



Winter Newsletter 2022 Number 74

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 with latest notices, and updated website and facebook page
- Responded to enquiries from email and 0800 bio div service
- Organisation of Soil Health and Biodiversity event
- Participated in on-going National Science Challenge Co-design hui: Scaling collective action through shared learning

Thames Coast Kiwi Care, Signs of Success

A recent road sign on the Thames Coast is so much more than a traffic warning – it's an indicator to the wider public that the hard work of Thames Coast Kiwi Care is paying real dividends. And soon that should extend well beyond kiwi, thanks to major funding from Waikato Regional Council.

Our dedicated trappers continue their amazing mahi targeting mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels) to protect the resident kiwi population. Two separate acoustic surveys that measure kiwi calls in the 5000-hectare project area confirm the numbers are healthy and relatively stable, with at least 48 pairs in the survey area, with calling rates observed continuing to increase annually. The overall population is estimated to have grown about 15 percent per year since 2006 to now number around 250.

But wait, there's more, as the old saying goes – TCKC is grateful to have received a huge boost from Waikato Regional Council's Natural Heritage fund that we expect to create big biodiversity returns. The fund will provide \$270,000 over the next 4 years, which will allow a major expansion of our project. Next year we'll add a new part-time project coordinator to extend our traplines with the award-winning, self-setting AT220 traps that target possums and rats. This will protect not only kiwi but the entire ecosystem. The funding also ensures continuity for 4 years, which is a first for TCKC.

We've had other sponsorship success through the year, notably from WWF New Zealand and the Tindall Foundation, and we value all our supporters, big and small. Another new development is a branding refresh. Volunteer Simon Leer has given our website thamescoastkiwicare.org a makeover and we're sporting a brand-new logo. Artist Rick Fisher of Ngāti Tamaterā says his design represents TCKC and all it stands for; kiwi and the role of all including tangata whenua in caring for sky, land, and water. These are all highly visible elements of Thames Coast Kiwi Care and we look forward to sharing more signs of success into the future.



Half our wonderful dedicated volunteer trappers



Owhango Alive - Our Magnificent Fungi Hunt

On May 23rd 2022 Grandma Rowan, Corbin, Brenda, Sally, Lois, Tania and I went on a fungi hunt in the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve. We first met up at 'Owhango Alive HQ', also known as Sally's house. We introduced ourselves, talked a bit, and then headed off.

After our first steps up the track we realised that a big tree had fallen on the track. We looked around it to find mushrooms, but there weren't any on it. We kept walking and showed everyone some of the fungi Grandma, Corbin, Brenda and I had found the previous week. Everyone thought they were fantastic to see!

About 10-15 minutes later I found a blue mushroom. I felt splendid as it was the first blue mushroom that I had ever found! Once we had found another 'Entoloma Hochstetteri', blue fungi, we realised that they grow in the darkest and dampest places. Lois is a fungi expert and she shared names and information about lots of our finds.

Later Grandma and Corbin left. The rest of us kept looking for mushrooms because we were enthusiastic about finding more magnificent fungi. Every time we found something new or interesting we took turns snapping pictures. We were very satisfied with our fungi finds and all the photos we took. By Anya Dee Warrilow. <https://www.owhango.co.nz/owhango-alive/>



Chair of Predator-Free Hamilton Trust (PFH)

Do you have the energy and enthusiasm to step into a voluntary leadership position for the Predator-Free Hamilton Trust? The current Chair is stepping down and we are looking for someone with the vision and ideas to revitalise the Trust's predator control efforts within Hamilton.

A background in conservation and, preferably, experience in community conservation groups would be advantageous. However, the position does not require deep knowledge of predator control as other members of the Trust have that.

The Trust works in partnership with GoEco (the Waikato Environment Centre) to support community trapping in Hamilton by setting up groups and providing traps, training and advice. It is responsible for strategy, policy, and ensuring that the Trust's operations are information based and reflect best practice.

The Trust meets monthly, except January. As well as this regular meeting, which typically takes around an hour and a half, the Chair may represent the Trust on various initiatives and attend workshops and seminars.

