



Sentinel

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH AUCKLAND BRANCH
ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY
PO Box 23602, Hunters Corner, Papatoetoe

No.49 APRIL.2009

A New Sentinel

Dene André: Welcome to the new look Sentinel. Till now Jan Riddick has performed the herculean task of writing, editing, producing and assembling past editions of Sentinel. Jan is continuing on preparing the speaker programme schedule but has now stepped down from Sentinel for a well-earned respite. **Thanks Jan! We are greatly appreciative of all the many hours of dedicated hard labour you engaged in to bring us such a fine newsletter.**

Have You Seen a Kaka?

Suzi Phillips: The KakawatchNZ network, organised by me, is keen to get details of any kaka sightings in the Mid-north area this year. Kaka are regularly seen on the mainland with peak numbers arriving between autumn and spring. Kakawatchnz keep a database of kaka sightings and foraging information. If you see a kaka, please email the details to kakawatchnz@gmail.com.

Please include your name, address and phone number, the location you saw the kaka, date and time of the sighting, plus any information about its activity such as flying, perched, or foraging, and any detail as to behaviour, such as stripping bark, interacting with other kaka or other birds, feeding on flowers etc. It is also important to note ,(whenever possible), the tree species if the bird is perched or foraging.

This information is collated and analysed for movement and nutrition information. Kaka distribution maps for the Auckland region are available on www.kakawatchnz.org with 2007 available and 2008 in preparation.

A Shag on the Front Lawn

Dene André: Bear in mind that this is a family newsletter with a conservation theme when I tell you that I recently had a shag on the front lawn and I thoroughly enjoyed it!

By way of background information, I live on the banks of the Pahurehure at Weymouth overlooking the tidal channel, which is replete with birdlife. On a good day I see up to a dozen shags standing on a bank of rock next to the main channel at low tide.

Committee 2008 2009

Chairman: Dene Andre 267-4366

Secretary: Brian Gidley: 278-0185

Treasurer: Mervyn Cargill: 570-9732

Lindsey Britton: 292-9215: Conservation/ Planning

Graham Falla: 276-3092: Conservation/ Planting

Colleen Grayling: 535-2292

Linden Johnson: 274-4400: Conservation

Jan Riddick: 524-2229: Conservation, KCC contact

Tony Woodrooffe: 296-1413: Reserves/Pest Control:

Carol Bozich: 274-7745: Conservation

Adrienne Grayson: 278-1295: Calendar sales

Ex Committee:

Programme: Hannah Aiken: 576-4191

and Barbara Garden: 534-8917

Regional Office: Nick Beveridge: 302--3901

F&B Website: www.forestandbird.org.nz

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.30pm Monday 11 May

Haseler Hall, All Saints Church, Selwyn Rd, Howick

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Cover Sheet – Important Numbers

Programme Sheet – Branch events incl KCC notes, revegetation news

True sentinels, they keep a watchful eye on the fish. From a distance they resemble small Emperor Penguins on guard duty – huddled together and standing upright and stiff-backed in their black and white regalia.

I was startled and somewhat pleased when, looking out of my front window, I saw a shag standing around on my front lawn. He waddled cheekily up to the front steps and peered in curiously at me. We eyeballed one another briefly, then he strolled off and flew away.

Nudibranchs - Nudi but Not Rudi

Many of you know the Mangemangeroa as a prolific habitat for wildlife. Environmental elements on the land are easily accessed and readily studied, whether it be animal, vegetable or mineral. Much less accessible and therefore much less studied is the life in the estuarine water and seabed. Recently a team of researchers from Auckland Museum have set about remedying this deficiency. Margaret Morley from the Auckland Museum reports that, during the course of their research, they have sieved a small (5 mm) nudibranch from soft sediments in Mangemangeroa estuary. It has yet to be identified.

The word "nudibranch" comes from the Latin *nudus*, naked, and the Greek *brankhia*, gills.

Nudibranch is a member of one suborder of soft-bodied, shell-less marine opisthobranch gastropod mollusks, which are noted for their often extraordinary colors and striking forms. Nudibranchs are often called "sea slugs" but not every sea slug is a nudibranch.

