

Matawai Conservation Area field trip

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Eight Rotorua BotSoc members gathered in Opotiki on Saturday night, and early the next morning of 3rd October 2021 set off up the Waioeka Gorge for Matawai Conservation Area. Weather was good – sunny with almost no wind, but the air was still a little chilly at our destination (around 600 m elevation) and an extra layer was required, along with beanies for a couple of members!

Matawai Conservation Area is a large, forested DOC reserve on Te Wera Road in the very head of the Motu River. The reserve is relatively flat along the north-west road frontage side, while rising at the south of the forest to the main peak, “Dome”, at just over 1000 metres. There are two main access points from the road – a track in to the Gisborne SAR lodge, and an old “Quarry track” which winds its way for several kilometres through the heart of the conservation area towards the peak at the south. There is also a roadside area of *Carex secta* swamp. Each of these three areas have had botanical lists compiled many years ago.



Red beech trees over a tawari subcanopy with *Dicksonia lanata* covering the understorey.

Photo: Paul Cashmore

Mistletoes have been recorded in the past from Matawai CA, including the sighting of a large *Peraxilla colensoi* (At Risk – Declining) (de Lange *et al.* 2018) near the lodge track from 1997, with an accompanying sketch map but no GPS location.

We did not have time to access the more remote southern part of the CA and decided to focus our efforts on the Lodge track area, keeping a good lookout for mistletoes, and if time allowed, finish the day near the road in the *Carex secta* swamp.

The Lodge track crosses about 50 metres of rough pasture, *Carex secta*, and *Carex geminata* interspersed with scattered shrubby trees (*Elaeocarpus hookerianus*, *Coprosma dumosa*) before entering the forest. Once into the bush silver beech (*Lophozonia menziesii*) dominates the canopy, along with some large red beech (*Fuscopora fusca*). Much of the reserve was historically logged for beech in the mid-20th century, so while there appear to be large old beech trees near the track in other parts of the reserve most trees appear to be somewhat younger with large beech specimens less common (Paul Cashmore *pers. comm.*).

The subcanopy in the forest comprised mostly tawari (*Ixerba brexioides*), while scattered podocarps (rimu, matai and miro) of varying heights were also present. *Dicksonia fibrosa* was common, scattered throughout.

After botanising only the first 70 metres or so from the bush edge Paul spotted a mistletoe high in a silver beech tree at NZTM 1988289 5736190, about 30 metres off to the left of the track. After examination by numerous eyes and several pairs of binoculars this was determined to be *Peraxilla colensoi*, a large specimen, approx. 3.0 x 3.0 metres. It appeared to be in reasonably good condition, and we were very encouraged.

We continued slowly on towards the hut, recording species. *Leucopogon fasciculatus* and *Coprosma dumosa* were common shrubs, while ground cover was dominated by *Dicksonia lanata*, *Astelia fragrans*, and scattered crown fern (*Blechnum discolor*) and bush rice grass (*Microlaena avenacea*). We saw *Alseuosmia pusilla* (starting to flower) and although ground orchids were very scarce *Earina mucronata*, *E. autumnalis*, and *Dendrobium cunninghamii* were all sighted above.

Hymenophyllum species present included *H. bivalve*, *H. pulcherrimum*, *H. rarum*, *H. multifidum*, *H. flabellatum*, and *H. sanguinolentum*. As we progressed closer to the SAR Lodge the canopy became more red beech-dominant. We passed several very old and rotted sawn red beech stumps alongside the track, all of which were cut high, above the flared buttresses. Notched steps were still visible high on the stumps.



Peraxilla colensoi on silver beech at Matawai. Photo: Paul Cashmore

A little over half-way in to the Lodge, Paul spotted a second mistletoe, this time *Peraxilla tetrapetala* (At Risk -Declining) (de Lange *et.al* 2018) on a red beech at NZTM 1988578 5736065, around 10 metres off the track to the left. This is about 50 metres before the track makes a gentle turn to the right. The plant was a smaller specimen, around 1.5 x 1.0 metres and was in the same general area as the original 1997 *P. colensoi* sighting. Once again, while showing evidence of possum browse damage it still appeared to be in reasonable condition.

Continuing on we eventually arrived at the locked Lodge, and stopped there to eat a late lunch in the sun. After lunch we quietly made our way back to the vehicles, recording a handful of species missed on our way in, and keeping a lookout for any further mistletoe plants. While we didn't spot any more, we ended the day feeling that the area is certainly worth a more widespread mistletoe survey. This is covered in a separate article in this issue (see Cashmore, p. 12-17.)

