



# Waikato Biodiversity Forum

Ngā Kaihāpai Rerenga Rauropi o Waikato

## Spring Newsletter 2020 Number 67

**Kia ora tātou,**

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

- Edited, published and gathered articles for Winter edition of the Forum Newsletter
- Chaired and took minutes for Forum Focus group meetings
- Sent bio-forum emails, and updated website and facebook page
- Responded to 21 enquiries from email and 0800 bio div service

### **Pirongia Te Aroaro Restoration Society – Springing Into Action Update and Job Opportunity**

Things are well and truly springing into action for the Pirongia Te Aroaro Restoration Society this season, with baiting events kicking off on both the maunga and at Okahukura Valley in the Pureora Forest. The multi-day baiting event in the valley attracted a record 75 volunteers – our largest contingent to date!

Our kōkako ecologists Dave and Amanda began surveying on Mt Pirongia late September. Conditions were good and already they have found a couple of pairs as well as a number of singles both banded and unbanded. A great start to the season, with hopefully some nesting action to report over the next few weeks.

We have also had some great success with funding of late, including being awarded a Waipa District Council Discretionary grant, which will go towards

kitchen installation and insurance costs for our Envirocentre. Special thanks must also go to the Department of Conservation's Community Fund, approving \$50,990 for kōkako monitoring on Mt Pirongia for the coming season, and \$36,165 for Okahukura kōkako protection which covers our pest control costs for 12 months. Awesome news for our native bird species, and for our volunteers and members who help make it all happen.

Speaking of people who make it happen, we are currently looking for a superstar Operations Coordinator who will help us deliver our objectives and promote the activities of the group. If this sounds like you or someone you know, then [check out our listing on SEEK](#). New volunteers are also welcome, email [djune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz) for more info.



*Our Okahukura volunteer team. Photo credit: Tom Davies.*

## Predator Free Hamilton Workshop

Predator Free Hamilton workshop to make a wooden tunnel box to house a rat trap. Learn the basics about trapping rats in your backyard and how it helps our native species. All materials and rat trap supplied but BYO hammer. Held first Wednesday of the month at Go Eco, Frankton. Koha appreciated.



## PREDATOR TRAP WORKSHOP

**GO ECO** 10-11am, first Wednesday of the month  
Go Eco, Commerce Street, Kirikiriroa

## Weedbuster Role - Go Eco, Kirikiriroa

We have an exciting new opportunity to join our team of community organisers, educators, volunteers, and food rescue champions to work with gully groups, communities, and volunteers for the eradication of pest weeds and the advancement of indigenous biodiversity.

It is really important that you enjoy the hands-on aspects of fieldwork, working with community groups, and able to collate both stories and data. You will work closely with volunteer leaders in Kirikiriroa based gully groups. Your collaborative spirit and passion for leading volunteer projects will engage communities in their local gully and restoration project.

Ideally, you have a passion for Te Taiao and an active interest in enhancing indigenous biodiversity and understanding the histories of our gully network. You may identify as mana whenua, be active, a fluent and confident communicator and enjoy leading small and diverse teams of people. A full driver's license, safe tool handling practices, and a willingness to continue development and learning are also required. Your cover letter and resume can be emailed to [manager@goeco.org.nz](mailto:manager@goeco.org.nz) before midnight on October 7th, 2020. Ka ora te whenua: Ka ora te tangata. Healthy environments supported by thriving communities.



## Request for Activator(s)- Biodiversity Collective Impact Initiative

Do you believe in collaboration to create collective outcomes for our environment? Are you driven by building connections with others that leads to a strategic approach for increased restoration and biodiversity? Waikato Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, University of Waikato and Trust Waikato have joined up to undertake the process of establishing a collaborative strategic approach to support communities in the

