

FIELD TRIP TO THE PONGAKAWA ECOLOGICAL AREA

John F.F. Hobbs

In July 2009 after two postponements due to inclement weather eight hardy botanists finally met at the junction of Pongakawa and Rotoehu Roads for a walk into the Pongakawa EA. The area covers some 749 hectares of partially cut-over forest set aside as habitat for kokako. From the road side the forest looks quite impressive with tall rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) towering over the tawa / kohekohe forest but this was in reality window-dressing as the policy during logging up to 1987 was to leave a chain-wide strip of forest unlogged.

After entering the forest we walked up a broad gully under tree ferns and under-story shrubbery until new species became less common. We then headed up to the top of a ridge we planned to follow down to an old logging track some three kilometres away to the north-east. Along the ridge new species were encountered. Tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) and kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) with occasional rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) and emergent rimu dominated the canopy. Under this was an under-story of tree ferns, mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) and kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsa*), with gully fern (*Pneumatopteris pennigera*) and bush rice grass (*Microlaena avenacea*) most common on the forest floor.

As we approached the ridge (which was not all that high) there was a perceptible change in the composition of the forest. Tawa became more dominant in the canopy and crown fern (*Blechnum discolor*) on the ground. Proceeding northwards down the ridge three kinds of hooked sedge (*Uncinia* spp.) sparked an interesting discussion as to which was what. kamu (*U. uncinata*) was quickly set aside by its many female flowers and the debate then centred on whether the remaining two were in fact different or just variations. It was left to sort out in the herbarium and later determined to be one species, *U. ferruginea*. Further down the ridge we came across a fine specimen of rewarewa with a trunk some 75cm dbh with a clear bole

to 7-8 metres above the ground. Close by the sprinkling of pink flowers on the ground indicated a fine puriri (*Vitex lucens*).

The crowns of a wind-thrown rewarewa and a tawa were magnets for those looking for epiphytic orchids and we were rewarded with the discovery of the compact green fleshy orchid (*Drymoanthus adversus*) and the even smaller bulb-leaf orchid (*Ichthyostomum pygmaeum*) clinging closely to the upper branches of its fallen host. Nearby was a magnificent specimen of hinau (*Elaeocarpus dentatus*) with its large branches festooned with epiphytic bush flax (*Astelia solandri*), spleenworts (*Asplenium flaccidum* and *A. polyodon*), the hanging clubmoss (*Huperzia varia*) and a shrub of *Pittosporum cornifolium* poking out from a clump of bush flax. Also perched on the lower branches were the autumn flowering orchid (*Earina autumnalis*) and the bamboo orchid (*Winika cunninghamii*).

During lunch it became obvious that we were not going to get as far as first thought so a more westerly direction was set as the general heading. In the bottom of a broad gully the presence of some shield fern (*Polystichum* sp.) sparked more debate and some collecting (we were fortunate to have a DOC staff-member with us). As we proceeded up an easy hill sharp eyes spotted a group of pixie-cap orchids (*Acianthus sinclairii*) on the ground. New and interesting species seemed to have run out and we soon reached the road where there were some useful finds for those collecting naturalised species. Stone parsley (*Sison amomum*) was the most interesting of these along the road back to our vehicles.

Some 36 naturalised species were observed during the day but these were mainly confined to the road sides (Pongakawa Valley Road cuts a small portion of the EA off to the west). Only four of these naturalised species, fleabane (*Conyza sumatrensis*), inkweed (*Phytolacca octandra*), Californian and Scotch thistles (*Cirsium arvense* and *C. vulgare*) had invaded an inviting habitat within the bush where there had been wind-throw giving light and disturbed soil.

An interesting day with too much botanising and too little getting anywhere. We barely scratched this piece of bush and I think another trip to this large Ecological Area is warranted.



Liz Miller pointing out regenerating species (Photo: Jenny Lux)



A group of happy botanists (Photo: Graeme Jane)

**PONGAKAWA ECOLOGICAL AREA (SOUTH-WESTERN PART)
VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES LIST**

John F.F. Hobbs and Graeme Jane

Ferns & Fern Allies	Common Name
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	hen and chickens fern
<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>	petako-paraharaha
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	huruhuruwhenua
<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	petako
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	rereti
<i>Blechnum discolor</i>	crown fern
<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>	panako
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	kiwakiwa
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
<i>Ctenopteris heterophylla</i>	
<i>Cyathea cunninghamii</i>	gully tree fern
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	silver fern
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>	mamaku
<i>Cyathea smithii</i>	soft tree fern
<i>Deparia petersenii</i> subsp. <i>congrua</i>	
<i>Dicksonia fibrosa</i>	wheki-ponga
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki
<i>Diplazium australe</i>	southern lady fern
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki
<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	matata, water fern
<i>Huperzia varia</i>	hanging clubmoss
<i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i>	irirangi
<i>Hymenophyllum dilatatum</i>	filmy fern
<i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i>	fan-shaped filmy fern
<i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i>	piripiri
<i>Hymenophyllum scabrum</i>	hairy filmy fern
<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i>	
<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>	hairy fern
<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i> subsp. <i>pentangularis</i>	
<i>Leptopteris hymenophylloides</i>	heruheru
<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i>	lance fern
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	hounds tongue fern
<i>Microsorium scandens</i>	mokimoki
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	matata
<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i>	tarawera
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	pakau
<i>Polystichum silvaticum</i>	shield fern
<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>	prickly shield fern
<i>Polystichum wawranum</i>	common shield fern
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken

<i>Pteris macilenta</i>	sweet fern
<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	leather-leaf fern
<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	leathery shield fern
<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>	fork fern
<i>Tmesipteris lanceolata</i>	fork fern
<i>Tmesipteris tannensis</i>	fork fern
<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	veined filmy fern

