

## Botanical Society trip - Kaukapakapa Scientific Reserve

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Kaukapakapa Scientific Reserve ("Whakatiwai") is a 200 ha block of regenerating kauri dominant forest on the northern side of the Kaukapakapa River, two kilometres upstream from its junction with the Kaipara River at Mt Rex. It is administered by DOC and has been a reserve since 1968, at which time it was subdivided from a much larger block owned by a local timber-milling family, the Wests. Unfortunately the only easy access to the reserve is via the remainder of the original block and the new owners do not encourage visitors.

The alternative access is by river, at high tide. For its trip on 17 September 1994, the Botanical Society, with West Auckland Forest and Bird Protection Society (a party of about thirty) chose this route travelling on Terry Somers' charter boat "Kewpie Too". We left at 8.30 am from Parakai, to catch the tide, and enjoyed the trip down the Kaipara past the extensive mangrove covered mud flats, and up the Kaukapakapa River past masses of flowering kowhai. We literally had to jump ashore and clamber up to a plateau dotted with a dozen pits, evidence of Maori occupation. From here it was uncharted territory, over to the verge of a small tidal creek, then back up to the ridge. We found a rich variety of flora (*Alseuosmia* sp. and *Cyrtostylis oblonga* in flower being my special delights). The growth on this part of the ridge is so prolific that the track is now non-existent, but we persevered and reached the almost impregnable pa site. Only the presence of trees (and their roots) on the steep slopes made climbing up possible. We stopped here for lunch. From this point the track is well worn. The vegetation changes to almost pure kauri stands, the conditions being much drier.

At the top of the hill the track leaves the reserve and the vegetation becomes scrubby with introduced weeds becoming common. We climbed the boundary fence to reach the (private) road. It was depressing to find here that a patch of manuka which had sheltered many *Pterostylis graminea* in flower had been felled and seedling pines planted in their place. We followed the road out to the gate and met the waiting bus at 2 pm.

This reserve is worthy of Bot. Soc.'s future attention, because of the great variety of vegetation and the areas within it which have been unexplored in the last thirty years. An exciting prospect for the adventurous botanist.

### Additions and comments on the flora and fauna of Motukahakaha Island, Hauraki Gulf, Auckland

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#### Introduction

The flora, fauna and vegetation of Motukahakaha, a small (0.6 ha) island (grid reference: S11 072835) situated between Ponui and Rotoroa Islands, Hauraki Gulf, was described and illustrated in detail by Cameron and Taylor (1992)<sup>1</sup>. On 19 October 1994 we visited Motukahakaha for thirty minutes while on transit from a reconnaissance visit to nearby Tarahiki Island. We were interested to determine the identity of a *Clematis* cited by Cameron and Taylor (1992) as one which could not be "matched with any known wild species in New Zealand". We also took the opportunity to examine the grey-faced petrel (*Pterodroma macroptera gouldi*) burrows to determine if they were still actively being used by petrels as was previously inferred by Cameron and Taylor (1992). Several additions to the island's flora were made.

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<sup>1</sup> Cameron and Taylor (1992) refer to this island as "Unnamed Islet". Recently, Mike Lee (*pers. comm.*, 1994) has drawn to our attention the fact that this island is known as Motukahakaha.