

Memorial Lodge and to Ross Edgerley for showing Mike the way in to the old bush tram track at Pokaka [sorry we could not find *Raukaua edgerleyi*, named after Shona and Ross's great great grandfather, John Edgerley (1814-1849), a pioneering nurseryman in Auckland]; to Jenni Shanks for her great work in organising the provisions and cooking duties; to Graeme Jane for his expert and diligent attention to the daily species lists; to Jessica Beever for identifying a moss at Tukino; and to all our group members for their plant observations, and duties at the Lodge.



**Fig. 30:** *Dryopteris affinis*, Rotoaira Forest, 31 March.

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## Discovery of *Myosotis pansa* subsp. *pansa* on Puponga Point, Cornwallis

Oscar Grant



**Fig. 1.** *Myosotis pansa* subsp. *pansa*, Sep 2016. All photos by the author.

Puponga Point is a prominent feature of the Manukau Harbour, pointing like a long finger across the water. While there are no formal tracks along the coastal fringe, exploration of this area is fairly easy around low tide from Cornwallis Wharf. Although it is predominantly covered in pines (*Pinus* sp.), significant strips of native vegetation still occur around the coast and on the outer reaches of the peninsula. Weed issues are of high concern, with boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* subsp. *monilifera*), pampas (*Cortaderia* sp.) and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) being abundant in many places. Climbing asparagus (*Asparagus scandens*) is also invading some of the native remnants from the interior of the peninsula where it has smothered the understory. However, despite the weed issues, patches of the native vegetation remain in good condition, and contain a variety of interesting species.

In late 2015 (Nov and Dec) I made a couple of visits to this peninsula where I found two populations of *Myosotis pansa* subsp. *pansa* (Figs. 1 and 2). Both populations occur very much in the coastal margin. Originally I found only a few plants at Torea Bay on the western side of the peninsula. These plants (perhaps a total of 10) consisted of both seedlings and adults growing beneath *Phormium tenax* and *Austroderia splendens* on actively eroding exposed coastal slopes. The second population is in a small cove near the tip of the peninsula, where a large slip occurred in recent years (Fig. 3). The *Pseudopanax lessonii* and *Corynocarpus laevigatus* trees that would have formed the canopy are still standing, though a large proportion of them are now dead (Fig. 4). Beneath is a lush assemblage of *Carex flagellifera*, *A. splendens*, *Tetragonia implexicoma*, *Senecio lautus*, *P. tenax* and a few other species. When I returned to the site in October 2016, I observed around 10-15 plants of *M. pansa* subsp. *pansa* around the edges, including some large mature plants and seedlings.

Some other interesting species in the area include a substantial patch of *Ranunculus acaulis* at Torea Bay, *Parietaria debilis* in rocky crevices and around reef heron nests across the point, and *Celmisia major* var. *major*, of which there are substantial populations around Bigsea Bay. The *R. acaulis* patch may be the last surviving population in the vicinity, as the populations at Kakamatua Inlet seem to have been overcome by weeds. (However, I have recently noted *R. acaulis* growing amongst grass behind the seawall at Foster Bay, Huia). Also of interest are populations of *Cheilanthes distans* and *Olearia albida* growing on cliffs on the eastern side of the peninsula, closer to the wharf. Moving away from the coastal strip there is also a population of *Paspalum orbiculare* on the track up to the monument – the first record for this species in the Waitakeres (Cameron 1998).

The peninsula also appears to hold what must be one of the largest populations of fur seals in the Manukau Harbour, and perhaps the Auckland region. On a recent visit in September 2016, I encountered at least 20 seals while making my way around the coast. A variety of seabirds are also known to breed on some of the headlands around the point. Grey-faced petrels were found nesting above Bigsea Bay by Ewen Cameron and Graeme Taylor in 1998, and their presence was confirmed again in 2016 by James Russell. Auckland Council has even installed a pest control program for the nesting population (EKC, pers. comm.) It is on some of these headlands that I wouldn't be surprised if there are



Fig. 2. *Myosotis pansa* subsp. *pansa*, Oct 2016.



Fig. 3. The large slip near the tip of the peninsula where the second population was found, Oct 2016.

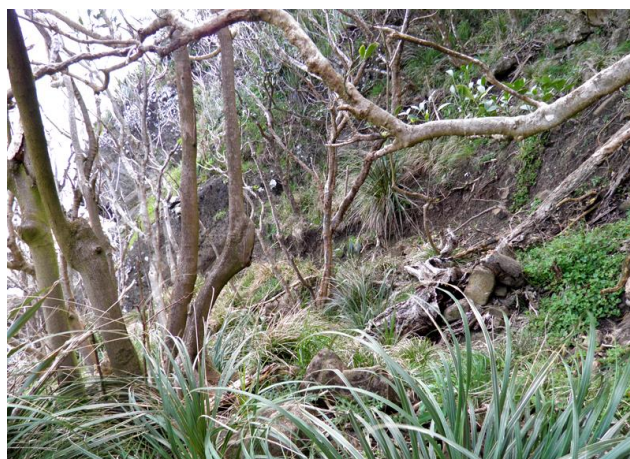


Fig. 4. Habitat of *Myosotis pansa* subsp. *pansa* at the tip of Puponga Point, Oct 2016.

more interesting plants to be found, but exploring these steep slopes presents a real challenge. Botanise at your own risk.

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