

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.

Purakauiti Stream

The rare *Pittosporum obcordatum* was viewed on a stream oxbow area recently fenced-off from livestock (Fig. 5, page 31). It was accompanied in its enclosure by *Plagianthus regius* and *Pennantia corymbosa*, with *Coprosma pedicellata*, *Melicytus flexuosus*, *Griselinia littoralis*, *Rubus* and *Parsonsia* nearby.

Pounaweia Forest Walk and Salt Marsh

This is a fine example of pre-European virgin forest, and further on, saltmarsh. Locals and the Crown purchased the land which is also rich in birdlife. Bellbirds, tui and brown creepers were plentiful. Podocarps, some perhaps as old as a thousand years, stretched upwards to catch the light. The consistently huge size of rimu, *Prumnopitys ferruginea* (miro), and a *Podocarpus totara* var. *totara* (lowland totara) at the path edge with a two meter diameter trunk added proof that no milling had occurred. *Ripogonum scandens* (supplejack) displaying red and green berries, had been browsed by deer. Large vines belonged to *Metrosideros diffusa* were in full bloom at eye level and higher. *Clematis paniculata* seized and clung to branches on its upward journey. Many seedlings were growing along the edge of the path along with *Parsonsia* and *Rubus* species. *Streblus heterophyllus*, *Griselinia littoralis*, *Pennantia corymbosa*, *Melicytus lanceolatus*, and *Fuchsia excorticata*, with its shredded soft tan bark, were abundant. An old kamahi with a large mossy trunk twisted and flattened into a natural seat with bark worn smooth - a great spot for a picture.

Flowering *Raukaua edgerleyi*, lush, with a pungent citrus lemon smell grew abundantly along with *Aristolelia serrata* (wineberry), *Coprosma areolata*, *C. crassifolia*, and *C. rotundifolia*. We passed lovely specimens of *Cyathea smithii* and, on the forest floor among punky decaying tree trunks, a handsome monoculture of *Blechnum discolor*. Although very dry, Gillian and Miles were able to identify all of the filmy ferns on the list. *Trichomanes venosum*, with its distinct trumpet shaped sori with a protruding bristle, when magnified, showed the plant's delicate beauty. Bryony showed us cushions of the pale green-white moss *Leucobryum candidum*. Looking rather dry were umbrella mosses: *Hypnodendron* (larger and shaggy) and *Hypopterigium* (not so shaggy and smaller). *Ptychomnion* (pipe-cleaner moss) was dotted along the path edge. Just to confuse me, Bryony pointed out *Cyathophorum bulbosum*, which looks like a fern but is a moss!

The salt marsh (Fig. 6, page 31) provided a great mix of plants: *Apium prostratum*, *Suaeda novae-zelandiae*, *Selliera radicans*, *Samolus repens* var. *repens* and *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* ssp. *quinqueflora*. *Isolepis cernua* var. *cernua* patchworked among *Apodasmia similis* agg. and *Plagianthus divaricatus* in semi-saline areas, and there were a few *Phormium tenax* still in flower, red and showy.