



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

Autumn 2019 Number 61

Kia ora tātou,

An update on some of the work undertaken over the past three months:

Waikato

- Co-organisation of Waiwhakareke forum event with UOW, to take place on **May 24th**
- Co-organisation of lizard workshop with Maungatautari Mountain Sanctuary, to take place on **April 16th**
- Co-organised and hosted a Bio-control workshop with Landcare Research, WRC and WDC
- Responded to 24 enquiries from the email and 0800 BIO DIV service
- Chaired biodiversity focus group meetings
- Updated the bio-forum email blog, website and facebook

Karioi Project creating pathways for youth

Karioi Maunga ki te Moana's pilot programme at Raglan Area School is creating employment pathways and inspiring young conservationists.

Dayton Keremeta started the NCEA Manaaki Ao pilot programme as a Year 12 student graduating the course as a Year 13 last year, and this year he joined the Karioi Project team as a paid employee.

Being able to combine being outdoors with academic studies was the inspiration behind joining the pilot for Dayton and he says the enormity of the predator problem was a real eye-opener.

"Being able to work outdoors and getting rid of the pests is a good feeling."

With a Level 3 NCEA pass on all his subjects, he's got his eyes set on university studies, but in the meantime Dayton's loving going bush

and playing his part in eradicating stoats, rats and feral cats around Whaingaroa.

Last year, all of the 12 students in the programme passed, which is designed to help students to grow in confidence, leadership and develop work-ready skills.

Manaaki Ao delivers practical, hands-on activities in challenging physical environments and with students working towards both NCEA Unit and Achievement Standards at Level 2 and 3.

Karioi Project tutors Annie Lorenzen, Duncan Mackay and Kristel van Houte, working alongside Raglan Area School teacher Angela Prain, introduce the students to a variety of local environmental issues and human impacts, and teams of students develop sustainable actions in response to these issues.

“Our vision is that through the project young people will have an enhanced curiosity in the natural world and will develop a love for nature – and that this will motivate them to take action in caring for the environment and inspire and equip them to engage in environmental science study and work in their future lives or careers,” Kristel says.

Well on the way to making a local environmental impact, the students’ solutions to pest control have also translated to commercial initiatives, with the Year 12 students setting up and managing a predator trapline at Xtreme Zero Waste.

“They now pay us for pest control because they reckon we can do a better job than previous contractors,” Duncan says.

Working collectively with partner organisations like Te Iwi Tahī Pest and Papa Taiao (the national partner organisation that provides NCEA accreditation) has been a strength of this project and in all aspects of Karioi’s conservation and education work, project manager Kristel says.

“For us it’s more than just about predator control or conservation even. It’s about growing the next generation of kaitiaki. And it’s about taking people and our community on a journey, exploring how everything we do is interconnected and impacts on each other, and this applies to humanity as well as our environment, together we can explore, restore and reconnect. There’s this great saying – When you tug on a single thread in nature...you’ll find it attached to the rest of the world,” she says.

Janine Jackson



Dayton at work checking traps on the Maunga

Carnivorous plant in our district

We have someone who is releasing this invasive introduced carnivorous plant in our District (Butterwort). We had one release site near Horopito next to the highway, and have just found another site on the Taranaki Falls Track.

Apparently carnivorous plant enthusiasts can get a bit “over-enthused” and are trying to get butterwort established. They will be bringing it into the country illegally and will be trying to establish a wild population. Butterwort is highly invasive and poses a threat to our wetlands in Tongariro National Park.

Could you please keep a look out for it when you are out and about. If you think you see it, please take photos and send to me/Dan/Lois.

On the following page are some pics. It is unlikely you will see it when it is flowering, so

look out for the bright leaves. Potential sites are accessible damp areas next to tracks or roads.

Ngā mihi, Alison Beath, Senior ranger (Biodiversity) - Kaitiaki Matua (Kanorau Koiora), Department of Conservation



The Friends of Mangaonua Esplanade in Silverdale

The Silverdale branch of the Mangaonua gully is a branch of the much larger Mangaonua gully system that starts at Pukemoremore and flows all the way in to Hamilton.