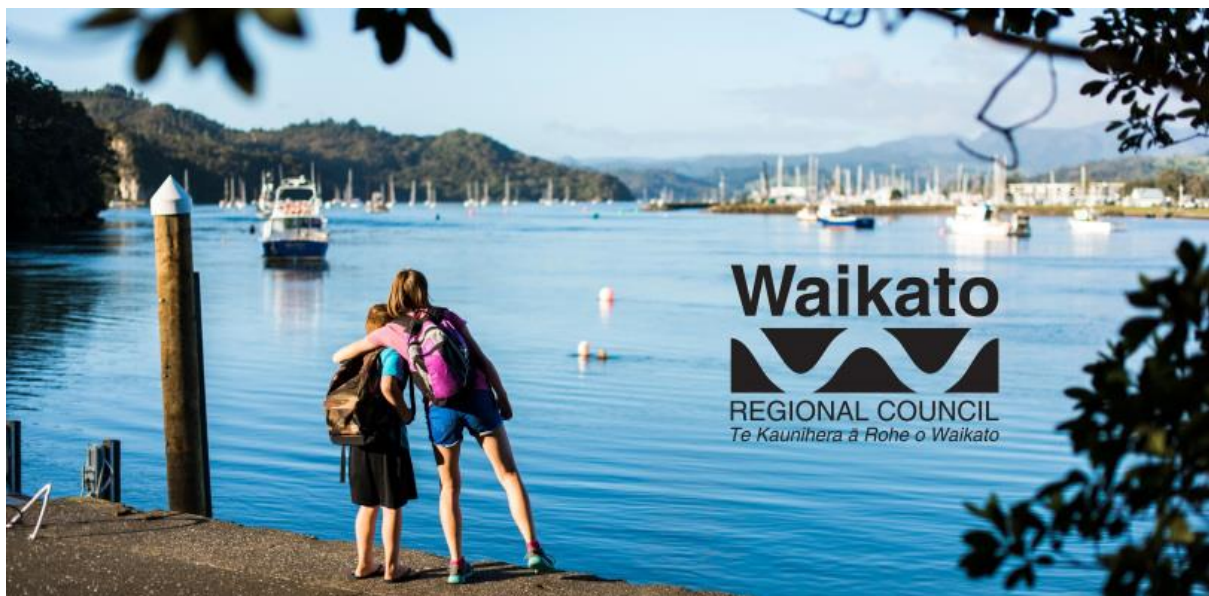
Waikato working to restore and enhance our biodiversity through a collective impact model. Based on similar models throughout the nation (eg. Taranaki Maunga Project, Reconnecting Northland), these partners are focused on creating a more aligned approach to biodiversity and restoration in the Waikato region that leads to impact.

Restoring nature and connecting communities is central to the work of the Waikato Biodiversity Collective Impact (CI) initiative. We are focused on working together effectively to achieve long term outcomes for the Waikato Region that contribute to a sustainable future, not just for our environment, but also for our communities and our economy. CI is the long-term commitment of parties to a common agenda. For us this common agenda is the protection, restoration and the enhancement of our biodiversity in the Waikato region.

We are looking for a skilled person or persons to lead this process who has experience in bringing together different ideas, organisations and communities to work together to achieve collective impact. The service provider will manage and facilitate the collective impact process, and eventually, will have a

small team they will work with to deliver the initiative outcomes focused on community needs. The service provider would have experience in facilitation, change management, collaboration for joint outcomes, programme management, iwi liaison, stakeholder engagement, relationship management, and effective communication. Experience within the local and regional Waikato context is preferred, particularly with an emphasis in working with iwi and tangata whenua within a co-governance environment.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Ngā mihi, Amy Satterfield |TEAM LEADER, Natural Heritage| Integrated Catchment Management| WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL | Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato



### WWF-New Zealand's Funding Round Is Now Open.

We run two separate funds in partnership with the Tindall Foundation, supporting Kiwis to get involved in protecting their local environment:

Community Conservation Fund - This fund is for local community conservation groups based and working in New Zealand, and engaged in hands-on ecological restoration or conservation.

Environmental Education Action Fund - This fund is for New Zealand schools, environmental education providers and community groups running education programmes where action for the environment is part of learning. We'll be accepting applications for both

these funds from 14 September to 9 October 2020. Visit our website to find out if your project is suitable for funding and how to apply.

If you have any queries contact WWF on Grant Administrator: 027 455 0051, Freephone: 0800 435 7993, Email: [community@wwf.org.nz](mailto:community@wwf.org.nz) for Community Conservation Fund, [education@wwf.org.nz](mailto:education@wwf.org.nz) for Environmental Education Action.



## Owhango Alive - FUNGI FINDS

Well, "Lockdown Level 3" certainly gave us the freedom to get back out and explore our special Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve - and indeed, the exploring was good for the soul, the body (that had overeaten) and for the fungi fanatics who love this time of year. Yep, guilty as charged and unashamed to boot, re the fungi foraging and the overeating ☹️. Best field mushroom season ever! AND I had friends equally enthused about the fossicking for fungi – truly!

