



# Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

## November 2013 Number 41

**Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members and Happy Christmas and a safe and relaxing holiday**

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Prepared biodiversity articles for Hamilton Press and Thames Coromandel District Council
- Ran an insect activity for the Zoo's conservation week event at Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park
- Organised the Forum day in Taupo
- Presented on the Forum and Community Initiatives for the Madison Ecological Restoration Conference at the University of Waikato
- Prepared oral submission for HCC and SWDC proposed District Plans
- Facilitated a meeting with the National Wetland Trust to set up a group/s of volunteers for Rotopiko Complex/Lake Serpentine
- Wrote a submission on the proposed Waikato River Fisheries
- Organised Ecosystem Restoration project team meetings
- Prepared Resource people database
- Attended the Conservation Inc Conference in Dunedin
- Organised and met with the Nature Space developers to explore ways the Forum's and Nature Space websites can share community group data
- Met with WRC Biosecurity to plan workshops across the region
- Assisted Kauri 2000 Inc with a Kauri Dieback strategy for the Coromandel
- Attended the Environment and Conservation Groups of NZ conference in Thames
- Judged Sustainability projects at Diocesan School.

### Funding Advice

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

### Forum's Facebook page

The Forum has a facebook page. I encourage you to use it to communicate with each other and post biodiversity related comments and events on the page and also LIKE us so our profile is spread.

### Nature Space website

The Waikato region is represented on the community group map by six groups at present. Check out the Nature Space website [www.naturespace.org.nz](http://www.naturespace.org.nz) and register your group to increase the profile of work being carried out in the region. There are useful resources on the website to check out too.

### Cambridge Tree Trust

The aim of



the Cambridge Tree Trust is to plant trees in and around Cambridge; to enhance the approaches to the town, protect the environment and keep alive the image of Cambridge as the Town of Trees. The trust is also involved in building new walkways, encouraging native birds to town and teaching local children how to care for the environment through lessons at the Nursery and Education centre. Plantings along all Cambridge's walkways include many different berry and nectar trees, to encourage native birds to come to the town and stay. A core group of over 15 volunteers meets each

Tuesday at the nursery and they have planted approximately 9000 mostly native plants around Cambridge. One of the group's latest projects is planting of trees for birds around Lake Te Ko Utu.

## Kids getting their hands dirty for conservation

Earlier this year, the intermediate teachers at Hilltop School Taupo met up with the Department of Conservation, DOC. They discussed many things involving New Zealand nature, but one thing in



particular. They talked about weeds. And so, starting in March, 80 Year 7/8 students took frequent trips to the Oruatua Conservation Reserve. The place was over-run with weeds, with entire fields of broome and cotoneaster. Were the students a little daunted? Not in the slightest! In the last eight months, a patch of broome the size of a rugby field has changed into a native habitat for kowhais, kanukas and birds. Not only this, but Team 5 Weedbusters have spread the word of weeds throughout Taupo. Run by yours truly, a blog at [Team5 weedbusters.blogspot.co.nz](http://Team5weedbusters.blogspot.co.nz) has accumulated around 500 pageviews! Team 5 Weedbusters

are changing the world... or at least Taupo. Written by Jack 'Jacco' McNeill (12 years old)

## Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group Inc



Lower Mangapiko Steamcare Group is once again ready for more clearing, fencing and riparian plantings thanks to Waikato River Authority, Waikato Regional Council, Waipa Tree Services, and the Streamcare funding committee. An open afternoon has been held to view the difference the plantings are making to the stream. This afternoon was funded by WRA, WRC, Grassroots Fund [Fonterra] and the Streamcare committee. The photo is taken

from Bowman Road Bridge showing work done in 2006 Betsy Bryant

## Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

We were thrilled to receive some photos of newly fledged North Island Robin (Pītoitoi) chicks seen on Mt Pirongia recently. There have also been a number of other sightings of robins in our bait station grid which covers 1,000ha, especially in the Corcoran Rd area. Our pest control work has been completed for the season with excellent support from over 50 volunteers and we now await the outcome of our rat monitoring. Of 12 monitoring lines, so far 9 have been returned with zero rats. Good numbers of birds were seen and heard by our monitors, especially riflemen, which is also encouraging. We are hoping to



progress our native bat protection work, with two of our committee members receiving training on bat data analysis from Kessels and Associates in the near future. Further promotions are also being planned in 2014 for our kokako project and commemorating the founding of Pirongia 150 years ago. Please contact Clare St Pierre (07 8719133 or