The current trustees include representatives of Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research, NZ Landcare Trust, Forest and Bird and members of community conservation groups. Depending on other commitments and the agenda, representatives of Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, GoEco and the Department of Conservation may also attend.

In terms of the Trust's deed the new Chair would need to join the Trust, being voted on by the existing members. This is a voluntary position. The current Chair is remaining as a trustee and will work alongside the new Chair for an induction period. Please direct inquiries to the current chair: Kemble Pudney, Mobile: 027 747 0442, Email: watsonia58@gmail.com More information about the Trust can be found on our website, www.predatorfreehamilton.org.nz



Pūkorooro Miranda Shorebird Centre - Keith Woodley: Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit

Reading the list of the Queen's Birthday and New Years Honours each year is a reminder how many people go above and beyond in so many areas of society. This year our own Keith Woodley received a New Zealand Order of Merit for services to shorebird conservation. An accolade well deserved.

The citation for Keith reads: Mr Keith Woodley has been the Shorebird Centre Manager for the Pūkorooro Miranda Naturalists' Trust (PMNT) for 28 years. In that time, Mr Woodley has led an ever-expanding range of Trust activities from various annual courses including Wader Identification, through organising visits of national and international speakers, delivering talks to local schools, ensuring wardens and field staff at the centre are undertaking trapping, and engaging with iwi to address environmental issues while meeting Treaty of Waitangi obligations. In his time as manager, the Shorebird Centre has grown to be a popular stop for tourists and the largest specialist natural history bookshop in New Zealand. He has published two books, one on godwits in 2009 and another on New Zealand shorebirds in 2012. He has made a significant contribution to the work of PMNT in East Asia, as an integral part of the New Zealand delegation to the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership.

He has travelled regularly to China, North and South Korea to work on projects and advocate for the protection of key habitats to maintain shorebird migratory patterns to New Zealand, including the signing of an agreement with China in 2016 and an application for World Heritage Status to protect these habitats. Mr Woodley has been on the Birds New Zealand Council since 2014.

As a summary it skims over the surface of the work that our consummate communicator Keith has done over the, last, nearly 30, years. Luckily for us Keith is in the final stages of publishing a book on the history of the PMNT, and his own history, where you will be able to read all the details! The book is due out in November, and an extract from the book is in the latest issue of the [PMNT newsletter here](#).



Keith Woodley on the shellbanks. Photo / ANZ

Soil Health & Our Farming's Future

How healthy is the soil on your farm? Apart from heaving on fertiliser mixes as recommended, how often do you check on its physical, chemical and biological/ecological health, using a variety of tests across all that space that you can do yourself? With all the problems going on in the world at present, you may have discovered from your reading or watching, that New Zealand is not self-sufficient in its food production. We can

eat meat and dairy products forever, but there are a lot of foodstuffs that we have to import, and when the world is in upheaval, from pandemics or wars, some of those may not be available, or the ships bringing them aren't arriving as we usually expect. As everything we eat comes from soil, maybe we need to be able to check that our soil is healthy enough to grow other crops in sufficient quantities to feed our people, which might cause some changes in how we actually farm.

How 'alive' are our soils? Do we have sufficient, or a balance of the 'critters' (fungi, bacteria and all the small ones moving around there) who are the symbiosis experts, who keep the right things moving in the right directions. Is the constant plant cover adding the carbon and sugars, and swapping them for the things plants need but can't produce themselves? In recent years there has been an enormous amount of new research, which is going on all over the world, on soil life and how it works together. We are only just learning how fungi and bacteria got our world started, and are keeping it going, along with plants and animals. Their methods are based on symbiosis, which is an overall 'give and take' system, where each facet helps the others, while taking what they need themselves.

However farming, even in New Zealand, has long been based on what we can get out of soil, rather than working with it. With our ever increasing spreading of chemicals we may have killed off the life sources within our soils, which will, over time, reduce their productivity, even if you haven't actually measured this yet, or just increased the amount you spread. It is possible to get working ecosystems going again, but you need to know how to do it. And soon!

