



Waikato Biodiversity Forum

Ngā Kaihāpai Rerenga Rauropi o Waikato

Spring Newsletter 2021 Number 71

Kia ora tātou,

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

- Edited, published and gathered articles for Spring 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 enquiries from email and 0800 bio div service
- Organisation of Biodiversity and Climate Change event

DOC Waikato Update

The Waikato DOC Office has had a busy few months as we moved in and out of Alert Level restrictions. There's been a publication of a new Maui dolphin population estimate which is now reported to be 54 dolphins. See the [report here](#).

A pest fishing operation is underway at Rotopiko Lakes, and a team of DOC folk and volunteers from the Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society have carried out *Dactylanthus* seed collection this season, including the sowing of eight new plots. There is also currently a *Cuscuta* survey underway and weed control planned for Lake Whangape. Living Water has successfully installed a new pest fish barrier at Lake Ruatuna and put 900 plants in the ground on site.

At Te Kauri goat control is underway, and in Whangamarino Wetland *Corybas* pre-burning monitoring and burning has begun. Research is currently underway by Te Papa Museum in collaboration with DOC to learn more about *Corybas* reproduction. A media release can be found on the DOC website: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2021-media-releases/the-perfect-match-uncovering-secrets-of-the-swamp-helmet-orchid/>

The Alert Level restrictions meant a few Conservation Week (4 – 12 September) events were tweaked to comply with restrictions - the week was a great success! We'd like to thank everyone who helped by attending or hosting events.



Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society Update

The seasons they are a-changing, and the time has come once again for a small group of our dedicated volunteers to make the pilgrimage up Pirongia maunga to sow the seeds of *Dactylanthus taylorii*. *Dactylanthus*, also known as “wood rose”, and in Māori as “te pua o te rēinga” is the only endemic parasitic flowering plant in Aotearoa. Historically, their primary pollinator has been the native short-tailed bat, however due to their declining numbers, the PRS team have taken up this role. It's a long wait to see the fruits of our labour though, with the average germination time for *Dactylanthus* being 4 years!

September also saw our mighty volunteer army filling bait stations in our 1,300 ha grid on the maunga, and our ecologists busy surveying kokako in preparation for the upcoming breeding season. So far, 8 pairs have been identified within the managed area. Speed bumps and signage have been installed to encourage motorists to slow down and be wary of kokako possibly nesting nearby on Grey Rd. Our special thanks to Waipa District Council and Department of Conservation for this incredible support.

Speaking of support, we are humble recipients of further grants for our mahi, including \$10,000 from Trust Waikato for kokako protection and \$1500 from Waipa District Council to go towards heating in our Envirocentre, which is nearing completion. We are very much looking forward to a busy season ahead (COVID-19 permitting) and we hope to see you all out there!



Speed bumps and signage have been installed to encourage motorists to slow down.



Dactylanthus seeds being sown in a grid by one of our volunteers. Cara Hansen, DoC.

Karioi Project Update

Happy spring everyone. The pipiharauroa / shining cuckoo are singing in the new season. Despite the shock of being back at Level 3 - we're excited to be able to spend time outside. It's also ōi chick season ! It's been a busy few months. We're all dealing with the changes in Alert Levels. We also want to keep our team and volunteers safe as they check traps and monitor seabird activity.

This ōi breeding season has also been tough. Sadly, we've already lost several ōi adults to ferrets this year. Ferret incursions have been increasing all around NZ. As rabbit populations grow, ferret numbers are increasing too. The abundance of these two species is strongly correlated, so if you can help control rabbits please contact us! We're asking local landowners to control rabbits on their property, or open their property up for rabbit control and also seeking volunteers to help with rabbit hunting. Our rangers have been working hard to track ferret activity all around

Whāingaroa, and we're eager to learn more about these elusive creatures. The lessons we learn today will hopefully help future generations of ōi chicks survive. The Karioi Team.



Bringing Together A Predator Free Waikato – Go Eco

The Predator Free 2050 movement continues to gain momentum with more groups and individuals participating in pest control nationwide. With this surge of enthusiasm, comes a need for guidance, ethical practices and increasing pressure on a small pool of over-subscribed funds.

A recent meeting of a small group of stakeholders acknowledged that there is some groundwork to do in order to progress the conversation while the broader Collective Impact project is underway.

Because pests wait for no person, Go Eco and a small group of those stakeholders is continuing the conversation and undertaking a scoping exercise to gauge interest in forming an umbrella group of Predator Free groups within the Waikato basin. A collaborative approach has been beneficial in other regions, helping with funding, education, advocacy, technology and sharing of resources.

