



Summer Trips and Working Days 2008/2009

Look at the new Forest and Bird website for any changes to this programme or phone the trip leader

Sunday 9 November 2008 - Bus Trip down the Waiau – Southland Ecological Restoration Network (SERN) Field Trip down the Waiau. Bookings essential – visit www.sern.org.nz or phone Chris 03 2131161 or Gay 03 2395827.

Saturday 22 November 2008 – “Strictly for the Birds” visit Otatara’s Native Bird Rescue Centre (49 Bryson Road) and the Community Nursery – “planting for the birds and pest trapping advice” (185 Grant Road) - Call in at any time from 2-4pm.

Thursday 11 December 2008 - Evening walk or bike ride around the Sutton boardwalk and lagoon with - Lloyd Esler. Joint trip with Otatara Landcare Group and Southland Field Club. Meet at the sea scouts den, Stead St. Wharf at 6.30pm or meet along the walkway. Bring a flask and finger food to share.

Saturday 13 December 2008 - Te Rere full day penguin count and work day. Leader Brian Rance – bookings essential 2131161.

Saturday 17 January 2009 – Visit Warwick Day’s Covenant at South Hillend, Limestone Bluffs at Dipton and Colliers Covenant - Leader Jenny Campbell 03 2486398 . Leave Invercargill Museum at 9am or Centre Bush Garage at 9.30am.

Saturday 14 February 2009 – Long Hilly (or Long Hei Lee) Track, Longwoods, Riverton. See the native plants birds and the historic Chinese mining area and new 2 hour well formed track. Leave from Invercargill Museum at 1.15pm to car pool or meet at Long Hilly carpark at 2pm. Bring something for afternoon tea. Leaders Chris and Brian Rance (03 2131161)

Saturday 14 March 2009 – Secret spots around Invercargill - Myross Bush Landcare Group project, Judith Robinson's revegetation project (bring your lunch), Sherry Elton's cheese farm, Otatara. Bring tools for planting and weeding please. Leader Chris Rance 2131161.

Saturday 18 April 2009 – Re-visit the Gore landfill site restoration project and learn about the Eastern Southland Sustainability Group - Don Lamont, Arne Clelland and John Adams. Leader Jenny Campbell 03 2486398.

Musing from the Chair

I must admit that I am rather busy with other activities at the moment and have not been to the last few committee meetings. Thank you to the membership for electing such a capable committee that can ably carry on without me.

These are certainly interesting times with an election coming up and the financial instability at the top of the headlines. Unfortunately the news on the financial meltdown is obscuring the reporting of the far more serious environmental meltdown the world is also facing.

It has been hard to find but there have been reports of climate change occurring much faster than anticipated, Arctic ice melt at record levels, methane bubbling from the Arctic waters, forest disappearing, oceans acidifying, rivers being polluted, water shortages in many places and more and more species becoming threatened or going extinct.

While much of the financial meltdown has been caused by greed, stupidity and fraud in financial markets there is also another underlying cause. The economy is running up against the environmental constraints of a finite planet.

The Earth can no longer supply the quantities of resources that are demanded by our lifestyles. Nor can the Earth handle the vast quantities of waste that our societies are producing.

Forest and Bird have produced an election guide to help you make an informed choice that counts for conservation at the coming election. I would ask that you seriously consider which party is likely to advocate for the best environmental and conservation outcomes before casting your vote.

Financial matters are important and we all need an adequate income to live. However the real economy is dependent on the Earth's environment to keep it supported. To get the economy back to a stable and sustainable state we must stop the deterioration of our environment and start to repair the damage. Forest and Bird have been working for this for 85 years. It is important to get a government who would be willing to support and extend the protection, enhancement and ability to enjoy New Zealand's unique species, seas and landscapes.

Craig Carson

New Look Website for Forest and Bird

www.forestandbird.org.nz

Branch information will be available on this website.

Help the Branch save money by asking for the branch newsletter on email or look at it on the website, email Chris at rances@ihug.co.nz

Email central office and give them your email address to receive E-News, Forest and Bird's regular newsletter for members.

Howden Hut - Plucking Enjoyment from Nature!

It had been some time since I had been out in the open air and my cellulite had begun to breed during the previous months of inactivity. Therefore after a sudden rush of blood to the head I asked a couple of friends if they would like to come into Lake Howden with me. OK, so the weather report wasn't all that great, but hey we don't melt in the rain so off we went.

The sky at the Divide was like a dirty grey blanket that had been soaked in ice water, and hung ominously over us all day. On with the thermals and wet weather gear and amidst great hoots of hilarity we began our 1½ hour tramp into the hut, occasionally bursting into maniacal laughter as we thought about our decision to continue. The incomparable natural beauty of Fiordland greeted us as we entered the forest; it was like going back in time. Landscape on all sides was a panorama of harshness and hostility, and around us was a silence broken only when birdsong filled the air. We were entering what the botanists like to call "the finest virgin beech forest in the South Island"

I won't say we bounded up the first incline rather we walked at a pretty steady slog, which soon degenerated into a wet and acrobatic trip through the calf deep snow.

