

SUMMER CAMP BASED AT LENZ RESERVE, CATLINS, 6 – 11 JANUARY 2012

INTRODUCTION

Gillian & Miles Giller

The Summer Camp in the Catlins, 6 – 11 January 2012, coincided with a week of mostly fine mild weather. Our venue was the Royal Forest and Bird Society's Tautuku Forest cabins in the Lenz Reserve, nestled among the regenerating podocarp-hardwood forests of Tautuku Bay. The majority of the camp participants arrived late on Thursday afternoon and that evening local naturalist Fergus Sutherland from nearby Mohua Park gave us a most interesting talk on some of the local geological and botanical highlights, and on the history of the Catlins area. We were very lucky to have Fergus, plus Southland DoC botanist Brian Rance and Otago DoC's Graeme Loh join and inspire us on various days with their intimate knowledge of the area. Species lists kindly provided by Graeme Jane and from local DoC offices provided a valuable reference for most areas we visited. Each was updated after our visit.

Camp participants: Robert Birks, Eleanor & Barry Bissell, Trevor Blogg, Barbara & Owen Cassidy, Jane Demeter, Margaret & Bert Geerkens, Gillian & Miles Giller, Bryony Macmillan, Paul & Ruth Maurice, Ann McMillan, Fraser Ross, Zuni Steer.

With help from: Graeme Loh & Sue Maturin, Gay Munro, Brian Rance, Fergus Sutherland.

6 JANUARY – TAUTUKU ESTUARY, LAKE WILKIE, AND LENZ RESERVE

Gillian Giller

With Fergus Sutherland's information fresh in our minds we were ready to start exploring the following morning. Brian Rance, DoC botanist, accompanied us for the day and we were grateful for his expertise. We visited areas close to camp and did very little driving, which was good after the long trip down the day before. Our first unscheduled stop was beside the entrance gate to the Tautuku Forest cabins where *Crassula ruamahanga* was pointed out happily growing on the side of the road. Across the road, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Ilex aquifolium* and *Tropaeolum speciosum* grew on the site of an old school and housing. In the short section of forest before the Tautuku Estuary boardwalk we saw the first of many filmy ferns we were to see during the week - *Hymenophyllum flabellatum* and *H. demissum*. The main canopy trees in this disturbed forest were kamahi, *Fuchsia excorticata* and *Leptospermum scoparium*.

The Tautuku Estuary boardwalk gave us a wonderful overview of the extensive *Apodasmia similis* agg. (oioi), where fernbirds were heard and a spoonbill was seen feeding. *Lilaeopsis novae-zelandiae* with its distinctive tape measure markings and tiny umbels of flowers was found right beside the boardwalk growing happily with *Isolepis cernua* var. *cernua* and *Triglochin striata*.

After a cuppa back at the Camp we drove to Lake Wilkie. The rimu, matai, miro and Hall's totara were magnificent but so were the ferns which covered every available space on the forest floor and tree trunks. The filmy ferns looked a bit wilted but provided an endless challenge for those who were endeavouring to identify them. The two *Hymenophyllum* species we had seen earlier were present, but so were *H. bivalve*, *H. dilatatum*, *H. revolutum*, *H. sanguinolentum*, plus some *Tmesipteris tannensis* for good measure. We sat on the boardwalk beside the lake for lunch and admired the southern rata flowers and the reflections on the water. *Thelymitra cyanea* (blue swamp orchid) and *Luzuriaga parviflora* (lantern berry) were in flower. *Schizaea australis* (comb fern) and *Drosera spatulata* (also see page 57) were found near the lake edge. *Raukaua edgerleyi* and *R. simplex* were compared on the way back, but interestingly there were not many juveniles present with their finely dissected leaves.

We returned to the camp and split into two groups for the afternoon to explore the Lenz Reserve. Brian led the group doing the longer loop track. The second group took a more leisurely pace along the track as far as an open wet area with *Carex appressa* growing among abundant mosses. *Hymenophyllum rarum* with its bluish colour and *Rumohra adiantiformis* were seen on the trunks beside the track.

The loop track passed through a range of habitats. There were some large specimens of kamahi on the drier ground. *Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum* was seen in a moister part. *Winika cunninghamii* in full flower at eye level was much admired and photographed (Fig. 1, page 29). A large matai was host to some clumps of *Asplenium polyodon* with a few clumps also growing on the ground nearby. The last part of the track followed the old tram line which was still in good condition in many places.

Back at the camp we watched as two pigeons dined on the foliage of a planted kowhai. Some members made use of the long summer evening to revisit the Tautuku boardwalk and see the fernbirds while enjoying the low sun angles across the estuary. Others chose to walk around the remains of the sawmill buildings and equipment near the camp. The mosquitoes were rather fierce but a young *Coprosma wallii* and *Olearia virgata* (*O. laxiflora*) were spotted before a retreat was made back to camp.