

Sphagnum cristatum, occasionally supporting *Gunnera prorepens*, *Centella uniflora* and *Coprosma elatirioides*.

A short drive further westwards took us to another area of Chaslands frost flat vegetation, which like the McLean Falls flats presented a wonderful range of small-leaved plants. *Raukaua anomalus*, *Aristotelia fruticosa*, *Myrsine divaricata*, *Neomyrtus pedunculata*, *Coprosma propinqua*, *C. dumosa* and *C. rigida* formed thickets below trees of *Coprosma wallii* (Fig. 2, page 29, with its characteristic red inner bark), *Plagianthus regius* and *Olearia lineata*. *Parsonsia capsularis*, *Rubus schmidelioides* var. *schmidelioides* and *Clematis marata* were occasionally encountered, making progress somewhat circuitous. *Ranunculus ternatifolius* (Naturally Uncommon) was found in a moist canopy gap, apparently a very uncommon listing for the Catlins. Several most attractive specimens of the hybrid *Raukaua anomalus* x *simplex* were encountered, as well as both parent species.

Despite being late in the day, several of us ventured a little further westward to the Koropuku Falls walk. This was rather similar to the forested section of the McLean Falls track, again with abundant ferns and bryophytes under a rata-kamahi canopy. *Hymenophyllum frankliniae* (formerly known as *H. ferrugineum*), *H. flabellatum*, *H. dilatatum* and *H. pulcherrimum* were common, though often rather crumpled in the southern summer drought. *Nertera depressa* was particularly eye-catching with its shining red fruit. Bryony noted that the liverworts appeared to dominate over the mosses.

The day certainly showed the value of having a local botanist on hand. Many thanks go to Brian Rance for his overall guidance and for answering so many questions.

8 JANUARY – PAPATOWAI ESTUARY, SHANKS’ BUSH QEII COVENANT, OLD COACH ROAD, AND OLD POSSUMERS’ TRACK

Trevor Blogg

This was our day for a short trip to the northeast over Florence Hill to the Papatowai estuary area, starting from the Papatowai settlement southwest of the estuarine lagoon. We had a low tide to walk along a sandy beach, but most of the botanical interest was at the high-water line where the beach reaches low vegetated banks (Fig. 3, page 30). Here was a rich colour-scape of crimson southern rata in full flower, the shiny leaves of *Coprosma lucida*, the inflorescence spikes of *Hebe salicifolia*, the golden-green of kamahi leaves and the blue-green blades of *Phormium tenax*.

The bank sides themselves revealed occasional *Asplenium obtusatum* ssp. *obtusatum* ferns - common in this area and easily mistaken for the shining spleenwort *A. oblongifolium*, which is absent this far south.



Figure 1 *Winika cunninghamii*, Lenz Reserve, 6 January. Photo by Miles Giller.

Figure 2 Brian Rance examining *Coprosma wallii* in the Chaslands shrublands, 7 January. Photo by Miles Giller.





Figure 3 Fergus Sutherland outlining points of interest in the Papatowai Estuary area. Photo by Miles Giller.



Figure 4 "...the silver beech forest was spectacularly adorned with scarlet mistletoe, *Peraxilla colensoi*." Thisbe huts, 9 January. Photo by Zuni Steer.



Figure 5 Bryony Macmillan studying *Pittosporum obcordatum*, Purakaiti Stream, 10 January. Photo by Eleanor Bissell.



Figure 6 Pounaweia salt marsh, 10 January. Photo by Gillian Giller.



Figure 7 *Gentianella saxosa* in the area of Waipapa Point, 11 January. Photo by Zuni Steer.



Figure 8 *Calystegia soldanella* on Waipapa Point dunes, 11 January. Photo by Paul Maurice.

We saw the occasional *Melicytus ramiflorus*, the more “familiar” whitey-wood than *M. lanceolatus*, which is ubiquitous in Tautuku Bay and points south-west along this coast.

A *Leptinella* was the subject of some discussion, but Brian Rance’s species list identifies this as *L. dioica* – a little research on this species reveals it to be highly variable (with a colourful taxonomic history). The specimen we saw had leaves of about 7 mm x 20 mm - towards the smallest end of the published range.

A happy discovery on the bank side was also a *Winika* (formerly *Dendrobium*) *cunninghamii* perching orchid, in full flower, growing from the root area of a kamahi.

