

On the walkway we encountered a number of species that we had not seen previously on the Camp, due to the different habitats and prevalence of peatlands and bogs. Among the more interesting were *Halocarpus bidwillii* (transplanted from local populations), *Gleichenia dicarpa*, *Dracophyllum longifolium*, *Pentachondra pumila*, *Gaultheria macrostigma* (formerly *Pernettya macrostigma*), *Drosera binata*, *D. spatulata*, *Nertera scapanioides*, *Baumea rubiginosa*, *B. tenax*, *Isolepis aucklandica*, *I. distigmata*, *Empodisma minus* agg., *Juncus planifolius*, *Thelymitra cyanea* (also seen at Lake Wilkie), *T. longifolia* agg., *Herpolirion novae-zelandiae* and *Libertia peregrinans* agg.. Of particular interest were the typically upland species seen here at sea level: *Donatia novae-zelandiae*, *Actinotus novae-zealandiae* and *Oreobolus strictus*. Beds of *Apodasmia similis* agg. surrounded the lagoon.

On the way home we ran into heavy rain, the first significant rainfall of the week. Many thanks to Miles and Gillian Giller for an extremely well-organised and interesting Camp.

ARTHUR'S PASS TRIP, WAITANGI WEEKEND, 3-6 FEBRUARY 2012

INTRODUCTION

Zuni Steer

Seven botanists and three partners attended the Arthur's Pass long weekend. We stayed at the well-equipped Outdoor Education Centre, where we all managed to secure a bottom bunk bed each. The weather was very kind to us really, a low covering of cloud appeared in the morning, opening up to blue sky in the afternoon, then clouding over again by evening, allowing us to experience both cool and hot temperatures each day. Arthur's Pass itself is at 920 m a.s.l., so technically we were in a sub-alpine area right by the car park. This V-shaped north-south valley is surrounded by steep slopes on either side, cut by the Bealey and Otira Valleys, which we explored on day 2.

Mountain beech (*Nothofagus solandri*) clothes the slopes to the tree line, where tall tussock species and herbs prevail. Due to the high rainfall and moist soils, red tussock (*Chionochloa rubra*) was most abundant in the bog on top of Arthur's Pass. A scattering of broad-leaved snow tussocks (*C. flavescens*), showing its flat wide blades and impressive seed heads (last year's), was present in the scrub. Shrubland was abundant up the side valleys, where several *Olearia* and *Brachyglottis* species had to be sorted out. Further up the slopes, the fitter members enjoyed the scree slopes and

their array of special plants. Small wetlands were also treats to explore, displaying their collection of distinctive plants such as *Drosera arcturi*, *Oreobolus impar* and *Carpha alpina*.

Back at base, we enjoyed one immense pot-luck dinner which stretched into another the following night, much of it appearing in lunch boxes too. A mixture of salads, meats, curries, falafels, rice and pies were finished off with a fruit salad and hand-whipped cream. Saturday night we were engaged in plant ID tasks and photo viewing on handy laptops, which really do justice for plant recognition. Sunday night we were treated to a visit from DoC manager, Chris Stewart, who talked about conservation and issues in the Arthur's Pass National Park and beyond, and unflappably answered all our diverse questions. Chris gallantly helped us to finish the fruit salad laced with ice cream, custard, meringues and lamingtons!

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY – TEMPLE BASIN

Zuni Steer

After an excruciating climb up the bouldery zig-zag track, we finally reached Temple Basin at ca.1500 m a.s.l., which was full of botanical delights. The common pale-sheathed, keeled blades of the mid-ribbed snow tussock (*Chionochloa pallens*) and the curly snow tussock (*C. crassiuscula*) appeared in the basin. Copious quantities of *Celmisia* spp. kept us busy, including the purple-ribbed *C. verbascifolia*, the orangey-yellow and green striped *C. armstrongii*, the ubiquitous grey-green *C. discolor*, the large fading flowers of *C. semicordata*, one *C. angustifolia* and a scattering of hybrids, among the usual suspects, *C. gracilentia*, *C. spectabilis*, *C. alpina*, *C. laricifolia* and *C. sessiliflora*. *Dolichoglottis* flowers had long gone but the iconic large-leaved *Ranunculus lyallii* still displayed a few flower heads for the mandatory photograph. One unusual plant that begged attention was the yellow-flowered *Euphrasia cockayneana*, which was surprisingly easy to spot amongst the fawn and green grassy backdrop, especially as it was on display all the way up the track. The large glaucous mountain carrot (*Anisotome pilifera*) was another plant that stood out. Alas, we never found one in flower.

Temple Basin is very craggy with rocky bluffs, deeply cut streams and mini-waterfalls, creating a wonderful variety of landforms that provide a range of habitats for botanical diversity. In the boggy areas, where it was compulsory to lie down and feel the moisture up close, we strained to balance a hand lens above the tiny plants. Among the usual flowering *Donatia novae-zelandiae* and *Phyllachne colensoi* cushions, we discovered red round patches of the insect-trapping *Drosera spatulata* (also see page 57) and the tiny sharp tufts of *Colobanthus strictus*.