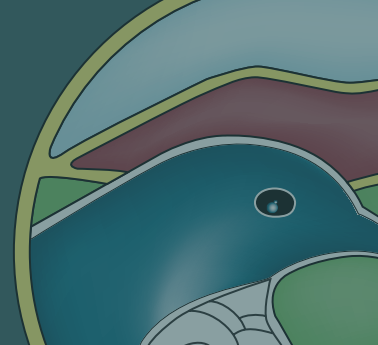




# Annual Report from the **Waikato Biodiversity Forum** 2014/15



## Introduction

The Waikato Biodiversity Forum has been operating for twelve years and has a steady membership of approximately 450. The membership is comprised of research and management agencies, iwi groups, private landowners, community groups and individuals who work towards improving indigenous biodiversity in the Waikato region. The Forum believes that the combined synergies of people working together provide a valuable contribution to improving biodiversity across the region. The Forum speaks on behalf of biodiversity. However it does not necessarily reflect the views of all Forum members on every biodiversity issue.

The Forum operates independently of its constituent organisations. It is run by a part-time coordinator who receives support and guidance from a Focus Group. The Forum's work includes:

- encouraging agencies and groups to network, share ideas and work together to protect and enhance biodiversity
- advocating for the development of sound policy to enhance biodiversity protection at national, regional and local levels
- organising forums to discuss biodiversity issues, and offer support and recommendations in relation to local projects
- organising workshops for community groups on a variety of topics such as pest management
- raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity through the media, the Forum's website, and Facebook and presentations to groups
- acting as a referral agency for biodiversity information
- providing support to community initiatives which protect and enhance biodiversity.

## Acknowledgements

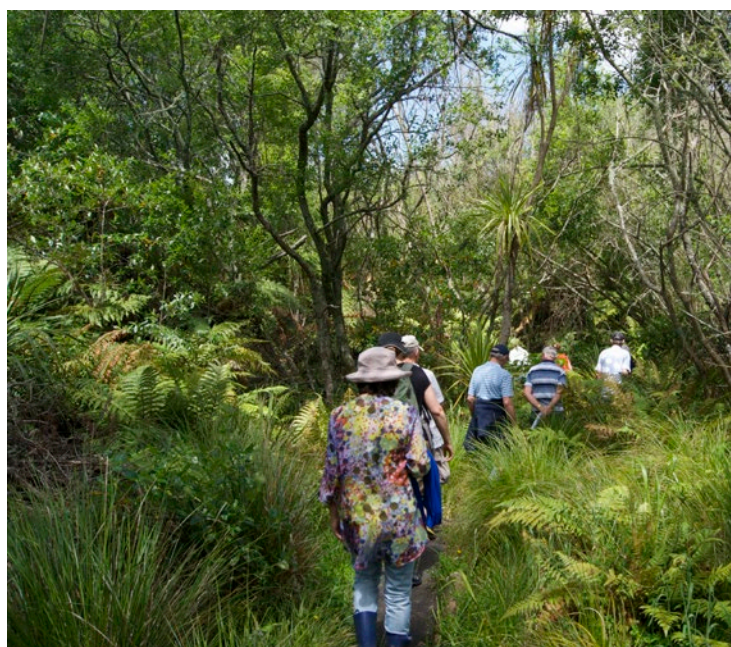
The Waikato Biodiversity Forum would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations for their financial support: Waikato Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Thames Coromandel District Council, Waikato District Council, Hamilton City Council, Waipa District Council and South Waikato District Council.

The Forum would like to thank the Focus Group members for their support and contribution to the work of the coordinator's role.

Finally the Forum would like to thank the staff from Forum member organisations and community groups for their contribution and expertise during Forum events, workshops and the on-going exchange of information with the public and other Forum members. This collective expertise makes the operation of the Forum a success and is valued by Forum members and the public.

## Waikato Biodiversity Forum events

The first Forum of the year was held in Hamilton City with an urban ecology focus. It explored "What do we know? and Where to from here for biodiversity in Hamilton City?". The day began with people gathering for field trips at Seeley's Gully, Mangaiti Gully and a private gully with a QEII covenant. They viewed and discussed the restoration work being carried out at these sites. On returning to the hall the participants were invited to provide their insight into the inspiration they draw upon for their restoration work, the challenges of the work and what they have learned so far about urban restoration that could be useful to others. Around 70 people attended across the day with some coming after work. Participants heard speakers on a variety of topics including urban ecology, wildlife connections in and around Cambridge, forest bird restoration in Hamilton City, restoring canopy flora, and kereru within fragmented urban landscapes. The participants listed "Bright Ideas" for Hamilton City which ranged from getting more kereru back in the city, to more strategic planting for year-round biodiversity, especially food sources for birds. Other suggestions included pest control, educating Council staff about planting for biodiversity such as more trees for birds, 500 green areas could be connected together to create the world's first urban national park, practical observations to bring back nature to own backyard and considering the effect of insecticides on invertebrates. It was a rewarding and inspiring day together to support and further conservation work in and around Hamilton City.



