

# Ruppia polycarpa

## COMMON NAMES

Horses mane weed, lakeweed

## BIOSTATUS

Native

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Rhizome prominent, and either much branched and congested giving rise to short stems and long leaves in dense grass-like mats or less closely branched with longer, sparsely branched stems. Leaves c.50–300 × 0.3–0.4 mm, dark green, almost filiform and only slightly flattened; apex obtuse, often most minutely denticulate; sheath (10–)25–35–50 mm long, auricles narrow. Peduncles to 0.5 m long, usually conspicuously thicker just below flowers, becoming spirally coiled as fruit matures. Flowers protandrous; carpels (5–)8(–16). Podogynes slender. Achenes (1.7–)2(–2.7) mm long, asymmetric, brown; mesocarp thin; endocarp smooth, black, with 2 longitudinal slits opposite to and about on level of top of operculum; beak 0.2–0.3 mm long.

## SIMILAR TAXA

*Ruppia polycarpa* differs from *R. megacarpa* by its curved to straight rather than zig-zagged branching pattern, obtuse rather than bidentate leaf apices; carpels usually 4 per flower (rather than (5–)8(–16)), and fruits which are 4–5 mm long rather than < 3 mm long. *Stuckenia pectinata* which sometimes grows with both species of *Ruppia* is superficially similar. It is easily distinguished from both *Ruppia* species by the ligulate acute-tipped leaves, tuberous stems, and spicate inflorescences.

## DISTRIBUTION

Indigenous. North, South and Chatham Islands. Also in Australia

## HABITAT

Saline ponds, lagoons, brackish streams, slow flowing fresh water streams and fresh water lakes from sea level to 700 m a.s.l.

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

## DETAILED TAXONOMY

### FAMILY

Ruppiaceae

### AUTHORITY

*Ruppia polycarpa* R.Mason

### SYNONYMS

None

### ENDEMIC TAXON

No



*Ruppia polycarpa* (growth habit) - Chatham Islands, Rekohu (Chatham Island), Lake Te Wapu outlet, Kaiangaroa Beach. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 29/01/2020, Licence: CC BY.



*Ruppia polycarpa* (flowering inflorescence) - Chatham Islands, Rekohu (Chatham Island), Lake Te Wapu outlet, Kaiangaroa Beach. Photographer: Peter J. de Lange, Date taken: 29/01/2020, Licence: CC BY.

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## ECOLOGY

### FLOWERING

October - February

### FRUITING

October - May

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Uncertain. Probably easily grown in suitable conditions but *Ruppia* is unlikely to be widely cultivated (if at all). Most people regard it as a pest and are only interested in eradicating it.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

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

## OTHER INFORMATION

### WHERE TO BUY

Not commercially available

## ETYMOLOGY

**ruppia**: Named after Heinrich Bernhard Rupprius (1689–1719), an 18th century German botanist

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 18$

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | Not Threatened | Qualifiers: SO

2012 | Not Threatened

2009 | Not Threatened

2004 | Not Threatened

## REFERENCING AND CITATIONS

### 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 P.J. de Lange 2 March 2011. Description adapted from Moore & Edgar (1970). Some of this factsheet information is derived from [Flora of New Zealand Online](#) and is used under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 New Zealand](#) licence.

### NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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### MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/ruppia-polycarpa/>

### PDF DATE

24 October 2024