References

- Cashmore, P. 2022. Motu Road and Matawai field trip follow-up mistletoe surveys. *Rotorua Botanical Society Newsletter* 78: 12-17.
- de Lange P.J., Rolfe J.R., Barkla J.W., Courtney S.P., Champion P.D., Perrie L.R., Beadel S.M., Ford K.A., Breitwiser I., Schönberger I., Hindmarsh-Walls R., Heenan P.B., and Ladley K. 2018: Conservation status of New Zealand indigenous vascular plants, 2017. *New Zealand Threat Classification Series* 22. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 82 p.

Matawai Conservation Area - Lodge Track forest species list

G Jane, JFF Hobbs, P Cashmore

Date: 05-01-2011; 3.10.21

Map: BF41 Grid Ref: 1988492 5735763

Key: x = on earlier list & seen October 2021

1 = addition to list October 2021

* = exotic or naturalised species

Psilopsids, Lycopods & Quillworts

1 *Lycopodium volubile* waewae-koukou; climbing clubmoss

Ferns

x	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>	hen and chickens fern; moku
x	<i>Asplenium flaccidum</i>	hanging spleenwort; makawe
x	<i>Asplenium polyodon</i>	sickle spleenwort; petako
x	<i>Blechnum chambersii</i>	nini; lance fern
x	<i>Blechnum discolor</i>	crown fern; piupiu; petipeti
x	<i>Blechnum fluviale</i>	kiwakiwa; kiwikiwi
x	<i>Blechnum minus</i>	swamp kiokio
x	<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>	kiokio
x	<i>Cyathea dealbata</i>	ponga; silver fern
x	<i>Cyathea smithii</i>	soft-leaved tree fern; katote
x	<i>Dicksonia fibrosa</i>	wheki-ponga; kuripaka
x	<i>Dicksonia lanata</i> subsp. <i>lanata</i>	tuokura; stumpy tree fern
1	<i>Dicksonia squarrosa</i>	wheki; harsh tree fern
x	<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	water fern
1	<i>Hymenophyllum bivalve</i>	
x	<i>Hymenophyllum flabellatum</i>	fan fern
x	<i>Hymenophyllum multifidum</i>	
1	<i>Hymenophyllum pulcherrimum</i>	
x	<i>Hymenophyllum rarum</i>	wire-stemmed filmy fern
x	<i>Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum</i>	blood-scented filmy fern
1	<i>Hypolepis ambigua</i>	
x	<i>Leptopteris hymenophylloides</i>	single crepe fern; heruheru
x	<i>Microsorium novae-zelandiae</i>	fragrant fern
x	<i>Microsorium pustulatum</i> subsp. <i>pustulatum</i>	hound's tongue; kowaowao
x	<i>Notogrammitis billardierei</i>	common strap fern
1	<i>Notogrammitis heterophylla</i>	
1	<i>Paesia scaberula</i>	scented fern; matata; ring fern
x	<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i>	gully fern; pakau; pakauharoha
1	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>	prickly shield fern; punui
1	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	bracken; rauaruhe
x	<i>Pyrrosia elaeagnifolia</i>	leather-leaf fern
x	<i>Rumohra adiantiformis</i>	butcher's fern
x	<i>Trichomanes venosum</i>	veined bristle fern

Gymnosperm trees and shrubs

x	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>	kahikatea, white pine
1	<i>Dacrydium cupressinum</i>	rimu, red pine

x	<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i>	miro; brown pine
x	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>	matai; black pine

