

Vascular plants and birds of Rabbit Island/Takangariki, Kawau Bay

Ewen Cameron, Shelley Heiss-Dunlop, Maureen Young & David Wilson

The lists (Appendix 1 & 2) were compiled during the Auckland Botanical Society visit to the island on 17 September 2022. For the account of that visit see Young (2023) above. Apart from near the wharf, the lower coastal fringe of vegetation could not be inspected because of a large high tide coinciding with our visit.

Since the felling of the pine trees (*Pinus radiata*) in 1976, landscaping of the island (including creating areas of mown lawn), and planting of many decorative shrubs and shade trees, few of the species have been controlled on the island (Leslie Holmes pers. comm.), including most weeds.

One exception is brush wattle (*Paraserianthes lophantha*). However, we felt it would be beneficial if a few other well-known Hauraki Gulf environmental weeds were also controlled, e.g.: boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides lophantha*), boxthorn (*Lycium ferrocissimum*), sweet pea bush (*Polygala myrtifolia*), tree mallow (*Malva arborea*), Cape honey flower (*Melianthus major*, Fig. 1), veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*), agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*), ice plants (*Carpobrotus chilensis* and *C. edulis*) (Fig. 2) and pampas grass

(*Cortaderia selloana*). This would reduce the risk of the island being a potential stepping-stone for these species to neighbouring islands or to the mainland coast. For reference: distances from Rabbit Island are: 0.8 km to Takangaroa (Goat I.); 2.0 km to Kawau Island; 2.5 km to Tawharanui; and 2.6 km to Mullet Point, Scandrett Regional Park.

A total of 180 vascular plant taxa are recorded below, of which 64 (36%) are native species. For some taxa it was difficult to be sure whether they were wild or planted. However, several of these natives are considered unnatural to the island and several others appeared to be only planted (i.e., not spreading) bringing the total of “natural” natives to some 42 species. Of the 116 exotic taxa recorded, about 57 (45 dicots, 12 monocots) were considered to be adventive, with eleven of those being environmental weeds (see above).

Evidently the island is free of rats and mice. A stoat was present c.5 years ago, and there is at least one species of skink present (Lesley Holmes pers. comm.). We were surprised not to see any blackbirds.



Figs. 1 & 2: 1. Cape honey flower (Melianthaceae) c.2 m tall was occasional on the island's northern cliffs and is a fairly local weed in the Hauraki Gulf. Photo: Ewen Cameron. 2. Two ice plant species (*Carpobrotus chilensis* and *C. edulis*) grow by the shoreline near the wharf. Both these weedy species can spread by seed or small pieces breaking off – even small stem fragments can establish. Growing by the shoreline increases their dispersal chances to establish on other islands. Photo: *C. edulis*, Shelley Heiss-Dunlop.

References

Young, M.E. 2023: Rabbit Island / Takangariki, Kawau Bay, Auckland Botanical Society Field Trip, Saturday 17 September 2022. *Auckland Botanical Society Journal* 78: 2–6.

Appendix 1. List of vascular plants

Key

* = exotic species

**= native species out of its natural geographical distribution,
or not a taxon of a small island

pl. = planted

pl.? = suspected to be planted rather than wild

+pl. = thought to be originally planted, now spreading

×1 = only 1 plant seen (×2 = 2 plants present), etc

no symbol = wild native

Ferns (10 + 1) (= native total + exotic total)

<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i>	rosy maidenhair
<i>Asplenium haurakiense</i> (×2)	
<i>Asplenium oblongifolium</i>	shining spleenwort
<i>Cyathea dealbata</i> pl.? (×2, short trunks by bach)	ponga
<i>Cyathea medullaris</i> pl.? (×2, 4 & 8 m tall)	mamaku
<i>Doodia australis</i> (local)	rasp fern
<i>Lecanopteris pustulata</i> (<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i>) (terrestrial)	hound's tongue
<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i> * pl.	staghorn fern
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken
<i>Pteris tremula</i>	shaking brake
<i>Pyrrosia elaeagnifolia</i>	leather fern

