

FORT GALATEA WETLANDS

Paul Cashmore

On 3rd October 2004 five members turned out on a lovely sunny day to explore three wetlands between Kopuriki Rd just north of Murupara and the Rangitaiki River.

The trip leader turned up with some rather smoky and stained aerial photos and species lists from the fire in his office building the day before and with these we set off with the aim of looking at the wetlands.

The first large wetland (referred to as Wetland 'A' in Beadel (1991)) is part of the Fort Galatea Conservation Area, managed by the Department of Conservation. On its south side is a large finger of radiata pine forest managed by Kaingaroa Timberlands, and south of that again is a second small oxbow wetland (referred to as Wetland 'B' in Beadel (1991)).

A third wetland complex, which occupies a long finger of land on a bend in the Rangitaiki River, is the Fort Galatea Wildlife Management Reserve, managed by Eastern Region Fish and Game. Between this wetland and Kopuriki Rd is the DoC-managed Fort Galatea Historic Reserve, which is predominantly grazed pasture but which has another small wetland in the south-eastern corner adjoining the Wildlife Management Reserve.

With a formidable area of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and occasional emergent radiata pine between the road and the northern wetland, enthusiasm for the planned option of a quick scrub bash from the road to the wetland soon dissipated. Instead we followed a track through the radiata pine block and along the edge of the pines to Wetland 'B', which sits in an old oxbow of the Rangitaiki River, now well-separated from the current river course by pasture and willows (*Salix* spp.),

although it was apparent that the Rangitaiki River had been flowing through the wetland during its peak flooding in July.

Wetland vegetation consisted of areas of *Carex virgata* sedge land with some *C. secta* in the wetter parts. Small areas of raupo (*Typha orientalis*) were present along with localised areas of *Baumea rubiginosa*. Flax (*Phormium tenax*) was occasional. Towards the pasture margins *Juncus articulatus* and the exotic *Carex vulpinoidea* (which had been partially grazed by stock despite the fencing) were dominant. Young grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) was present in parts of the wetland and appeared to be actively invading.

Following lunch the party headed into the pine forest with the aim of botanising the larger Wetland 'A' in the afternoon. Time was spent negotiating blackberry in the understorey before breaking out through the gorse onto a power line corridor through the pines. We followed this to the northern boundary of the block but were unable to get into the wetland as most of the area visible appeared to be dry with scattered kohuhu (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with abundant blackberry in the understorey. We followed around the northern margin of the pine block, avoiding the worst of the gorse and blackberry which appear to be rampant in this area, and by climbing a fallen pine tree we got a fairly good look at the wetland.

The wetland proper appeared to be in the north-western corner of the reserve. From our vantage point all that could be seen was emergent scattered kohuhu-cabbage tree/hawthorn-manuka-*Coprosma propinqua* subsp. *propinqua* scrub and occasional small kahikatea (*Dacrydium dacrydioides*) trees, with blackberry and gorse abundant in the understorey. This vegetation type occupied a large part of the supposed wetland area, suggesting that the area was fairly dry, which was enough to satisfy us that there was no botanically exciting wetland just beyond the blackberry edge that we should be risking further cuts and scratches to explore.

The group retreated back through the pines and into the Wildlife Management Reserve, where the three remaining members of the party followed a hunters' track into the

wetland. The wetland vegetation is rather limited, being essentially a canopy of large crack willow (*Salix fragilis*) throughout with many emergent poplar trees (*Populus* sp.). The understorey is rather open, dominated by exotic pasture grasses with little other vegetation.

After examining this briefly we turned back to the Historic Reserve to follow the interpretation trail explaining the rich and diverse Maori and European history of the area. Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) was abundant in patches along the bank adjoining the Wildlife Management Reserve, a relic of the past historic dwellings on the site. We were able to see over the cliff to the small wetland which adjoins the Wildlife Management Reserve but which is actually part of the Historic Reserve. The vegetation was dominated by scattered grey willows with a few small pine trees over flax, manuka and raupo.

We finished the day by driving down Kopuriki Rd and viewing Wetland 'A' from the road edge where there was a reasonable viewpoint across the pasture. Areas of young kahikatea, flax and cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) could be seen. However hawthorn appeared to be present throughout much of the area as well, suggesting that most of it was fairly dry with blackberry present. It was decided that a follow up trip to look at this wetland area should head in from the northern side across the pasture rather than the route we had tried and we unanimously agreed not to come near this place again without a slasher!!!

REFERENCES

Beadel, S.M. 1991. Fort Galatea Wetlands. Department of Conservation, Rotorua. 12 pp.

FORT GALATEA WETLAND "B" VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES LIST

John F.F. Hobbs

Ferns

<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>	Pacific azolla
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	kiwakiwa
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
<i>Blechnum penna-marina</i>	little hard fern
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	hound's tongue fern
<i>Polystichum</i> sp. (<i>P. richardii</i>)	common shield fern
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken
<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	leather-leaf fern

Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

* <i>Berberis glaucocarpa</i>	barberry
<i>Coprosma propinqua</i>	
<i>Coprosma propinqua</i> x <i>C. robusta</i>	
* <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Hebe stricta</i>	koromiko
<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>	kanuka
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	manuka
* <i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	sweet brier
* <i>Salix cinerea</i>	grey willow
* <i>Salix fragilis</i>	crack willow
* <i>Ulex europaeus</i>	gorse

Dicotyledonous Lianes

<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>	pohuehue
<i>Rubus australis</i> ?	lawyer
* <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	blackberry

