

## HOPKINS RIVER VALLEY FLATS

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Botanical Society members attending the Summer Camp at the Huxley Lodge, responding to a request for a list of plants growing on the Hopkins River Flats gave, to the uninitiated eye, a spectacle of knots of somewhat odd looking humans, perhaps reverting to an earlier method of locomotion, or rest, on knees and elbows, posteriors elevated, heads at ground level. The results of their efforts, apart from housemaid's knees, was a surprising total of 108 species. A comment made was that if another group had covered the same area the next day, a further number of plants would have been discovered.

The plant list gives an idea of the tremendous variety to be seen, albeit by handlense in some cases. The grasses were dominant, viewed from an upright position. Prostrate coprosomas formed dense covering on humps where the soil had built up over the years. Tight silvery patches of Raoulia up on the more stony ridges. Muehlenbeckia axillaris with its strong wiry growth helped form more or less permanent plant associations with more fragile plants pushing up through its protective stems.

## PLANT LIST

Acaena dumicola  
 A. fissistipula  
 ? A. glabra  
 A. inermis  
 Aira caryophyllea  
 Anisotome aromatica  
 Aporostylis bifolia  
 Arthropodium candidum  
 Aristotelia fruticosa  
 A. serrata  
 A. s. x A. fruticosa  
 Brachycome sp.  
 19 *Carex bergrenii* (C)  
 C. coriacea  
 C. petriei  
 Celmisia gracilentia  
 Coriaria plumosa  
 C. sarmentosa  
 C. s x C. plumosa  
 Coprosma acerosa  
 C. petriei  
 C. propinqua  
 C. rugosa  
 C. sp. 't' aff. parviflora

Cotula pectinata ssp. villosa  
 C. serrulata  
 Crepis capillaris  
 Discaria toumatou  
 Epilobium alsinoides ssp. <sup>tenulipes</sup>  
 E. brunescens  
 E. melancaulon  
 Festuca rubra  
 F. r. var commutata  
 Fuchsia excorticata  
 Galium (asperula) perpusillum  
 Gentiana serotina  
 Geranium microphyllum  
 G. sessiliflorum  
 G. parviflorum  
 Gnaphalium luteo-album  
 Gonocarpus aggregatus  
 Gunnera dentata  
 G. monoica  
 Hebe salicifolia  
 H. sp.  
 Helichrysum bellidioides  
 H. filicaule

Hydrocotyle tripartita	Pratia angulata
H. heteromeria(americana)	Prunella vulgaris
Juncus articulatus	Pterostylis mutica
J. bufonius	Raoulia australis
J. effusus	R. glabra
Lagenifera petiolata	R. haastii
Leontopodium autumnalis	R. hookeri
Leucopogon(Cyathodes) fraseri	R. subericea
Linum catharticum	R. tenuicaulus
Luzula rufa var rufa	Ranunculus lappaceus
Lycopodium fastigatum	R. sp.
Mentha cunninghamii	Sagina procumbens
Microtis oligantha	Scirpus caligensis
Montia fontana	Scleranthus brockieii
Muehlenbeckia axillaris	S. uniflorus
Myosotis arvens	Senecio haastii
M. forsteri	S. wairauensis
M. uniflora	Shoenus pauciflorus
Nothofagus solandri	Thelymitra longiflora
Oreomyrrhis rigida	Trifolium avense
Parahebe decora	T. dubium
Peraxilla lyallii	Uncinia fuscovaginata
P. tetrapetala	Viola cunninghamii
Pimelea prostrata	Vulpie megaleura
P. oreophila	
Poa caespitosa	
P. colensoi	
P. lindsayi	
Præophyllum colensoi	Wahlenbergia albomarginata

The river flats are grazed by cattle and sheep, on a fairly limited basis, stream banks and wet areas show some damage done by stock, but it was obvious the animals had not congregated in the immediate study area. A wet spring and early summer had ensured plenty of grass growth over the the flats, keeping the animals spread out. As grazing is permitted throughout the year, it would be interesting to see how the stock affects the more vulnerable sites during autumn and winter months. The flats are typical of these valleys, the braided river, its normally shallow streams wandering down between grass covered, stony islands. Matagouri bushes on some islands have withstood the frequent floods. Further up the valley tongues of beech lick down towards the river. Dominating the whole scene are the mountains with their broken, rocky peaks and permanent ice fields. This valley is truly a very lovely and spectaculular sight with interest and enjoyment for all. We are fortunate to have freedom of access, and this should be jealously guarded in these times of departmental change.