



Ceratocephala pungens

Common Name(s):

None known

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Critical

Distribution:

Endemic. South Island, Mackenzie Basin and Central Otago. Formerly known from the upper Waitaki River where it appears to be extinct.

Habitat:

A species of dry open ground, often amongst scabweed (*Raoulia* spp.) matts.

Features*:

Tiny, tufted, rosette-forming, annual herb 1.5-2 cm tall. Leaves 4-8 x 3-10 mm, grey-green, finely woolly-hairy, spathulate in outline, trilobed, each lobe divided 2-3 times, into oblong segments. Flowers solitary, unstalked or on short stalks 2-5 mm long. Sepals 4-5 mm, linear-oblong, woolly beneath. Petals yellow, as long as sepals, linear-oblong. Achenes (fruits) 20-30, 3-4 x 1.5 mm, woolly-hairy; keel flattened, triangular, beak 1-1.5 mm, erect, straight and slender, tapering into a spine.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

November - March

Threats:

At serious risk of extinction. The open scabweed habitats this species requires have, following the near demise of rabbits (as a consequence of the release of Rabbit calicivirus) been replaced by taller introduced and indigenous grasses. These grasses have all but replaced the relatively open habit *Ceratocephala* requires, so quickly that whole populations have disappeared within one growing season. If this trend continues unchecked then *Ceratocephala pungens* is likely to become extinct within the next 5-10 years.

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 September 2003. Description adapted from Garnock-Jones (1984) - see also de Lange et al. (2010).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Heenan, P.B.; Norton, D.A.; Rolfe, J.R.; Sawyer, J.W.D. 2010: Threatened Plants of New Zealand. Christchurch, Canterbury University Press. 471pp.

Garnock-Jones, P.J. 1984: *Ceratocephalus pungens* (Ranunculaceae), a new species from New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 22: 135-137

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=11



Caption: Flat Top Hill, Central Otago, October 2004

Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Galloway

Photographer: John Barkla