At the end of 2017 Gerard Kelly, the Hamilton city council community planting coordinator, asked George Lusty to initiate a care group to remove weeds from the gully in order to allow native plants to grow. Some planting has also been done in order to support the work that has already been done by Ngāti Hauā Mahi Trust.

This is an important project because by having more native trees we will be able to bring more native birds such as tūi and kererū back into the city.

The Manga Ō entrance is at the end of Silverdale Road, just before it joins Morrinsville

Road. It has a good track which has been laid by Ngāti Hauā Mahi Trust, which connects to lots of pre-existing native trees and new plantings.

George Lusty said that it is good to do weeding and planting because you get to have fun, get some natural exercise and you are doing good deeds at the same time.

Currently a small group of people come on Thursday mornings 9am to 12 noon. You are welcome to come and help if you are available.

If you are interested please contact George Lusty on georgelusty@outlook.co.nz or 027 210 3884



Peter Dornauf and George Lusty in the Mangaonua gully in Silverdale. Photo: Keri Thompson

Tui activity in Mangaiti Gully, Hamilton

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Trust has an extensive rat and possum eradication programme covering the whole 30 hectares of the gully system. The roll out of this programme was started in 2016 and will be completed in the winter of 2019.

Since 2010, when our restoration Trust started, there has been a gradual increase in Tui sightings particularly during the winter months.

This is in line with the growth in Tui numbers in Hamilton City, primarily due to the success of the Halo programme. However, there was no evidence of breeding in Mangaiti until 2017. The increase in successful breeding runs directly parallel with the roll out of the pest eradication programme. In the 2017 / 18 season there was a sighting reported of a juvenile Tui up the Gordonton Road end, and one possible sighting around our depot.

However by the 2018 / 19 season things changed dramatically. In the winter prior to the breeding season, a spike in Tui numbers were seen. Up to 18 were counted in one set of Taiwanese Cherry trees (yes we don't like these trees either!). This was followed by an explosion in sightings of Tui juveniles over the entire 30 hectare gully system in December to February.

Rex Bushell, Mangaiti Gully Restoration Trust,
021-237-3857,
<http://gullyrestoration.blogspot.co.nz>

Pokaiwhenua Streamcare Group - Japanese Walnuts

The Pokaiwhenua River is well looked-after by many who live along its banks – good effluent systems, riparian areas fenced and planted in native trees, weed and pest control. These measures all help deal with agricultural run-off, prevent erosion, and provide a habitat for native species, ensuring the health of the river.

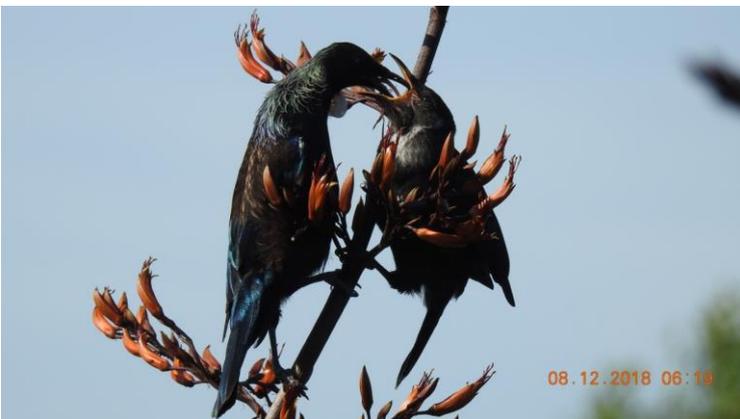
There is however one weed that is getting out of control. It is the Japanese walnut - *Juglans ailantifolia*. It becomes a large, deciduous tree that prevents other species from growing because of its wide crown and provides huge quantities of choice food for rats. The seeds are carried by rats and also float down the river all along the Pokaiwhenua valley. This walnut is a hugely invasive species. Eventually there will be a forest of walnuts all along the banks of the Pokaiwhenua – as well as along our roads. You can see this happening here and it has already happened in other places.

This tree is on the list of pest plants with the Regional Council in the category of environmental threat and could well be upgraded.