If you want to know more about nudibranchs I recommend a visit to Wikipedia on this URL: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudibranch>

Birds-a-Three, They Came to Me

Dene André: It's a common and fairly universal belief that things come in three. Certainly this held true for a short series of encounters I had with seagulls, all within a 10-day period.

The first encounter was with a young black-backed gull. The bird was full size but still mottled in brownish black feathers. We noticed the bird hanging around on a neighbouring property near the waters edge. I noted that it was behaving strangely compared to other birds but never got close enough to find out why. After a day or two it died. Apparently it had been hooked on a fishing line and broken free but with the hook in its mouth it was unable to eat and became too weak to fly. My normal policy is to leave the wildlife alone unless there is a clear reason to intercede as this is usually the wisest course of action. I wish I'd had some inkling it was in distress and intervened.

The second was with a mature black-backed gull caught in razor wire on top of the back-end of a local supermarket. The hapless bird was drawn to my attention by a woman who had been standing idly by watching it struggle for some minutes. Apparently it had become caught in the wire while flying past. It didn't seem able to free itself and its struggles seemed to mire it deeper into the wire.

Immediately I went to the supermarket manager and asked him to come and look at the bird with a view to mounting a rescue. He was very concerned and cooperative – for that I give him full marks! However, by the time we had walked round to the bird's location, it had managed to draw free and was gone. No doubt wounded, bloodied and a bit the worse-for-wear but at least free.

The third was with a small grey gull my wife found on our upstairs deck. The hapless bird was too weak to fly

off and clearly was ill. It had a dull eye and a passive demeanour. I cornered the bird on the deck and after one brief, panicky attempt at flight it calmed and waited for me to pick it up.

Ironically, I put the bird in a cat carry cage, then contacted Pam from Bird Rescue – she's the expert on marine birds – and smartly took the bird across to her for medical assistance. She diagnosed a stomach bug of some sort and a large population of "livestock" inhabiting its feathers. A quick recovery was forecast. Why the bird came to us for help we'll never know but, out of all the places along our stretch of coast, it came to the right place - the home of a dedicated Forest & Birder!

Hunua Falls for Pest Control

The ARC: With the exception of the Kokako Management Area, most of the Hunua Ranges is only managed for possums, and no rat or mustelid control is undertaken. Yet rats are abundant, predation pressure is extremely high and reproductive rates of most native bird species are severely impacted.

The aim of the pest control project is to reduce the numbers of introduced predators - such as rats, stoats, possums and cats – and to enhance the habitat and wildlife values of the Hunua Falls area.

The intention is to establish a 'mainland island' for birds - including the more common species such as tomtits, kereru and grey warbler as well as more threatened species such as North island robin, Kaka and Bellbirds - plus for hochstetters frog.

The ARC wishes to reduce predator numbers and create a place where people can come and see birds/wildlife. The project will encourage community involvement and promote the species protection message to the wider public visiting the area.

The Hunua Falls project is seeking more volunteers for their Tuesday and Wednesday projects. Those of you who are interested, please contact Scott Kusabs, the ARC ranger involved with the Wednesday group. He can be contacted at scott.kusabs@arc.govt.nz.

Other details on the Hunua Falls Pest Control Programme can be obtained from Jo Meys, Senior Ranger Conservation on **021 566254**.

An Urban Density Canal Village on the Wairoa River - Plan Change 13

Lindsey Britton: For the uninitiated, Plan Change 13 is the name of a proposal to modify the District Plan to provide for the Wairoa River Maritime Village on the outskirts of Clevedon. A new version of Proposed Plan Change 13 was put before the Environment Court as part of a late appeal (dated 4th August 2008) by the developers, seeking to substitute plan provisions (objectives, policies, explanatory material, development controls and a plan) on the original plans adopted by Manukau City Council.

Programme Notes

Sat May 23 Walk Pakuranga Creek with Alan La Roche. Walk to Cascades waterfall and Reserve with several historical features. Then walk along the new Burswood Reserve and a small waterfall. Bring own afternoon tea or use café at end of the walk.