The view around the first bend in the track was stark white and obviously cold with capital letters. It didn't look terribly foreboding, but it also didn't look like anything you would sensibly walk in to. A number of tree falls kept us busy as the tallest of our group climbed over and those of us who are short in the wheelbase attempted to crawl under. Now I ask you who would be stupid enough to attempt to crawl under a tree fall with their pack on? Us of course, I'm surprised you even hesitated in your reading of this to wonder. I was repeatedly dragged out from under a tree branch/trunk by my pack straps as I became cast and/or caught up. Fortunately I have some patient and understanding friends.

Before long the snow, ice cold, found its way through our wet weather gear and caused an arctic experience in certain parts of the body that even a Speights couldn't reach.

Valerie admitted to feeling like she'd left her oxygen back at base camp and I was definitely looking as though I needed mechanical attention as my legs seemed able to bend in several different directions. Only Eileen showed any sign of still being human and was going at it like a toiler ant, leaving us lagging in the rear.

An intimate association with snowflakes, wet plant life and damp rot, etc began to lose its fascination with me as I repeatedly face planted into the snow. A creative string of curses issuing forth as I surfaced yet again (I must have been a disappointment to my mother).

Eventually after four hours we reached the hut and an untouched snow covered vista as pure as our lady's wimple greeted us. The scene was all the more enhanced by the lake which seemed like a dark steel mirror reflecting the somber sky and the small stream gurgling merrily through the untouched snow. Life seemed far simpler and more real here, no hordes of trampers, no planes, no noisy cars, just us, the mountains and the rain that had begun to whisper down.

"Why don't we have a nice cup of tea" Eileen suggested a comment that was greeted with enthusiasm. Billy duly filled with snow then topped up by standing on the verandah and holding it out to catch the rain that was running from the spouting. There was a plentiful supply of wood all too long and large to fit into the pot bellied stove and no axe to cut it with, so we huddled over the dry kindling we had carted in and the few miserable pieces we managed to break up. We decided to only stay one night as the weather showed all the classic signs of deteriorating, (So...sometimes the TV weather report IS wrong!)

Darkness fell quickly as we prepared our gourmet meals of pasta and whatever else was lurking in our food bags. By 8pm a unanimous decision was made to head for bed, at least we would be warm there. Getting into our sleeping bag was much like plunging thro thin ice into a lake, and we each emitted gasps of surprise as our bare bits contacted our liners. (I prayed that the manufacturer was telling the truth and the bag would warm up). We chatted for a while before in perfect unrehearsed rotation our prolonged yelps and groans of agony

from repeated attacks of cramp had us in hysterics as our attack lessened and someone else's began. Lightening lit up the night and sliced through the blackness of the sky, from our bunks we could see the stark grey silhouettes of trees and heard chunks of ice & snow cascading off the roof before kerthumping into the deep snow piled up against the hut. Sleep eventually came as we warmed up.

Daylight, dull and overcast crept in through the hut window, and to our immense relief we discovered the remaining snow hadn't frozen overnight. Visions of sliding over banks on treacherous ice had filled our minds during the previous evening. The storm had disappeared muttering like an old woman sometime during the night.

Breakfast over we packed and donning our last lot of dry clothes walked almost jauntily up through the tangle of soaked and glittering forest fresh with the night's rain. The ground was a brittle carpet of crunchy snow, but the way was clear to see and only a couple of hidden holes leapt out to trip us up. The walk out was refreshing although the sun appeared reluctant to put in an appearance. Back at the car, wet through again we decided to go on to Gunn's Camp for the night and turned up on **Footloose**

Helen & Bills doorstep looking like road kill. What a change in weather there was down in the Hollyford Valley. The sun was sparkling on the frost covered ground, glinting off the roofs and river; add the combination of a hot drink and the hut fire warming us up, what more could you want. Birds played & whirled around the camp the mountains draped in green rimmed the valley and stared grandly down and all seemed right with the world as we took a stroll in dry clothes. We departed the following morning wishing we had time to stay another few days at the camp. Was the trip into Howden worth it? Darn right it was cold and all.

Thank you to those people who commented on our sanity, and made a number of suggestions - none of which will be implemented but they were fascinating.

A weekend at Gunn's Camp in the Hollyford Valley is a must for anyone who enjoys the forest & mountains. Historic huts, numerous short walks, impressive scenery and fantastic hosts. gunnscamp@ruralinzone.net or Gunn's Camp Hollyford Valley Private Bag Te Anau 9640.



Transition Towns – what are they??

