



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter February 2012 Number 34

Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Organising a Family Biodiversity event at Kaniwhaniwha Stream
- Updating the Forum publication Restoring Waikato's Indigenous Biodiversity: Ecological Priorities and Opportunities
- Presented an oral submission on the draft Regional Policy Statement to the Regional Council hearings
- Responding to 0800BIODIV calls
- Met with groups in the Hawkes Bay to talk about operation of the Waikato Biodiversity Forum
- Prepared material and assisted with NZAEE Conference field trip to Lake Serpentine
- Prepared report "Valuing Community Action on the Ground"
- Preparing Trapper workshop in Franklin
- Wrote article on Biodiversity and Raglan for Hamilton Press
- Attended NZ Landcare Conference
- Provided WWF with feedback on information for survey

Funding Advice

The Forum's website has a comprehensive list of funders. Moira is available for funding advice.

William Hall Memorial Reserve



During the second half of 2011 the Thames Coromandel District Council with some help from Forest and Bird has continued the maintenance of the Reserve. The Council has organised an Arbor Day event by assembling children from the Moanatairi, St Francis, and Parawai schools to plant 600 native shrubs and trees. The trees had been grown in nurseries at each of the schools. They have been planted at the approaches to Hall's and around a zig-zag track leading to the upper part of the Reserve. Kauri2000 contributed about 20 plants while Eco Covers of Henderson donated several hundred weedmats and pins. A start was made on the removal of the widespread and invasive wild asparagus on 6 Aug 2011 by a Forest and Bird work group. The weed is present in most of the Reserve. The group began by covering only a small area with coverage extended bit by bit to other parts on four

other occasions. About half the Reserve has so far been sprayed. The bulbous roots of the plants, though now having lost their foliage, will re-appear into top growth when next season comes round, and will have to be done again. Their re-emergence is expected to be somewhat easier to control

It will be recalled that a comprehensive plan for the longer term survival and continuation of the Reserve was prepared by the consultants John Wakeling and Chris Muller in Oct 2010. Amongst its many recommendations was the establishment of a management team comprising the Council, consultants, and friends such as Forest and Bird. Accordingly John Rich has convened a group which met on 9 June

2011. Forest and Bird looks forward to a second meeting of the group which may prove to be effective in managing the site and planning its future. A step towards making the public more aware of the Arboretum, and to protect its archives, was made by establishing a website for Hall's, which should come on-line sometime in the first half of 2012.

Ken Clark

Thames Forest and Bird

Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group

The Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group is nearing its vision of clearing and planting the stream from Montefiore Reserve to Fonterra at the back of Te Awamutu College Grounds. Over the past four years



the group have cleared the Mangapiko Stream of all nuisance trees and planted the riparian margins. Many groups have been involved to make this happen. To walk the completed section of the track park in Montefiore Reserve [corner of Factory and Racecourse Roads]. The following groups have contributed to the project Fonterra, Waipa District Council, WRC, Honda tree Fund, TFS, St Pats School, Te Awamutu College, Te Wanaga, WCEET, Lion Foundation, Southern Trust, Trust Waikato and Te Awamutu Primary School.

Opito Bay Environment Group

The dotterel is losing battle at Opito Bay The New Zealand dotterel/tūturiwhatu is an endangered species found only in this country. It was once widespread and common but there are only about 1700 birds left. This serious decline in numbers is due to a combination of habitat loss, predation by introduced mammals and disturbance during breeding. This year on Opito Bay Beach 26 NZ dotterel nests were identified. Because of the unseasonably bad summer weather some nests were moved up to six times to be clear of the high water mark. Unfortunately, while signage is very clear on all entry points to the beach dogs not on leashes have accounted for up to 50% of eggs being eaten, in some cases days before the eggs hatched. On one occasion dogs ate 14 eggs over Christmas Day and Boxing Day. This is an extremely endangered species (Oyster Catchers have not bred in Opito for the