Dicotyledonous trees and shrubs

x	<i>Alseuosmia pusilla</i>	karapapa; mountain honeysuckle
x	<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>	wineberry; makomako
1	<i>Beilschmiedia tawa</i>	tawa
1	<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>	rangiora; bushmans friend
x	<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	putaputaweta; marbleleaf
x	<i>Coprosma autumnalis</i>	raurekau; kanono; mamono
1	<i>Coprosma ×cunninghamii</i>	
x	<i>Coprosma dumosa</i>	
x	<i>Coprosma lucida</i>	karamu; shining karamu
x	<i>Coprosma propinqua</i> var. <i>propinqua</i>	mingimingi
1	<i>Coprosma propinqua</i> x <i>C. dumosa</i>	
1	<i>Coprosma rhamnoides</i>	thorny coprosma
x	<i>Coprosma tenuifolia</i>	wavy-leaved coprosma
x	<i>Elaeocarpus hookerianus</i>	pokaka
x	<i>Fuscospora fusca</i>	red beech
x	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	broadleaf; kapuka
x	<i>Helichrysum lanceolatum</i>	ninia
x	<i>Hoheria sexstylosa</i>	houhere
x	<i>Ixerba brexioides</i>	tawari
x	<i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i>	mingimingi; kaikaitau
x	<i>Lophozonia menziesii</i>	silver beech; tawhai
1	<i>Melicope simplex</i>	poataniwha
x	<i>Melicytus lanceolatus</i> var. <i>lancelolatus</i>	narrow-leaved mahoe; mahoe-wao
1	<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i> subsp. <i>ramiflorus</i>	mahoe
x	<i>Neomyrtus pedunculata</i>	rohutu
1	<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i>	white maire
x	<i>Olearia rani</i> var. <i>colorata</i>	heketara
x	<i>Pennantia corymbosa</i>	kaikomako
1	<i>Peraxilla colensoi</i>	korukoru; pirita
1	<i>Peraxilla tetrapetala</i>	red mistletoe; pirirangi
x	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	black matipo; kohuhu
1	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>	five finger; puhou; whaupaku
x	<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i>	lancewood; horoeke
x	<i>Pseudowintera axillaris</i>	horopito
x	<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i>	pepperwood; mountain horopito
x	<i>Raukahu anomalous</i>	whauwhaupaku
x	<i>Raukahu anomalous</i> x <i>R. simplex</i>	
x	<i>Raukahu simplex</i>	haumakoroa
x	<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	pate; patae; kotete
x	<i>Weinmannia racemosa</i>	kamahi; towai; tawhero

Dicotyledonous lianes and related trailing plants

x	<i>Clematis paniculata</i>	clematis; puawhananga
x	<i>Parsonsia capsularis</i> var. <i>capsularis</i>	small flowered jasmine; akakiore
1	<i>Parsonsia heterophylla</i>	maori jasmine; kaihu; kaiwhiria

x	<i>Rubus cissoides</i>	bush lawyer; tataramoa
1	<i>Rubus schmidelioides</i> var. <i>schmidelioides</i>	bush lawyer; tataramoa

Daisy-like herbs

1	* <i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
x	* <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Scotch thistle
x	* <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	ragwort
1	* <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	dandelion

Dicotyledonous herbs other than Daisies

x	<i>Acaena anserinifolia</i>	bidibid
x	* <i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>	starwort
1	<i>Cardamine dolichostyla</i>	
x	<i>Cardamine forsteri</i>	
x	* <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	foxglove
x	<i>Epilobium rotundifolium</i>	round-leaved willowherb
x	<i>Hydrocotyle heteromeria</i>	wax weed
1	<i>Hydrocotyle microphylla</i>	hydrocotyle
1	<i>Hydrocotyle novae-zeelandiae</i> var. <i>novae-zeelandiae</i>	common pennywort
x	* <i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lotus major
x	<i>Nertera villosa</i>	
1	* <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort; narrow-leaved plantain
1	* <i>Plantago major</i>	broad-leaved plantain
x	* <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	selfheal
x	<i>Ranunculus glabrifolius</i>	
x	* <i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
1	* <i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock
1	<i>Stellaria parviflora</i>	
1	* <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover
1	* <i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
x	<i>Urtica sykesii</i>	stinging nettle

Sedges

x	<i>Carex coriacea</i>	cutty grass; toetoe rautahi
x	<i>Carex dissita</i>	
1	<i>Carex geminata</i>	
x	<i>Carex horizontalis</i>	
x	<i>Carex megalepis</i>	
1	<i>Carex minor</i>	
x	<i>Carex solandri</i>	
x	<i>Carex uncinata</i>	watu
x	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>	spike rush
1	<i>Gahnia setifolia</i>	

Rushes and allied plants

1	<i>Juncus edgariae</i>	wiwi
1	* <i>Juncus effusus</i> var. <i>effusus</i>	soft rush
x	* <i>Juncus tenuis</i> subsp. <i>tenuis</i>	track rush

Grasses

x	*	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	browntop
1	*	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent
x	*	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	sweet vernal
x	*	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot
x	*	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
1	*	<i>Lolium arundinaceum</i>	
x		<i>Microlaena avenacea</i>	bush rice grass; oat grass
x		<i>Rytidosperma gracile</i>	forest fairy grass

Remaining Monocotyledonous herbs

x		<i>Astelia fragrans</i>	bushflax; kakaha
x		<i>Astelia microsperma</i>	
1		<i>Astelia solandri</i>	kowharawhara
x		<i>Dianella nigra</i>	blueberry; turutu

Orchids

1		<i>Corybas trilobus</i>	spider orchid
1		<i>Dendrobium cunninghamii</i>	winika; Christmas orchid
x		<i>Earina autumnalis</i>	Easter orchid; raupeka
1		<i>Earina mucronata</i>	peka-a-waka; spring earina