-scabrid, interkeel and flanks with sparse minute hairs and prickle-teeth. **Callus** with large tuft of crinkled hairs just below midnerve of lemma. **Rachilla** c. 0.5 mm, glabrous. **Lodicules** 0.4–0.7 mm, rarely hair-tipped. **Dioecious**: male with anthers 2.0–3.3 mm, gynoeceum 0; female with pollen-sterile anthers c. 0.6–1.0 mm, often on long filaments; stigma-styles c. 2 mm. **Seed** 2 mm; rarely perfect.

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the grasses of New Zealand](#)

SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to *Poa tennantiana* Petrie which is a superficially similar southern New Zealand robust grass of coastal areas, especially near sea bird nesting grounds. *Poa tennantiana* differs from *P. foliosa* by its monoecious rather than dioecious habit, yellow-green rather than green leaves, by the lower leaf-sheaths scabrid between the nerves, rather than smooth, and by the glabrous rather than hairy (hairs crinkly in a prominent tuft) callus.

FLOWERING

October–December

FRUITING

November–April

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from fresh seed and rooted pieces. Dislikes humidity and will not flower or thrive in warm climates.

THREATS

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a narrow range, offshore island endemic. It is abundant in its known locations with no obvious threats.

ETYMOLOGY

poa: Meadow grass

foliosa: Leafy

WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

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REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Edgar E, Connor HE. 2000. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Manaaki Whenua Press, Christchurch, NZ. 650 p.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/poa-foliosa/>

PDF DATE

17 September 2024