



Spring Newsletter 2023 Number 79

Kia ora tātou,

Some of the work undertaken over the past three months:

- Organisation and hosting of the Waikato Biodiversity Forum Landscape Scale Biodiversity Restoration Wānanga
- Participating in on-going National Science Challenge Co-design hui: Scaling collective action through shared learning
- Chaired and took minutes for WBF Focus group meetings

Waikato Biodiversity Forum Landscape Scale Biodiversity Restoration Wānanga

The Waikato Biodiversity Forum Landscape Scale Biodiversity Restoration Wānanga took place at Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain Education Centre on the 8th of November. The day was extremely popular, with registration numbers suddenly outstripping expectations, meaning we had to scramble to find extra funding for catering and even turn down some late registrations, which was unfortunate but necessary as there were counts of over 100 people in the room on the day!

The number of people in attendance and the spread of those people involved in projects, from literally all over the rohe, was amazing to see and reflective of the growing desire to collaborate and increase the scale of our restoration efforts. The attractiveness of the venue was undoubtedly also a draw card. Maungatautari Mountain is always stunning, but we were lucky to be able to enjoy it on a sunny day, as well as being able to utilise the new education centre which proved to be a fantastic space.

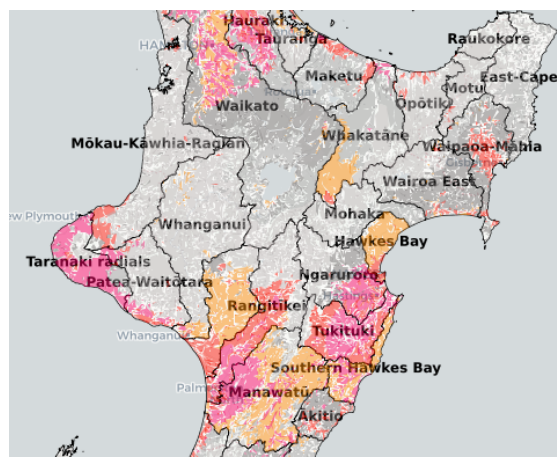
The day began with Bodie Taylor, MSM Sancturay Manager and Tangata Whenua, giving us mihi whakatau full of wairua and aroha. This really made us feel welcome and set us up to have the successful day which followed. The day featured six speakers, Toni Cornes - [Nature in the City](#), Bexie Towle - [Taiea Te Taiao](#), Karen Barlow - [Bush to Burbs](#), Dan Howie - [Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari](#), Jude Hoosen - [Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel](#) and Ian Boothroyd - Boffa Miskel, [Connectivity for Biodiversity](#). Each speaker discussed the opportunities and challenges of taking on restoration at a landscape scale in a very raw and honest way. Multiple speakers commented on the scale of these projects offering up both a great opportunity and challenge simultaneously. Working at landscape scales requires a huge range of individuals and groups with diverse interests, all buying into the same vision and taking action. This journey is not an overnighter, nor a simple one. But all these projects are already making differences and gaining momentum. The longest standing project to present was the host, Sanctuary Maungatautari Mountain, who concluded the speaking part of the day. Dan Howie spoke about many of the learnings and pitfalls they have encountered, some of which nearly ended the project completely. But through a great deal of resilience they have continued to progress and now are so successful they are having to translocate species outside the sanctuary, to the tune of 300 kiwi per year! To see all the talks from the day follow these links - [Landscape Scale Biodiversity Restoration – Part 1](#) [Landscape Scale Biodiversity Restoration -Part2](#) . The feedback from attendees of the day have been very positive. The opportunity to share information is crucial to help us to





The Eco-index team have developed a digital toolkit to help reverse the decline of native biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand. They are committed to creating useful, open access tools to share their research findings. Working alongside data analysts and communication advisors, the interdisciplinary team are developing an interactive online map that allows users to explore science-based ecosystem restoration guidance at both catchment and national scales. “Our team are invested in developing tools that make a difference for land managers across the country,” says John Reid, Eco-index co-lead (Ngāti Pikiao, Tainui). “We understand that our findings need to reach the people who can use them, so we’re taking the time to share our information well.”

So, what might the 15% goal look like? If, for example, the natural range of Kahikatea-pukatea-tawa forest in a given catchment is 1,000 hectares but the current day forest only covers 50 hectares, the Ecosystem Restoration Map will recommend restoration of an additional 100 hectares of this forest type to reach the 15% goal.



