



Poa billardierei

Common Name(s):

Sand tussock, hinarepe

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

North Island, South Island, Chatham Island (apparently absent from Chatham Island now despite being formerly abundant). Also found in temperate Australia.

Habitat:

Coastal dunes; sandy and rocky places near the shore, especially foredunes and dune hollows.

Features*:

Yellow-green tussocks up to about 70 cm tall. Leaves fine, rolled, somewhat drooping (coarser than silver tussock), initially green, often fading at tips to silver, and drying to golden-straw colour. Seed heads no longer than leaves; seeds relatively large, barley-like, leaving a characteristic zig-zag look to the remaining head when fallen. Flowers in early summer and the seed are produced in late summer. It could be confused with *Poa chathamica* which has blue-green or grass-green flat leaves and an open seed head which overtops the foliage. It could also be confused with marram grass which has similar foliage but large cat's-tail-like seed heads which overtop the foliage.

Flowering:

Early summer

Fruiting:

Mid to late summer

Threats:

Mammalian grazing and browsing (palatable to sheep, cattle, goats and horses). Competition from marram grass. Coastal development and use of vehicles. The combined impact of browsing and competition from marram grass is believed to have caused the loss of the species from the Chatham Islands.

***Attribution:**

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 2 September 2003.

References and further reading:

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Stanley, R. 2001. Sand tussock *Austrofestuca littoralis* update on the Auckland populations. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 56: 21-22

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=148



Caption: *Austrofestuca littoralis*

Photographer: Kevin Matthews



Caption: Kapowairua, Spirits Bay

Photographer: Gillian Crowcroft