A new initiative is capturing the imagination of different groups across the province with the formation of a group known as Transition Towns. Exploring this concept and what it might mean for their lifestyles in response to the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change has been the subject of several meetings and talks recently.

People from across Southland gathered in Invercargill to discuss how others can be informed and involved in this grass roots movement. Invercargill, Gore, Riverton, Northern Southland and Te Anau groups are moving the knowledge forward by networking through environmental groups which already exist and spreading the message through local communities.

The movement is international and is taking off in many towns across New Zealand. Each community decides what the most appropriate actions are for their individual circumstances and energy, all based on local resources, skill and capabilities.

Jenny Campbell

It depends on local people working together to produce the best outcomes for the environment through such projects as permaculture gardens, planting heritage fruit trees, cultivating home vegetable gardens and eating locally to take account of food miles.

Local enthusiast Mr Peter Wilson is delighted the ideas are being picked up by people in Invercargill with individuals, schools, gardening groups and families all getting involved at the level of their choice. "The power of relocalising is moving ahead across Southland and communities are being redefined," he said. "The philosophy seems to be, 'be alert but not alarmed' when it comes to dealing with the challenges which are facing us on an environmental front."

People who are interested in finding out more about the group can access contacts through the Invercargill or South Coast Environment Centres.

Visit Gore on our February trip to hear more about sustainable living with John Adams.

Te Whenua Awhi – Invercargill Environment Centre

A one stop shop for all your environmental information

Volunteers needed at the Centre – can you spare a couple of hours sitting in the pleasant environment of the Centre in the old Trust Bank Arcade? You will be surrounded by interesting resources and if you don't know the answer to any questions you can easily find out or ask experts who are only a phone call away. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Located in the SIT Arcade, between Esk and Don Streets - open from 10am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.
Phone 218 4404

Southland Environmental Events Calendar published every month – call the Environment Centre to be on the email list.



Bluff Hill/Motupohue Environment Trust (BHMET) is a community group who have come together with a common vision of providing a haven for native wildlife on Motupohue.

The lush coastal forest of Motupohue is home to a relatively high diversity of breeding birds and is also a magnet for immigrant birds from Rakiura and Codfish Island - Kaka are regular visitors, and this winter 2 Red-Crowned Kakariki were present for a period of several weeks. Importantly there is also a remnant breeding population of Titi on the Hill.

BHMET have produced a draft strategy outlining their proposals for pest control and restoration work on Motupohue and are using this document to consult with stakeholders. The trust hope to have the first traps out on the hill in early November, in time to protect nesting Titi.

For more information about the project please contact Chris Andrews (03) 218 4977

The Group logo was designed by Robin Sallis.

Paul Jacques

**Kiwi Conservation Club for Children (KCC)
– a great Christmas gift for Children and Grandchildren**

Join now on-line at www.forestandbird.org.nz

Single \$12

- Family \$20 (each child receives one magazine per issue)
- Mini Set \$28 (four magazines per issue)
- Class Set \$65 (30 magazines per issue)

Kiwi Conservation Club for Children Website

The KCC website is a growing resource, packed with information about New Zealand wildlife and wild places. The website has been specifically developed for children, so they will enjoy the site and gather valuable information for school projects.

Information on the KCC website includes... educator resources, how kids can help the world, a glossary of conservation terms, a conservation event calendar and Fact Sheets on conservation topics, such as the Black Robin, Extinct Birds of NZ, Hoiho, Hector's Dolphin, Kakapo, Kiwi, NZ National Parks and Weta.

Visit the Kiwi Conservation Club website www.kcc.org.nz

Native Fuchsia pollination survey 2008

The purpose of the survey is to measure the health of bird-plant mutualisms throughout New Zealand. We are using the pollination service for tree fuchsia as an indicator of the health and wellbeing of our native

ecosystems. This is part of ongoing research jointly run by Landcare Research, Department of Conservation and University of Canterbury.

We need your assistance. We need people to complete the survey from locations all over New Zealand this spring and summer. Please help by completing the survey for a tree fuchsia population near you.

For more information and the survey forms visit: http://www.biol.canterbury.ac.nz/pollination_survey/

While there you can also check out the 2007 survey results

How to carry out the survey

Firstly you need to establish that the plants are flowering. Tree fuchsia has a long flowering season through spring and into summer (from July-August to around December) and in general the further north your site is the earlier the plants will start to flower. Sampling earlier in the season is usually best.

When you carry out the survey, aim to record data for 10 hermaphrodite plants and 5 female plants at any one site. There are usually fewer female plants in a population, so if you can't find 5 female plants record data from as many as you can find.

The main measurement of the survey (pollen load on the stigma) is recording how well the flowers are being visited by birds (and having pollen deposited on the stigma). We have devised a system that allows people to easily score the amount of pollen that can be seen on the stigma, using a scale of 0-4.