Sun Sept 20th Muriwai Programme People might like to arrive early and have lunch or coffee at the café. 2-3.30 pm Coastal bush walk, Lookout & Quarry tracks 3.30 – 4.15 pm Gannet colony

4.15-5.30 Maori Bay. Seashore ecology walk to study one of Auckland's most spectacular algal gardens (low tide 5.15pm). Also beautiful pillow lava cliffs

Sun Nov 8 Bus Excursion to Driving Creek Railway and potteries, Coromandel - Visit a working pottery and ride a narrow-gauge mountain railway through a wild life sanctuary. – Early booking essential for this trip to go ahead. Bus pick-ups along Gt South Road. Approximate cost: Bus \$35 pp with a reduction if enough book. Plus mountain railway concession fare \$16 Booking \$20 deposit by September 10th, refundable if trip cancelled. Ph Jan 524-2229

This late appeal was the subject of a strike-out action by Clevedon Cares and the ARC. The Court decided not to strike-out the late appeal and will now deal with both versions of the Plan Change at the same time. There might even be three versions, as MCC's evidence favours a version different in some respects to both the other plan changes

While the new plan 'looks' better, having improved design and building control features, it remains contrary to the Auckland Regional Policy Statement, the National Coastal Policy Statement and the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000. Its response to global warming, the anticipated increase in storm events and sea level rises continues to be unacceptable. Even MCC felt it necessary to cover its back in this regard and has added the following:

"In addition, all consents for "building platforms, sites, wastewater tanks and roads" are subject to a criterion which states that any consent granted will be subject to "a condition to be secured by the registration of a covenant on the land whereby the owner and the holders of any interest in the land agree not to make any claim against the Council, and to indemnify the Council against any claim, for damages arising from the low-lying topography of the land and/or the effects of climate change".

The plan now has a village centre destined for retail premises, a Village Office and Community Facilities (nature unknown). It is doubtful, however, that 270 dwellings will be sufficient to support such a centre, especially as many will be holiday homes and there seems little real possibility that retail premises will eventuate. There is also no new approaches to stopping or mitigating the developments adverse impacts on rural landscape character, Iwi considerations, ecology, water quality and coastal processes etc., and its social and economic impact on Clevedon Village and surrounds continues to remain unaddressed.

The location and nature of this development make it, of necessity, a totally artificial construct. As rate payers we ought to be asking why MCC has not addressed the matter of how only 270 properties (through a Body Corporate) will meet its 'in perpetuity' costs such as dredging and maintaining their private roads.

Will MCC expect us as ratepayers to pick up those costs if the Body Corporate fails?

If PC 13 is approved, in whatever version, a myriad more Private Plan Changes for Clevedon will result and MCC will find them hard to deny! It is more than 12 years since the ARC first asked MCC to develop a Structure Plan for the

Clevedon Valley, one has never eventuated and Clevedon remains extremely vulnerable to urban development.

Olive Davis House Conservation Plan

Nick Beveridge: The Olive Davis House is situated on the F&B Olive Davis Reserve in Manukau City. The house was designed by JW Chapman-Taylor and is listed in the MCC District Plan as a historic building.

A requirement of the management plan for the house is the preparation of a conservation plan. A draft has been produced by the consultant architect about to apply to MCC Heritage Fund for some more money to enable us to commission a geotech report

A Little Bird for a Big Project

New Zealand's smallest bird, the rifleman, now have a home on Tiritiri Matangi island. 31 riflemen were recently caught on Hauturu / Little Barrier Island and then flown across the Hauraki Gulf, making them the twelfth species of native bird to be introduced to Tiritiri Matangi. Species already introduced include takahe, kokako, saddleback, stitchbird and tuatara.

Because of their small size, survival of riflemen is dependent on minimizing the time between capture and release. For this reason, they were transferred daily, by helicopter, for a mid-to-late afternoon release.

As there is a lack of suitable nesting cavities on Tiritiri Matangi, nesting boxes have been placed near the release site in anticipation for the next breeding season. These will be useful in monitoring the ongoing success of the species.

This project is a joint initiative between the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi (SoTM) and the University of Auckland, with much assistance and encouragement from the Department of Conservation.

