



Carex pleiostachys

Common Name(s):

Fiordland Sedge

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. South Island, Fiordland coastline only.

Habitat:

Coastal. Said to be a conspicuous species of seal haul outs, and both seal and penguin (rock hopper) colonies. It is known to grow within peaty soil under low shrubs, and on open cobble, and sand beaches. It also colonises cliff faces. It extends well inland up the fiords and has been collected from shingle at various river mouths.

Features*:

Pale green, densely tufted and leafy sedge of coastal slopes, boulder and cobble beaches and cliff faces. Culms 100-300 x 0.5-1 mm, terete, glabrous; basal sheaths light brown to reddish brown. Leaves distinctly > culms in length, 1-1.5 mm wide, usually concave on the upper surface, often with a obvious median groove, and convex on the underside, margins scabrid with the apices much curled; sheaths rather long, extending for up to 1/2 the length of the lamina. Inflorescence comprised of 5-7 spikes, these 10-20 x 4-7 mm. The terminal spike male; remaining spikes female, with occasional male spikes near the base. Uppermost spikes more or less approximate, sessile, lower spikes shortly pedunculate, the lower most typically set well back and more distant from the others; leaf-like bracts subtending spikes long with distinctly curled apices. Glumes (excluding awn) almost equal to or just shorter than utricles, ovate, acute or emarginated, membranous, cream with light brown striae, midrib paler, prolonged as a scabrid awn of varying length. Utricles 3-4 x 1 mm, subtrigonal, narrow-lanceolate, green to greenish-brown with white to pale brown nerves, this fading at maturity, margins glabrous; beak tapering gradually, 1-1.5 mm long, crura bifid, glabrous; stipe 0.5 mm long. Stigmas 3. Nut 2 mm long, dark brown, oblong-obovoid, trigonal.

Flowering:

Unknown

Fruiting:

Unknown

Threats:

Because of the remote and hazardous nature of the Fiordland coastline this species is not very well known. Preliminary surveys and past field reports suggest that it is locally abundant along some parts of the coastline. For this reason it is currently viewed as a localised, range restricted species. Further survey to clarify status is desired

***Attribution:**

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=399