Farley/Kakamatua/Parau Loop in the Waitakeres

Orchids, and others

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"Native orchids" – words to quicken the hearts of many and obsess the souls of a few. They certainly had the magic to bring out 40 members on a perfect spring day in September.

The Farley/Kakamatua/Parau loop track has the reputation of being the best orchid track in the Waitakeres. Twenty species were on the starting-out list and we added two more on our eighteenth September field trip. The trick is to choose just the right time of year – not too late for the main winter orchid flowering and not too early for the spring flowering species. We didn't do too badly – we saw flowers on 9 species and buds on a few more. The overall (native) species list of 166 swelled to 196 by the end of the day, a very respectable tally.

The leader got the pleasurable job of writing up this report because she forgot to organise someone else to do it at the start; in Bot. Soc. lore it's considered unsporting to wait till the end of the trip and then to ask someone to do it.

The orchids

We didn't see any signs of four orchid species previously recorded: *Caladenia* and *Microtis* – it was too early for the flowers and the leaves are easily overlooked, even at botanical pace (a little slower than snail's pace); *Chiloglottis cornuta* – my record is of Jack Mackinder's find of about a dozen plants in 1983; *Corybas rivularis* (actually *C.* 'kaimai' according to Dan Hatch, in whom we have absolute faith), seems to have disappeared from the immediate environs of the waterfall. There is a lot of bare rock and one of two likely habitats has been "buried" by a fallen tree fern and kiekie. No doubt it can still be found elsewhere along the stream, but we didn't have the time to search. As it was, we took more than 5 hours (lunch at the lookout over Huia included) to accomplish what is normally a 2-hour walk.

One of our additions was the epiphytic *Drymoanthus adversus*. Helen's sharp eye spotted one lonely specimen; it had two leaves not very much bigger than a pin head, but the spreading roots, though slender, were comparatively long and pale enough in colour to stand out against the bark of its kauri host. However, Ewen pointed out that its hold is tenuous because the kauri will, in due course, slough the bark that it is clinging to, and that will be the end of that.

Corybas oblongus was mostly still in bud, but two open flowers were found by Steve. *C. cheesemanii* had gone to seed, as was expected. *C. trilobus* was well past its peak flowering but one small flower was found in amongst a loose carpet of leaves. The flowers of this species appear early on in its annual cycle and by the time the plant has spread vegetatively to form a large mass of leaves, the flowers have finished. One patch of *C. macranthus* was seen within sight of the waterfall, but it was too early for flowers. At least two other patches, in different parts of the loop track, have been recorded in the past but weren't found on this trip.

Cyrtostylis oblonga, the gnat orchid, was in flower, and popped up at regular intervals along the track. *Acianthus sinclairii* and *Pterostylis* species were in abundance. The *Acianthus* had gone to seed, but five *Pterostylis* species were seen in flower, including the three that have basal rosette leaves in their juvenile stage: *P. alobula*, *P. brumalis* and *P. trullifolia*. We were delighted to find two flowers of *P. brumalis* because mid-September is very late for this species, which begins flowering in April.

Pterostylis banksii was still in bud but looking promising. *P. agathicola* (syn. *P.* "rubricaulis") with its twisted labellum tip and its relatively horizontal leaves was abundant in the vicinity of its kauri associate and was in full flower. *P. graminea* (longer and more upright dark green leaves and altogether a more slender plant) was also in flower. *Thelymitra* leaves were in evidence, but no one hazarded a guess as to which species, beyond the ubiquitous *T. longifolia*.

Earina mucronata was in bud and flower, but it was too early for *Winika* (syn. *Dendrobium*), too late for *Earina autumnalis*, and who has ever seen *Bulbophyllum pygmaeum* in flower anyway?

Other species

We used the opportunity to try to get our minds and tongues around some new names – *Huperzia*, *Lycopdiella* and *Leionema*. *Phymatosorus* at least has reverted to a name (*Microsorum*) that is familiar to many older members.

Harry found two healthy *Syzygium maire* juveniles and earned half a chocolate fish from the leader who could not recall having ever seen a juvenile before.

Alseuosmia macrophylla was in full flower and there was much of it, in a wide range of pinks. *Clematis paniculata*, high in the canopy in the kanuka forest, and *Fuchsia excorticata* at the waterfall were also

flowering. The musty but pleasant perfume of *Geniostoma rupestre* flowers greeted us on the Kakamatua Ridge. *Pittosporum ellipticum* was mostly still in bud, but one tree hanging over the track was in flower.

Ewen identified a juvenile *Cyathea cunninghamii*, but the leader/author wasn't nearby at the time to hear whether the find provoked the usual "is it or isn't it, and if not, why not" discussion. Ewen was very firm about it though.

Ewen also recorded a single plant of *Astelia grandis* on the Kakamatua Ridge Track section of the loop. Although uncommon in the Waitakeres, there are other records of this species in the area, on a small stream feeding into the Kakamatua Inlet, and in scrub at the Cornwallis end of the Panto Track, below the Kakamatua Ridge.

Rosa located the "lost" *Phebalium nudum* (now *Leionema*) near the bottom end of the Parau Track, making the leader's day.