There were some lovely finds, and having invested in the book "A Field Guide to New Zealand Fungi" by Shirley Kerr, we were able to identify most of our 'shrooms... which I have learnt is the colloquialism for mushrooms, toadstools and other weird fairy-tale stuff. Note to self.... get a good camera and learn how to use it.



The biggest excitement was to receive a message, from someone who obviously knew about Owhango Alive, saying that he'd spotted blue mushrooms

downstream of the Whakapapa Bridge! Now, these are pretty special, so I charged down to the River to search for them – that took some time of walking along what we call "The Boathole Track". When I say walking, think as in step, look left, look right, listen, look again, step, repeat.... and so on.... 600 metres on and I SPOTTED THE BEAUTIES, cobalt blue and gleaming secretively on a grounded punga log! What a find! The colour looks so unnatural – not at all like something Mother Nature would dish up... they're fabulous.... check out the photos. Werewere-kokako, or *Entoloma hochstetteri*. The werewere-kokako has been given its name from an old Tuhoë story, in which the kokako bird rubs its wattles on the mushroom, thus taking on the blue colour. And here are some of the other gems discovered on our walks.



## Creating a Much-Needed Learning Environment In A Magical Forest Setting

A Field Base | Community Hub is being created in the heart of Mahakirau Forest Estate providing a unique learning centre and an exquisite 'place' to connect people to nature.

The Mahakirau Forest Estate conservation project is located in beautiful native forest on the crest of the Coromandel Ranges. For almost 20 years the Mahakirau Society have been undertaking an extensive programme to protect and enhance the natural environment. We are guardians of some of New Zealand's most endangered treasures which are nationally identified conservation priorities, including:

\* ARCHEY'S FROG | One of the world's most endangered amphibians, the Archey's Frog is no. 1 on the London Zoological Society's EDGE List (Ecologically Distinct Globally Endangered).

\* NORTHERN STRIPED GECKO | TOROPUKU COROMANDEL | Mahakirau is home to 80% of the listed population of these newly discovered rare geckos.

\* HELM'S BUTTERFLY (FOREST RINGLET | On the brink of extinction, the Helm's Butterfly was previously common throughout New Zealand. However an expert from David Attenborough's UK Butterfly Conservation Trust recently spent 12 weeks searching the span of the country and only found 5 – solely at Mahakirau.

\* NORTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI | The Coromandel is the only part of New Zealand where the kiwi population is growing and our kiwi survey this year has identified 5-7 birds calling, the first for some years. It is truly thrilling to be welcoming them home again.

We are experiencing strong demand for people to engage with, and gain insight from our project and will greatly benefit from a dedicated 'place' to provide:

- A learning centre on site with educational resources and the opportunity to immediately practice what has been learnt.
- A base where scientific and academic experts can stay short term and therefore study on site, attracting high quality partnerships.
- A base for community conservation volunteers to meet, share knowledge and inspire others.

We have raised 75% of the funding required to build a Community Hub facility with grateful support from NZ Lotteries Commission, QEII National Trust, Pub Charity Ltd, Trust Waikato, Waikato Regional Council, private donations and the proceeds of a

cake stall from our local pre-school, Riverlee. We are currently running a GiveALittle campaign to raise the final budget required to make this dream a reality: <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-us-build-a-field-base-or-community-hub>

For more information on this project please see: <http://www.mahakirau.co.nz/>



### Waiwhakareke Update

Thank you to all those hard-working volunteers who have helped complete the planting programme for 2020. From the replacement Arbor Day planting when many colonising species were put in the ground to the planting of enrichment species such as Rimu, Kauri and Tawa. So much has been achieved in spite of all the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Now we ask for your help in carrying out the releasing of these plantings to ensure they get the best possible start in their new location. Releasing is needed for most plants for their first two years in the Park. It involves stamping down the grasses, which we call a "pukeko stomp", round the main stem of the plant to stop smothering. We don't actually pull out the grass as that risks drying out. Many volunteers find it a very satisfying task to locate a hidden plant and release it. We welcome anyone to help us over the next 6 months.

Remember we meet at the Brymer Rd carpark opposite the Hamilton Zoo at 9am on the last Saturday of every month except December. For more information visit the Hamilton City Council [website](#) or [facebook](#) | Catherine Smith, Friends of Waiwhakareke, Tui 2000 Inc.