After a morning tea break we left the beach, recovered our cars and drove to the entrance of Shanks’ Bush QEII covenant. This locally-established reserve is well stocked with gymnosperms and flowering tree species alike. Out of 10 *Coprosma* species, the quite rare *C. pedicellata* is present, with its strongly-veined leaves (in that respect, similar at a glance to those of *Lophomyrtus obcordata*) and its bright orange cambium.

A notable *Olearia* was *O. virgata* (*O. laxiflora*), an addition to Graeme Jane’s species-list. A liane that we rarely see was *Rubus australis*, with its very rounded leaf, significantly smaller than that of *R. cissoides* - both were present. Other than lancewood, the only *Pseudopanax* present was *P. colensoi* var. *ternatus* – in common with the Tautuku area.

Miles and Gillian Giller concentrated significant effort on distinguishing the six different species of *Hymenophyllum* fern present, which contrasted in size with the tree-ferns, *Dicksonia squarrosa*, *D. fibrosa* (with its fully intact ‘skirt’), and *Cyathea smithii* (with its short ‘skirt’). The tree-ferns supported a crop of *Tmesipteris*, both *T. tannensis* and *T. elongata* (the latter another addition to Graeme Jane’s list).

Among herbs not often seen on our outings (though apparently not rare) was *Senecio wairauensis*.

After lunch we explored the Old Coach Road and Old Possumers’ Track to the northeast of the lagoon. (I believe “old” refers to the track, not necessarily the possumers.) The foreshore vegetation included *Samolus repens*, which was noticeably absent on the southwest shore.

The Old Coach Road has most of the forest species seen elsewhere in the coastal area, with narrow leaved whitey-wood (*Melicytus lanceolatus*) being fairly dominant, but with a notable number of *Streblus heterophyllus*, commonly known as milk tree for its white latex. Some of these were quite large trees, something new to the author’s experience.

The Old Coach Road track yielded no obvious new species of shrub, but Bryony Macmillan spotted *Lagenifera strangulata* at the track-side. At the track’s end, Margaret Geerkens located some *Pterostylis* orchids, almost

certainly *P. banksii*, and I noticed some highly variegated small ground-hugging leaves which I photographed and later determined to be *Nematoceras trilobum* (formerly *Corybas trilobus*). Also in this area was *Lagenifera pumila*.

Taking us away from the lagoon, the Old Possumers' Track quickly became rich in tall and mature rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) trees. For a while there was some discussion as to whether some were kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) as many were too tall to see the needle leaves in detail. We eventually found a fallen (unequivocal) rimu bearing an *Earina mucronata* orchid in full flower, and its bark helped decide that most of what we were seeing were, in fact, rimu. Our species list included kahikatea, so we must assume that some were this. Zuni Steer also noted the presence of *Coprosma colensoi* here – we hadn't seen it along the Old Coach Road track.

A notable addition to the species list from this area was *Gastrodia cunninghamii*, a root parasitising orchid.

9 JANUARY – MOHUA PARK, CATLINS RIVER, THISBE HUTS, AND THE WISP

Zuni Steer

The morning began with a visit to Mohua Park, an 8 ha round hill north of Papatowai, in the Catlins River valley. Although the area had been logged in earlier times, Mohua Park is a forest remnant worthy of protection under Fergus and Mary Sutherland's care, and legally protected by way of a QEII covenant. Mohua Park is an ideal place to learn botany, as the well-marked trees and shrubs enable visitors to identify the more common species. Older forest remnants include matai, kahikatea, rimu, miro, totara and kaikomako. This lowland mixed podocarp-broadleaf forest is complemented with adjacent silver beech forest, wetland and grassy clearings. Alas, the yellow mohua bird was not to be found. Instead, we were delighted to see much *Streblus heterophyllus* and particularly, *Raukaua edgerleyi* growing healthily as seedlings, saplings and as mature trees. Ten species of small-leaved *Coprosma* kept us busy with the hand lenses, while other shrubs of interest were *Melicytus lanceolatus*, *Pseudopanax colensoi* var. *ternatus* and the silvery shiny leaves of *Neomyrtus pedunculata*. A healthy crop of ferns, lianes and orchids also sustained our interest both on the forest floor and high up in the canopy.

From here DoC's Graeme Loh led us up the Catlins River valley to Thisbe Huts, where the silver beech forest was spectacularly adorned with scarlet mistletoe, *Peraxilla colensoi*, (Fig. 4, page 30). Here we sat for lunch, watching the bellbirds and tui fulfilling their pollination duties while