When we looked around to find information on suitable tests we can mostly do ourselves, there were bits here and bits there, but nothing all in one place that we can study. So I have put together a series of eight articles on different ways you can actually look at what is there, or not, and decide just what is, or should be going on in the black stuff beneath whatever you grow on top. These have already appeared in the 1 August edition of Farmers Weekly, with the first one as a Pulpit and all 8 on the website as a feature. <https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/special-report/diy-soil-health-special-feature/> And Feds didn't want to be left out and they are appearing monthly in Feds News. We hope to put them together in a handy downloadable booklet soon. By Sue Edmonds



GOOD CONDITION VS = 2
Mottles are generally absent.



MODERATE CONDITION VS = 1
Soil has common (10-25%) fine and medium orange and grey mottles



POOR CONDITION VS = 0
Soil has abundant to profuse (>50%) medium and coarse orange and particularly grey mottles

Te Pahū Landcare Group Celebrated its 20th Birthday

Te Pahū Landcare Group celebrated its 20th birthday with a gathering during Conservation Week, and kindly supported by DOC. Held on Sunday 11th September at the Kāniwhaniwha Reserve, it was a great opportunity for dedicated volunteers, whom have all contributed to the group over the years, to come together and celebrate. Co-founder of the group, Maxine Fraser, whose husband Tony Fraser suggested starting a care group in 2002, attended, along with many others, including current students from Te Pahu School. Starting with morning tea, the group then headed along the Nikau walkway beside the Kāniwhaniwha stream to admire 20 years of riparian planting, learn more about the group's current weeding and trapping efforts and wētā monitoring. A number of locally sourced native trees were planted along the walkway to mark the occasion. The group headed back to the Reserve for a sausage sizzle for lunch. The celebratory cake was cut by Maxine, shared around, and eaten while people reminisced about past achievements and future plans were discussed.

The Te Pahū landcare group are always keen for more volunteers to assist with their trapping work. Trapping efforts can be seen on Trap.nz here. If you'd like to receive emails about the monthly weeding activities, please contact Nardene at: landcare@tepahu.co.nz



Maxine planting a tree during our celebration (photo credit: Liz Overdyck).

20th Anniversary Cake and plaque to be installed (photo credit: Nardene Berry)

Restoring Nature In Hamilton City

The team at Hamilton City Council have been busy delivering year 2 of our thirty-year Nature in the City programme. The aim is to restore Hamilton's native vegetation cover from 2% to 10% by 2050. So what's been happening in our neck of the woods?

We launched our first restoration project under the programme at Donny Park/Kukutaaruhe Gully. The name of the gully, Kukutaaruhe, stems from the history of local hapuu Ngaati Wairere. The name depicts the flight of the Kuku otherwise known as the Kereru, Kukupa or Native Wood Pigeon. It also depicts the hapuu matauranga knowledge of seasons, migration patterns, native fauna and flora patterns, the river/stream ecology as well as weather movement.

In May we held a ground breaking event with Ngaati Wairere and the community. together we shared kai, blessed the site and planted over 1000 natives. Looking to the future, we've developed a planting plan for the area and have sought feedback from the community and iwi on these plans.

We wouldn't get far with our big restoration goal without the help of our wonderful volunteers. During the planting season (May to September), we've had approximately 1815 volunteers contribute over 3500 hours of work, preparing land, planting trees and removing pest plant species. In addition to this, we've had our tireless regulars, around 100 dedicated volunteers in various groups who show up for nature every week, fortnight or month.

Reports of kereru sightings have increased recently – our team even saw a kereru doing a ‘mating dive’ in Jubilee Park. After the success Hamilton has seen bringing tuui back thanks to the Halo Project, we are excited to see what we can do under the Nature in the City programme.

To encourage our community to get out into nature and explore Hamilton's natural treasures, we created treasure maps for five of our gullies and natural areas. You can download them here, talk a walk and find the treasures – from nesting ruru to rare plants, there is plenty to see if you know what to look for!



Waiwhakareke Natrual Heritage Park