

M.V. COLVILLE'S TRIP TO LITTLE BARRIER, MOKOHINAU AND CUVIER ISLANDS

April 8th - 24th, 1969.

It all started when Graham Adams, the Wildlife Conservator for the Auckland District, offered me the chance of a fortnight on Little Barrier while he and David Gravatt, M.Sc., caught two pairs of Stitchbirds for Mount Bruce. David, having done his thesis on the feeding habits of the Honeyeaters of Little Barrier, knew the island well, after many visits spread over two years.

I jumped at the chance, having spent an enjoyable ten days on Hen Island in 1968, while a party of four men from Wildlife Branch of Internal Affairs caught saddlebacks for transfer to Cuvier and Fanal Islands.

Leaving Auckland by M.V. Colville (which is the Marine Department's Lighthouse Supply Ship, a Fairmile of 113.7 tons and 127 feet long, built during the second World War. Her average speed is 9 knots and her best is 13 knots.) at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 8th April, it took us until 11.30 a.m. the next day to reach Little Barrier, as landing by dinghy on the boulders would not have been possible that day. Tying up at the wharf at Mansion House Bay on Kawau Island, I went ashore and in an hour's walk, saw only eleven ferns;

Cyathea dealbata	Pteris tremula
Cyathea medullaris	Paesia scaberula
Elechnum capense	Polystichum richardii
Elechnum lanceolatum	Pyrrhosia serpens
Doodia media	Microsorium diversifolium
Adiantum hispidulum	

This island is overgrown with exotics - aloes, radiata and Norfolk pines and huge succulents.

We left at 6 a.m. on Wednesday 9th April. The weekend had been a bad time for pleasure craft and was still rough with strong south-west winds but the landing on Little Barrier was without incident.

The bunkhouse, used by students, scientists, Internal Affairs Wildlife Trainees etc., was my home for the first nine days after which I kept Betty Wisnesky company while her husband, John, the Marineland Ranger was away in Auckland.

Right outside their back door tuis and bellbirds feed from a trough full of syrup made from brown sugar and water, and were a constant delight.

Weather for the first day or two was changeable, but, doing at least one track each day, the number of fern species noted was large for the area. Only the dry, boulder-strewn creek-beds or the sharp ridges are suitable for walks, as the slopes are extremely steep.

The track to the summit of Mount Hauturu (2370 ft.) and on the summit of the Thumb gave a wide variety of ferns, from hard, dry conditions just above sea-level to boggy, continually dripping bush towards the summit, which more often than not is cloud-capped and has approximately half as much rainfall again as has the Ranger's house at sea-level.

Round the base of the slopes grew:-

Lastreopsis velutina, (under high leptospermum)
Adiantum diaphanum
Adiantum hispidulum
Asplenium lamprophyllum

On the open flats grew:-

Doodia media
Lastreopsis glabella
Pteris tremula
Hypolepis punctata
Hypolepis tenuifolia
Adiantum aethiopicum
Paesia scaberula
Pteridium esculentum

The Summit Track, being marked at each 100 ft., made recording of ferns interesting:-

- 150 ft. *Doodia Media*
Asplenium lucidum
Pyrosia serpens
Microsorium diversifolium
Asplenium flaccidum
- 300 ft. *Cyathea dealbata*
Asplenium falcatum
- 400 ft. *Lygodium articulatum*
Lindsaea trichomanoides
Lindsaea trichomanoides var lessonii
Grammitis
- 800 ft. *Blechnum capense*
Cardiomanes reniforme
- 1000 ft. *Mecodium australe*
Schizaea dichotoma
- 1200 ft. *Blechnum fraseri*
- 1300 ft. *Selenodesmium elongatum*
Leptopteris hymenophylloides
- 1400 ft. *Mecodium pulcherrimum*
Blechnum discolor

- 1600 ft. *Rumohra adiantiformis*
Cyathea medullaris
Cyathea smithii
Elechnum lanceolatum
Elechnum filiforme
Asplenium lamprophyllum
Asplenium bulbiferum
- 1700 ft. *Lastreopsis hispida*
- 1800 ft. *Elechnum nigrum*
Elechnum fluviatile

On the Thumb Summit were :-
Elechnum minus
Gleichenia cunninghamii

Filices noted on this climb were:-

Mecodium rarum
Mecodium dilatatum
Mecodium sanguinolentum
Mecodium villosum
Mecodium flexuosum
Mecodium australe
Mecodium pulcherrimum
Mecodium demissum
Mecodium flabellatum
Sphaerocionium lyallii
Sphaerocionium ferrugineum
Hymenophyllum revolutum
Hymenophyllum peltatum
Meringium bivalve
Polyphlebium venosum
Selenodesmium elongatum
Cardiomanes reniforme

The Wildlife men in their first two weeks on Little Barrier had not succeeded in capturing any Stitchbirds, which are not noisy birds and frequent the high canopy, but with the advent of bright weather, they achieved their goal in three days. These birds, put into an aviary, built by Graham Adams, were flown out on April 24th, all having fed happily in captivity on pears, tomatoes and a complan mixture.