Field trip Hamilton Biodiversity Forum event

The second Forum event was held at Ruakuri Bush Reserve for 90 year 10 students from Otorohanga College, Te Kuiti High School, Piopio College and Te Wharekura o Maniapoto. Taura (students) from participating schools contributed to the planning of the day and workstations. Students, teachers, workstation facilitators, tūākana (university student mentors/assistants) and Kaiāwhina were welcomed by mana whenua with a pōwhiri. Auntie Miria Tauariki responded to the call and led the procession of manuwhiri under the waharoa and along the footpath to the picnic area. Uncle Barney Anderson spoke on behalf of manuwhiri acknowledging all present, and Manawa Huirama from the University of Waikato laid down a koha of a native plant for Tokikapu Marae. After morning tea it was time for the groups to start rotating around the eight workstations. These workstations included: viewing animals living in streams and the characteristics of a healthy stream, learning about the sediment affecting the stream and caves and smothering the food source of the glow worms, learning about kererū, native bats and weta, hunting for terrestrial invertebrates in the understorey and leaf litter of the bush, learning about the impacts of tourism on glow worms and exploring the Aranui Cave, learning about pest control for stoats, possums and rats, and learning about the yearly activity of bees. Finally students learnt about aspects of rongoa Māori which touched on whakapapa, wairuatanga, health and safety and identification of plants.



Workstations Maniapoto Youth Biodiversity Forum

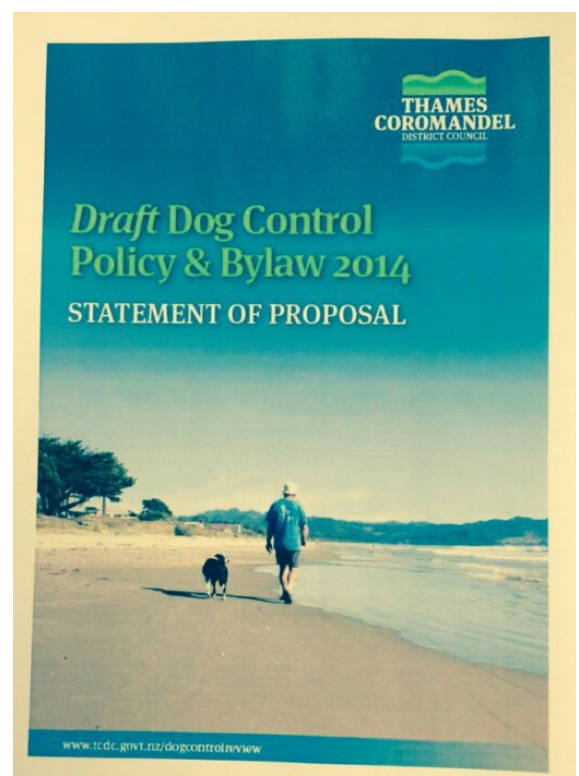
## Networking and 0800 BIODIV

The Forum members received three newsletters to inform them of biodiversity related information. The Forum network continues to provide a link for community group members and management agencies through dissemination of information and communication, with individual members to answer queries or refer them to other sources of information. There is now a resource person register being maintained so that Forum members can be put in touch with the right person for advice and assistance.

The Forum coordinator operates the 0800 BIODIV line and responds or refers enquiries to an appropriate person. The coordinator responded to 57 enquiries, mainly from Forum members, through the 0800 line and the website. The enquiries continue to range from funding information, weed and animal pest management, details of community group projects, volunteering on projects and planting information.

## Advocacy

The Forum provided written submissions and oral presentations on six draft Long Term Plans. These included South Waikato District Council, Waipa District Council, Thames Coromandel District Council, Waikato District Council, Waikato Regional Council and Hamilton City Council. The oral submission was an opportunity to thank the Councils for their contribution to the Forum, and highlight the work the Forum had undertaken in their districts and across the region. A written submission and oral presentation was also made on the Thames Coromandel District Council draft Dog Bylaws. This submission focused on the protection of kiwi and shore birds on the Coromandel Peninsula. The coordinator represented the Forum on the Advisory Committee for Regional Environment (ACRE) to provide input on biodiversity protection and enhancement through ACRE's advocacy work.