If your restoration group is undertaking predator control and would be interested in discussing a 'Predator Free Waikato' approach, then contact Jo Wrigley manager@goeco.org.nz



Media Agog Over Our Gobsmacking Godwits - Pūkoro Mirando Shorebird Centre

This year's epic migration of Bar-tailed Godwits/Kuaka from Alaska to New Zealand and eastern Australia attracted amazing publicity for PMNT's work. Adrian Riegen's reports on Facebook about the godwits' progress drew a huge global audience. The reports were also picked up by other social media like Twitter, as well as traditional media, like newspapers, magazines, radio and television, around the globe, some of which you can see on these pages. As this season's southern migration drew to an end, PMNT organised a webinar where Adrian, supported by Council members, told the compelling inside story of the migration. It had a live audience of 408, many from overseas, and has since been seen on YouTube by a further 1,252. Promotional emails and Facebook messages were posted before and after the event and helped attract \$1,055 in general donations and \$1,842 towards further bird tracking work, as well as selling 20 copies of Keith's Godwits book, 10 calendars, 10 tea towels and six memberships. In addition, the mailing list for our eNewsletter jumped by around 500. The only disappointment is that, as Keith Woodley put it, 'Normally with this amount of publicity we'd be deluged with visitors. But they're not allowed to come. [Click here](#) to see full Journal of Pūkoro Mirando Natrualists' Trust



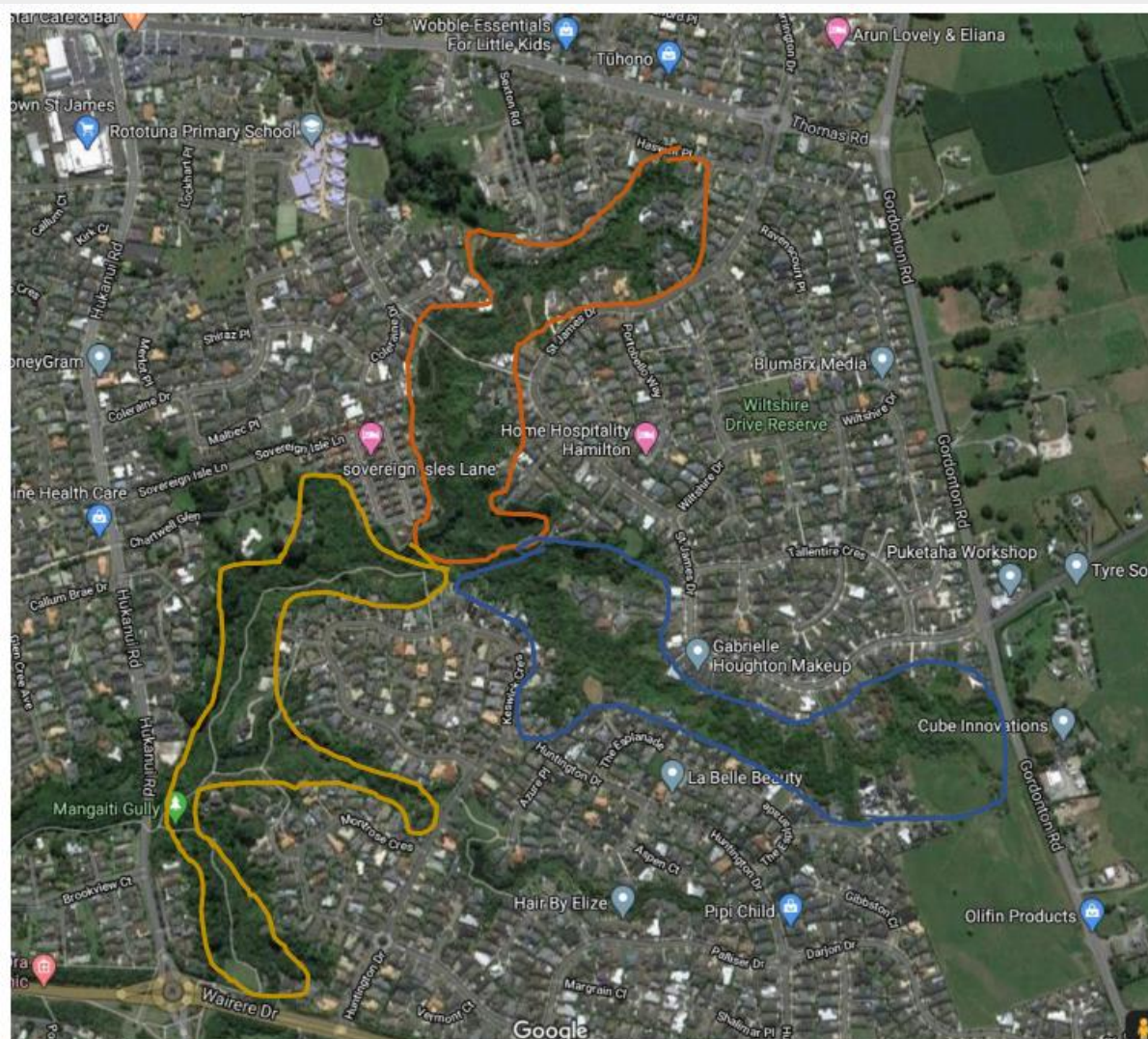
The "Jobs for Nature" crew- Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

