

Meeting & Trip Reports; Vascular plant list

10 September 2005, 'The Crater' – Taieri Ridge *John Barkla*

A procession of cars regrouped at Middlemarch before winding their way through the back roads to the foot of Taieri Ridge. Our objective, The Crater, stood out as a curious lip of volcanic rock amongst the ubiquitous schist, high on the ridge. It looked quite a walk, and turned out to be so.

Rocky outcrops and shallow gullies hid relicts of native shrubland and these became more conspicuous as we climbed to a morning tea stop – a lone, tall, conical pine. A surprising find amongst ablation surfaces was mats of the minute *Crassula mataikona*. After a short steep descent through narrow-leaved tussockland we crossed a small stream and discovered a few tiny flowering plants of NZ mousetail (*Myosurus minimus* subsp. *novae-zelandiae*) on shallow damp soils. There were more of this spring annual in damp gravelly depressions on a higher terrace.

The promise of lunch spurred weary legs up the final climb to the rocky ramparts of the crater rim. This was a great view point out over the Strath Taieri to the bulk of the Rock and Pillar Range with its shrinking snow banks. Most of the group dispersed to explore the nooks and crannies of the crater rim, constructing a plant list along the way. Others, mostly small people, opted for a game of one-two-three-home amongst the short tussock of the crater floor.

Scrambling over the gritty 20 million year old basaltic breccia revealed many treasures including groves of flowering kowhai, *Melicope simplex*, *Coprosma crassifolia*, *C. propinqua* and *Carmichaelia petriei*. Sunny dry ledges had *Vittadinia australis*, *Senecio quadridentatus* and *Einadia allanii* with the odd cushion of *Scleranthus uniflorus* and *Raoulia australis*. Shaded crevices and overhangs sheltered ferns such as *Asplenium hookerianum* and *A. flabellifolium*. In contrast, the crater floor had a paucity of natives despite a promising ephemerally wet central depression.

Some chose an alternative route back to the cars taking in the shrublands of a small incised creek. They discovered a few groves of the tree daisy *Olearia lineata* and the uncommon grass *Elymus tenuis*. A stunning landscape and a magnificent spring day to boot – thanks Robyn for organising.

Vascular plants of The Crater, Taieri Ridge, Otago
Centred on NZMS 260 Sheet I43 GR 943251
John Barkla & Mike Thorsen with assistance from other BSO members
10 September 2005

**adventive species*

Trees and shrubs

Carmichaelia petriei
Coprosmma crassifolia
C. propinqua
*Cytisus scoparius
Discaria toumatou
Leucopogon fraseri
Melicope simplex
Melicytus alpinus
*Rosa rubiginosa
Sophora microphylla

Herbs

Acaena caesiiglauca
A. dumicola
Aciphylla aurea
Anisotome aromatica
Bulbinella angustifolia
Cardamine sp.
*Cerastium fontanum
*Cirsium vulgare
Colobanthus strictus
Crassula colligata subsp. colligata
C. mataikona
Dichondra repens
Einadia allanii
Epilobium nerteroides
Euchiton ruahenicum
Galium perpusillum
Geranium microphyllum
Helichrysum filicaule
*Hieracium pilosella
Leptinella pusilla
L. squalida subsp. mediana
Libertia ixioides
*Marrubium vulgare

Oreomyrrhis ramosa
Oxalis exilis
Raoulia australis

Herbs ctd.

*Rumex acetosella
*Sagina procumbens
Scleranthus uniflorus
*Sedum acre
Senecio quadridentatus
Stellaria gracilentia
*S. media
*Trifolium arvense
*T. repens
*Verbascum thapsus
*Vicia sativa
Vittadinia australis
Wahlenbergia albomarginata

Lianes

Clematis marata
Muehlenbeckia complexa
Rubus schmidelioides

Grasses

*Aira caryophyllea
*Anthoxanthum odoratum
Chionochloa rigida
*Cynosurus cristatus
Festuca novae-zelandiae
*Festuca rubra
Poa cita
P. colensoi
Rytidosperma clavatum

Sedges and rushes

*Juncus amabilis

Ferns

Asplenium appendiculatum subsp.
appendiculatum
A. flabellifolium
A. hookerianum
Polystichum vestitum