Gymnosperms (2 + 0)

<i>Agathis australis</i> ** pl. (×1, 2 m tall)	kauri
<i>Podocarpus totara</i> pl. (8 m-tall lawn specimen)	tōtara

Angiosperms – Dicotyledons (35 + 92)

<i>Alectryon excelsus</i>	tītoki
<i>Anemone</i> × <i>hybrida</i> * pl.	Japanese anemone
<i>Bellis perennis</i> * (in lawn)	daisy
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> subsp. <i>cicla</i> * pl. (vegetable garden)	silver beet
<i>Bougainvillea glabra</i> cv. * pl.	bougainvillea
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i> * pl.	bottlebrush
<i>Camellia</i> cv. * pl. (several lawn plantings)	camellia
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i> *	bitter cress
<i>Carpobrotus chilensis</i> * +pl.	ice plant
<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i> * +pl.	ice plant
<i>Cassia leptophylla</i> * pl.	gold medallion tree
<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i> *	annual mouse-ear chickweed
<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> * (common on cliffs)	boneseed
<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> * pl.	camphor tree
<i>Citrus</i> × <i>sinensis</i> * pl. (orchard)	orange
<i>Coleonema pulchellum</i> * pl.	breath of heaven

<i>Coprosma propinqua</i> var. <i>martinii</i> ** pl. (cliff top, N side)	
<i>Coprosma macrocarpa</i> subsp. <i>minor</i>	coastal karamū
<i>Coprosma repens</i>	taupata
<i>Corokia</i> × <i>virgata</i> ** pl.	
<i>Corynocarpus laevigatus</i> (seedling)	karakā
<i>Crassula multicava</i> * +pl.	fairy crassula
<i>Cunonia capensis</i> * pl.	butterspoon tree
<i>Daphne odora</i> * pl.	winter daphne
<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Mercury Bay weed
<i>Dimorphotheca fruticosa</i> * pl.	dimorphotheca
<i>Dimorphotheca jucunda</i> * pl. (various ray-floret colours)	freeway daisy
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> pl. (mostly the purple form, many dead/dying)	akeake
<i>Didymocheton spectabilis</i> (<i>Dysoxylum spectabile</i>)	kohekohe
<i>Echium candicans</i> * pl.	pride of Madeira
<i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i> *	fleabane
<i>Erodium moschatum</i> * (in lawn)	musky storksbill
<i>Erythrina crista-galli</i> * pl. (x1)	cockspur coral tree
<i>Euphorbia oblongata</i> * +pl.	Balkan spurge
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i> *	milkweed
<i>Euryops pectinatus</i> * pl.	grey-leaved euryops
<i>Farfugium japonicum</i> * pl. (green leaves)	tractor seat
<i>Farfugium japonicum</i> cv. <i>Aureomaculatum</i> * pl. (gold-spotted leaves)	leopard plant
<i>Facelis retusa</i> * (patch in lawn)	annual trampweed
<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i> * pl. (orchard)	feijoa
<i>Ficus carica</i> * pl. (orchard)	edible fig
<i>Fumaria capreolata</i> *	rampant fumitory
<i>Fumaria muralis</i> *	scrambling fumitory
<i>Galium aparine</i> *	cleavers
<i>Geniostoma ligustrifolium</i>	hangehange
<i>Geranium homeanum</i> (in lawn)	
<i>Geranium maderense</i> * pl.	Madeira Island geranium
<i>Geranium molle</i> *	dove's foot cranesbill
<i>Glebionis segetum</i> *	corn marigold
<i>Gomphocarpus physocarpus</i> * pl.	swan plant

