

Ngapukeriki – a few highlights from up in the hills

Elizabeth Miller

Some of us were lucky enough to take part in the second attempt during November this year to visit the ranges behind Omaio, staying in a hut in a sheltered clearing on a ridge, Ngapukeriki, and exploring some of the ridge tracks nearby. The trip had been postponed from the original date because of very wet, stormy weather. There will be more detail on this trip in the next issue, but here are a few highlights.

- The helicopter trip up to the hut, courtesy of Willie Ngamoki of Nga Whenua Rahui, Opotiki, who is a keen Rotorua Botanical Society member, was magical for those of us not used to such treats.
- Hirere Ngamoki and Hori Barsdell, NWR field staff, together with Tim Senior of BOP Regional Council, organised gear, evening meals, communication over transport, and led the day trips out from the hut. Thanks for the smooth running of the weekend.
- There were wonderful big rimu and lots of large hard beech – some silhouetted against the clear sky as it got light in the mornings.
- We quietly enjoyed the dawn chorus on the Saturday morning – late ruru, then tui, korimako, and a bit later, riroriro, the grey warblers. More magic.
- Jo Bonner says: While sitting at the hut site admiring the view, the serenity and the calls of the tom tit on day one, I noticed a small tree not familiar to me. Discussing it with John Hobbs, we couldn't decide whether it was a *Hedycarya arborea* or *Pseudowintera axillaris*; the only real way to tell was to taste test, and I would like to confirm it was hot and bitter – definitely *P. axillaris*!

A highlight was learning an orchid genus new to me; *Corybas* species, in full flower, and with a hand lens borrowed from Graeme, you could see the throat and little black hairs inside. I found a small group of them on day three on the side of the bank in full flower, which was quite a treat!

- To our delight, Hirere managed to find some Hochstetter's frogs – three of them – under a stone in a small stream that we crossed on the loop track.
- The low cloud that came in on the Saturday evening and Sunday morning, filtering down through the treetops, added a peaceful, remote atmosphere.
- Hirere says: I just wanted to say thanks to the Society for coming out to do the work. It's an impressive plant list that was generated and just being around such enthusiastic people was awesome.

A memorable weekend.

Okareka mistletoe restoration project

Weed control/plant releasing work day for 2018

Come and join Rotorua Botanical Society to control weeds
threatening mistletoe sites and plant new host trees.

Activities will involve hand-pulling, cutting, sawing of vines, climbers
and small trees.

**When: Sat 13 October – Weed control/plant releasing
work day**

Meet: Cnr Summit and Loop Roads (lake end) @ 8:45 am

**Grade: medium-hard – activities suitable for all ages
and abilities will be provided**

Please contact the organiser Paul Cashmore

027 650 7264 (mob) or 07 349 7432 (work) to RSVP.

Equipment to bring will be advised.