Arbor Day 2020

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## Rings Beach Wetland Group Spring 2020 Update

RBWG manages a 270-hectare block of public conservation land between Matarangi and Kuaotunu. We have an extensive network of traps for predator control, maintained and serviced weekly by volunteers. Our intention is to extend this trapping to encompass the entire reserve, when funding becomes available. There are also public walking tracks with entrances at Matarangi and at Rings beach.

This month the third year of wilding pine removal is taking place with funding provided by environment Waikato. Our goal is to eradicate wilding conifers from the reserve within the next two years and with a new grant from National wilding conifer control group, for conifer control over the whole Kuaotunu sub-peninsular, this is now achievable. Maintenance

and hand sawing/pulling of small seedlings will be required for some years to come until native regeneration establishes.

In June 2020 a Kiwi count was carried out in the reserve and results were very encouraging. Two breeding pairs are believed to be resident and as many as 7 individual bird calls were recorded. Many thanks to Project Kiwi for their expertise and analysis of the recordings. Monitoring will take place again in June next year.

Our group is always looking for new volunteers and supporters - If anyone in the Matarangi- Kuaotunu area would like to get involved or make a donation please contact us - [ringsbeachwetlandgroup@gmail.com](mailto:ringsbeachwetlandgroup@gmail.com)



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## Waikato Regional Council Shovel Ready Projects Update

Follow links to see specific projects;

[ONE BILLION TREES](#) - We secured \$1.49 million in Government One Billion Trees funding for two planting projects with iwi groups. Both projects build on work that is already underway and will create jobs in the eco-sourcing and growing of plants in nurseries.

[JOBS FOR NATURE](#) - We secured \$5.535 million in Government Jobs for Nature funding for quick-start

restoration projects. All our projects involve working collaboratively with iwi, landowners, the Department of Conservation and/or other agencies. The work will also support local contractors and businesses.

[CLIMATE RESILIENCE](#) - We secured \$23.8 million from the Government's COVID-19 recovery fund for climate resilience projects. This money will go towards 10 flood protection and catchment projects which are already underway

A close-up photograph of a shovel digging into dark, rich soil. The shovel is blue and has a yellow handle. The background is slightly blurred, showing more soil and some green plants.

**1 Shovel ready projects**

We're ready to dig in!

## Manaia River Restoration

Manaia was well known for its rich abundance of food in the river, estuary and sea. Fishing and mussel farming employ locals (as well as the total immersion school Te Wharekura O Manaia), however changes in the catchment have seen an increase in siltation, runoff and localised flooding resulting in a decline in stream health. In the community there is growing concern about the state of the water and a desire by local iwi and landowners to take action and preserve the awa for future generations.

This project builds on river management works that have been carried out by the regional council, marae, iwi and adjacent landowners since the 2002 'weather bomb'. It will improve river water quality, reduce sedimentation build-up in the harbour and provide opportunities for cottage industry, bringing to life the aspirations of iwi for their awa. The programme of work helps realise the Manaia River Restoration Plan, which was recently developed by landowners and the regional council.

### Key outputs;

- Establishing a local native plant nursery.
- Planting over 40,000 eco-sourced native trees – predominantly wetland species.
- Fencing and planting the Manaia River channel and its tributaries, from the mountains to the sea.
- Comprehensive water quality monitoring programme.
- Upper catchment predator control.
- Kauri dieback measures and monitoring.
- Training a local workforce in planting, weed control and vegetation management.
- Environmental benefits
- Improved water quality through reduced sediment and nutrient inputs.
- Improved biodiversity through habitat enhancement, weed control, and predator control. Total funding received: \$855,592, Total project cost: \$1,155,59



## Continuing Kuriri Conundrums - Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre

Five of the satellite tags we put on Pacific Golden Plover/ Kuriri this season seem to have died but the sixth, on the bird we named Rā for her red and yellow bands, keeps fooling us by missing reporting dates, then springing back into life. The latest message, on 14 September, shows her near the mouth of the Black River in Alaska, where she has been since 31

July, alternating her time between the tundra and a coastal beach. Before that, she spent most of June and July 500km further north in the tundra near Shishmaref on the Seward Peninsula.