Large trees need to be cut down and treated with poison. Alternatively they can be chemically ringbarked with a product like X-Tree Basal. Physical ringbarking could be tried if you do not wish to use poison. Removing trees when they are small is definitely a stitch in time.

We live in such a beautiful place. Let's keep it that way. We are appealing to you all to help eradicate this pest plant.

Lesley Fitzgerald and Jenny Oliphant ph 07 883 5763 jenandles@slingshot.co.nz



Adult tui feeding juvenile - photo by Owen Cole



Japanese walnut seedlings growing along the Pokaiwhenua river

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

We completed our pest control at Mt Pirongia and Okahukura this season with 5.8% residual index at Pirongia and a zero index for Okahukura. Volunteer support has been excellent. Our kokako survey for Mt Pirongia located over 30 of the 45 birds, with roughly half in our 1,000ha pest control area and half outside. Four nests were monitored with all successfully fledging chicks and further nests active. A male-male couple have caused some interest in the media as has our road sign: Slow for Kokako.

Mustelids and feral cats have been identified as additional threats to our kokako, and Waipa District Council have approved \$12,000 towards a mustelid trapping programme, which we really appreciate. We are looking at working with our community on how to manage feral cats.

Dactylanthus taylorii monitoring was completed over the summer on Mt Pirongia.

New volunteers are always welcome; please contact our volunteer co-ordinator Dianne June on djune@xtra.co.nz.



Whakaupoko Landcare Hubs

This has progressed better than expected with a high level of interest and uptake. We have had hub days in Clevedon & Hunua with supporting Friends of Te Wairoa. Close to 100 people attended these events. Also at Joy Plants, Pukekohe East, with just promotion via the A & P Show and email we had close to 40 people. Tomorrow (Saturday) there will be another Hub at Waiuku and in 2 weeks time one at Tuakau. Apart from Tuakau these have been funded by Akld Council and FLB to the tune of \$25,000 to see us through to the end of June with a review process in April to prepare for beyond June. After Waiuku the funds will almost all be used up with uptake more than expected.

The funds are primarily for Traps, (Trapinator, Timms and rat traps), Bait stations, (Pied Piper & Philproof), Bait, (mainly Pest Off with some rat block baits) and quite a few DOC 200's in Hunua and Clevedon where Willow was keen to see at least some mustelid control capability. Some lures including possum dough for the Trapinators and dried rabbit for the DOC 200's and easy to use squeeze tube paste as a

general rat and possum lure. Also some Chew cards. As well as materials we have built in some cost recovery with this model to take account of time spent ordering and assembling materials, time & travel on the day and some follow up education. This is 10% of the material cost as an admin fee and \$350 for each day to cover the cost of 2 people.



Clevedon Hub day that was attended by around 50 people.

We have our own local Hubs, with the last one back in December which was well attended. There are some further smaller scale Hubs planned at Otua school, Karioitahi Hall and Akaaka in late March early April. These are funded separately by our WRC funding and AC Environment fund. Tuakau is outside both Auckland and our local area for our WRC fund. It is planned to use some of our DOC funds for this in the meantime. There is a new DOC fund closing in a couple of weeks time that we are looking to apply to. This is primarily to support rolling out the Hub concept to areas that could include Tuakau, Onewhero, Port Waikato, Mangatawhiri and Mangatangi. This gives the Hub project a large collaborative scale and potentially surrounds the Hunua's, which would provide an improved base for a mainland island concept in the Hunua's. At the moment talking, (or will be talking), to the likes of John Walters, Robyn Brown, Gary Dalton, Peter Roberts, Hannah Missen and Aidan Nelson re this. If we apply funding is for up to 3 years, and we would use a similar model to fund the days as that used with Akld Council.

We have built a trailer cover that doubles as a table for use on the Hub days. It is very functional. We could get it professionally painted and Merrin has suggested [Brigita Manabell](#)? She's a young, talented local artist who has created some of the murals around Waiuku. Your thoughts? Andrew Sinclair
Whakaupoko Landcare
M 021 268 1904
whakaupokolandcare@gmail.com