Gymnosperms

<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	rimu
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	miro

Dicotyledonous Plants

* <i>Acaena anserinifolia</i>	piripiri
* <i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	piripiri
* <i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
<i>Alectryon excelsus</i> subsp. <i>excelsus</i>	titoki
<i>Alseuosmia macrophylla</i>	karapapa
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	water celery
<i>Aristolelia serrata</i>	makomako, wineberry
<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	tawa
<i>Brachyglottis kirkii</i> var. <i>kirkii</i>	kohurangi
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>	rangiora
* <i>Buddleja davidii</i>	buddleia
* <i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	wavy bitter cress
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	putaputaweta
* <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> subsp. <i>vulgare</i>	mouse-ear chickweed
* <i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Californian thistle
* <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Scotch thistle
<i>Clematis cunninghamii</i>	clematis
<i>Clematis paniculata</i>	clematis
* <i>Conium maculatum</i>	hemlock
* <i>Conyza sumatrensis</i>	fleabane
<i>Coprosma grandifolia</i>	kanono
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>	karamu
<i>Coriaria arborea</i>	tutu
* <i>Crepis capillaris</i>	hawksbeard, hawksear
* <i>Daucus carota</i>	wild carrot
* <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	foxglove
* <i>Duchesnea indica</i>	Indian strawberry
<i>Dysoxylum spectabile</i>	kohekohe
<i>Elaeocarpus dentatus</i>	hinau
* <i>Erica lusitanica</i>	Spanish heath
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>	kotukutuku
* <i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i> var. <i>ligustrifolium</i>	hangehange

* <i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb Robert
<i>Griselinia lucida</i>	puka
<i>Haloragis erecta</i> subsp. <i>erecta</i>	toatoa
<i>Hebe stricta</i> var. <i>stricta</i>	koromiko
* <i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy
<i>Hedycarya arborea</i>	porokaiwhiri
<i>Hydrocotyle dissecta</i>	pennywort
* <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	catsear
* <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	ragwort
<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	rewarewa
<i>Kunzea ericoides</i> var. <i>ericoides</i>	kanuka
* <i>Lactuca serriola</i>	prickly lettuce
<i>Laurelia novae-zelandiae</i>	pukatea
* <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	oxeye daisy
* <i>Leycesteria formosa</i>	Himalayan honeysuckle
<i>Litsea calicaris</i>	mangeao
<i>Lobelia angulata</i>	pratia
* <i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lotus
<i>Macropiper excelsum</i> subsp. <i>excelsum</i>	kawakawa
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i> subsp. <i>ramiflorus</i>	mahoe
<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>	rata
<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>	rata
<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>	aka
<i>Mida salicifolia</i>	mida
<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>	puka
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	mapou
<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i>	white maire
<i>Olearia rani</i> var. <i>colorata</i>	heketara
<i>Parsonsia capsularis</i>	akakiore
<i>Parsonsia heterophylla</i>	akakaikiore
<i>Passiflora tetrandra</i>	kohia
* <i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	water pepper
* <i>Phytolacca octandra</i>	inkweed
<i>Pittosporum cornifolium</i>	tawhirikaro
* <i>Plantago australis</i>	swamp plantain
* <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	narrow-leaved plantain
* <i>Plantago major</i>	broad-leaved plantain
* <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	selfheal
<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>	five finger
* <i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>Rubus cissoides</i> agg.	tataramoa
* <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	blackberry
* <i>Rumex acetosella</i>	sheep's sorrel
* <i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock
<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	pate

* <i>Senecio bipinnatisectus</i>	Australian fire weed
* <i>Sison amomum</i>	stone parsley
* <i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	hedge mustard
<i>Solanum laciniatum</i>	poroporo
<i>Solanum nodiflorum</i>	small-flowered nightshade
* <i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	potato
* <i>Sonchus asper</i>	prickly sow thistle
* <i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
* <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	purple-top
<i>Vitex lucens</i>	puriri
<i>Weinmannia racemosa</i>	kamahi

Monocotyledonous Plants

<i>Acianthus sinclairii</i>	
* <i>Agapanthus praecox</i>	agapanthus
* <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	browntop
<i>Astelia solandri</i>	kahakaha
* <i>Axonopus fissifolius</i>	narrow-leaved carpet grass
* <i>Bromus willdenowii</i>	prairie grass
<i>Carex solandri</i>	Solander's sedge
<i>Collospermum microspermum</i>	
* <i>Crocasmia ×crocosmiiflora</i>	Montbretia
* <i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>	umbrella sedge
<i>Cyperus ustulatus</i> f. <i>ustulatus</i>	giant umbrella sedge
* <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot
<i>Drymoanthus adversus</i>	green fleshy orchid
<i>Earina autumnalis</i>	raupeka
<i>Earina mucronata</i>	peka-a-waka
<i>Freycinetia banksii</i>	kiekie
* <i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
<i>Ichthyostomum pygmaeum</i>	bulb-leaf orchid
* <i>Juncus effusus</i> var. <i>effusus</i>	leafless rush
<i>Microlaena avenacea</i>	bush rice grass
* <i>Miscanthus nepalensis</i>	Himalaya fairy grass
* <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	paspalum
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual poa
<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>	nikau
<i>Ripogonum scandens</i>	supplejack
* <i>Setaria pumila</i>	yellow bristle grass
* <i>Sporobolus africanus</i>	
* <i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	tradescantia
<i>Uncinia ferruginea</i>	
<i>Uncinia gracilentia</i>	
<i>Uncinia scabra</i>	
<i>Uncinia uncinata</i>	kamu, matau a Maui
<i>Winika cunninghamii</i>	winika