There has been interest in the Eco-index Ecosystem Restoration Map and 15% goal from many land managers, including those representing agricultural companies, iwi, conservation and catchment groups, and business. "This map is designed to fill an information gap for people and groups from many sectors," says Catherine Kirby, Eco-index Communication and Relationships Manager. "We kept hearing that people were unsure where to start with their biodiversity efforts, so we designed the map as a starting point for users to explore the native ecosystems that are relevant for their catchment."

Click [here to see video](#)

Click [here to see restoration map](#)



Project Tongariro – Our Story

The Tongariro Natural History Society (TNHS), which operates under the name of Project Tongariro (PT), is proof that one event can change the direction of many lives and have significant impact on future generations, and our environment. Tongariro Natural History Society, later Project Tongariro, was formed in 1984 as a living legacy to Tongariro National Park staff who died in a helicopter crash on Mt Ruapehu near Tūroa Skifield on 9 December 1982. Those in the helicopter were:

- Keith Blumhardt: Ranger Whakapapa
- Bill Cooper: Senior Ranger Ohakune
- Derek White: Ranger Whakapapa
- Marie Williams: Park Assistant
- Doug McKenzie: Pilot

The founding members of TNHS were friends and family of the four park staff who died. These people were already strong supporters of Tongariro National Park, but this event created an impetus to do more.

Early efforts focused on assisting with the Summer Nature Programme (now Mahi Aroha), taking visitors

on field trips to showcase the Park's special values. Project Tongariro also commissioned and published books on the natural values of Tongariro National Park. The funds raised were used to assist the Department of Conservation (DOC) with targeted projects DOC was unable to fund itself.

Over the decades Project Tongariro has grown enabling members and volunteers to have a bigger impact on conservation work, undertaking many land-mark projects, such as the much-needed restoration and interpretation of the Historic Waihohonu Hut and the Alpine Garden at Whakapapa. In 2008 PT took on funding responsibility for the restoration of the Hapuawhenua Viaduct along with interpretation of the site, and the Ohakune Old Coach Road, both significant local landmarks and popular visitor destinations today.

Project Tongariro has taken on the prime responsibility for the ongoing restoration of Rotopounamu-Pihanga, an important podocarp forest in Tongariro National Park, Rotopounamu being one of the most popular and visited sites in the park. The work is ongoing and has involved biodiversity surveys, monitoring, and pest control. A trapping network was established and extended over Mt Pihanga as well as an aerial poisoning programme. All this work has taken PT closer to the long-term aspiration of reintroducing endangered species to the area.

Project Tongariro has also taken on work at the large 1,500 hectare Te Mātāpuna Wetlands, adjacent to Lake Taupō, forming important partnerships with DOC and local iwi to enable this work to happen effectively.



TONGARIRO NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Funding from DOC, Waikato Regional Council, and Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust procured by PT has contributed to significant projects in undertaking willow control and restoration planting of natives to greatly improve the biodiversity and habitat at Te Mātāpuna.

Project Tongariro has planned and managed numerous and varied projects over the last four decades, too many to list, but here are a few examples; revegetation of the Lord of the Rings film sites on Mt Ruapehu; a weed project at the site of the old Whanganui Bridge SH47; ongoing flora monitoring and propagation; and the coordination of volunteers in TNP, restoration work at various sites including Oruatua Recreation Reserve (Tūrangi) and the Rongokaupo Wetland (Ohakune), administration of the Kiwi Forever Education Programme, environmental education projects via Kids Green Taupō and Waimarino Restoration. PT also provides support for sporting events in the park as a way to raise funds. Also field trips and educational/informational activities for members as a way to socialise and see what other conservation groups are doing. PT recently became an Environmental Hub which has extended our networks and added another layer of environmental and sustainability awareness to our work.

Today, Project Tongariro and the brands it represents (Greening Taupō, Kids Greening Taupō, Predator Free Taupō, and Waimarino Restoration) work towards a vision, and the underlying goals required to focus on restoring degraded environmental assets by carrying out active restoration projects of all sizes, ranging from planting out podocarp forest in the Tongariro National Park World Heritage Area, to increasing biodiversity in school backyards.

Through effective collaboration across all levels, Project Tongariro is a key facilitator ensuring local councils, Department of Conservation, iwi, landowners, businesses, schools, and individuals are inspired to connect with nature. PT does this by advocating for, and working to strengths to achieve community-driven conservation outcomes.

