



Poa tennantiana

Common Name(s):

Muttonbird Poa

Current Threat Status (2012):

Naturally Uncommon

Distribution:

Endemic. New Zealand: South (Otago (Taieri River Mouth), Stewart, Snares and Auckland Islands. It has not been seen on the Auckland Islands recently.

Habitat:

Coastal usually in or near sea bird nesting grounds, on forest margins, clearings, in low scrub, on cliff faces and damp banks.

Features*:

Yellow-green, rather stout, stiff-leaved, perennial tussock-forming grass up to 1 m tall, arising from a strong rhizomatous base covered by abundant fibrous remnants of leaf-sheaths; branching intravaginal; leaf-blades persistent. Leaf-sheath submembranous, striate, densely, retrorsely, minutely pubescent-scabrid between ribs in basal leaves, glabrous in cauline leaves, very light brown, later becoming darker and shredding into fibres. Ligule 6-16 mm, apically glabrous, entire, narrowed to a long fine point, abaxially short-pubescent. Leaf-blade 160.0-380.0 x 4.5-9.0 mm, flat, finely striate, abaxially smooth, adaxially minutely papillose, very rarely minutely ciliate-scabrid on ribs; margins ciliate-fimbriate for a short distance above ligule, otherwise glabrous, gradually narrowed to straight-sided acute tip. Culm 150-330, internodes glabrous. Panicle 90-160 mm, broad, dense but much-branched, upper branches almost completely hidden by numerous, rather small spikelets, lower branches naked towards base; rachis smooth, branches and pedicels $\frac{3}{4}$ scabrid to occasionally smooth. Spikelets 3.5-4.5 mm, 2-3-flowered, light brown. Glumes subequal, ovate-lanceolate, acute, glabrous; lower 2.0-2.5 mm, 1-nerved, upper 2.5-3.0 mm, 3-nerved; midnerve near tip and margins with sparse prickle-teeth. Lemma 3.0-3.5 mm, 5-nerved, ovate-elliptic, minutely pubescent-scabrid, nerves longer ciliate on lower $\frac{1}{3}$, acute, or midnerve very shortly excurrent. Palea 2.5-3.0 mm, keels scabrid in upper $\frac{1}{2}$, interkeel smooth or with a few prickle-teeth. Callus glabrous. Rachilla c.0.5 mm, glabrous; prolongation twice as long. Lodicules 0.5-0.8 mm. Anthers 1.0-1.5 mm. Seed 1.5 x 0.5 mm.

Flowering:

October - December

Fruiting:

November - April

Threats:

Not Threatened. Listed because it is a narrow range endemic of mainly offshore island. It is abundant in most of its known locations with no obvious threats.

***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=641