<i>Haloragis erecta</i>	toatoa
<i>Hebe</i> cv. ** pl.	koromiko
<i>Hebe stricta</i>	koromiko
<i>Hibiscus</i> cv. * pl.	hibiscus
<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> * pl.	hydrangea
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> * pl. (vegetable garden)	kūmara
<i>Iresine herbstii</i> * pl. (red-leaved form)	Herbst's bloodleaf
<i>Kunzea robusta</i>	kānuka
<i>Lavendula dentata</i> * pl.	toothed lavender
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> pl. (pl. c.5 years ago)	manuka
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> *	oxeye daisy
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i> * (×1 seedling, no adults seen)	Chinese privet
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i> *	lotus
<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i> *	boxthorn
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> * pl. (×2 in lawn, to 14 m tall)	southern magnolia
<i>Magnolia</i> sp./cv. * pl. (deciduous)	
<i>Malus</i> × <i>domestica</i> * pl. (orchard)	apple
<i>Malva arborea</i> *	tree mallow
<i>Melianthus major</i> *	Cape honey flower
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>	māhoe
<i>Meryta sinclairii</i> ** pl.	pukanui
<i>Metrosideros excelsa</i>	pōhutukawa
<i>Modiola caroliniana</i> *	creeping mallow
<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	wire vine
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	māpou
<i>Nerium oleander</i> * pl.	oleander
<i>Olearia furfuracea</i>	akepiro
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> *	horned oxalis
<i>Oxalis exilis</i>	creeping oxalis
<i>Oxalis incarnata</i> *	lilac oxalis
<i>Paraserianthes lophantha</i> * (×2, N cliffs)	brush wattle
<i>Pelargonium hortorum</i> * pl.	zonal pelargonium
<i>Pericallis</i> × <i>hybrida</i> * +pl.	cineraria
<i>Persea americana</i> * +pl. (pl. and 1 seedling)	avocado
<i>Physalis peruviana</i> *	cape gooseberry
<i>Piper excelsum</i>	kawakawa
<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>	karo
<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i> cv. ** pl. (variegated form)	tarata
<i>Pittosporum ralphii</i> ** pl. (Stephens Island form)	
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i> pl.	kōhūhū
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> *	narrow-leaved plantain

<i>Polygala myrtifolia</i> *	sweet pea shrub
<i>Potentilla indica</i> *	Indian strawberry
<i>Prunus</i> spp./cv. * pl. (orchard)	peach/plum
<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i> pl.	whauwhaupaku
<i>P. crassifolius</i> × <i>P. lessonii</i> pl.	hybrid lancewood
<i>Pseudopanax ferox</i> pl.	fierce lancewood
<i>Pseudopanax lessonii</i>	houpara
<i>Psidium cattleianum</i> * pl. (×2, 3 m tall, orchard)	strawberry guava
<i>Rhaphiolepis bibas</i> (<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>) * pl.	loquat
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> * pl.	rosemary
<i>Rumex acetosella</i> * (in lawn)	sheep's sorrel
<i>Salvia leucantha</i> * pl.	Mexican bush sage
<i>Schinus molle</i> * pl. (×1 lawn specimen)	pepper tree
<i>Senecio cineraria</i> * pl.	dusty miller
<i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>glabrata</i> * +pl. (×1 young plant, N cliff tops – wild?)	
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i> *	field madder
<i>Solanum americanum</i>	small-flowered nightshade
<i>Solanum betaceum</i> * pl.	tamarillo
<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i> * pl. (vegetable garden)	tomato
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> *	sow thistle
<i>Sophora chathamica</i>	kōwhai
<i>Stachys arvensis</i> *	staggerweed
<i>Stellaria media</i> *	chickweed
<i>Strobilanthes anisophyllus</i> * pl.	goldfussia
<i>Syzygium australe</i> * +pl.	brush cherry
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> *	dandelion
<i>Trifolium repens</i> *	white clover
<i>Tropaeolum majus</i> * pl.	nasturtium
<i>Vaccinium virgatum</i> * pl. (in a pot)	blueberry
<i>Veronica arvensis</i> * (in lawn)	field speedwell
<i>Veronica persica</i> *	scrambling speedwell
<i>Vicia sativa</i> *	vetch
<i>Vicia</i> sp. * (sterile; one of 3 small spp. wild on Hauraki Gulf islands)	vetch
<i>Viola odorata</i> * +pl.	violet
<i>Vitex lucens</i> pl. (>8 lawn trees)	pūriri
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> * pl.	grape