For each tree record the pollen load on the stigma for 10 young (early or middle in age) flowers (i.e. the greenish ones). **DON'T USE OLD/RED FLOWERS** (i.e. anthers withered, flower fully red in colour).

You will also need to note the sex of the tree: Hermaphrodite or Female. Remember the flowers on a female tree are smaller than the hermaphrodite flowers and lack the large anthers with the distinctive blue pollen.



Hermaphrodite (left) and female flowers (right)

Summary of NPS results from 2007.

Overall, the results for females show that pollination is not working very effectively at most studied sites. At only one site (Kaikoura) did female flowers get enough pollen to be classed as “good”, using the detailed studies of Robertson et al. (2008, NZ J Botany vol 46 issue 3) on Fuchsia as a yardstick. The next healthiest pollination sites were Waitutu and the two sites in the middle of the North Island. Consistently poor pollination was recorded from the mid Canterbury and lower West Coast of the South Island sites.

Tautuku Lodge – Lenz Reserve Working “Bees”

Situated on the Southern Scenic Route (SH92) 8km south of Papatowai and 90 minutes north of Invercargill, on a sealed highway, the Lodge Coutts Cabin and an A Frame continue to be a popular place to stay. In a bush

setting of 550 hectares with beaches, caves and waterfalls nearby it provides an excellent base for exploring the Catlins.

The Lodge (10 beds)

Members \$15

Non Members \$20

Coutts Cabin (4 beds)

Members \$15

Non Members \$20

A Frame (2 beds)

Members \$10

Non Members \$15

Schoolchildren \$5

Under 5 Free

These prices are at 1989 rates and represent real value for money. The facilities are well equipped (all electric) with heaters (heat pump in the Lodge), microwaves, ovens and showers.

Convenient walks are the 1 hour nature walk and 3 hour long track both starting and finishing at the Lodge plus beach walks, Cathedral Caves and Lake Wilkie nearby

Another feature in the area is the Cooks Mill site on which is located a Traill tractor and bogies under cover that were used for hauling logs, this has been refurbished and upgraded by the Owaka Lions Club as a project following the previous repainting of the tractor and bogies by the late Jim Ollerenshaw, whose father was the mill manager. The refurbishment was financed by the Lenz Reserve finances together with a generous \$1000 donation from South Otago Branch. Further funding is being sought from the Clutha Licencing Trust and Rotary. The Mill site is listed in the latest Clutha Heritage Trail brochure and is well worth a visit.

To book accommodation phone Diana Noonan 03 4158024, or email diana.n@clear.net.nz

Tony Bretherick

LENZ Trips 2009

15-16 May 2009 and 25-26 September 2009

Tautuku Lodge – Coutts Cabin – A Frame in the Catlins are an ideal place to stay – Why not see for yourself by booking in for the 2009 “Working Bees” Weekend. Travel up on Friday night or Saturday morning, work on the nature walk track, weeding or working on the buildings can suit all levels of fitness. Free accommodation, pot luck tea on Saturday night and time to explore beaches, wetlands and bush walks on Sunday before returning home.



The Lodge



Coutts Cabin

Eco Sourced Native Plants



RD 2, Gore
Ph. 03 205 3801
Fax. 03 205 3703
A/H. 03 205 3703
Mobile. 0274 346 174
Email. pukeraunursery@clear.net.nz

The Nursery team offer:

- On-site consultation, analysis of site conditions, issues and opportunities.
- Landscape planning for large and small scale ecological restoration projects.
- Plans and Assessments of Effects on the Environment for land use resource consent applications.
- Design concepts for introducing natives into any size space, from residential courtyard gardens to commercial property, lifestyle blocks and large country gardens through to farms.
- Eco- sourced plant supply.
- Planting and construction work by our experienced construction team.
- On going management of plantings.

Castlerock - Dipton Landcare Group meeting

The dangers around the bend south of Dipton along with the ongoing issues about damage to the iconic Castlerock limestone bluffs took up the attention of Dipton Landcare Group members at their meeting chaired by Mr Peter McDonald last week.

Letters of concern about the on- going excavation behind the Castlerock limestone bluffs had been received from a farmer and shareholder, NZ Alpine Club and the Geological Society of NZ which had recently undertaken a review of the NZ Geopreservation Inventory project. They reviewed limestone karst landscapes across the country finding they are relatively rare in Southland with Bruce Hayward, Convenor of the project stating that they 'have assessed Castle Rock ridge bluffs as having best karstic landforms in Southland'. They recognised that the bluffs have outstanding aesthetic, scientific and educational values, being readily viewed from a main road.

Mr McDonald noted that the Geological Society urges management authorities to do their best to ensure the intact preservation of these bluffs as they
Jenny Campbell

see them as being considerably vulnerable to damage, particularly from quarrying. They consider they need to be protected so they are not compromised by any ugly quarrying scars visible from public viewing points.

