



## *Senecio sterquilinus*

### Common Name(s):

Guano groundsel

### Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Relict

### Distribution:

Endemic. North, South and Chatham Islands. Known from Stack H (Mokohinau islands group), Hawkes Bay (extinct), Matiu/Somes, Makaro/Ward, Brothers and Stephens islands in the Cook Strait. Also on the West Coast from Cape Foulwind south to Point Elizabeth. Around Wellington Harbour this species is occasionally seen at Petone Beach and Evans Bay. On the Chatham Islands it has been recently (2006) collected from the Forty Fours, Sisters and Western Reef

### Habitat:

A strictly coastal species usually found growing in the vicinity of sea bird nesting grounds or seal haul outs. Often found growing out of thick guano deposits on sparsely vegetated rock stacks dominated by sea birds.

### Features\*:

Annual to short-lived perennial, subsucculent, fleshy to succulent herb, forming densely branched, somewhat sprawling plants up to 0.6 x 0.6 m. Basal stem woody, purple-red or purple, glabrous, rest of stem purple, purple-green or green, sparsely covered with cobwebby hairs. Leaves fleshy, subsucculent to succulent, sparsely to moderately cobweb-hairy, especially on the undersides, often more densely so on emergent leaves, becoming glabrate to glabrous, cuneately narrowed to seed, amplexicaul, 30-200 x 10-80 mm, dark green and glossy above, paler green or purple-green below, elliptic to ovate or rhomboid, usually pinnately lobed to pinnatisect with very broad pinnately lobed or deeply toothed segments, rarely crenate to entire. Upper most leaves similar but smaller, usually less divided, base shortly and broadly cuneate, amplexicaul. Supplementary bracts and calycular bracteoles 9-30, 1.5-8 mm long. Involucral bracts 13-21, glabrescent to glabrous, 6-12 mm long. Ray florests 13-28; ligules dark yellow, closely spaced or overlapping, 3-10 mm long. Disc yellow 10-25 mm diameter. Cypsela 2.5-3.0 mm long, dark brown, dark purple-brown to black-brown, narrowly oblong to narrowly oblong-elliptic, scarcely narrowed at apex, base cuneate; ribs broad and rounded; grooves narrow to u-shaped; hairs retrorse in 4-10 rows filling grooves, often obscuring ribs as well. Pappus 5-6 mm long, white, caducous.

### Flowering:

July - June

### Fruiting:

July - June

### Threats:

A vulnerable herb of very restricted and probably relict distribution. Abundant at most of its known localities and seemingly dependant on sea bird guano to thrive. This makes it very vulnerable to any decline in nesting/roosting sea birds.

### \*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 1 November 2008. Description based on Webb et al. (1988) supplemented by observations obtained from fresh specimens and herbarium material

### References and further reading:

Webb CJ, Sykes WR, Garnock-Jones PJ 1988. Flora of New Zealand. Vol. IV. Botany Division, DSIR, Christchurch

### For more information, visit:

[http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora\\_details.asp?ID=684](http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=684)



**Caption:** Western reef

**Photographer:** Peter de Lange



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