



Carex trifida

Common Name(s):

Mutton-bird Sedge, Tataki

Current Threat Status (2012):

Not Threatened

Distribution:

Indigenous. New Zealand, southern South Island, Stephens, Stewart, Chatham, Snares, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell Islands. Also present on Macquarie Island, in southern South America and the Falkland Islands.

Habitat:

Strictly coastal where it often associated with seal haul outs and sea bird nesting grounds, especially - as the common name suggests - muttonbirds (*Puffinus* spp.). Usually in open sites, very rarely found in canopy gaps within coastal forest.

Features*:

Extremely robust, compact, light green to glaucous sedge, producing tussocks up to 1 m diameter. Culms 0.15–1.00 m tall, 2–4 mm diameter, trigonous with angles rounded, glabrous; basal sheaths cream, grey, or yellow-brown. Leaves often overtopping the inflorescence, 6–15 mm wide, light green to dark glaucous green, double-folded, with keel not very much thickened, rather soft and spreading, margins slightly scabrid with rather distant teeth; sheath only slightly broader than lamina, paler green. Spikes 6–15, brown, very sturdy, 35–11 x 5–15 mm; upper 2–4 spikes male, occasionally with a few female flowers intermingled, ± approximate, ± sessile; lower spikes female, the lowest often compound, on stout erect peduncles; bracts leaf-like, > inflorescence. Glumes > utricles, linear-oblong, or lanceolate, noticeably emarginate, membranous, chestnut-brown, the pale greenish brown midrib produced to a very long hispid awn. Utricles 4.5–6.0 x c.2.0 mm., subtrigonus, oblong-obovoid, turgid, distinctly nerved, straw-coloured to light brown tinged; abruptly narrowed to a rather shallowly bifid beak c.1 mm long, margins and orifice occasionally slightly scabrid; much contracted to a very pale brown stipe c.1 mm long. Stigmas 3. Nut c. 2 mm. long, trigonous, oblong-obovoid, dark brown.

Flowering:

August - December

Fruiting:

November - June

Threats:

Not Threatened - but very uncommon in the northern part of its range

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared by P.J. de Lange (10 August 2006). Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970)

References and further reading:

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington.

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 2009 Vol. 11 No. 4 pp. 285-309

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=1425



Caption: Chatham Islands, Te Whakaru

Photographer: Peter de Lange



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