People present felt the area was very vulnerable as a result of the blast 6 months ago which was so big that Ravensdown had not had to blast again, with a lot of work being carried out by heavy machinery on the skyline since then. The main concern is that the cap and western wall should not be lowered by mining with a feeling that lime was available in adjacent areas.

“It is felt there is a moral obligation to preserve such a significant feature with people not looking to close the mining down ,” Mr McDonald commented. “ It would be great PR for Ravensdown to do the right thing by retaining the outcrop for the people of New Zealand. We are currently awaiting a response from Ravensdown Cooperative and remain hopeful of a positive outcome for the community.”



News from Biodiversity Southland

The Biodiversity Southland forum has been busy over the last six months, working together to compile a Biodiversity Strategy for Southland. A series of meetings have been held to identify the aims, objectives and actions required to protect biodiversity. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have also been identified and all this has been brought together along with an action plan identifying some priorities. One of these tasks includes undertaking an inventory of biodiversity, identifying values and the condition of these areas. This document will be sent out shortly to members of the advisory group for feedback before distribution to the community and landcare groups and landowners involved in protecting biodiversity. Once feedback has been gained it is hoped to produce the document in the new year for general distribution. If you are keen to access a copy please contact Janet Gregory at Janet.gregory@landcare.org.nz

The document will provide clear direction of what the community would like to achieve with biodiversity protection for the agencies involved in LTCCP reviews and the review of the Regional Policy Statement and the Southland District Council District Plan.

Many new groups have started over the last six months with a focus on protecting or restoring areas of biodiversity and it is heartening to see the community supporting these groups and getting involved. The new Community Conservation Fund will enable more groups to undertake work on public land and this will now compliment the Biodiversity Condition Fund available for private land. If anyone would like further information or assistance, contact your local DOC office or Janet.

Janet Gregory

QEII Covenantors Receive Ramsar Certificates.

In a first for NZ, Southland covenantors, Brian & Chris Rance, Ian & Jenny Gamble and Russell Nicol were presented with a certificate by the Minister of Conservation, Steve Chadwick, in May this year. This recognised that their covenants have become a part of the extended Awarua/Waituna Wetland Ramsar site. The Ramsar Convention for Protection of Wetlands was the earliest international conservation movement, coming into being in 1971 in the city of Ramsar, Iran. In presenting the certificates, Steve Chadwick commented that it is not just government that has a part to play in protecting NZ's ever decreasing wetlands but that the contribution of private landowners is also most important.

Congratulations to the Rance's, Gamble's and Nicol's in the recognition they have received for their part in wetland conservation.

Gay Munro

Snippets From The Catlins

- Lions put out stoat traps at Waipohatu wilderness walk in October
- F&B tree signs are up at George Aitken Walk at Waikawa (it's a lovely walk, just ten minutes)
- Cathedral Caves is closed because of a slip and no date for opening yet – visitors are very disappointed....
- South Catlins community had a huge beach cleanup at Fortrose Estuary on 3 August.

Rivers get dirtier under Clean Streams Accord

2 October 2008 - Contact: Kevin Hackwell, Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager, 04 385 7374 or 021 227 8420

For Forest and Bird media releases see <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/mediarelease>

Waterways in many areas are more polluted than they were five years ago when the voluntary Clean Streams Accord was set up, according to a report released today by Forest & Bird and Fish & Game New Zealand.

“The Dairying and Clean Streams Accord has not only failed to improve water quality but in some areas has allowed rivers and streams to deteriorate further from continued dairy effluent and nutrient run-off,” Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager Kevin Hackwell says.

“The results of this study show that the dairy industry is still not meeting its environmental responsibilities, which undermines the integrity of its products.”

The voluntary accord is not working, according to Fish & Game New Zealand Nelson-Marlborough regional manager Neil Deans. “The evidence is that the dairy industry, regional councils and central government have failed to improve the state of our waterways,” he says.

“Tougher standards and more effective enforcement are needed to improve water quality. And we need to have more input from New Zealand’s environmental watchdogs.”

The accord was signed in May 2003 by Fonterra, Ministers for the Environment and Agriculture and Forestry, and Local Government New Zealand. It aimed to improve the quality of lowland waterways by reducing the amount of dairy effluent and nutrients going into them.

The report by Forest & Bird and Fish & Game New Zealand found that regional councils had very different figures on dairy farmers’ resource consent compliance compared with this year’s Snapshot Report by the Accord partners. Regional council figures give a national average of serious non-compliance of more than 14 per cent, twice the 7 per cent level reported by the Accord partners.