SoTM spokesperson, Simon Fordham, is ecstatic at the result. *"This has exceeded our expectations, especially as it took five days to catch our first bird. A lot of effort, by many people, will now give visitors to Tiritiri Matangi Island the opportunity to see New Zealand's smallest bird in the Auckland region."*

It is hoped to celebrate the bird's arrival with a "Welcome to the Riflemen" event in the near future.



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Fold 2

The South Auckland Branch of Forest & Bird has:

- * A monthly meeting on the second Monday of the month with venues alternating between Howick and Manurewa.
- * Regular field trips.
- * An active tree propagation and planting programme.

We may be contacted at any of the phone numbers listed on the front page of Sentinel. Please phone if you have any conservation concerns, programme suggestions or would like to help.

Joining F&B: If a friend or relative would like to join F&B, contact us and we will post them a membership form. Alternatively, anyone can join online at www.forestandbird.org.nz.

More members = more lobbying power = more conservation

Important Numbers to Keep Handy

ARC Environment Information (incl. parks, air pollution, and plant and animal pests): **366-2000**
To report pollution phone the Regional Council's 24 hour Hotline number: **377-3107**

MAXX: Public transport info: **366-6400**
MAXX Website: www.maxx.co.nz

Harbour Patrols: (safety, jet skis etc): **362-0397**

MAF: Exotic diseases and pest Hotline: **0800 809-966**

Fisheries Compliance and enquiries; **820-1990**
or poaching: **0800 476-224**

Manukau City: Dog control, graffiti, refuse, traffic 24 hour Hotline **262-5104**

Members with email - have you let us know your email address? And if you change that please tell us too!

Fold 1



**FOREST
& BIRD**

New Zealand
Permit No. 3198



SOUTH AUCKLAND BRANCH, ROYAL FOREST & BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY
KCC & F&B Programme of Activities B April 2009 B Nov 2009
Mark these dates on your calendar NOW so you don't forget.

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Evening Meetings are held either at HOWICK (Haseler Hall, (All Saints Church, Selwyn Road), or Manurewa (Methodist Lounge, cnr. Alfriston and Great South Roads. All visitors are welcome. Donations (\$2 each) to cover costs are appreciated. Trading table.

Field trips. We plan routes and activities for all ages. Please wear suitable footwear (boots or stout shoes) and bring a parka and a packed lunch - in a day pack if possible. No dogs please. If you need a lift or can provide a ride ph. Hannah (576-4191) or Barbara (534-8917)

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Important note: Day trips: Many things can change between when a trip is planned and the trip day. It may be cancelled (weather or organiser illness) or the start time or meeting place may change. We suggest those coming give the trip contact their phone or email details so we can advise of changes.

Mon Apr 20 **J** 7.30 talk MANUREWA MEETING B *Cyclone damage to NZ-s Indigenous Forests.* Our speaker, Dr Tim Martin, reports on research. An increasing consequence of climate change?

Sun Apr 26th ! 10 am *Chelsea Estate Heritage Park B An urban wilderness.* A volunteer from the Uruamo Ecological Society will join us for a 2 hour walk focused on ecology and a little history. Medium fitness. Meet Chelsea Sugar Company carpark, end of Colonial Rd. Birkenhead. Contact & booking 524-2229 Jan

Mon May 11 **J** 7.30 talk HOWICK AGM & MEETING A short AGM then - *Visiting the Antarctic Peninsula* A talk by member Gill Muggleston.

Sat May 23 ! 1.30pm *Walk Pakuranga Creek with Alan La Roche.* 2 hours of history and ecology at a leisurely pace. Park & meet outside the Howick Historical Village in Bell Road. Enquiries: Alan 534-7366 **More details see Progr.Notes p3**

Sat June 6th ! 9 am ANNUAL PLANTING B *Mangemangeroa Reserve.* Wet or fine. Meet at carpark by barn, south end of Somerville Rd, Howick, with strong footwear, spade, drink & snack. If you are bringing plants they should be well weeded and watered, ecosourced from Mangemangeroa and 30 cm + tall. Enquiries: Graham Falla 276-3092

Mon June 8 **J** 7.30 talk MANUREWA MEETING *Local geology and its influence on the landscape of east Auckland.* Our speaker, Graham Mansergh, is also guiding July-s geological walk.

