

Orocrambus fugitivellus (Hudson, 1951)

A drowned world



Adult *Orocrambus fugitivellus*. Landcare Research

Quickfacts

A moth only known from one location in the eastern Mackenzie Basin.

Habitat is unusual in that it is periodically flooded.

An ephemeral habitat

The moth *Orocrambus fugitivellus* is only known from one seasonally wet grassland site of several hectares in the eastern Mackenzie Basin. Here they can be locally abundant (particularly males) in late summer, inhabiting native and exotic grasses and sedges. Unusually, this habitat can be inundated with water in early spring-summer, and then extremely dry by the time the adult moths emerge. No one knows how the moth survives being covered in water for months at a time. The land it inhabits is a mixture of freehold and Pastoral Lease land, with the surrounding known habitat having been developed, thus confining *Orocrambus fugitivellus* to this small remaining habitat.

It was first discovered, at its current site, in 1939, and then described as a new species in the family Crambidae by Hudson in 1951. It was not seen again until 1976/77. They are day-active moths active between January and March. Males have a wingspan of 2 cm, but females are short-winged (brachypterous) and flightless. As the females are flightless, their dispersal to new sites is limited. Threats to its survival include development of its habitat for farming. A covenant was proposed to protect where *Orocrambus*



fugitivellus habitat exists during the Tenure Review of the property's Pastoral Lease.

What next?

The following has been recommended to sustain the habitat which supports *Orocrambus fugitivellus*:

- Maintain grazing as present (preferably sheep)
- No disturbance of soil (including fertilisation and sowing), burning of wetland/shrubland/grassland habitat or erection of buildings
- Annual and three-yearly monitoring of the site

Additionally, information regarding its biology and population trend are required.

Population monitoring of this species is likely to cost \$12,000 p.a. over the next 5 years to also gain information on its biology. After 5 years population monitoring should only be required every third year and will cost \$5,000.

More information

Webpage: Landcare Research: *Orocrambus fugitivellus*. [Link](#)

Scientific paper: The Conservation Status of New Zealand Lepidoptera. By Ian Stringer, Rod Hitchmough, John Dugdale, Eric Edwards, Robert Hoare & Brian Patrick. New Zealand Entomologist Vol. 35 (2), pages 120-127, 2012.

Scientific paper: Conservation of New Zealand's tussock grassland moth fauna. By Brian Patrick. Journal of Insect Conservation Vol. 8 (2), pages 199-208, 2004.

Scientific paper: The Conservation Requirements of New Zealand's Nationally Threatened Invertebrates. By Carl McGuinness. Threatened Species Occasional Publication No. 20. Department of Conservation, 2001. [Link](#)

Scientific paper: Conservation Status of the New Zealand Lepidoptera. By Brian Patrick and John Dugdale. Science for Conservation, 2000. Department of Conservation [PDF](#)

Scientific paper: Supplement to the Lepidoptera of the Mackenzie Country with recommendations on their conservation. By B.H. Patrick. New Zealand Entomologist Vol. 15, pages 48-58, 1992. [PDF](#)

Scientific Paper: Supplement to New Zealand Crambinae Lepidoptera Pyralidae – corrections, description of females of two species, and notes on structure, biology and distribution. By D. E. Gaskin. New Zealand Journal of Zoology Vol. 14, pages 113-121, 1987.



Scientific paper: Revision of the New Zealand Crambini (Lepidoptera: Pyralidae:Crambinae). By D. E. Gaskin. New Zealand Journal of Zoology Vol. 2 (3), pages 265-363, 1975.

Photos



Male (upper) and short-winged female (lower)
Orocrambus fugitivellus. Brian Patrick