Dicotyledonous Herbs

* <i>Bidens frondosa</i>	beggars' ticks
* <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	foxglove
* <i>Epilobium obscurum</i>	tall willow-herb
<i>Epilobium pallidiflorum</i>	willow-herb
<i>Galium propinquum</i>	marsh bedstraw
<i>Galium perpusillum</i>	
* <i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lotus
* <i>Ludwigia palustris</i>	water purslane
* <i>Mycelis muralis</i>	wall lettuce
* <i>Myosotis laxa</i>	forget-me-not

<i>Ranunculus amphitrichus</i>	waoriki
* <i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
* <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
* <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	ragwort
* <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	sow thistle
* <i>Stellaria alsine</i>	bog stitchwort
* <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	dandelion

Monocotyledonous Trees, Shrubs & Lianes

<i>Cordyline australis</i>	cabbage tree
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Grasses

* <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent
* <i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
* <i>Schedonorus phoenix</i>	tall fescue

Sedges

<i>Baumea rubiginosa</i>	
<i>Bolboschoenus fluviatilis</i>	marsh clubrush
<i>Carex secta</i>	swamp sedge
<i>Carex</i> sp.	
<i>Carex virgata</i>	swamp sedge
<i>Eleocharis sphacelata</i>	tall spike sedge

Rushes

* <i>Juncus articulatus</i>	jointed rush
* <i>Juncus effusus</i>	leafless rush
<i>Juncus</i> sp.	

Other Monocotyledonous Herbs

<i>Phormium tenax</i>	flax
<i>Typha orientalis</i>	raupo
<i>Lemna minor</i>	duckweed

**FORT GALATEA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT RESERVE
VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES LIST**

S.M. Beadel 1991

(with additions (#) from John F. F. Hobbs)

Ferns

<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i> ssp. <i>flaccidum</i>	hanging spleenwort
<i>Asplenium gracillimum</i>	
* <i>Azolla pinnata</i>	fern y azolla
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	
<i>Blechnum fluviatile</i>	button hard fern
<i>Blechnum minus</i>	swamp kiokio
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
<i>Blechnum penna-marina</i>	creeping hard fern
<i>Deparia petersenii</i> #	
<i>Dicksonia fibrosa</i>	wheki-ponga
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki
<i>Diplazium australe</i>	
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>	hound's tongue
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	lace fern
<i>Pellaea rotundifolia</i> #	tarawera
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	
<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>	prickly shield fern
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken
<i>Pteris tremula</i>	shaking brake
<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	leather leaf fern

Dicotyledonous Trees & Shrubs

* <i>Berberis glaucocarpa</i>	barberry
* <i>Cotoneaster</i> sp. #	cotoneaster
* <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
<i>Hebe stricta</i>	koromiko
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	kohuhu
* <i>Populus nigra</i> 'Italica'	Lombardy poplar
* <i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak
* <i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	brier rose
* <i>Salix fragilis</i>	crack willow
* <i>Ulex europaeus</i>	gorse

Dicotyledonous Lianes

<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i>	pohuehue
* <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	blackberry

- **Vinca major* periwinkle
- **Lonicera japonica* # Japanese honeysuckle

Dicotyledonous Herbs

- Acaena novae-zelandiae* piripiri
- **Achillea millefolium* yarrow
- Callitriche stagnalis* starwort
- **Cardamine* sp. bitter cress
- **Cirsium arvense* Californian thistle
- **Cirsium vulgare* Scotch thistle
- **Conium maculatum* hemlock
- **Conyza albida* fleabane
- **Digitalis purpurea* foxglove
- Epilobium rotundifolia* # round-leaved willow-herb
- **Galium aparine* cleavers
- Haloragis erecta* ssp. *erecta* shrubby haloragis
- Hydrocotyle moschata* hydrocotyle
- Hydrocotyle novae-zelandiae* hydrocotyle
- **Leucanthemum vulgare* # ox-eye daisy
- **Lotus pedunculatus* lotus
- **Ludwigia palustris* water purslane
- **Mentha x piperita* peppermint
- **Mycelis muralis* wall lettuce
- **Myosotis* sp. forget-me-not
- **Oxalis* sp. oxalis
- **Plantago lanceolata* ribwort
- Pratia angulata* # pratia
- **Prunella vulgaris* selfheal
- **Pseudognaphalium luteo-album* # cudweed
- **Ranunculus repens* hairy buttercup
- Rorippa palustris* marsh cress
- **Rumex obtusifolius* broad-leaved dock
- **Senecio jacobaea* ragwort
- **Stachys sylvatica* # woundwort
- **Stellaria alsine* bog stitchwort
- **Stellaria media* chickweed
- **Trifolium repens* clover
- **Veronica anagalis-aquatica* water speedwell
- **Veronica arvensis* field speedwell

Monocotyledonous Trees Shrubs & Lianes

- Cordyline australis* cabbage tree

Orchids

Microtis unifolia onion-leaved orchid

Grasses

**Agrostis stolonifera* creeping bent
**Anthoxanthum odoratum* sweet vernal
**Glyceria declinata* floating sweet grass
**Glyceria maxima* reed sweet grass
**Holcus lanata* Yorkshire fog
**Lolium perenne* perennial ryegrass
**Poa annua* annual poa
**Schedonorus phoenix* tall fescue

Sedges

Carex geminata agg. rautahi
**Carex ovalis* oval sedge
Carex secta niggerhead
Carex subdola sedge
Carex virgata swamp sedge
Eleocharis acuta sharp spike-sedge

Rushes

**Juncus articulatus* jointed rush
**Juncus effusus* leafless rush
Juncus gregiflorus leafless rush

Other Monocotyledonous Herbs

**Lemna minor* duckweed
**Potamogeton crispus* # curled pondweed