

EAST CAPE TRIP #7 DAY 2: OPAKOKO, MOTU RIVER

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On Saturday 5 October 2013 five members of RBS led by Tim Senior and Willie Ngamoki from Nga Whenua Rahui gathered at the Haparapara River bridge for a 4WD trip upriver to botanise Nga Whenua Rahui's intensively managed forest block. Unfortunately as the river had been high a few weeks before, the track was not currently suitable for 4WDs so this trip was postponed. Instead we went further along to the northern side of SH 35 where it crosses the Motu River to botanise an area known as locally as 'Opakoko'.

The area consisted mostly of secondary forest and wetland on a river terrace above the Motu River. The area had apparently been cleared historically for farming but had gradually reverted over time into advanced secondary forest. The majority of the block on the river terrace and slopes above comprised of kanuka-puriri-kohekohe forest. Occasional nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) and karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*) were present throughout. Puriri (*Vitex lucens*) were a feature of this forest like much of the East Cape coastal forest with many reasonably large specimens present carrying large numbers of *Collosporum microspermum*. These larger specimens were obviously older than the surrounding vegetation so had probably survived the original forest clearance and survived as specimens when the area was farmed.

The subcanopy was dominated by ponga (*Cyathea dealbata*), pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*), nikau, supplejack (*Ripogonum scandens*) and mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) with occasional patches of kiekie (*Freycinetia banksii*). The understorey showed signs of persistent deer browsing with deer having been regularly seen on the highway (W. Ngamoki pers. comm.). Most of the palatable species were absent and the understorey was relatively open. It was dominated by *Blechnum filiforme*, *Hymenophyllum demissum*, *Coprosma spathulata*, chewed supplejack, and scattered ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) throughout. Kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) seedlings and saplings were commonly encountered along with occasional titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*). Bush rice grass (*Microlaena avenacea*) and *Uncinia uncinata* were locally present in patches.

The group worked its way east along the base of the hillslope until we reached a small wetland area between the base of hill and the highway, which was dominated by kahikatea forest with occasional pukatea (*Laurelia novaezelandiae*) present. Kahikatea seedlings dominated the subcanopy and understorey. *Blechnum filiforme* was also common along with kanono (*Coprosma grandifolia*), and mapou (*Myrsine australis*) which were somewhat browsed. Bush rice grass and *Blechnum minus* were also present. We continued walking parallel with the highway along the river terrace below the hillslope. Vegetation changed from kahikatea forest to open old growth kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) forest with mapou and cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) occasional in the understorey. *Parsonsia heterophylla* was commonly seen climbing up kanuka trees. The unusual part of this was that the understorey comprised of typical understorey species with *Machaerina tenax* common and *Carex geminata*-*Isachne globosa*-*Carex virgata* throughout. Although the understorey was relatively dry, areas of silt could be seen suggesting this area does become wet fairly frequently with runoff from the hillslope above.



Figure 1: Old growth open kanuka forest with a wetland an understorey of swamp millet and *Carex geminata*.

It was unusual to see a kanuka canopy which is typical of drier sites overtopping a wetland understorey. This suggested the site was wet enough periodically to support wetland vegetation but easily dried out for long periods to enable the open old growth kanuka canopy to persist. Also of note were occasional kowhai (*Sophora tetraptera*) trees which were in full flower, present near the road verge.

We stopped for lunch on a slip which had deposited a large amount of silt and woody debris on the river terrace. A range of different plant species typical of disturbed sites was noted here, including puha (*Sonchus oleraceus*), *Juncus planifolius*, *Schoenus masculinus*, *Callitriche stagnalis*, *Cirsium vulgare* and *Conyza sumatrensis*. The majority of the slip had been completely smothered by pampas (*Cortaderia selloana*) which had excluded most of the other species.

After lunch we continued in the same direction. Walking through some more swamp millet we came across an area of *Hierochloa redolens* which was of note as it is not commonly seen in coastal sites. We left the wetland vegetation and got back into the forest vegetation similar to what we had first encountered in the day. Passing through here we noted a few orchid species present including *Pterostylis banksii* and *Nematocerus trilobum*. We reached the highway by mid-afternoon and while some botanised the road edge flora the remainder of the team crossed the road into the Motu riverbed and followed up the river, exiting near the bridge. The highlight here was kowhai trees in flower along both riverbanks.

