

Waikato Section Notes :

Maratoto Excursion

Waikato Section recently held a day excursion to Maratoto near Paeroa. Members arrived in eighteen cars which forded the Hikutaia River and parked beneath a bush-covered hill. The party had an early lunch, after which Mr. A. S. Gray gave a brief history of the area. The members then sorted themselves into three groups, one to go to the top of the range, another to study geology around the mine and the third to botanise in the vicinity of the cars.

The summit party found the track which went over the range to Whangamata almost up to vehicle standard. They saw white flowers on the hinau trees in great profusion. *Senecio kirki* a plant which often grows as an epiphyte or perching plant was also in flower; again the flowers were white, but these were larger, being up to 2in. in diameter. T. F. Cheeseman in his *Manual of the New Zealand Flora* described them as "A very remarkable and beautiful species. The flower heads are often so abundantly produced as to conceal the leaves, the multitude of snow-white rays then rendering the plant conspicuous from afar." Several pigeons were seen and many tuis were seen and heard. Pipits, silvereyes, and fantails were also observed. The whole area was a cut-over kauri forest and although many kauri trees were to be found there were no forest giants amongst them.

The group which visited Maratoto mine found that it was still being worked by a solitary miner. The geologists in the party studied the rock formation and found quartz, which is an indication that gold might be found. They also saw *Gaultheria* plants covered in white berries and an occasional one with bright pink berries. The 18-inch high plants of the orchid *Thelymitra longifolia* were flowering fairly abundantly, members seeing flowers ranging from bright blue through shades of pink and white.

The members that remained near the river found taurepo (*Rhabdothamnus solandri*) in flower by the water's edge. This small shrub bears bright orange blossoms. The largest trees seen were tawa. Two smaller trees tawhero (*Weinmannia sylvicola*) and *Pseu-*

dopanax discolor were numerous; these trees are rarely found in the Waikato area but are plentiful from Auckland and Thames northwards. The *P. discolor* has leaves of an attractive shade of bronze. Several other plants of special interest to members were found including the perennial herb *Cladium sinclairii* and the orchid *Orthoceras strictum*, both of which were in flower. The total number of plants seen in the area was 130.



Tapuaenuku Scenic Reserve

An area of 5,500 acres in the Inland Kaikoura Range has been established as the Tapuaenuku Scenic Reserve according to an announcement by the Minister of Lands (Hon. R. G. Gerard). It will comprise all the land above 6,500ft. surrounding Tapuaenuku (9,465ft.), Mt. Alarm (9,400ft.) and Mitre Peak (8,600ft.) at the northern end of the range.

The area is popular with mountaineers and trampers, particularly from Marlborough and Wellington, and reservation will give the public free right of access. The reserve has legal access from Blenheim through the Awatere valley and up the Hodder River.

While the proposed reserve is mostly bare rock and scree it is interspersed with small mountain shrubs and odd patches of tussock. Reservation of the area has been made possible by the cooperation of local landowners, said Mr. Gerard. Part of the new reserve was previously vacant Crown land, some was included in pastoral licences, and the rest held under freehold title. The landowners have willingly made the land available, said the Minister.

Mt. Tapuaenuku is the highest mountain in New Zealand outside the Southern Alps and a winter ascent of it is not recorded until 1941. The precipitous peak of Mt. Alarm was not climbed until 1928.

The editor regrets that he carelessly credited to the National Publicity Studios the fine photo of bellbirds feeding from a jug. This photo, which appeared on page 19 of the November 1962 issue of *Forest and Bird*, should have been credited to Mr. R. H. Blanshard, who is caretaker of the Little Barrier Island sanctuary and a well known authority on wildlife.