In Waikato, which has half New Zealand’s dairy farms, water quality in rivers and streams is

deteriorating. Bacteria in waterways make the water unsuitable for stock to drink in 75 per cent of sites and levels are too high for people to swim safely at 70 per cent of sites, according to an Environment Waikato report.

In Taranaki, which has quarter of New Zealand’s dairy farms, water quality trends are unclear, but water quality in streams decline significantly as they flow through dairy farms.

The Forest & Bird and Fish & Game report also asked regional councils whether Accord targets had been met. No regions reported 100 per cent compliance by dairy farmers in meeting resource consent conditions and regional plans. Few regional councils could confirm that dairy farmers had nutrient management systems, had bridged stream crossings or had fenced wetlands on their farms.

Some regional councils were concerned that they were unable to verify statistics from dairy farmers for Accord reporting.

Forest & Bird and Fish & Game want an independent review of the Accord. Other recommendations are:

- Input from environmental organisations if the accord is to continue.
- Stricter targets in improving water quality.
- Stricter enforcement of targets and effective penalties for poor performers.
- Consistent, nationwide monitoring of water quality in dairying areas.
- Consistent, nationwide benchmarks for assessing the accord’s performance.

The Forest & Bird and Fish & Game New Zealand report – Dairying and Declining Water Quality: Why has the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord not delivered cleaner streams? is at http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/conservation/fresh_water/Dairying_and_Declining_Water_Quality.pdf

Contacts:

Neil Deans, Fish & Game New Zealand Nelson-Marlborough Regional Manager, 03 544 6382 or 027 439 4381

Kevin Hackwell, Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager, 04 385 7374 or 021 227 8420

SERN – www.sern.org.nz - a new Southland website about community action in conservation across Southland – have a look at the 40 projects on the site and see if you can lend a helping hand.

Southland Ecological Restoration Network
A network of Southland Community Conservation Projects

HOME PROJECTS ORGANISATIONS EVENTS GALLERIES LINKS ABOUT CONTACT

Find a project

To learn more, or help out.

Do you wish to learn more about ecological restoration projects in Southland? Would you like to work your assistance on a Southland project? To locate a project, you can use the map to the right, or follow the link below to see a larger map. To see a list of projects for each region in Southland, use the link below.

See Regions Larger Map

Feature project

A sample of the projects inside

Bushy Point Restoration Project

The Otakara Landcare Group is having a 14 hectare area of public conservation land. The project area is the restoration of grazing land into native forest and wetland habitat on the edge of New Forest bushery.

Read more

Galleries

Pictures from projects and events

Southland

New Zealand's deep south

Events

Participate in the community

Spring Field Day
Thursday 14th October 2009
Restoration in the Lower Maitland - Tikao to Gore.
See more events

Department of Conservation
environment SOUTHLAND
Invercargill
People First
Southland District Council

Southland Ecological Restoration Network

Southland Ecological Restoration Network (SERN) is a network of Southland's "working back to nature". The aim is to recycle the restoration of native ecological sites in Southland. This is achieved by SERN events which feature projects, networking and people's diverse time projects, and getting people's hands restoration along to see what the fuss is about. SERN also offers links to various conservation projects and offers a helping hand.

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Design by 2011

Albatrosses – Unique and Beautiful birds

People were treated to an exciting evening of journeys, adventure, scientific expertise and research at Invercargill last Thursday when Ms Tui de Roy and Mr Mark Jones shared aspects of their albatross project as part of the Department of Conservation (DOC) Winter Programme series.

“With Invercargill being the closest city to the Subantarctic Islands, home to eight species of albatross, it is not surprising that interest in these magnificent birds here is extremely high, “ Ms de Roy commented. “With the launch of our new book “Albatross: Their world, Their ways” it has seen a dream project come true. By celebrating these largest of all flying birds, we hope to raise awareness of both their magnificence and their plight.”

The book, divided into three parts, conveys the magic of the birds with personal accounts and scene-setting photos, reflects on people's historical relationship with albatrosses, including contributions from 17 world experts and concludes with details about their natural history and species-by-species profiles.

To spend time in all the NZ albatross islands, Subantarctic and Chathams, they had to acquire and outfit their own small

Jenny Campbell

sailing vessel, a 13m steel cutter named Mahalia. It took them one and a half years to get her ready. Since then, with 3-5 people on board, they have done seven trips totalling nine months, over five years, to photograph all of the eleven species which nest in NZ.

Over about ten years, they divided themselves between spending time in the albatross world, recording their ways both at sea and on their nesting islands, and following the incredible discoveries of researchers, often by sharing field time with them.

“We have been drawn to albatross quite simply because we believe they are among the most splendid creatures alive today,” Ms de Roy commented. “Their sheer size, majestic elegance and mysterious lives embody the spirit of all that is wild and free, yet their vulnerability is heart-rending.”