[clare.stpierre@gmail.com](mailto:clare.stpierre@gmail.com)) if you would like to help us with that, volunteer for planting, bait station filling or monitoring opportunities, or to discuss options. More information is on the Society's website:

[www.mtpirongia.org.nz](http://www.mtpirongia.org.nz) and lots of photos are on our

Facebook page. Supplied by Clare St Pierre Photo by Dean Parr

## Kauri 2000 Inc

This year's planting saw over 2,600 trees go in the ground, taking us to a grand total of more than 38,000 kauri planted since our inception. Matarangi Reserve continues to absorb most of our effort, and now contains around 11,500 trees. Planting involved dozens of volunteers as well as Mercury Bay Area School Year 7 and 8 students, staff and parents, and our sponsors the Bank of New Zealand. Although the area we are planting now is rather steep, conditions for kauri in the south-facing blocks are very good, with a 100 percent survival rate for our 2012 trees despite last summer's drought. Coromandel's Kauri Hill block continues to expand steadily and 680 trees went in the ground with the help of students from Coromandel Area School and others. Tairua School planted at Sailor's Grave, closing in on their target of 1000 kauri in their grove. Supplied by Kauri 2000.

## Waikato River Trust



Waikato RiverCare has completed a major native tree and shrub planting project at Huntly, with more than a kilometre of Waikato River bank planted, thanks to \$60,000 of funding assistance from the Waikato River Authority (WRA). The Raahui Pookeka A project – carried out between 2 and 6 September and involving the planting of more than 11,000 trees and shrubs – is the biggest ever undertaken by riparian restoration charity Waikato RiverCare. The planting covered an area 1100 metres by 14 metres. This planting will help keep stock out of the river, reduce erosion and contaminants as well as provide a recreational asset. The planting brings the amount of river bank fenced and planted by Waikato RiverCare over the past 12 years to 16+ kilometres. “Over the next 10 years Waikato RiverCare is hoping to plant another 30 sites from near the Te Rapa

dairy factory to just downstream of the Tuakau bridge. Supplied by Waikato River Trust.

## Moehau Environment Group – Sponsor a trap

We are on a mission to raise funds for our Kiwi Sanctuary. By sponsoring a trap, you will help us win the fight against mustelids and keep kiwi chicks safe. Our Kiwi Sanctuary has been in operation for 8 years and protects nearly 8000ha of kiwi habitat. We employ six part-time trappers to service 700 traps monthly. Since we started, these traps have caught over 900 stoats, 590 weasels and 6760 rats making a huge difference to resident Kiwi. In fact, kiwi more than doubled in the area in the last 10 years. The biggest threat to young kiwi is stoats and by servicing these traps we are giving kiwi the best chance to survive in the wild and re-populate the area. Due to funding cuts we need to source more funding to ensure trapping can continue. If you would like to help protect kiwi, please sponsor a trap for only \$65/year (what it costs to service the trap). What do I get for my sponsorship? The money will directly benefit Coromandel kiwi. A map showing trap location and yearly updates of what your trap has caught will be provided. To sponsor a trap or learn more please email [info@meg.org.nz](mailto:info@meg.org.nz) Your support makes all the difference! MEG Website

## Eco Covers Weed Matting



EcoCover® Environmentally Friendly Weed Matting is produced from waste paper that is removed from the landfill waste stream. EcoCover Weed Mat products contain unique attributes that benefit the plant, soil and environment. The EcoCover Weed Mat is a cost-effective substitute for other mulch systems used in the horticultural, agricultural and land management industries. EcoCover Weed Matting is the world's most complete plant mulch. EcoCover's patented Biodegradable Weed Mat products build soil carbon levels, are organic, compostable and biodegradable, conserve water, reduce plant mortality, control weeds, promote plant and crop growth, moderate soil temperature, reduce soil

