

Ruppia megacarpa



Drawing by Georgina Davis

FAMILY: RUPPIACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Ruppia megacarpa*
R.Mason, *New Zealand J. Bot.* 5: 525 (1967)

COMMON NAME: Large-fruit seatassel

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

Ruppia megacarpa is a perennial aquatic herb with rhizomes 0.6 to 1 mm in diameter. **Stems:** The stems are 20 to 30 cm long and are often zigzag in form. **Leaves:** The leaves are dark green, alternately arranged along the stems and stalkless, and are up to 25 cm long by 0.3 to 0.5 mm wide, with notched tips. **Flowers:** The inflorescence is a two-flowered spike, held at the end of a stalk of variable length (depending on water depth). The flowers are held at the water surface at maturity and after pollination are retracted under water by the tight coiling of the axis. **Fruit:** Each flower produces 2 to 4 (to 6) fruiting bodies (carpels) that are 3.5 to 4 mm long; these are held at the ends of stalks that elongate to several times the length of the carpels. Mature fruit are pear-shaped and have a short beak. Flowering may occur from November to March (description from Curtis & Morris 1994 and Walsh & Entwisle 1996).

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland *Ruppia megacarpa* occurs in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, and it has also been recorded from New Zealand (Curtis & Morris 1994). In Tasmania it is found growing in estuaries and lagoons along the east and southeast coasts, and brackish lagoons in the Midlands; there is also an historic record from the Tamar estuary in the States' north.

Key Sites and Populations

Derwent Estuary, Freshwater Lagoon, Hermitage Lagoon, Moulting Lagoon, Porters Bay, Sloping Lagoon, Sloop Lagoon, Township Lagoon.

Known Reserves

Reserved in Bay of Fires Conservation Area, Boltons Beach Conservation Area, East Risdon State Reserve, Freycinet National Park, Lime Bay State Reserve, Mayfield Bay Conservation Area, Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve, Mt William National Park, River Derwent Marine Conservation Area, Tamar Conservation Area and Township Lagoon Nature Reserve.

Ecology and Management

Little is known of the species' ecology, though it does appear to be capable of persisting under relatively high levels of natural and semi-natural disturbance. As an aquatic species any changes to the hydrology at the local and broader scale may be to its detriment and thus should be avoided, while pollution and stock represent potential threats.

Conservation Status Assessment

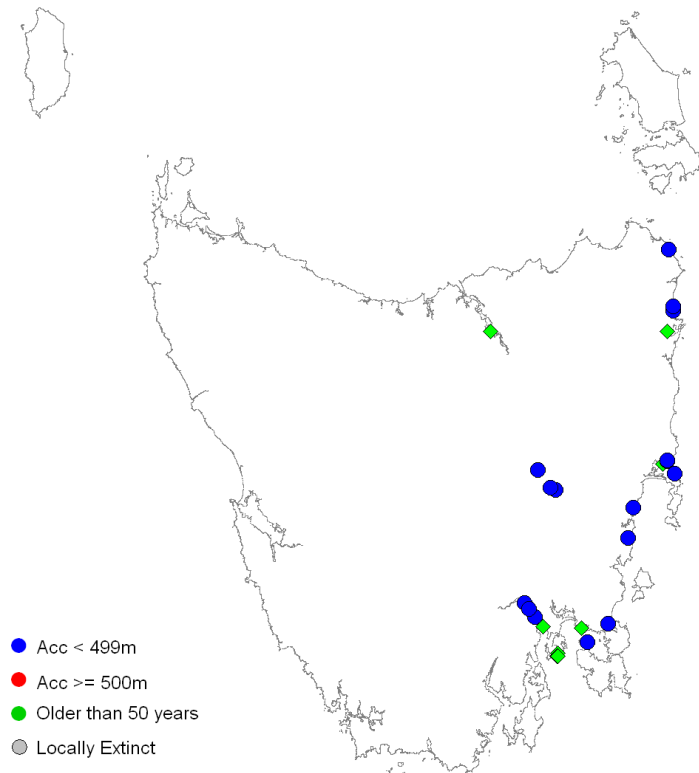
There have been several new sites recorded for *Ruppia megacarpa* since its original listing on the TSP Act in 1995, including in formal reserves, suggesting that a reassessment of the species' conservation status may be warranted.

Further Information

- Curtis, W.M., & Morris, D.I. (1994). *The Student's Flora of Tasmania, Part 4B*. Printing Authority of Tasmania, Hobart.
- Walsh, N.G., & Entwisle, T.J. (1996). *Flora of Victoria, Volume 2*. Inkata Press, Melbourne.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Section records, March 2013)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Binalong, Blackmans Bay, Carlton, Cremorne, Dilston, Dunalley, Ellinthorp, Friendly, Grindstone, Hobart, Mayfield, Naturaliste, Richmond, St Helens, The Gardens, Tunbridge.

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View

<http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/threatenedspecieslists>

Contact details

Threatened Species Section, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (03) 6233 6556; fax (03) 6233 3477.

Permit

It is an offence to collect, disturb, damage or destroy this species unless under permit.