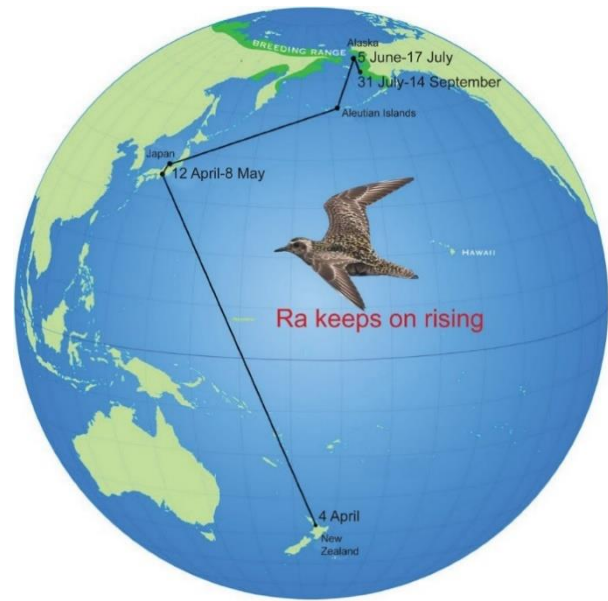
Despite the intermittent operation of her tag, it has given us some good information on Rā's movements

in the Hauraki Gulf prior to migrating north – moving round between Pūkoro, Karito and Piako – and on the two months she then spent in Japan. Hopefully, she will shortly start on her southward migration and the tag will allow us to follow progress.

Meanwhile, the first Kuriri have started arriving in New Zealand. Tony Habraken saw a tired, newly-arrived bird at Karaka on the Manukau Harbour on 6 September and Gillian Vaughan spotted two at Pūkoro the following weekend. By 23 September there were four at Pūkoro.

Unfortunately, our two main observers from previous seasons, JoJo Doyle and Amanda Hunt, will not be with us this summer so we are going to need all the help we can get watching for returning Pacific Golden Plovers. If you spot a bird sporting coloured

bands or an antenna, please note the details and contact the Shorebird Centre. Jim Eagles



### Matuku Hurepo Released into the Otama Reserve Wetland

Matuku Hurepo (Australasian Bittern) are an extremely sensitive species that are rarely seen, living in the New Zealand wetlands. These birds are an endangered species due to habitat loss, predators, poor water quality and decline in food sources.

On March 12th 2020, an injured juvenile, emaciated Matuku Hurepo was found and taken into the care of Annemieke Kregting from Kuaotunu Bird Rescue. The bird initially was incubated, put on fluids and crop fed, and as it improved it was placed into a private aviary and fed salmon smolt and mice, on which it thrived and doubled its body weight. Annemieke cares for native birds that are found distressed or unwell, with the aim to release them back into the wild when recovered.

Emma Williams from Bittern Conservation had planned to band the Matuku Hurepo and attach a transmitter for research purposes, however due to COVID-19 restrictions, she was unable to. It was decided to release the bird into the wild, before it became distressed in captivity and reliant on a feeding regime. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, the rescued Matuku Hurepo was released into the Otama Wetland Reserve by Department of Conservation (DOC) Ranger Troy McDonald and Paul Kington from the Otama Reserves Group.

The Otama Reserves Group was thrilled to have the opportunity to introduce the Matuku Hurepo into the Otama Wetland, as they have previously been sighted and heard in the wetlands. They make a distinctive booming sound in the breeding season. The Otama Reserves Group hopes to increase the numbers of this rare bird and since its release into the wetland, this juvenile has been sighted a number of times by members of the community.

The Otama Reserves Group, is a community based organisation that has been running a pest control program for several years and is reaping the rewards of their efforts with the return of native bird species in the area including the critically endangered Matuku Hurepo (Bittern) Matata (Fernbird), Mohopereru (Banded Rail), Pateke (Brown Teal), Karuhiruhi (Pied Shag), Kawaupaka (Little Shag), Kawau-tua-whenua (Black Shag), Kotare (Kingfisher), Tuturiwhatu pukunui (Dotteral) and Torea-pango (Oyster Catcher). Their efforts have resulted in the successful fledging of 2 Tuturiwhatu pukunui (Dotteral) chicks this year and our first Torea-pango (Oyster Catcher) chick in 5 years.

The Otama Reserves Group is working with DOC, Waikato Regional Council, coastal ecologists Jim Dahm and Meg Graeme, and landowners to undertake a wetland restoration project. It has aspirations of creating a biodiversity corridor from



bush to beach, incorporating the native forest on its border which is part of Project Kiwi, through the wetland system and lagoon, and a nationally significant regenerating sand dune system. They plan to monitor the progress of the restoration project

from its inception and record the increase in native species diversity. A bird log of native birds sighted in the Otama Wetland is being created by Ana Kington. Many thanks must be provided to all involved in the release of this bird into the Otama Reserve Wetland.