At 7am on Monday morning I welcomed the Jobs for Nature crew to their first day on the job. This has been a long drawn out process with covid continually causing delays. Last week DOC approved our covid management safety plan which gave us the all clear to finally get started. There are three organisations that I must acknowledge and thank for their support, without which this project would never have got off the ground. Go Eco with their administration infrastructure to support the employment of staff, Ngāti Wairere whose Hapū covers the Mangaiti Gully came on board with their support via Go Eco and the support from Hamilton City Council who are the legal guardians of the gully. The full welcoming ceremony, which we originally planned, was scuttled by level 3 lock down. Notwithstanding covid we are still hopeful that we may be able to resurrect this in the near future and have a community open day so the public can have the opportunity to meet the crew and discuss our future plans covering the next three years. The JFN Crew will be focusing their work in Zone 2 of the gully. There are three main zones within the gully. The existing state of each zone will dictate how a management plan is developed for each zone.

Zone 1/ Mangaiti Gully Restoration Trust which has varying stages of restoration work. Accessible.

Zone 2/ Hamilton City Council, Parks & Open Spaces which has varying stages of restoration work. Accessible.

Zone 3/ Clearing, planting and track design started in this zone mid-2021. Limited access.



The Friends of Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust - Playing With Eels! Whitebait Connection

Students at Whenuakite, Mercury Bay Area and Te Rerenga Schools have participated in an experiential learning programme about freshwater conservation and catchment restoration, The Whitebait Connection (WBC).

This is the third year the programme has been offered by provider organisation The Friends of Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust. Local area resident Amber Boyd delivers the programme to schools in the region.

The Trust would like to thank Waikato Regional Council's Environmental Initiatives Fund for their three-year funding of this programme. With this funding we can offer the programme at no cost to schools. (photo students in stream with eel)

The program consists of a power point presentation which teaches about freshwater systems, how to monitor freshwater, what rivers need to be "healthy" and also all about whitebait. The best part of

the program is getting the children out to the rivers to test the water health. The “bug hunting” being the favourite part of this for many children.

Students from age 4 years to Year 8 school level are getting freshwater conservation education along with teachers and parents in the Coromandel/Hauraki area. It utilises an inquiry framework of learning enabling students to focus on a variety of fresh water topics best suited to their community. Students will formulate an action plan that does something for the freshwater environment in their community based on the knowledge they have gained during the programme.

- Te Rerenga School has a wetland project that they are working on continuously.
- Whenuakite School is working on a stream restoration project behind the school. Amber has been supporting them and helping with work.
- Mercury Bay Area School is working on planting and restoration of a wetland at the Mercury Bay Bike Park. Amber and the students are going to test the water and help with planting.

Amber wants the WBC program to be able to have a more long-term impact on the students. Doing more riparian planting and more whitebait spawning sites. This year’s work (above) proves the programme is working! We now have it in place and continuing.

The WBC programme is available to any school in the Hauraki/Coromandel area thanks to funding provided by WRC EIF. Many schools in the region have taken up the opportunity in the past.

If you would like more information or to register your school’s interest in the WBC programme, please contact Hauraki/Coromandel Regional Coordinator - Amber Boyd amber@whitebaitconnection.co.nz



Morrinsville Joining Predator Free Communities For Bats And Birds

Following the recent discovery of pekapeka-tou-roa (native long-tailed bats) in Morrinsville; a community network is being established to help give them and other native wildlife a fighting chance against predators. Go Eco and Piako Catchment Forum are launching Predator Free Morrinsville, with an information session, and working bee on the 6th of November. The working bee will involve building rat trap tunnels for backyards, and community trapping programmes in public areas including Holmwood Park Reserve and the Morrinsville River Walk. They aim to send 100 traps into the community for the launch.

Their long-term goal is to have 1 in 5 Morrinsville properties controlling predators like rats, stoats and possums. Based on results in other predator free communities, this will help protect our bats and bring more native birds like tūi into Morrinsville. As part of the launch they will provide information about the native species living in Morrinsville.

and how working with neighbours and a wider community can improve results. All interested Morrinsville residents are welcome! Note: Event is subject to COVID-19 alerts and will run under Level 2 with a maximum of 50 participants. Attendees asked to bring their own hammer.



Please [register here](#) 9.30am – 12pm, 6th November / Rotary Club Hall, Canada Street, Morrinsville

Contact: Harvey Aughton / Go Eco – harvey@goeco.org.nz | Norm Mason / Piako Catchment Forum – masonn@landcareresearch.co.nz 021 1535031