OPAKOKO TERRACE FOREST - MOTU RIVER

Map: X15 Grid Ref: 2916700 6360800

Authors: G Jane, G Donaghy & J.F.F. Hobbs

Psilopsids, Lycopods & Quillworts

<i>Huperzia varia</i>	hanging clubmoss; iwituna
<i>Lycopodium deuterodensum</i>	puakarimu

Ferns

<i>Adiantum cunninghamii</i>	maiden hair fern
<i>Adiantum fulvum</i>	
<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	hen and chickens fern; moku
<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>	hanging spleenwort; makawe
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	shining spleenwort
<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	sickle spleenwort; petako
<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	nini; lance fern
<i>Blechnum discolor</i>	crown fern; piupiu; petipeti
<i>Blechnum filiforme</i>	Climbing hard fern; thread fern
<i>Blechnum minus</i>	
<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
<i>Cyathea cunninghamii</i>	slender tree fern; gully tree fern
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	ponga; silver fern
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>	mamaku; korau; black tree fern
<i>Deparia petersenii</i> ssp. <i>congrua</i>	
<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki; harsh tree fern
<i>Diplazium australe</i>	
<i>Hymenophyllum demissum</i>	piripiri; irirangi
<i>Hymenophyllum dilatatum</i>	lop-sided filmy fern
<i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i>	fan fern
<i>Hymenophyllum revolutum</i>	
<i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i>	blood-scented filmy fern
<i>Lastreopsis glabella</i>	felted fern
<i>Lastreopsis hispida</i>	hairy fern, hairy legs
<i>Lastreopsis microsora</i> ssp. <i>pentangularis</i>	
<i>Leptopteris hymenophylloides</i>	single crepe fern; heruheru
<i>Loxogramme dictyopteris</i>	sexy fern
<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i> ssp. <i>pustulatum</i>	hounds tongue; kowaowao
<i>Microsorium scandens</i>	mokimoki; fragrant fern
<i>Notogrammitis heterophylla</i>	
<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	scented fern; matata; ring fern
<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	gully fern; pakau;
<i>Polystichum wawranum</i>	common shield fern; pikopiko

<i>Pteris macilenta</i>	sweet fern
<i>Pyrrosia eleagnifolia</i>	leather-leaf fern
<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	butcher's fern
<i>Tmesipteris elongata</i>	
<i>Tmesipteris lanceolata</i>	
<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	veined bristle fern

Gymnosperm trees and shrubs

<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>	kahikatea, white pine
<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	rimu, red pine
<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides</i>	tanekaha; celery pine
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	miro; brown pine

Dicotyledonous trees and shrubs

<i>Alectryon excelsus ssp. excelsus</i>	titoki
<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>	wineberry; makomako
<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	tawa
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>	rangiora; bushmans friend
* <i>Buddleja davidii</i>	summer lilac; buddleia
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	putaputaweta; marbleleaf
<i>Coprosma grandifolia</i>	raurekau; kanono; mamono
<i>Coprosma lucida</i>	karamu; shining karamu
<i>Coprosma rhamnoides</i>	
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>	karamu
<i>Coprosma spathulata ssp. spathulata</i>	
<i>Coriaria arborea var. arborea</i>	tree tutu
<i>Corynocarpus laevigatus</i>	karaka; kopi
<i>Dysoxylum spectabile</i>	kohekohe
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium var. ligustrifolium</i>	hangehange; privet
<i>Hebe stricta var. stricta</i>	koromiko
<i>Hedycarya arborea</i>	pigeonwood; porokaiwhiri
<i>Hoheria sexstylosa</i>	houhere
* <i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	tutsan
<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	rewarewa; NZ honeysuckle
<i>Kunzea ericoides var. ericoides</i>	kanuka; white teatree
<i>Laurelia novae-zelandiae</i>	pukatea
<i>Leptospermum scoparium var. scoparium</i>	manuka; red teatree
<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>	mingimingi; kaikaitau
<i>Lophomyrtus bullata</i>	ramarama
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>	mahoe
<i>Mida salicifolia</i>	willow-leaved maire
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	red matipo; mapou
<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i>	white maire

<i>Nothofagus truncata</i>	hard beech; tawhairaunui
<i>Olearia rani</i> var. <i>colorata</i>	heketara
<i>Piper excelsum</i> ssp. <i>excelsum</i>	
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	black matipo; kohuhu
<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	lancewood; horoeka
<i>Pseudowintera axillaris</i>	horopito
* <i>Rosa canina</i>	dog rose
* <i>Salix cinerea</i>	grey willow
<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	pate; patae; kotete
<i>Sophora tetraptera</i>	large-leaved kowhai
<i>Vitex lucens</i>	pururi; kauere
<i>Weinmannia racemosa</i>	kamahi; towai; tawhero