Project Tongariro has also been able to support the work of others with funding applications, financial management and administration support, including staffing. This has led to the establishment of community projects such as Greening Taupō, Kids Greening Taupō and Predator Free Taupō and Waimarino Restoration, and assisting with Kiwi Forever.

We look forward to a future of more of the same essential biodiversity work. PT increasingly looks to extend out into the field of education and bring others, especially our local communities, and the younger generation, along with us on the journey. We hope to inspire the young to carry on our work to care for nature.



Te Whakaoranga O Karioi - The Karioi Project, Whāingaroa - Multispecies landscape scale predator control, monitoring results, and environmental education.

The Karioi Project has been working to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale, with incredible volunteer support, to bring back populations of seabirds and forest birds. In the past decade, volunteers from the Karioi Project have trapped thousands of introduced predators using over 3,000 traps. This work has resulted in some significant conservation gains, with the 50th ōi chick (Grey Faced Petrel) about to fledge! We are now

also seeing kororā (Little Blue Penguin) back on our coastline, and kororā chicks - a twin pair - are currently sitting in a burrow ready to depart.

Despite this huge effort, our work is not done yet! Each year we continue to expand our network - reducing mustelids, rats, cats and possum populations to achieve better conservation outcomes. Over the past few years, we have intensified our networks by installing bait stations and using toxic baits on up to 1000 hectares. Intensification of predator control will greatly improve forest health and specifically benefit resident forest bird populations of bellbirds, tomtits, tūī, kererū, ruru, kārearea and pekapeka-tou-roa and more. Recent monitoring showed we have reduced possums and rats to 8% and we aim to maintain these levels with ongoing work and expansion and intensification of our network.

Recently we completed our second landscape survey for pekapeka-tou-roa, the long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*), with support from the Department of Conservation, Waikato Regional Council and local ecologists. The results show that these bats are active around the edges of Karioi and in surrounding rural and semi-rural areas including Te Uku, Upper Wainui Rd, Te Hutewai Rd, Maungatawhiri Rd, Houchen Rd, Toreparu wetland and south of Ruapuke. Pekapeka-tou-roa are highly endangered, classed one level below extinct and have the same threatened status as the kākāpō!

The Karioi environmental education programme has just hit its 10th birthday! The programme aims to connect local rangatahi to nature and inspire the next generation of kaitiaki. Approximately 70 kids participate in our after-school programme each year. In partnership with Raglan Area School, we also deliver environmental education through the Manaaki Ao and Hauora programmes for years 1-10. Hundreds of kids participate in a local species workshop and older students in a two-day "ranger experience" in the bush. Since we started, six graduates from these programmes have worked on the Karioi Project team. We also host a range of other schools and tertiary institutes.

If you'd like to connect with us and join our project we'd love to hear from you - please connect via our website: www.karioiproject.co.nz

The Karioi Project is a community-led conservation and education project inspiring our community to connect to nature and restore biodiversity. Initiated by Te Whakaoranga O Karioi (2009) in partnership with members of Tainui o Tainui hapū and Ngati Whakamarurangi hapū, A Rocha Aotearoa NZ, Whāingaroa Environment Centre, Department of Conservation, Waikato Regional Council and the Whāingaroa/Raglan community.



Ōwhango Alive – Sam The Trap Man

On Sunday August 6th, Whanganui Region Catchment Collective (WRCC) held a trapping workshop at the Kaitieke Hall, about 20ks from Ōwhango. The invited speaker was Hamiora Gibson, AKA Sam the Trap Man. Sam is an ecologist and coordinator with Landcare Trust, covering the East Coast/Tairāwhiti area. Sam has

over 20 years experience in predator control and wildlife monitoring – he shared lots of tips on trap lures, trap maintenance and methods for targeting specific predators.

Sam also talked about the value of joining/creating a collective of similar groups, in order to not only access funding opportunities, but also to strengthen the shared knowledge and expertise within many trapping and conservation groups. I am now collecting feathers to hang on a piece of nylon to entice cats to traps – why so? Well, Sam explained how cats are “visual” critters and that by placing a trap which a cat can spy from a distance (say a tree in the middle of a paddock)

AND with a feather fluttering in the breeze above the trap, the cat’s interest will be piqued. The feather will entice the cat to head to the trap to check it out and then hopefully enter the trap – as the old saying goes, “curiosity killed the cat”. Hence feather collecting :))

There were interesting discussions on trap placement, the efficiency of various baits and lures – soft meat baits can be gnawed at and pulled away, whereas a firmer bait encourages predator to engage more with the bait and BINGO, trap triggers. Sam also placed emphasis on checking the traps that haven’t caught for a while yet the bait is disappearing, and to make sure that the trap is actually firing. About 25 people attended the event, 5 of whom were Owhango Alive volunteers and the rest were members of the Retaruke Catchment group. The catchment group has just received a grant to have a community trap bank to get on top of wild cats in the Kaitieke Valley. The event was a great opportunity to network with other groups and trappers from around the region, as well as learn more trapping techniques.