FARLEY TRACK from Huia end / KAKAMATUA RIDGE TRACK / PARAU TRACK back to Huia

FERNS & FERN ALLIES
Adiantum cunninghamii
Adiantum fulvum
Anarthropteris lanceolata
Asplenium bulbiferum
Asplenium flaccidum
Asplenium oblongifolium
Asplenium polyodon
Blechnum chambersii
Blechnum discolor
Blechnum filiforme
Blechnum fraseri
Blechnum membranaceum
Blechnum novae zelandiae
Blechnum vulcanicum
Cyathea cunninghamii
Cyathea dealbata
Cyathea medullaris
Dicksonia squarrosa
Doodia australis
Gleichenia dicarpa
Gleichenia microphylla
Huperzia varia
(syn. *Lycopodium]*
Hymenophyllum demissum
Hymenophyllum dilatatum
Hymenophyllum flabellatum
Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum
Lastreopsis glabella
Lastreopsis hispida
Leptopteris hymenophylloides
Lindsaea linearis
Lindsaea trichomanoides
Lycopodiella cernua
(syn. *Lycopodium)*
Lycopodium deuterodensum
Lycopodium volubile
Lygodium articulatum
Microsorum pustulatum
(syn. *Phymatosorus diversifolius / pustulatus)*
Microsorum scandens
(syn. *P. scandens)*
Paesia scaberula
Pneumatopteris pennigera
Pteridium esculentum
Pteris macilenta
Pteris tremula
Schizaea fistulosa
Sticherus cunninghamii
Tmesipteris elongata
ssp. *elongata*
Tmesipteris lanceolata
Tmesipteris sigmatifolia
Tmesipteris tannensis
Trichomanes elongatum
Trichomanes reniforme
Trichomanes venosum

GYMNOSPERMS
Agathis australis
Dacrycarpus dacrydioides
Dacrydium cupressinum
Libocedrus plumosa
Phyllocladus trichomanoides
Phyllocladus x *toatoa*
Podocarpus hallii
Prumnopitys ferruginea
Prumnopitys taxifolia

DICOTYLEDONS
Alectryon excelsus
Alseuosmia macrophylla
Aristotelia serrata
Beilschmiedia tarairi
Beilschmiedia tawa
Brachyglottis kirkii var. *angustior*
Brachyglottis repanda
Callitriche muelleri
Carmichaelia australis
Carpodetus serratus
Centella uniflora
Clematis paniculata
Coprosma arborea
Coprosma areolata
Coprosma grandifolia
Coprosma lucida
Coprosma rhamnoides
Coprosma robusta
Coriaria arborea
Corokia buddleioides
Corynocarpus laevigatus
Cyathodes juniperina
Dodonaea viscosa
Drosera auriculata
Dysoxylum spectabile
Elaeocarpus dentatus
Elatostema rugosum
Epilobium sp.
Fuchsia excorticata
Galium propinquum
Gaultheria antipoda
Geniostoma rupestre
var. *ligustrifolium*
Gnaphalium gymnocephalum
Gonocarpus incanus
Griselinia lucida
Haloragis erecta
Hebe macrocarpa
Hebe stricta
Hedycarya arborea
Hoheria populnea
Hydrocotyle dissecta
Hydrocotyle moschata
Knightia excelsa
Kunzea ericoides
Lagenifera pumila
Laurelia novae-zelandiae
Leionema nudum
(syn. *Phebalium)*
Leptospermum scoparium
Leucopogon fasciculatus
Litsea calicaris
Lobelia anceps
Macropiper excelsum
Melicytus macrophyllus
Melicytus ramiflorus
Metrosideros diffusa
Metrosideros fulgens
Metrosideros perforata
Metrosideros robusta
Muehlenbeckia australis
Myrsine australis
Myrsine salicina
Nertera dichondrifolia
Nestegis lanceolata
Olearia furfuracea
Olearia rani
Parsonsia sp.
Passiflora tetrandra
Peperomia urvilleana
Pittosporum ellipticum
Pittosporum tenuifolium
Pomaderris phylicifolia
var. *ericifolia*
Pratia angulata
Pseudopanax arboreus
Pseudopanax crassifolius
Quintinia serrata
Ranunculus reflexus
Rhabdothamnus solandri
Rubus australis
Rubus cissoides
Schefflera digitata
Sophora microphylla
Streblus heterophyllus
Syzygium maire
Toronia toru
Vitex lucens

MONOCOTS excl. grasses and orchids
Astelia banksii
Astelia grandis
Astelia solandri
Astelia trinervia
Carex lambertiana
Collospermum hastatum
Cordyline australis
Cordyline banksii
Cordyline pumilio
Dianella nigra
Freycinetia banksii
Gahnia lacera
Gahnia pauciflora
Gahnia setifolia
Gahnia xanthocarpa
Isolepis reticularis
Lepidosperma laterale
Libertia grandiflora
Morelotia affinis
Phormium cookianum
Phormium tenax
Rhopalostylis sapida
Ripogonum scandens
Schoenus maschalinus
Schoenus tendo
Uncinia banksii
Uncinia uncinata

ORCHIDS
Acianthus sinclairii
Bulbophyllum pygmaeum
Caladenia sp.
Chiloglottis cornuta
Corybas cheesemanii
Corybas macranthus
Corybas oblongus
Corybas rivularis
Corybas trilobus
Cyrtostylis oblonga
Drymoanthus adversus
Earina autumnalis
Earina mucronata
Microtis unifolia
Pterostylis agathicola
(syn. *P.* "rubricaulis"*)*
Pterostylis alobula
Pterostylis banksii
Pterostylis brumalis
Pterostylis graminea
Pterostylis trullifolia
Thelymitra longifolia
Winika cunninghamii
(syn. *Dendrobium)*

Grasses
Dichelachne crinita
Microlaena avenacea
Oplismenus imbecillis
**Rytidosperma racemosum*