Dicotyledonous lianes and related trailing plants

<i>Calystegia sepium</i> ssp. <i>roseata</i>	
<i>Calystegia tuguriorum</i>	NZ bidweed; powhiwhi
<i>Clematis cunninghamii</i>	scented clematis; pokopoko
<i>Clematis paniculata</i>	clematis; puawhananga
<i>Metrosideros diffusa</i>	white climbing rata; akatea
<i>Metrosideros fulgens</i>	scarlet rata; winter rata
<i>Metrosideros perforata</i>	aka; small white rata; torotoro
<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	pohuehue; wire vine
<i>Parsonsia heterophylla</i>	maori jasmine; kaihu; kaiwhiria
<i>Rubus australis</i>	tataramoa
<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	bush lawyer; tataramoa
* <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	blackberry

Daisy-like herbs

* <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Scotch thistle
* <i>Conyza sumatrensis</i>	broad-leaved fleabane
<i>Euchiton involucratus</i>	creeping cudweed
* <i>Euchiton japonicus</i>	
<i>Euchiton sphaericus</i>	Japanese cudweed
* <i>Gamochaeta coarctata</i>	purple cudweed
* <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	catsear
<i>Leptinella dioica</i> ssp. <i>dioica</i>	
<i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i>	Jersey cudweed
* <i>Senecio bipinnatisectus</i>	Australian fireweed
* <i>Sonchus asper</i>	prickly sow thistle; puha
* <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	sow thistle; puha; puka

Dicotyledonous herbs other than Daisies

<i>Acaena anserinifolia</i>	bidibid
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* <i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>	starwort
* <i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	centary
<i>Epilobium cinereum</i>	
* <i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
<i>Galium perpusillum</i>	bedstraw
<i>Hydrocotyle elongata</i>	
<i>Hydrocotyle moschata</i> var. <i>moschata</i>	
<i>Lobelia anceps</i>	wild lobelia
* <i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lotus major
* <i>Oxalis latifolia</i>	fishtail oxalis
<i>Persicaria decipiens</i>	swamp willow weed
* <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	selfheal
* <i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
* <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
* <i>Solanum nigrum</i>	black nightshade
<i>Solanum nodiflorum</i>	
* <i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	hedge woundwort
* <i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	purple-top
* <i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	water speedwell

Monocotyledonous trees and shrubs

<i>Cordyline australis</i>	cabbage tree; ti-kouka
<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>	nikau

Monocotyledonous lianes

<i>Freycinetia banksii</i>	kiekie
<i>Ripogonum scandens</i>	supplejack; kareao

Sedges

<i>Carex dissita</i>	
<i>Carex geminata</i>	
<i>Carex lambertiana</i>	
<i>Carex spinirostris</i>	
<i>Carex virgata</i>	
* <i>Cyperus congestus</i>	
<i>Cyperus ustulatus</i> f. <i>ustulatus</i>	coastal cutty grass
<i>Gabnia lacera</i>	
<i>Gabnia setifolia</i>	
<i>Isolepis habra</i>	
<i>Isolepis reticularis</i>	
<i>Isolepis subtilissima</i>	
<i>Machaerina rubiginosa</i>	
<i>Machaerina tenax</i>	

Schoenus maschalinus

Uncinia banksii

Uncinia gracilentata

Uncinia uncinata

watu

Rushes and allied plants

* *Juncus articulatus*

Juncus edgariae

* *Juncus effusus* var. *effusus*

Juncus pallidus

Juncus planifolius

Luzula picta var. *picta*

jointed rush

wiwi

soft rush

wi

Grasses

Austroderia fulvida

* *Briza minor*

* *Cortaderia selloana*

* *Dactylis glomerata*

Hierochloa redolens

* *Holcus lanatus*

Isachne globosa

Microlaena avenacea

Oplismenus hirtellus ssp. *imbecillis*

* *Paspalum dilatatum*

* *Paspalum urvillei*

* *Schedonorus arundinaceus*

shivery grass

pampas

cocksfoot

sweet-scented holy grass

Yorkshire fog

swamp millet

bush rice grass; oat grass

oat grass

paspalum

Vasey grass

tall fescue

Remaining Monocotyledonous herbs

Astelia solandri

Collospermum microspermum

* *Crocasmia crocosmiiflora* X

* *Hedychium gardnerianum*

kowharawhara

montbretia

wild ginger

Orchids

Drymoanthus adversus

Earina autumnalis

Earina mucronata

Nematoceras trilobum

Pterostylis banksii

Pterostylis cardiostigma

Winika cunninghamii

Easter orchid; raupeka

spring orchid; peka-a-waka

spider orchid

tutukiwi

bamboo orchid