“By getting to know albatrosses as intimately as we have and recording their world in thousands of evocative photographs, we would like to serve as ambassadors for their plight,” she said. “They need a voice to make the world aware and we hope our book will provide that voice.”

Southland Natural History Field Club

The Southland Natural History Field Club or “Field Club” brings together all those with an interest in nature and the outdoors and meets once a month (usually on every second Thursday of the month) followed by a weekend field trip, often on the same topic as the talk. If you are interested in becoming a member it costs \$20 per year (\$25 for a family) and you will receive the monthly newsletter and programme of trips. Contact **Lloyd Esler** (2130404).



Southland Community Nursery



185 Grant Road, Otatara
email rances@ihug.co.nz
web address <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~rances/>

“Strictly for the Birds”

Saturday 22 November 2008

Open Afternoon at Russel and May Evans Bird Rescue Centre and Southland Community Nursery – gardening for the birds – free tui feeders available at the Community Nursery for each person attending 2-4pm

Make a bird friendly garden

Key natives to plant for birds in Southland



Nectar eaters

Tui, bellbird, waxeye - kowhai, fuchsia, flax, rata, cabbage tree, kohuhu, lemonwood

Fruit eaters

Tui, bellbird, waxeye, kereru - coprosma, pepperwood, broadleaf, wineberry, totara, kahikatea, cabbage tree, fuchsia.

Leaf, flower and fruit eaters

kereru - lowland ribbonwood, kowhai, wineberry, cabbage tree, fuchsia.

Insect eaters

fantail, grey warbler, brown creeper
all vegetation, particularly tangly shrubs like coprosma.



Animal Pest Control Advice available on the day – stoats, rats and possums

Southland Community Nursery Web site <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~rances/> . The Southland Community Nursery is open most Fridays – please phone by Thursday evening to check 2131161.

Chris Rance

Flagging Pests

The imperative to make a difference for the environment in which they work is the incentive for Joyce Kolk and Johan Groters to keep monitoring and checking stoat trips they have set up along the Wairaurahiri River on the southern coast of Fiordland. Their initial involvement was with the Coal Island South West Endangered Species Trust (SWEST) while they were caretakers at the Lodge at Kisbee. Johan marked out tracks followed by pre-feeding and then trapping the island. Recently they returned to be involved with mouse poisoning on the island. "When we started our Wairaurihiri Jet boat business we noticed how quiet the forest was with very little bird song or even bird sightings," Joyce remarked." After some initial setbacks from official groups, we decided to start trapping along the east bank of the river with others, such as locals, firms and family sponsoring the traps at a cost of \$225 each for two years." Department of Conservation (DOC) have loaned six traps as well as they see the benefits for the forest birds and other wildlife along with the educational benefits for travellers on the jet boat. The sponsorship also gives the purchaser a free trip on the boat to view their trap and for businesses or lots of 10 traps sold there is another special incentive. DOC charges them 7.5% gross on each trap as part of their concession with traps made by Alistair Jukes from Te Anau.

The first sponsored trap was put out in August 2006 with Janet Gregory, Regional Coordinator NZ Landcare Trust and Sherman Smith, Biosecurity Officer – Pest Plants from Environment Southland helping to formulate a plan. "DoC are hoping to trap stoats and rats over in the Waitutu Forest on the western side of the river to help the kaka which are being murdered on their nests as the predator numbers are mind boggling," Joyce said. "The male to female ratio in the kaka population are the worst in the country at 9 males to 1 female."

They consider they need to get 35 traps sponsored to start their next stage which is to trap the South Coast track from the Wairaurahiri river along to Percy Burn viaduct then on to Port Craig.

It was Joyce's idea to source a flag which could be installed to enable people on the jet to tell if the

traps had been triggered and so needing to stop and remove the dead predator or reset the trap. David Mollison from Architects Mollison and Associates came up with the first prototype with it being fine tuned to the flag system which is used now. To date they have caught 206 stoats and 64 rats.

Passengers show a keen interest with them hearing the story of why the trapping started. "Most of them are kiwis with them leaving with plenty to think about and wondering how they can help," Joyce noted. "Everybody has a very positive opinion of the trapping project and they all recognize the need for it."

They have been an inspiration to others as well with a four wheel drive tour business in Queenstown adopting the idea of sponsored stoat traps. A group in Bluff is interested as well as people in the Taupo DOC Conservancy with finding out about the flag and how it works. They have noticed more birds but one regret is that they did not do a bird count before they started, although they hope to get one done along the river soon as well as prior to trapping the South Coast Track. "Hunters who have hunted the area for years wrote a comment in the hut book at Teal Bay commenting on the increase in bird song which is nice that others are noticing," she commented.

As tourism operators they jet boat across Lake Hauroko, then down the 200 metres to the sea via the grade three rock strewn rapids of the wild Wairaurahiri River, returning to the boat ramp after lunch, noticing the traps on the way. Johan has been jet boating commercially for 15 years and probably more seriously since building a purpose built boat in 2000.