Thanks go to Tania Bramley of NZ Landcare Trust and Natasha Cave, regional coordinator for WRCC, and of course to Sam the Trap Man. It was a Sunday afternoon well spent. Check out Sam the Trap Man on youtube....there are several videos of his work in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Sally Lashmar

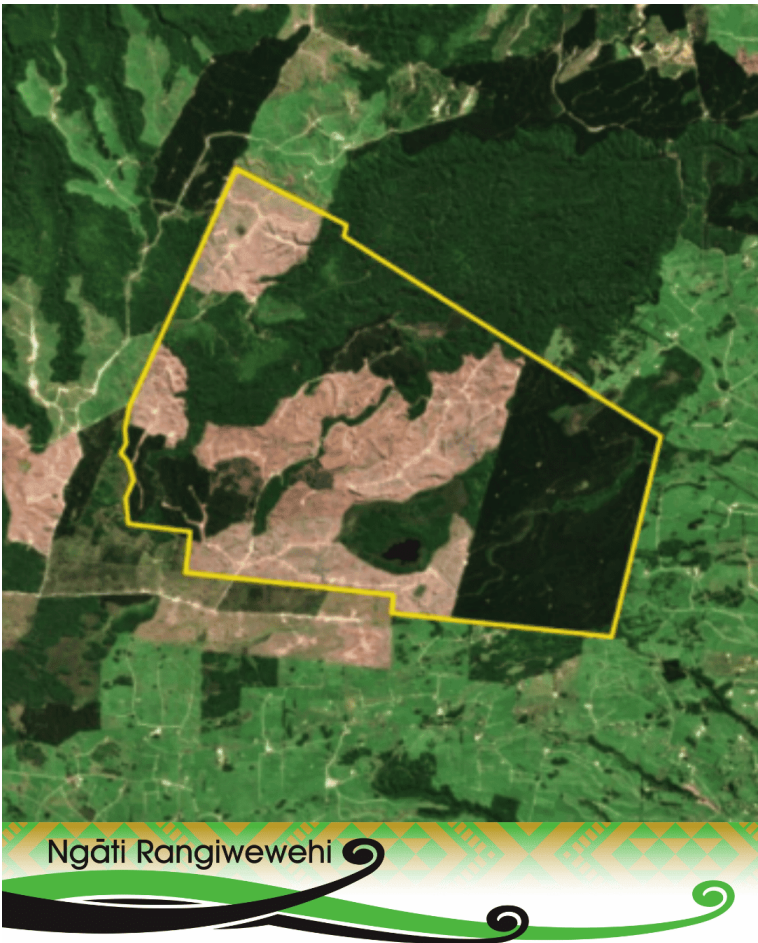


Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust - Two new projects

Te Māhuri: Ngāti Haua - Te Wairere and the Kaimai ranges provided spiritual sustenance to the Ngāti Hauā people. It was a place of refuge for tūpuna, an important source of food and other resources and home to an abundance of taonga species. Te Wairere overlooks papakainga and sacred burial grounds, and is professed to be near the resting place of Te Waharoa's renowned son, Wiremu Tamehana. Now there are pest animals and pest plants which are a risk to taonga species. The stage one funding allowed the Te Māhuri team to develop a detailed restoration project proposal, work plan and budget. They are now seeking stage two funding to implement their project.

Mangorewa-Kaharoa Restoration: Ngāti Rangiwewehi - The Mangorewa-Kaharoa Forest was once a coveted location for bird-snaring and spearing of Kākā, while the Mangorewa Stream was well-known for its tuna (eel) populations. These resources were key to the ongoing survival of the people of Ngāti Rangiwewehi. Today, despite the disruption from pest species as well as major land use change in the surrounding area, it is believed that a remnant Kiwi population may still survive. We have secured funding for stage one, which

enables the project team to identify key threats and taonga species and plan a restoration project within the 3,246 hectare Mangorewa Kaharoa Te Taumata block.



Te Māhuri: Ngāti Haua