



Prasophyllum hectorii

Common Name(s):

swamp leek orchid

Current Threat Status (2012):

At Risk - Declining

Distribution:

Endemic. North and Chatham Islands. Formerly known in the North Island from Te Pahi south to near Waiouru, and from one site on the main Chatham Island. Current records exist for Te Pahi, the Waikato and Central Volcanic Plateau.

Habitat:

Coastal to subalpine, in wetlands (0-1100m a.s.l.), and associated slow flowing streams. Usually found partially submerged in or at the margins of pools and streams, where the plants tubers may be seen floating just above the sediment. It is often associated with the sedge genera *Baumea* and *Eleocharis* (Cyperaceae) where it easily overlooked unless flowering.

Features*:

Stout orchid of wetlands. Plants sweetly scented, 0.15-1 m tall at flowering, Tuber ovoid usually paired with previous seasons tuber, roots few, stout, peg-like. Stem erect, fleshy, terete, dark green. Leaf solitary, usually overtopping raceme; lamina yellow-green to dark green, fleshy, terete, apex acute. Inflorescence a few to many flowered raceme. Flowers more or less evenly spaced, 10-80-flowered, fleshy-succulent. Perianth yellow, yellow-green to green. Dorsal sepal 6-8 mm, broad-ovate, concave; laterals somewhat longer, narrow-oblong, free to base, margins thin, apex often hooded, sometimes appearing bidentate. Petals slightly shorter, thinner. Labellum yellow, white or black, prominent, narrowed at base to a short, stout claw, ovate, sharply bent at a right angle halfway from base; margin undulate; callus confined to proximal tip. Lateral processes of column oblong, falcate, as tall as rostellum. Anther sessile, overtopped by rostellum. Stigma prominent.

Flowering:

(November -) December - February

Fruiting:

November - May

Threats:

This species has declined from most of its former coastal and lowland wetland haunts as a consequence of drainage, competition from weeds and on occasion excessive collection by botanists and plant collectors. Drainage is still the main threat to the majority of its remaining populations, several large ones of which are entirely on private land. Invasive weeds, particularly royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) are a problem in the Waikato. Previously recorded as *Prasophyllum* aff. *patens* (AK 236408; New Zealand) by de Lange et al. (2004).

*Attribution:

Fact Sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange 14 April 2007. Description adapted from Moore and Edgar (1970).

References and further reading:

de Lange, P.J.; Norton, D.A.; Heenan, P.B.; Courtney, S.P.; Molloy, B.P.J.; Ogle, C.C.; Rance, B.D.; Johnson, P.N.; Hitchmough, R. 2004: Threatened and uncommon plants of New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 42: 45-76.

Moore, L.B.; Edgar, E. 1970: Flora of New Zealand. Vol. II. Government Printer, Wellington

For more information, visit:

http://nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.asp?ID=2328



Caption: Near Waiouru. Feb 2007.

Photographer: Colin Ogle



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