



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter November 2012 Number 37

Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Wrote text and sourced photos for a biodiversity pamphlet for South Waikato District Council
- Organised Family Conservation Week activity in liaison with DOC
- Held Weed workshop for community groups and the public at Te Mata, Thames Coast
- Held Forum event in the Waipa District
- Met with DOC Area Management staff to brief them on Forum activities
- Attended WETmak training day
- Met with staff from the Waikato Raupatu River Trust to share information
- Attended community group meetings on the Coromandel with Thames Coromandel District Council for consultation on the draft District Plan
- Took a JUNATS session on making tracking tunnels
- Developing Strategic Plan for Forum
- Attended a Federated Farmers stakeholder get together
- Set up a Facebook page for the Forum
- Briefed new Focus group members
- Organising workshop with group in upper Coromandel for next March
- Attended facilitators training
- Responded to Forum members request for information and assistance
- Prepared biodiversity related article for Hamilton Press
- Attended and facilitated part of the WRC, Landcare Trust and Whakaupoko Landcare Group meeting on future landcare events, landcare tools and assistance for landcare groups

Funding Advice

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

Miranda Shorebird Centre Advocating for Shorebirds

Miranda Shorebird Centre, owned and operated by the Miranda Naturalists' Trust (MNT), is an information and education centre on the southwest corner of the Firth of Thames and is open seven days a week. Two key objectives of MNT - raising awareness of coastal ecology and advocating for



shorebirds and their habitats - are becoming increasingly important and even urgent, because many of our shorebird populations are in trouble. Loss and degradation of habitat, be it around one of our northern beaches where New Zealand Dotterel (Nationally Vulnerable) and New Zealand Fairy Tern (Nationally Critical) attempt to breed; around the Firth of Thames where 40 % of the world Wrybill (Nationally Vulnerable)

population winter; on the South Island braided riverbeds where Wrybill, Black-fronted Tern (Nationally

Endangered), Black Stilt (Nationally Critical) and Black-billed Gull (Nationally Endangered) nest; or around the shores of the Yellow Sea, where Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots, stop to refuel on their long flights back to Alaska and Siberia – all mean declining shorebird populations. It also means that at Miranda our interests are local, national and global.

At the Shorebird Centre we facilitate bird banding and research, host school and university visits, offer interpretative talks, and run training courses. Our six-day residential field course held each January and Dotterel Management course each September are particularly popular. A walking trail from the centre to our bird hides has recently been upgraded, and interpretation signage is currently being prepared. Predator trapping has improved breeding success for birds like New Zealand Dotterel, Banded Rail and Bittern. Since 1994 we have been engaged with the East Asian Australasian Flyway (EAAF), the network of shorebird habitat sites between New Zealand and the Arctic. MNT is a member of the EAA Flyway Partnership, and has a sister site partnership with Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve (YJNNR) in China, where up to 80% of all New Zealand godwits refuel during northward migration. We assist with annual shorebird surveys on the reserve, as well as school visits and other awareness raising events.
Keith Woodley

WETMAK Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Kit.

WETMAK is now available on the NZ Landcare Trust website. WETMAK has its own dedicated area on the NZ Landcare Trust website: www.landcare.org.nz/wetmak
Contact Nardene Berry Nardene.berry@landcare.org.nz or James Barnett James.Barnett@landcare.org.nz if you have questions about the kit.

Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve Report

The last 6 months have been busy - again – and worthwhile in terms of all that has been achieved in the Reserve. Since the Winter Newsletter (August 2012), the Mangatea track has been almost completed. The last of the grassed areas has been sown. An area of dense privet and willow/blackberry is due to be dealt with by the T-Rex in February/March. About 1500 trees have been planted this year in and around the edges of the forest stands along the Mangatea flats. A boardwalk and bridge have improved the loop track and a fence built around the Log Hauler site.



Waikato Botanical Society

The Waikato Botanical Society has a new website <http://waikatobotsoc.org.nz/>. The Society provides a forum to share and expand botanical knowledge with other like minded enthusiasts, opportunity to conserve the indigenous flora of New Zealand, field trips throughout the Waikato region and beyond, exploring varied habitats from wetland to forest, coastal to montane, regular meetings and talks, with guest speakers on a wide variety of fascinating topics and a regular newsletter and emailed announcements to stay up-to-date on botanical events and happenings across the region

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

The Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group has finished building an all weather track / boardwalk for the full length of the main gully that we are restoring. This has been a major achievement for our group.



