

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

drinking the nectar of the gods. This was the site of a DoC project monitoring mistletoe pollination.

Activity during pollination was being filmed by Sue Maturin for a short video, soon to appear on the Forest and Bird website. So, we were glad to have a real life preview. *Peraxilla colensoi* differs from the other red mistletoe, *Peraxilla tetrapetala*, in that the leaves are larger and more rounded, the flowers are in clumps of 3-10 and it mainly grows on silver beech, further out along the branch. *Peraxilla tetrapetala* has smaller blistered leaves, flowers are in clumps of 1-3, and grows mainly on mountain or black beech. In the afternoon, we continued up river to The Wisp, where with Graeme's guidance we were finally rewarded with sightings of a pair of mohua nesting high up in a silver beech tree. Lying on our backs with binoculars we watched a pair feeding young in a nest inside the stump of a broken branch. As the evening drew on many of us left while Graeme roped up to inspect the nest.

## **10 JANUARY – TAUTUKU BAY, PURAKAUNUI FALLS, PURAKAUITI STREAM, AND POUNAWEA FOREST WALK & SALT MARSH**

**Eleanor Bissell**

### ***Rod Snell Memorial Walk - Tautuku Bay***

Even though they were dry, we could see the tiny sporangia at the leaf tip of *Hymenophyllum demissum* with a hand lens, and the pale blue green fronds of *H. rarum*. All filmy ferns on the list were identified by our eagle-eyed experts as we walked through shady podocarp forest, complemented by *Melicytus ramiflorus* (mahoe), kamahi, *Coprosma lucida*, and *Griselinia littoralis* (kapuka). *Uncinia* seeds along the trackside were eager to travel. I was glad to see the shining black berries on *Pennantia corymbosa*, a personal favourite. Orchids - *Earina*, *Microtis*, *Nematoceras*, *Pterostylis* and *Winika cunninghamii* - were all found. *Baumea*, various *Carex* species, *Ficinia nodosa*, *Schoenus* and *Isolepis*, with a mix of introduced weeds were to be found at the bay. There was time to gaze at the beautiful view across the water, a perfect place for a morning break.

### ***Purakaunui Falls***

Once again we gazed at old *Nothofagus menziesii* and *N. solandri*. Drier parts of the walk had *Podocarpus cunninghamii* thriving. Orchids were plentiful. At eye level we saw *Winika cunninghamii*, *Earina mucronata* (some still with a few flowers) and *E. autumnalis*. *Simpliglottis cornuta* grew along the pathway - a delight waiting to be spotted. *Leptopteris superba* was exactly that, and grew in abundance. *Schistochila*, a large genus of liverworts made large soft green cushions in some damper areas.