



Sonchus novae-zelandiae

Common Name(s):

Dryland sow thistle

Current Threat Status (2012):

Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Distribution:

Endemic. Three Kings Islands and South Island from the Marlborough Sounds to Southland and Fiordland.

Habitat:

Coastal to subalpine (10 - 1200 m a.s.l.) amongst sea bird colonies or within open stony ground, short and tall tussock grassland, on or near rock outcrops (on rock ledges, within crevices, and on talus slopes), sometimes on recently exposed alluvium. Rarely in open ground under grey scrub.

Features*:

Rosulate, perennial, scapigerous herb arising from a stout, deeply descending, often multicapital tap root. All parts when broken leaking copious amounts of white latex exudate. Leaves and petiole 20-150 mm long, flattened, and more or less held appressed to the surrounding substrate; lamina crisply membranous, glabrous, lyrate, bright green, yellow-green, or glaucous, sinuately shallowly to deeply, closely or distantly lobulate, or pinnatifid; lobules rounded, apical, often mottled with darker brown pigmentation or glaucous; terminal lobes 30-50 x 20-30 mm, lateral lobes diminishing in size from 10 to 1 mm, confluent, merging into the broadly winged petiole. Scapes 150 mm or more long, slender, initially sparsely and finely tomentose, becoming glabrous, except near capitulum; bracteate, bracts 1-5, linear, tomentose mainly with eglandular hairs, glandular hairs either absent or sparse. Capitula 15-30 x 10-40 mm, receptacle shallowly concave, alveolate. Involucrum 4-seriate, imbricating, membranous with scarious margins; outer involucral bracts 3-5 mm long, narrow-ovate, undersides densely tomentose with dark spreading glandular hairs; inner bracts narrowly ovate-oblong up to 15 mm long, dark brown-green, undersides initially clad in white tomentum and glandular hairs becoming glabrous, margins scarious with rather fine teeth. Florets 30-36, ligulate; limb pale lemon-yellow, about equal in length to the slender claw, apex deeply 5-fid. Style arms long, densely covered in minute processes, finely coiled. Anthers conspicuous. Fertile achenes few, 2-3 mm long, dark brown, slightly compressed, broad at first, apices bluntly obtuse to rounded, narrowed slightly to base, crowned with minute asperities glabrous, primary ribs longitudinal, 4-5, prominent; secondary ribs 4-5, less obvious, otherwise strongly transversely wrinkled towards base. Sterile achenes numerous, narrowly subcylindric, pale and finely ribbed. Pappus hairs up to 7 mm long, copious, white, slender and soft, fused at base otherwise barbellate in upper half.

Flowering:

November - April

Fruiting:

November - May

Threats:

Sonchus novae-zelandiae appears to have always been biologically sparse but recent ad hoc field surveys for this species have found that it has declined from large parts of its former range. Many populations are at risk from the spread of *Pilosella*, and in some sites *Sonchus novae-zelandiae* is now confined to cliff and rock outcrop refugia

*Attribution:

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (6 August 2006). Description adapted from Allan (1961) supplemented with observations made from fresh and dried material (see also de Lange et al. 2010).

References and further reading:

Allan, H.H. 1961: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. I. Wellington, Government Printer

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.

Garnock-Jones P.J. 2014: Evidence-based review of the taxonomic status of New Zealand's endemic seed plant genera, *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, DOI: 10.1080/0028825X.2014.902854

Heenan, P.B.; Mitchell, A.D.; de Lange, P.J.; Keeling, J.; Paterson, A.M. 2010: Late Cenozoic origin and diversification of Chatham Islands endemic plant species revealed by analyses of DNA sequence data. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 48: 83-136.

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



Caption: Harris Mts
Photographer: John Barkla



Caption: Old Man Range, Otago
Photographer: John Barkla

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