

MURIWAI 21st May 1966

New territory was covered on the May outing when Mr J. Horsman led a large party into an area at Muriwai which is under the control of the Forest Service. There we travelled through native bush around the perimeter of a large pine plantation. Gullies and ridges were covered with a remarkable variety of coastal vegetation indicative of the plant life of this area before the onset of the invading sand made much of it barren country. Now, with the protection of the pine plantations and the stabilisation of the sand, the forest flora has every opportunity for regeneration.

The dominant trees were the kauri, puriri, pohutukawa, Entelea arborescens (Whau); Rhopalostylis sapida (Nikau) - which had an astonishing number of seedlings, and one of the variable leaved forms of a "Panax" which always remains nameless even after a long discussion on nomenclature. Corynocarpus laevigatus (Karakā) was there, as also Alectryon excelsus; Knightia excelsa; Hedyocarya arborea; Melicope ternata; Dodonaea viscosa; kahikatea and tawa.

Forming a lower canopy was Cassinia retorta; Carmichaelia aligera; Brachyglottis repanda; Paratrophis microphylla; Corokia cheesemanii; Geniostoma ligustrifolium, whilst the genus Coprosma was represented by C. areolata, C. crassifolia, and C. arborea. I did not see any mature shrubs of our native Gloxinia, Rhabdothamnus solandri, but seedlings were plentiful. Of the climbers we found Parsonsia heterophylla, the rata, Metrosideros diffusa, and the supplejack, Rhipogonum scandens. Muehlenbeckia complexa with its red wiry stems formed a tangle over supporting shrubs; the larger leaved species, M. australis was also recorded. In more open spaces the native spinach, Tetragonia trigyna, formed a carpet covering the sand.

The ferns were represented by several species of Asplenium and of Blechnum, also by Cyathia dealbata, Ctenitis decomposita, Doodia media, Pellaea rotundifolia, Phymatodes diversifolium and P. scandens. All three species of our Pteris were there. Both the coastal and forest forms of Polystichum richardi were present, but the only filmy fern seen was Mecodium sanguinolentum. Great interest was taken in an immense wall of compacted sand which was covered with Blechnum membranaceum. All were small plants and the broad, rounded terminal pinnae showed how this species differs from the pointed tip of a B. lanceolatum frond. A search failed to find a typical specimen of Asplenium hookerianum, although some plants of a doubtful parentage were close to it. Of particular interest were the many luxuriant clumps of Asplenium lucidum growing some distance in under the canopy of pines.

Of the orchids, Earina mucronata was the most abundant, often almost covering large branches, and on one huge pohutukawa, Bulbophyllum pygmaeum was in association with it. Dendrobium cunninghamii was plentiful.

Continued:-

Lunch was partaken on a pleasant open rise. Here the green sedgey plant, Kyllinga brevifolia, now considered not truly indigenous, was competing with the grass. Earlier we had seen it as one of the dominant plants growing prolifically in seepage, giving evidence that it is tolerant of diverse conditions.

In the valley below nestled Lake Okaihu. The water table of the boggy land surrounding the lake was rather high so a large community of fresh water plants was not fully investigated. Most abundant in the swamp was the tall sedge, Scirpus lacustris and the introduced Barnyard grass, Echinochloa crusgalli. Some of the other plants noticed were Ottelia ovalifolia, Ludwigia palustris, (water purslane), Ranunculus rivularis, Polyg. hydropper (water pepper), Potamogeton, Myriophyllum and Callitriche.

On return to the bus a quick run was made to Muriwai beach and here our leader collected a little member of the Cress family, Lepidium virginicum, which has the common name of pepper grass (alien).

A vote of thanks was passed to our leader for a most interesting field trip.

P. Hynes.

KAKAMATUA RIDGE - 18th June 1966

The ridge line between the Kakamatua and Huia valleys looks at first sight unpromising, but the bus load of members who visited it on 18th June, favoured by fine weather, found it most rewarding, particularly on account of the variety of associations traversed. The track, leaving the Huia Road opposite the turn-off to the Spragg monument, at first enters what is almost typical gum-land scrub. Here the Manukau bréacias of the Waitakere Ranges are grading into the Waitemata claystones on their eastern flanks; also, this area has suffered repeated burning in the past before being brought under the protection of the Park. So we get the general cover of stunted tea-tree association with various twiggy coprosmas, the heath pa-totara, akepiro, umbrella ferns, the two common lycopodiums, and Lindsaea linearis among the ground cover of rushes, mosses and lichens. Promise of regeneration to forest was shown by occasional kauri seedlings and toro. As the ridge is ascended, following an old eroded and slippery logging track, the tea-tree is higher, and here the area may have been burnt once only following the original milling. This enters more typical Waitakere soil, and after the climb the track follows a nearly level ridge line with pleasant walking through rapidly regenerating bush, characterised by tanekaha, mapou, lancewood, ramarama, titoki, some kauri, and surprisingly a few specimens of young nangeao, and a solitary Melicope ternata, among the more common second growth association typified by pigwood, mahoe, koromiko and coprosmas. A manuka 4' - 10" in girth at breast height excited some comment. On the ground were several orchids in flower - Pterostylis trullifolia in the two varieties alobula and gracilis, Acianthus fornicatus, and Corybas aconitiflorus. At one position alongside the track juvenile Carmichaelia