Thames Coromandel District Council Dog Bylaw review



## Community Groups Database

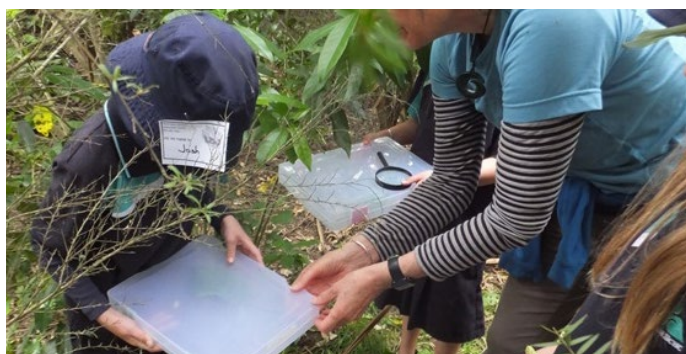
The Forum maintains a database and map of community group projects, which highlights the contribution that these groups make to biodiversity protection and enhancement across the region. The database is continuing to be updated in relation to being hosted by the Nature Space website. Nature Space is a website designed to help groups and individuals learn more about ecological restoration processes and projects in NZ. It is also a great site to profile community groups. The number of groups working across the Waikato region on the Forum's database is 149 groups working on 164 project sites.

## Workshops

The Forum coordinator worked with the Coromandel Kiwis for Kiwi Collective to provide a workshop to community group members and landowners on the Coromandel Peninsula. The topics included recent research on the efficacy of traps, use of a colycalciferol mix that is effective for both rats and possums, recent research on toxins, stoat behaviour, recently improved Kamate traps, innovative alterations to traps in use at Makakirau Estate, and a bait station recording system. The coordinator also worked with the Senior Environmental Project Manager from Maniapoto Maori Trust Board to develop a funding workshop for groups. An animal and plant pest workshop was also planned for the Waikato, but due to low numbers enrolling it will be offered next year.

## Events

The Forum coordinator assisted at Fieldays by talking with children and adults in the children's corner of the Department of Conservation display area with Waikato Tainui staff. The children played interactive predator related games on iPads. There were opportunities to talk with the children and their parents about endangered species protection. In September the Hamilton Zoo hosted a conservation week event at Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park. The coordinator and other Forum members ran an invertebrate activity for 125 primary school children who attended the event. In June another invertebrate activity was provided for a Waipa Earth Champions day attended by 40 students from Waipa schools. These are popular activities and the students really enjoy the opportunity to go bush, looking for insects and identifying them using cards and books. The Forum coordinator worked with Friends of Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve to offer a Conservation Week activity at the reserve. It involved a night walk to view the invertebrates in the bush at night, detecting bats in the reserve and looking at the night sky through a large telescope.



Insect activity at Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park –Zoo schools event

## Support for Community/Agency initiatives

The Forum coordinator has assisted with the establishment of the Coromandel Kiwis for Kiwi Collective. This work has involved supporting the collective coordinator in her role, facilitating parts of a workshop for kiwi care groups, and assisting with the development of the Collective's priorities. The Kauri 2000 Trust on the Coromandel has also been supported in its establishment of the Kauri Dieback coordinator role and the Kauri Dieback Forum. In April the Forum coordinator was invited to be a member of the Mokaihaha Kokako Recovery Project which is based near Tokoroa. This working group will be working to raise community awareness of the kokako and the project, and gain support from interested people and groups in the Tokoroa and wider area.

Members of the Focus Group visited two reserves in the Waipa and Waikato districts to find sites which may benefit from some Forum assistance. A site in the Waikato district will have a weed working bee take place to improve the entrance of the reserve.



Fieldays Childrens Corner –Applying an insect “tattoo”

## Summary

In summary the Forum has continued to involve itself in advocacy, networking and advice to organisations and groups across the region. It has collaborated with other organisations and groups to support biodiversity work, and worked with other organisations to provide events such as the Maniapoto Youth Biodiversity Forum and the workshop on the Coromandel. The Forum acknowledges and commends the work that agencies, community groups and individuals carry out to improve biodiversity. The Forum would also like to thank the Focus Group members for their support and contribution to the work of the coordinator.

Moira Cursey, Coordinator, Waikato Biodiversity Forum



Animal Pest Management workshop Kuaotunu



Invertebrate activity Maniapoto Youth Biodiversity Forum



Animal pest management workshop