There has been a number of engineering challenges. Most of the gully floor is deep mud and we had to design it to withstand flash flooding caused by storm water runoff that comes through several times each winter. The main reason for building the all weather track / boardwalk was to give us easy access to the gully and to protect the flora at the side of the track from being trampled on by continually making the track through the mud wider and wider as you look for more stable ground. The project was funded by a

Hamilton City Council envirofund grant and supported with a very generous discount from Acorn Building Supplies for all the timber and necessary hardware.

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET)

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET) is now seeking applications for its 2013 funding round. Over the past eight years the Trust has provided nearly two million dollars in funding to environmental enhancement projects throughout the Waikato Catchment. For further information about WCEET email: enquires@wceet.org.nz If you have any questions please call Trust Secretary Michelle Archer on 07 858 8403. Applications close on the 31st January 2013.

Research on Self-Setting Traps

DOC has a report on the Good Nature self-setting traps. The report details the efficacy and cost effectiveness of the A24 and A12. If anyone would like a copy of the report please email me. Moira

Sanctuaries of NZ Workshop in August 2012

This website contains interesting papers from this workshop on predator proof fences and sanctuary issues. www.sanctuaries.org/meetings/workshop2012.asp

Moehau Environment Group

This winter we trialed bioacoustic recorders in our Coromandel Kiwi Project, which found kiwi calling at three sites. The results are great encouragement for our volunteers who have caught 116 Stoats, 367 Rats, & 12 weasels to date- helping our kiwi chicks beat the odds.



Another Kiwi Avoidance training held in Colville and Waikawau Bay over Labour weekend saw 19 dogs trained to avoid kiwi in the bush. We recently hosted 25 students from Bay of Plenty Polytech, who help us every year to monitor fernbirds, rodents & invertebrates in our Waikawau Bay Wetland project. This year we heard 111 Fernbirds (a similar number to last year), as well as 8-10 Banded Rail and 3-6 Bittern! A great result.

Visiting the Coromandel during January? Take part in our annual Summer Holiday programme which is jam packed full of fun activities to do with nature. To find out what's on, go to www.meg.org.nz. Natalie Collicott

Opito Bay

comprehensive pest control programme has been very successful in the Bay and since February the following 'kills' have been noted.

- Total 703 being made up of 157 stoats 270 opossums 276 h/hogs / rats. Feral cats 7. Opossums are few and far between in the areas we have been working, and numbers of all other target species are tracking downward quickly.

The above numbers show how important pest control is as we back onto the kiwi reserve that runs through to Waitaia Bay and beyond. Work we are doing is helping the kiwi recovery in the area. Bird life in the area has bounced back with the ongoing control programme.

Native trees planted since we began in 2001 now exceed 16,500 on the retired farmland in the Bay.

This year was no exception with approximately 1000 native trees planted. Ongoing support from Environment Waikato has ensured we have had funds for traps, baits and herbicides to keep on top of all pest species. We are now seeing natural regeneration occurring from trees planted several years ago but ongoing releasing (hand pulling and use of herbicide) of recently planted trees will continue until they are large enough to shade out the weeds..

(photo attached - regenerating native bush overlooking healthy wetland. 10 years ago the picture was of pasture. Species planted and included in the photo include kauri, manuka, rewarewa, cabbage tree, flax, totara, tarata, kahikatea, karo and pohutukawa).

Esri Conservation Grant Programme and Eagle Technology Training

This is computer technology which provides ArcGIS software, training and documentation to registered charitable trusts for a nominal cost, empowers conservation trusts to work smarter, faster and with more precision. The ArcGIS can help community groups with their restoration work and their interaction with communities of interest. Motutapu Restoration Trust are using the maps create from ArcGIS to improve the efficiency of weed control programme. The ArcGIS computer programme can monitor moth plant infestations, record where the outbreaks occur, when they are dealt with and monitor any recurrence of the weed after initial removal. The Esri Conservation Grant Programme has given the group the tools to do this. Here is a link to the Eagle Technology/ESRI Conservation Grant Program. <http://www.eagle.co.nz/GIS/Case-Studies/Conservation-Grant-Programme/>

DOC has committed to supporting community groups with coordinating training and providing on going mentoring. Phone DOC's Hamilton Service Centre 07 8581000 and ask for the Geo Spatial team.

The Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group

The Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group was set up in 2000 to protect kiwi and their habitat on 3500 hectares in the Whenuakite and surrounding area. From 29 Coromandel brown kiwi identified by call survey in 2001, the 2010 count revealed 98 birds with an estimated population of 75 pairs plus juveniles. Four hundred and sixty traps spread along 50 kilometers are checked monthly and to date 1268 stoats, 12



ferrets, 168 weasels and 280 feral cats have been eliminated as well as about 60 rats per month. A paid employee services half of the traps as well as coordinating the work volunteers do in servicing the remainder. BNZ volunteers from throughout the Waikato check two trap lines on a monthly basis. Aerial 1080 is utilised working with DOC and WRC on a two to three years basis targeting rats with a by kill of possums and trap shy stoats. A very spectacular increase in kereru, kaka and tui has been noted. Arthur Hinds

Flocks of kereru "grazing" on Hinds farm at Whenukite

Initial Report on Kaimai Mamaku Bird Count 2012

The report is based on 25 survey counts, compared with 24 last year. Each survey consisted of between 5 and 10 separate sites within the general location. A total of 243 sites were surveyed, compared with 225 last year. Surveys were over the 17 days from 12th October to 1st November. While weather conditions and therefore the bird activity certainly varied from site to site, in general conditions were windy and could explain why sites were surprisingly low. In one case (Aongatete Forest Restoration Trust) two surveys were undertaken on contrasting days eight days apart, along the same line and resulting in counts of 32 birds and 106 birds. This highlights the fact that surveys are not absolute records of bird life in any one place. For more information contact Moira. I have a copy of the full report from Warwick Buckman.

National Certificate Horticulture (Introductory) (Level 2) Programme

Wintec will offer the National Diploma in Horticulture (Level 2) introductory course free of charge next year. The six month programme is ideal for anyone with a passion for protecting and enhancing their environment, says Wintec's School of Engineering, Science and Primary Industries Team Leader, Eric Haycock. On completion of the Level 2 horticulture course, students can continue with the National

Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4) or the Certificate in Arboriculture (Level 3 or 4). Students who wish to continue directly with the Certificate in Arboriculture (Level 4) will need to meet certain criteria prior to commencement of this level. The course will be available at Wintec's Thames campus and at Tūrangawaewae Marae (Ngaruawahia) during semester one next year and in Morrinsville at the Ngati Haua Mahi premises in Anzac Avenue in Semester Two. The National Diploma in Horticulture (Level 2) has a practical orientation and includes units on revegetating indigenous plant areas, establishing and maintaining plant collections, demonstrating knowledge of chainsaw use and plant identification and propagation. For more information contact Wintec's School of Engineering, Science and Primary industries on 07 834 8800 (ext. 7921 or 8058)

The Kauri 2000 Trust –Gearing up against Kauri Dieback

The Kauri 2000 Trust will be targeting holidaymakers on the Coromandel over summer with an advertising and PR campaign aimed at preventing the spread of kauri dieback. Kauri dieback is killing kauri in Northland, on Great Barrier and in Auckland, particularly the Waitakeres. There is no cure known as yet.

Kauri dieback is spread by soil movement. So far it has not been found on the Coromandel Peninsula. The Trust is concerned that visitors could bring this devastating pathogen with them in soil on footwear, walking poles, mountain bikes, tyres, camping gear or other equipment.

We ask all Forum members to help spread the word. The key messages are:

- 1 Thoroughly scrub all footwear and gear clean of soil BEFORE AND AFTER going into any forest
- 2 In the forest, stay on the track and off kauri roots.

If you know you or others have been to an infected site, please don't bring that footwear or walking poles etc to the Coromandel Peninsula. For more information about kauri dieback go to

www.kauridieback.co.nz

Pirongia te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society.

Spring saw record numbers of bait stations filled on Mt Pirongia in our grid which now covers over



1,000ha. Our monitoring results for rats shows the huge success we are achieving, with pre-operational populations of 65% being reduced to just 3% - a little higher than our desired target of 2% but still within the range needed to protect nesting native birds. And Pirongia Village has benefited from the bird increases as they come down off the mountain to feed. There is constant birdsong from August to late October. The North Island robins introduced earlier in the year appear to have dispersed

widely and it is planned to do systematic monitoring of their presence in the next few months with the help of volunteers. Thanks to a recent EIF grant from WRC we can connect electricity to our envirocentre and translocate a second cohort of robins to Mt Pirongia in 2013. For more photos see:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pirongia-Te-Aroaro-o-Kahu-Restoration-Society/145527248817282?sk=photos> Clare St Pierre

Benefits of Biodiversity to Farmers NZ Landcare Trust publication

See the following website for this valuable publication <http://www.landcare.org.nz/Biodiversity-for-Farmers>

Opito Bay Environment Group

Since February this year a comprehensive pest control programme has been very successful with a total of 157 stoats, 270 possums, 276 h/hogs and rats and seven feral cats. Possums are few and far between in the areas we have been working, and numbers of all other target species are tracking downward quickly.

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Regenerating native bush overlooking healthy wetland at Opito Bay. Ten years ago the area was pasture. Species planted include kauri, manuka, rewarewa, cabbage tree, flax, totara, tarata, kahikatea, karo and pohutukawa.

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