Waireia stenopetala

COMMON NAMES
yellow beaks, beak orchid, horizontal orchid,

BIOSTATUS
Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS
2023 | Not Threatened
Jump to previous conservation statuses

CATEGORY
Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS
Orchids

FLOWER COLOURS
Green, Yellow

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Auckland Islands. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
Summer-green, leafy, glabrous, tuberous, perennial herb. Tubers paired or in threes, globose to conical. Plant at flower up to 400 mm tall, plant sharply elongating at fruiting. All parts fleshy. **Stem** erect, terete. **Leaves** (1)–2–(3), widely spaced and reducing in size up stem, basal leaf 80-150 x 15-20 mm, dark green, narrow-lanceolate to lanceolate, concave, apex acute, dark green to bronze green, rarely flecked brown. **Floral bracts** closely sheathing and overtopping ovary, leaf-like, colour as for leaves. **Flowers** (1)–3–(6) in short racemes, inclined away from bracts. **Perianth** 10–20 mm long, yellow-green, or green, usually spotted red-brown. **Sepals** acute; dorsal sepal rather broadly ovate, cucullate, deeply concave, arching over and obscuring most of the rest of the flower; lateral sepals smaller, yellow-green or green, linear, sharply deflexed. **Petals** slightly shorter again, yellow-green or green, linear-lanceolate, subacute, deflexed or patent. **Labellum** erect, broad-ovate, narrowed abruptly to a short fixed claw; margin entire, callose ridges present and extending toward labellum apex. **Column** elongate-cylindric, curved, wing very narrow, finely lobed about anther. **Anther** terminal, papillose, with two initially coherent, pollinia per cell, finely granular. **Stigma** prominent, discoid; rostellum median.

SIMILAR TAXA
None

DISTRIBUTION
Endemic. New Zealand: North Island (known only from the eastern slopes of Mt Ruapehu and from the Tararua Range), South Island, Stewart Island/Rakiura, Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT
Wet, peaty places at higher elevations in the north, down to sea level in the south.

GENUS
Waireia

FAMILY
Orchidaceae

AUTHORITY
Waireia stenopetala (Hook.f.) D.L.Jones, M.A.Clem., et Molloy

SYNONYMS
Lyperanthus antarcticus Hook.f., Thelymitra stenopetala Hook. f.

TAXONOMIC NOTES
Waireia is a recent segregate from Lyperanthus.

ENDEMIC TAXON
Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS
Yes

ENDEMIC FAMILY
No

FLOWERING
November–March

FRUITING
January–May

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE
Difficult—should not be removed from the wild.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING
FAC: Facultative
Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY
stenopetala: From the Greek stenos (narrow) and petalum (petal), narrow petalled

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY
Key to native orchids of New Zealand

NVS CODE
WAISTE

CHROMOSOME NUMBER
2n = 40

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES
2017 | Not Threatened
2012 | Not Threatened
2009 | Not Threatened
2004 | Not Threatened
Jump to current conservation status

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES
Otago: 2025 | Regionally Not Threatened Help
Current regional threat status assessments prepared according to Crisp et al. (2025) are displayed when available. The 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
Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1997).
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MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/waireia-stenopetala/

PDF DATE

25 August 2026