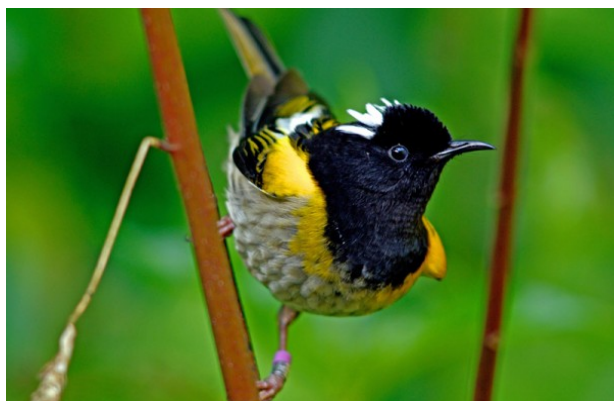
erosion, sequester CO<sub>2</sub>, reduce plant losses, eliminate or reduce herbicide use, are a carrier of beneficial additives for the soil and save you money. To purchase online go to [www.ecocover.co.nz](http://www.ecocover.co.nz). For comprehensive information on EcoCover's development, R & D and trials results go to [www.ecocover.com](http://www.ecocover.com). Call David 021 351289 / [david.job@ecocoversystems.co.nz](mailto:david.job@ecocoversystems.co.nz)

## NZ Plant Conservation Network Award Winner

A big congratulations to Jan Simmons a founding member of the Forum, who won the NZPCN award for an Individual involved in plant conservation. Jan works on a voluntary basis to promote the planting of native plant species around Hamilton and areas beyond. She has been the convener of Eco-sourced Waikato since its inception in 2000 and in 2005 helped establish the Tamahere Community Nursery to provide eco-sourced plants for the Hamilton gullies restoration initiative. This concept has now expanded to the growing of thousands of specialist enrichment plants for Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park project near Hamilton Zoo ([www.waiwhakareke.co.nz](http://www.waiwhakareke.co.nz)). Other voluntary biodiversity projects Jan is involved with include weed clearance in Whewells Bush (a Department of Conservation reserve at Matangi); providing plants and labour for restoration of a wetland at Pirongia and for bush enhancement in a QEII covenant on a Waitomo farm, and supplying plants and volunteers for enhancement of the National Wetland Centre based at Lake Serpentine. Jan is also leading a group of volunteers to collect seeds of the more difficult to locate and grow on species to be reared at the Tamahere Nursery. She is passionate about all aspects of growing native plants for restoration projects, and freely shares her knowledge and enthusiasm with volunteers working at the nursery. Well done Jan.

## Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust

In September approximately 40 volunteers from across the North Island arrive at Maungatautari to assist with a mountain-wide survey of reintroduced hihi/stitchbird and tieke/saddleback at the sanctuary. Hihi reintroductions from Tiritiri Matangi and Little Barrier Island took place between 2009 and 2011, and



tieke were reintroduced from Tiritiri Matangi in May 2013. The hihi population was intensively monitored from 2010 to 2012 as part of a PhD research collaboration between Massey University, the Zoological Society of London and the Hihi Recovery Group. There is continuing interest in monitoring the progress of this nationally endangered species at Maungatautari. The 2012/13 breeding season saw an estimated 80 adult hihi breeding. The September/October survey indicated that

recruitment from the previous season had been high with approximately half the located birds being unbanded (mountain-bred hihi had been banded until the 2012/13 season). Around 22 of the 40 released tieke were located during the survey week, with a number of possible sightings still to be followed up. This suggests that at least 55% (and probably more) of the reintroduced birds had survived to breed. The first nests were found in early November. As yet no eggs have been laid suggesting breeding was off to a bit of a late start for these recent releases. Supplied by MEIT Photo Phil Brown.

## Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve and Kauri Dieback Disease

PTA, (*Phytophthora taxon Agathis*) is a fungal-like organism related to potato blight and many tree dieback organisms. It spreads by soil movement and can be contained by preventing contaminated soil



spreading to a new environment. Boot cleaning and washing stations have been set up in vulnerable areas to induce visitors to clean gear prior to and subsequent to visits to kauri areas. However, experience in the Waitakeres has shown that voluntarily only 30% of visitors to kauri areas use the boot washing facility. The David Johnstone Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve, 25 km NE of Hamilton is a 40ha remnant of Waikato lowland forest, is free of PTA and contains some fine kauri rickers and mature trees. The bush trust has recognised the need to protect these trees and has had boot cleaning stations set up which have only desultory use. We have requested and received grant money from Regional Council to erect permanent walk-through stations in which all visitors will need to walk through a foot bath containing the surface

active disinfectant Sterigene™ (formerly Trigene) which has proven activity against fungal and bacterial organisms. The structures will straddle the path, be roofed over and walkers will be required to walk through both before and after visiting the kauri area. We would like to see this initiative widely adopted in kauri areas. Supplied by Warwick Silvester.

## Kauri dieback disease update

It was heartening to learn that kauri dieback was not found on the Coromandel Peninsula during the latest surveillance round, but this only serves to reinforce how important it is to stay vigilant in preventing this deadly disease reaching the Peninsula. A Coromandel Dieback Forum is being established in the New Year to keep Peninsula kauri dieback disease free. The Forum will combine the people and resources of key agencies (the Kauri Dieback Management Programme, Waikato Regional Council, DOC, TCDC), the knowledge and expertise of science and technical advisors, and the energy and local knowledge of committed Coromandel groups and individuals. Dieback signage is being installed at all DOC tracks, and another advertising campaign targeting holidaymakers and their hosts is being run over the peak holiday period. Dieback posters and brochures are also being distributed at tourist attractions and accommodation promoting the key message: SCRUB your shoes, SPRAY with disinfectant and STAY on the track. Supplied by Kauri 2000 Inc.

## NZ Landcare Trust



NZ Landcare Trust launched the community aspect of the Waikato River Authority funded 'Community Catchment Action Plan for the Rotomanuka Lakes' with a successful planting day at Lake Rotomanuka in November. About 30 local people, including many children, turned up during the course of the event, which ran for three hours in the afternoon. Project Coordinator Melinda Dresser said, "We were delighted with the event, 267 plants were planted and people seemed to enjoy the opportunity to get to know their neighbours". Project Coordinator Nardene Berry added, "it was great to have support from Waipa

District Council, particularly Paula Reeves, who provided expertise with plant selection... all low growing sedges and shrubs native to peat lakes." The focus for the Rotomanuka Lakes project to date has been encouraging local farmers to adopt Whole Farm Plans. To find out more about the project visit the project webpage: <http://www.landcare.org.nz/Regional-Focus/Hamilton-Tauranga-Offices/Rotomanuka-Lakes> Supplied by the NZLCT with photo by Abby Davidson.

## Whio ducklings back in town

Trout and white water rafting aren't the only draw cards for Turangi with whio ducklings navigating the white rapids of the Tongariro River, thanks to local predator trapping volunteers of the Blue Duck



Charitable Trust. Ducklings are currently hatching again this season, following the successful fledging of 14 ducklings in both 2011/12 and 2012/13 breeding seasons. Resident whio pairs are increasing with at least 10 pairs now protected. Great news for the community is that the densest concentration of pairs is close to the Turangi township, with four pairs between the Major Jones and Red

Hut Bridges. Trapping set up has increased this year with traps now protecting habitat from Tree Trunk gorge to the Turangi township. 70 of the DOC 200 traps are on Tongariro Prison Land being checked by prisoners and staff. The line up includes Good Nature self-setting traps, which are performing well. Supplied by Anna McKnight, Ranger Partnerships, Department of Conservation, King Country Taupo District Office

The newsletters are all placed on [www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz](http://www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz) for easy access. Cheers Moira