



## *Puccinellia raroflorens*

### Common Name(s):

Saltgrass

### Current Threat Status (2012):

Nationally Critical

### Distribution:

Endemic. South Island (Central Otago) and Stewart Island. Known from the salt pans of Central Otago and in coastal sites on Stewart Island (Paterson Inlet and Mason Bay).

### Habitat:

A species of inland salt pans, salt slicks, and coastal salt encrusted sand depressions. It has also been collected from near barren, stony ground within an estuary.

### Features\*:

Diminutive perennial grass forming diffuse mats up to 2 m diam. and 450 mm high. Plants usually partially covered in soil, rarely flowering with only the short, narrow, dull green leaves visible. Branching extravaginal. Leaf-sheath hairless, wider than leaf-blade, ribs few, distinct. Ligule 0.2-0.6 mm, obtuse or truncate, transparent. Leaf-blade 10-30 x 0.2-0.5 mm, hair-like, inrolled, sometimes curled, hairless, tips subacute, margins minutely scabrid. Culm entirely hidden by leaf-sheaths. Panicle rarely present, 10-16 mm, overtopped by leaves, bearing 12 spikelets. Spikelets 3-4(-4.8) mm, 4-6-flowered, green to brownish green. Glumes unequal, ovate, obtuse; lower 0.6-1 mm, 1-nerved, upper 1.1-1.4 mm, 3-nerved. Lemma 1.8-2.5 mm, 5-nerved, ovate-elliptic, hairless. Anthers 0.4-0.6 mm. Seeds 1.2-1.6 x 0.6-0.7 mm.

### Flowering:

November - January

### Fruiting:

November - February

### Threats:

This species is seriously threatened throughout its known mainland range because of the encroachment of salt-tolerant weeds within the saline soil habitats of Central Otago. Its status on Stewart Island remains unclear being known from just two collections made from widely separated localities and 20 years apart.

### \*Attribution:

Description modified from Edgar and Connor (2000).

### References and further reading:

Edgar, E.; Connor, H.E. 2000: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. V. Grasses. Christchurch, Manaaki Whenua Press. 650 pp.

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=37](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=37)



**Caption:** *Puccinellia raroflorens*

**Photographer:** John Barkla



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