The only fresh ferns noted over the rest of my two weeks' stay were:-

Linsaea linearis
Pteris comans
Elechnum lanceolatum with every frond-tip plumed most attractively

One plant of a yellow-flowered climbing *Metrosideros* was noted and a spray photographed in the aviary where the Stitchbird's yellow-splashed wing matched exactly.

On 22nd. April M.V. Colville called at Little Barrier (with the Correspondence Schools Inspector, Miss Woodward aboard) en route to Mokohinau Island to drop supplies and to Cuvier Island to land a lighthouse keeper and his family.

The first night was spent at anchor off Great Barrier Island and then up to Mokohinau Island where Miss Woodward required at least three hours with the pupils. Unloading took three and a half hours which I spent ashore. There was very little growth beyond Muehlenbeckia on the boulders, stunted Metrosideros, some Phormium tenax and the only ferns seen were some very hard, deeply cut, forms of :-

Asplenium flaccidum
Asplenium lucidum
Histiopteris incisa
Adiantum hispidulum
Adiantum aethiopicum
Doodia media
Pteris tremula
Cyathea medullaris growing in a hole, away from wind and cows.
 1 plant only of *Blechnum banksii*.

The find of the day was a good patch, estimated at perhaps 50 plants, of Blechnum durum. This, being listed as confined to the South Island, was of interest.

Feed for the milking cows being very sparse, most ferns are chewed off, but this patch of Blechnum durum was fortunately inaccessible to them, below overhanging rocks about fifty yards from the shore.

As it was still too rough for Cuvier Island we went south to Shoal Bay on the west side of Great Barrier Island where the Colville tied up overnight.

An hour's walk before dark along the road showed:-

<i>Doodia media</i>	<i>Paesia scaberula</i>
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	<i>Microsorium diversifolium</i>
<i>Asplenium lucidum</i>	<i>Cyathea medullaris</i>
<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i>	<i>Blechnum capense</i>
<i>Adiantum Aethiopicum</i>	<i>Blechnum lanceolatum</i>

Darkness and rain made it impossible to explore the hillsides above the road.

Overnight there were strong winds and heavy rain, but we were off again at 5.30 a.m. hoping to land the family on Cuvier Island. By 8 o'clock the seas were calmer, there was less wind, so stores and family were put ashore without incident, and Miss Woodward had an hour ashore with pupils.

Now the route was almost direct to Auckland, apart from a call at Tiri-tiri to drop off a sheep-dog.

A most interesting and satisfying sixteen days, from which I returned very fit after the stiff climbs and plenty of boulder-hopping when exploring the coast-line and various creek-beds.

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MURIWAI LAKE

----- Mrs. P. Hynes.

Listed below are three plants which have been recently recorded from Muriwai Lake, South Kaipara.

On the 1968 November outing to this lake I found a wee sedgy plant which was quite new to me. A further visit was made a few weeks later in the company of Mr. V.J. Cook. The rainfall during the intervening period had been rather heavy so that the lake level had changed but little. After a long search, more plants were located in somewhat deeper water and this time the specimens were much more robust. These have been identified as Bycreus sanguinolentus (Vahl.) Nees. Botany Division of the D.S.I.R. informs me that this plant has been recorded from two other places in Northland.

Another interesting find was Gnaphalium candidissimum Lam., a native of Cape Province, S. Africa. This was first recorded as growing in New Zealand when it was collected in 1961 from the shore of Lake Waiparera, just north of Kaitaia. At this lake it was growing in seepage, whereas at Muriwai Lake it was half submerged and this evidence could show that it has a preference for wet feet. It is a dainty little plant. The stems and leaves are clad in dense white tomentum and amongst the woolly heads there is a peep of colour, for only the tips of the phyllaries are white, the lower two-thirds being magenta. In comparison, our native G. luteo-album has brown phyllaries giving it a rather drab appearance.

In recent years Mr. Warren noted one of the liverworts, Ricciolepis sp. growing in profusion on the same lake but on our November visit there was no sign of it. This is a very small water plant and quite unattractive to the layman but records of its distribution are always desirable.

I strongly support the suggestion made by Miss Davis in the last Newsletter that another visit to Muriwai Lake, at a different time of the year, would be most profitable. Although the lake is land-locked the water table changes throughout the year so that the plant life is not static, also the number of wild-fowl which visit the area must add to the plant species, all of which should give an impetus for further search.

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^TThis article refers to the Helensville Lakes outing 16.11.68