Angiosperms – Monocotyledons (17 + 23)

<i>Agapanthus praecox</i> * +pl.	agapanthus
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> *	sweet vernal
<i>Arthropodium bifurcatum</i> ** +pl.	northern rengarenga
<i>Arthropodium cirratum</i> +pl.	rengarenga
<i>Astelia banksii</i>	coastal astelia

<i>Astelia hastata</i>	tank lily	<i>Kniphofia uvaria</i> * pl.	red-hot poker
<i>Axonopus fissifolius</i> *	carpet grass	<i>Liriope muscari</i> * pl.	lilyturf
<i>Canna</i> cv. * pl.	Indian shot	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i> * pl.	spiny-head mat-rush
<i>Carex flagellifera</i>	trip-me-up	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	meadow rice grass
<i>Carex inversa</i> (in lawn)	creeping lawn sedge	<i>Musa</i> cv. * pl.	banana
<i>Carex virgata</i> ** pl. (in garden)	swamp sedge	<i>Narcissus</i> sp./cv. * pl. (plants in lines; flowers not seen)	daffodil/jonquil
<i>Clivia miniata</i> * pl.	clivia	<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>	basket grass
<i>Cordyline australis</i>	tī, cabbage tree	<i>Phormium cookianum</i> ** pl.	mountain flax
<i>Cordyline ?pumilio</i> **	dwarf cabbage tree	<i>Phormium</i> cvs. ** pl.	flax
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> *	pampas grass	<i>Phormium tenax</i> +pl.	flax/harakeke
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> *	Indian doab	<i>Poa annua</i> *	annual meadow-grass
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i> *	cocksfoot	<i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i> pl.?	nikau
<i>Dietes grandiflora</i> * +pl.	fairy iris	<i>Rytidosperma racemosum</i> *	danthonia
<i>Ehrharta erecta</i> *	veldt grass	<i>Strelizia reginae</i> * pl.	bird of paradise
<i>Ficinia nodosa</i>	knobby club sedge	<i>Sporobolus africanus</i> *	ratstail
<i>Gahnia lacera</i>	bamboo sedge	<i>Watsonia</i> cv. * pl.	watsonia
<i>Iris foetidissima</i> *	stinking iris	<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i> cv. Green Goddess * pl.	Green goddess arum lily
<i>Iris</i> cv. * pl. (garden)	iris		

Appendix 2. List of birds (* = exotic species)

Blue penguin (footprints in sand by wharf)	NZ dotterel (1 pair)	Grey warbler / riroriro
Gannet / tākapu (close to island)	Black-backed gull	Song thrush *
Pied shag	NZ pigeon / kererū (Fig. 13, p.5)	Tui
Weka (×1, Leslie Holmes pers. comm.).	NZ kingfisher / kotare	House sparrow *
Variable oystercatcher (3 pairs)	Welcome swallow	Chaffinch *
Spur-winged plover	Silvereye / tauhou	Australian magpie *

Christmas pot-luck picnic at the Warkworth & Districts Museum and Parry Kauri Park, 3 December 2022

Maureen Young

Participants: Ewen Cameron, Jenny Chamberlain, Helen Cogle, Geoff & Bev Davidson, Neil Davies, Frances Duff, Leslie Haines, Kristy Hall & baby Evelyn, John Millett, Peter Moosberger, Helen Preston Jones, Juliet Richmond, Doug Shaw, Bec Stanley, Cheryl Taylor, Alison Wesley, Maureen Young (leader) (Fig. 1).

Summer decided to put in a long-awaited appearance for our Auckland Botanical Society (ABS) annual Christmas luncheon, this time at Warkworth. The local museum fitted our criteria of having a good kitchen and somewhere comfortable to eat, in this case at picnic tables under the roofed veranda, and that other necessity, some interesting botany nearby, as the museum is situated in the grounds of Parry Kauri Park.