



Pseudognaphalium ephemerum

Common Name(s):

kettlehole cudweed

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Critical

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand, South Island, eastern from the upper Wairau River to Southland.

Habitat:

Montane to subalpine. Usually in intermontane basins where it is a plant of ephemeral wetlands, kettlehole, tarn and lake margins, strictly in places which are flooded in winter and dry out in summer.

Features*:

Sparingly to much branched annual herb forming greyish more or less circular patches 10-80 mm diameter, and 10-15 mm tall on dried out mud of montane to alpine lake, pond and tarn beds. All parts densely clad in off white to greyish, floccose, cottony hairs (hairs initially white fading with age to off-white or grey); hairs shedding somewhat on older leaves. Branches filiform, decumbent, apices more or less ascending. Rosette leaves 3-8, mostly all withered at flowering; 7.4-18.6 x 2.0-4.6 mm, obovate, spathulate, oblong-spathulate, oblanceolate, elliptic to linear-lanceolate; apices obtuse to acute, often apiculate, bases cuneate to attenuate, dull grey-green to grey, margins often weakly undulate; mid stem and upper stem leaves 2-3, spreading, up to 10.2 x 1.8 mm, mostly narrow-oblanceolate to spathulate or linear-lanceolate, apices acute to subacute, becoming distinctly smaller near inflorescence, greyish-white to white due to dense hair covering, margins plane. Inflorescence of 1-3 terminal capitula, each subtended by a foliose bract 5.0-8.2 x 2.1-6.3 mm. Capitula mostly solitary, if more than 1 then arranged in very compact, simple, 3-flowered cymes, 2.3-4.3 mm diameter, 2.8-3.8 mm long, outer surface densely invested in white cottony hairs. Involucre narrowly barrel-shaped to urceolate; Involucral bracts arranged in 2-3 rows, basal 1/3 brown to dark brown, otherwise translucent, hyaline, pale amber, somewhat lustrous, weakly oblong, ovate, elliptic to more or less rhomboidal; adaxially with a central tuft of white, cottony hairs otherwise glabrous; outer bracts 4-12, 2.6-3.1 x 1.0-1.2 mm, slightly larger than inner 1-2 rows; inner row 4-8 (third row if present comprising 4-6 bracts). Receptacle 0.68-1.00 mm diameter, very slightly convex, alveolate. Florets 3-6, filiform, 0.9-1.4 mm long, not or scarcely exceeding involucre, corolla pale lemon yellow to almost greenish yellow; female florets 2-4, bisexual 1-2. Cypsela oblong-ellipsoid, more or less terete or compressed, 0.4-0.6 x 0.2-0.3 mm, yellow-orange, surface sparsely invested in papillate hairs. Pappus bristles 9-15, 1.8-2.6 mm long, white, barbellate readily detaching from cypsela

Flowering:

November - February

Fruiting:

December - April

Threats:

A biologically sparse, naturally uncommon plant whose occurrences are dictated by the presence of suitable wetland habitats. In some locations, such as Lake Lyndon many thousands of plants can appear in a good season, while at other sites it may be known from year to year by only a handful of specimens. Although its ecological requirements play a strong role in its year to year abundance it cannot be denied that at many of its known locations, especially in the northern South Island it is now seriously threatened by the spread of invasive weeds into its ephemeral wetland habitat.

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (28 February 2008). Description by P.J. de Lange based on live plants and herbarium specimens. - this description was subsequently published by 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. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=261



Caption: *Pseudognaphalium ephemerum*

Photographer: John Barkla