

Eriophyoidea incertae sedis

Of uncertain placement

Photos of this species wanted. Send to
info@endangeredspecies.org.nz

Quickfacts

Nationally Critical conservation status

A leaf mite only known from one tree

Member of an ancient group of animals

Very little is known about this animal

Incertae sedis is Latin for “of uncertain placement”, and is a term sometimes used by scientists to refer to specimens that appear different from all known species, but there is insufficient material (few individuals or samples are too damaged) to confidently create a new species. *Eriophyoidea incertae sedis* is an example of this. Because it is so rare, the experts have not seen enough animals to decide whether it deserves a species name of its own.

Eriophyoidea incertae sedis is a small gall mite that creates a pocket in a plant’s leaf. It is known from only one host tree, a putaputaweta/marbleleaf *Carpodetus serratus* tree in a reserve that is very degraded. Many other trees in the neighbourhood have been searched, but with no success.

The mite belongs to the subfamily Eriophyinae of the Eriophyidae mite family, of which there are 60 species known from New Zealand. Mites of the Eriophyidae family are known as gall mites because they create galls where they feed on their plant host, or other





damage to plant tissue such as leaf russeting or witches brooms. They are microscopic in size (0.1-0.3mm), worm-like, have only 2 pairs of legs, and are so small they lack a respiratory system. Their main method of population spread is by wind dispersal.

Other mites that are known to infest putaputaweta trees are *Acalitus carpatus*, *Aculops serrati* and *Lambella cerina*.

What next?

It is hard to know what needs to be done to save this mite. First, its only host tree should be protected and other putaputaweta planted around it to provide additional hosts for it to move on to. Moving some of these mites to other hosts nearby, and further afield, could be attempted – but only if there are sufficient individuals on the host tree. Planting additional trees is likely to cost only \$500, and moving cut foliage containing galls to other host trees is likely to cost \$5,000.

More information

Webpage: Wikipedia - Eriophyidae. [Link](#)

Scientific paper: New Zealand Eriophyoidea (Acari: Prostigmata): an update with descriptions of one new genus and six new species. By X.-F. Xue and Z.-Q. Zhang. Zootaxa, Vol. 1962, pages 1-32, 2008.

Publication: Fauna of New Zealand 4: Eriophyoidea except Eriophyinae (Arachnida: Acari). By DCM Manson. 1984. [PDF](#)

Publication: Fauna of New Zealand 5: Eriophyinae (Arachnida: Acari: Eriophyoidea). By DCM Manson. 1984. [PDF](#)

This webpage represents the views of the Endangered Species Foundation of New Zealand and not necessarily those of other individuals or organisations involved in the conservation of this species.

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