Sun July 12 ! 2pm *Geological Features at Eastern Beach.* Graham Mansergh leads a low-tide ramble along Eastern Beach. Meet at north (Musik Point) end of The Esplanade. NB Raincheck day Sun 26 Enquiries Graham 534-2998

Mon July 13 6pm dinner **J** 7.30 talk HOWICK MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER *Watching Weka at Kawakawa Bay* Rosemary and John Cotman talk about their experiences with this locally self-introduced native. Bring food to share for main or sweet course & **labeled cutlery and plates.** Enquiries Lyn Choat 534-7595

Mon Aug 10 **J** 7.30 talk MANUREWA MEETING B Angela Gibbons *Our Native Butterflies* Angela will show pictures and have examples of host plants.

Have you booked for Driving Creek pottery trip on Sunday 8 November? **See Progr.notes P3**

Mon Sept 14 **J** 7.30 talk HOWICK MEETING *The Marine Botany of Auckland-s West Coast and the Manukau Harbour.* Our speaker, botanist Mike Wilcox, also leads our September field trip.

E E E E E E Programme continues over page. **E E E E E E**

Sun Sept 20th ! 2pm Field trip B Muriwai B Bush, gannets & algal gardens. Leader Mike Wilcox. Meet at Sand Dunz Beach Café, 409 Motutara Rd Muriwai Beach. **Details see Progr.Notes p3**

Looking Ahead B (details next Sentinel)

Mon Oct 12 MANUREWA MEETING *Kakapo research*

Sun Nov 8 Bus Excursion B Driving Creek Railway and potteries, Coromandel
Early booking essential for this trip to go ahead. **See Progr.notes P3**

Mon Nov 9 HOWICK MEETING *Forensic Entomology*

Kiwi Conservation Club News

Many F&B talks are suitable for older children and some walks suit all ages. We have found a full KCC programme was not well supported but if you have ideas for activities or could help with KCC please contact Jan 524-2229 or Kim 298-8715

Email: We have been reminding members of up-coming events, changes to programme and conservation issues via email. If you have not been receiving these messages and want to be put on our list, email Jan: ridix@clear.net.nz If you think you are on the list and haven't been getting messages you may have changed your server and not told us.

Revegetation News B May 2009 *Graham Falla*

It's been a good growing season and we look forward now to planting time for a new one at a number of sites around Auckland where our members are involved. At Mangemangeroa the big day is Saturday 6 June. Please book it on your calendar now B only two months away. A turnout like last year's on planting day would be tremendously cheering, and not just for the present B this restored forest is meant to last forever.

If anyone looking at areas of new planting struggling to establish themselves among the surrounding weed growth doubts whether they can possibly succeed, a visit to our Olive Davis Reserve is recommended. There they will see little evidence of the large horse paddock that was a feature 25 years ago. Now it has the appearance of natural bushland where one can enjoy walking under a 10 metre-high canopy. The manuka planted as a nurse crop has done its job and almost disappeared, leaving natural regeneration to take charge. At Mangemangeroa our plantings over the first few years from 2000 are already showing signs of developing the same character.

The time is also right for raising new plants from ecosourced seed. Please phone Graham Falla on 276 3092 if you would like to do that.

Reserve workdays This branch manages two reserves. Work is often required on these. We do not always advertise workdays, as they are often a response to a need not anticipated when this programme is prepared, and may be weather dependent. However **we need a pool of willing helpers** to call on when the need arises. Phone to be put on the list.

Want to help? Call: Graham Falla (276-3092): Planting, work days, planning.
Tony Woodroffe (296-1413): Reserves, pest control

ARC Southern Parks planting days for our area: All start at 10, BBQ lunch provided. Bring own snacks, water bottle, parka, & spade (though spares available) ARC contact: Mags Ramsey. ph 536-7012

- Sundays 24 May B Hamlins Hill
- Sundays 31 May B Tapapakanga
- Monday 1 June (Queens Birthday) Whakanewha
- Sunday 7 June - Duder
- Sunday 14 June B Awhitu