last 5 years also). At issue is irresponsible dog owners and authorities not being strict enough in enforcing the by – laws. There is a fine of up to \$250 for unrestrained dogs on beaches over the summer period but there have been no infringements handed out as far as we are aware. In addition to the above problem we have discovered bait eggs laid in stoat/hedgehog traps have been broken (we expect by children). BrianThompson who has been the honourary dotterel protector in the Bay for 10 years and has contributed3,000 hours to dotterel protection over that time. But eradicating stoats, wild cats and rats is taking up more of Brian's time and he will no longer be able to dedicate time to dotterel protection. So we ask

visitors and people who live in the Bay to be more cognisant of where their dogs are over the dotterel-breeding season. Breeding and fledgling efforts so far (with Brian's help) have been very successful. To continue to be so please have your dogs on a leash when you walk on the beach. Chris Severne

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society.

Following another successful season of getting rat populations down to 2% or less, a new extension to the bait station grid on Mt Pirongia maintained by the society has been approved by DoC, with Pub Charity funding \$10,000 of the cost. \$5,500 still needs to be secured but the society is confident that this extension, which will take the total area receiving on-going pest control to over 1,000ha, will be completed by the coming spring.

The field work to return North Island Robins (Pītoitoi) to Mt Pirongia has begun at Mangatutu thanks to the help of volunteers under the supervision of Paul Jansen. The programme involves more field work in March and April, and if all goes to plan, the Pītoitoi will be released on Mt Pirongia in late April.

Native bat monitoring is also about to be kicked off with ABM's being placed in strategic locations on the perimeter of the Forest Park to assess activity, under the guidance of Gerry Kessels from Kessels & Associates.

The society is always keen for new volunteers to join in on their projects, so if you are interested, please contact Clare St Pierre on (07) 8719133, or clare.stpierre@gmail.com. More information on the society can be found at their website: www.mtpirongia.org.nz or on their Facebook page. Clare St Pierre

Picnic at Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve



It was a beautiful afternoon at the David Johnstone Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve at Tauhei on a recent Saturday. A large crowd had gathered to see all the new walking tracks that had been made by the Friends of Pukemokemoke and for the dedication of the new covered picnic table funded by Kath Des Forges in memory of her husband Brooke, the original chairperson of the bush trust. Thousands of hours of work had gone into turning the river flats, which used to be an impenetrable jungle of privet, into large grassy areas surrounded by native forest trees and shrubs. It was also an occasion to award a certificate to Mantez for being Pukemokemoke Volunteer of the

Year. Over the past two years he had worked at the reserve on nearly every work day as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. There was a delicious picnic barbecue, an orienteering/treasure hunt, lolly scramble and tractor rides for the kids, a climb to the look-out for the energetic and a lot of talk about how so many people had been so generous with their time and energy to transform the place into a wonderful destination for the public. If you haven't been to the Reserve on the Tauhei Road beside the quarry, go and see what a special place it is. Alan Leadley

Regional Weedbuster Awards Open for Nominations

Weedbusters NZ is calling for groups, organisations, schools and individuals tackling weed issues in their communities to be nominated for the 2012 Regional Weedbusters Awards being run throughout New Zealand. The awards recognise the efforts of those who get stuck in and deal with weed issues in their communities in a voluntary capacity. Weedbusting efforts around New Zealand over the last few years have ranged from individuals working on their own properties to remove weedy species, to groups adopting natural areas such as bush remnants or wetlands and removing all weed species in that area. Joint efforts are often the most successful, with community volunteers working with schools, businesses, local and regional councils, and DOC to tackle weed issues.

There are five categories for the Weedbusters awards, all recognising weedbusting efforts:

- public land
- private land
- industry/organisation
- education
- overall excellence chosen from the previous four categories.

Anyone can put forward nominations for these awards, even the weedbusters themselves!
Nominations are open until 31 March 2012, and can be made online at www.weedbusters.org.nz.
Contact me for assistance with the nominations.

Moehau Environment Group

Moehau Environment Group has had a busy start to the year, hosting two international volunteers during January and February. They have been immensely helpful, and have spent their time trapping, track cutting and undertaking weed control. We are interested to hear from other groups in the



Coromandel who may be interested in sharing volunteer labour.

We have recently secured funding from the Lou and Iris Fisher Charitable Trust, which will enable us to begin systematically upgrading stoat traps to stainless steel DOC 200 traps in our Kiwi Sanctuary. With 700 traps spread over 7900 hectares, this is a big task! Since our Kiwi Sanctuary's establishment in 2005 these traps have caught over 787 stoats, 548 weasels, 5844 rats, 101 hedgehogs and 23 cats, making a huge difference to the breeding success of resident Kiwi.

Our members have been undertaking counts for Pateke (Brown teal) in Waikawau Bay and Port Charles during February. Before 2002 only about 20 Pateke were thought to be living on the peninsula. After several translocations and intensive predator control, the numbers have since boomed, with over 400 counted each year at several flock sites. We've had a record count for the Pateke census so far in the Waikawau Bay and Big Bay flock

sites. Two further counts will be done at the end of the February to complete the survey.

Project Kiwi Trust

For the past 15 years Project Kiwi Trust has monitored kiwi and established a robust trapping system to control predators over its operational area. For the past seven years Project Kiwi Trust has also utilised the BNZ Operation Nest Egg facility at Rainbow Springs, Rotorua to ensure kiwi chick survival. As of March 2011, Project Kiwi Trust has returned 77 juvenile kiwi to the Kuaotunu Peninsula. Paired with this was the continued success of maintaining the resident population of kiwi on the Kuaotunu Peninsula to a survival rate of 31.6%. The key objectives of Project Kiwi include BNZ Operation Nest Egg, permanent island populations, island crèching and predator control. Media exposure takes Project Kiwi Trust to the people and this year we have seen a high level of media exposure in general. Some key highlights to add to last year's TV3 Campbell Live segment were TV ONE Country Calendar showing trustee Warwick Wilson and project managers Jon and Paula Williams, a Radio Live interview with Jon Williams and a variety of other written material. Excerpts from the Project Kiwi Annual report April 2010-March 2011

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

Recently the Waikato Regional Council scientist Bruno David and his team did a survey of 150metres of our stream. The findings were really exciting. We had mature breeding size, 125mm to 160mm,



native kokopu both banded and giant along with young 40mm to 65mm long. This indicates a good healthy breeding population.

Twenty-one shortfin eels were recorded with lesser numbers (2) of the longfin eel. Common smelt (*Retropinna*) were the most plentiful fish with 139 identified and the next most common were 29 Inanga (*Galaxias maculatus*). Pest fish found included six catfish and two mosquitofish (*Gambusia*). This is a very pleasing healthy fish population to build from as we restoration to enhance their environment with stream side planting of

Carex species which we hope will further increase their population with particular focus on the Kokopu. It must be understood that this population exists in the middle of the new urban suburb of Rototuna in Hamilton and have had to endure all the pollution pressures that go with section development over the last 8 years. Rex Bushell

Green Ribbon Award Nominations Open



The Green Ribbon Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals, organisations, businesses and communities to protecting and enhancing New Zealand's environment. The Minister for the Environment presents the Awards around World Environment Day each June.

Nominations for the 2012 Green Ribbon Awards are now open. The Awards are open to all individuals and organisations in New Zealand who are making a difference for our environment. You can nominate yourself, your organisation, community group, service or product or you can nominate someone else you think deserves recognition. The Green Ribbon Award categories change from year to year. To read about this year's categories and to make a nomination visit 2012 Green Ribbon Awards page.

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/awards/green-ribbon.html>

If you want to contact people whose details are not in the newsletter you can go through the Contact Us page on the Forum website and send an email to me. I'll put you in touch with them.

The newsletters are all placed on www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz for easy access.

Cheers Moira