At Environment Southland's Awards this year they were highly commended in the commercial section with 16 entries in their category. "Johan and I feel pretty privileged to operate in such a beautiful place and it is a great way for us to raise awareness of the plight of our native birds and flow on effects for the forests getting rid of a few stoats and rats along the way," Joyce commented. "Everybody has to be aware of these issues. As Pink Floyd's song says 'There's no more turning away'."

Jenny Campbell

Te Rere Yellow-eyed penguin Reserve Update (since April 08)

For photos and stories about Te Rere visit - www.converge.org.nz/fbsth/

Southland Branch of Forest and Bird completed its annual October yellow-eyed penguin count on Sunday 19th October 2008. The annual counts are an important way of monitoring penguin numbers at the colony. There are two counts undertaken annually at the colony the first in October (half day count) and the second in December (full day count).

The Te Rere penguin colony is within the Te Rere Scientific Reserve located on the Catlins coast. The reserve is owned and managed by the Forest & Bird Society. The yellow-eyed penguin colony is one of the largest colonies of this rare bird on the mainland New Zealand coast. The reserve is 72 ha and is an important coastal reserve. Other work undertaken at the reserve includes an ongoing forest restoration programme and predator control. Despite all the effort put into the reserve the recovery of the colony following a devastating fire in 1995 has been slower than anticipated but at least we haven't experienced the disease events that have been prevalent on Stewart Island.

The counts are a great opportunity to see penguins and it's quite relaxing as you sit on a headland waiting for penguins to come and go. Volunteers to assist with the next count to be undertaken on **13th December 2008** are welcome. Contact Brian or Chris Rance, ph 2131161.

Te Rere penguin October count – what happened?

On Sunday 19th October 2008 the annual half day beach count was undertaken. We had a team with a mix of new and experienced people. The count team was lead by myself and Geoff Dembo and we were joined by Neil Robertson (our new committee member from Manapouri), Ali and Fynn (SIT students from Invercargill), Gary a conservation volunteer from England and Anna (from Germany). We had put the count off from Saturday and were rewarded with a mild sunny day.

The count revealed a total of 17 adult and one juvenile penguins landing at the reserve during the day. Unfortunately this count result is slightly less than results from recent years. However a nest search which was undertaken a few days earlier by Fergus and Mike Hazel found 18 nests, though

Fergus thought that there may still be one or two late nest to come. This number of nests is the average number for recent years. Therefore it looks like numbers may not be down, but no increase either. During the count a little blue penguin was seen. Fergus had first recorded little blue penguins a couple of years ago. He thinks that they are increasing, which is great. It is possible that they have established as a result of the success of our predator trapping programme. Another interesting record during the count was a sealion. Sealions appear to be coming more common visitors or possible resident at the reserve. While it is good to have these rare marine mammals visiting they are of some concern as they are known to predate penguin.

The penguin count was my first visit since the winter planting workbee in July. The plantings that I saw looked good, some of the recent plantings near the Falls Creek count site are showing a spring flush of growth. There were some deer tracks present, but fortunately not much sign of browsing.

The next trip to Te Rere is for the December full day count to be held on 13th December. This count is from 10:00am till dark (about 10:00pm) and is done in two 6 hour shifts. We need help for this count so if anyone is interested let me know (ph 2131161).

Other Te Rere news

Fergus has had groups of overseas student volunteers down at Te Rere and this has allowed a lot extra work be undertaken. Some of the more notable jobs they have done is build a foot bridge across Falls Creek and erect the new storage shed. Fergus also continues to maintain all our plantings, undertake predator control, check the fences, keep an eye on the penguins and much, much more! Fergus was pleased to report that on his most recent visit he had caught three stoats. It is a good time to catch them as the penguins are on nests and eggs and young chicks are vulnerable to predation.

On 26 July the winter planting day was held. We had a great turnout with three different groups. From Invercargill we had 15 people, including a

group from Southland Tramping Club. From Dunedin was a group of 13 DOC conservation volunteers lead by Bruce McKinley and David Mules. Fergus also had a group of 9 Rustic Pathway volunteer students

from USA. The weather was cool with some showers, however with the enthusiastic group we managed to get all 500 plants in before the rain set in. The highlight was seeing huge spray explosions from the south-east swell.



The Te Rere Advisory committee met on 17th May 2008. As usual this was a most worthwhile meeting. We had updates on Te Rere from Fergus, on the recent Long Point Reserve purchase by the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust from Margaret Murrell, on the previous penguin season from Bruce and Maurice Yorke told us of his covenanting of areas adjacent to Te Rere and along Falls Creek which complements well the Te Rere Reserve.

We have also had film crews down at Te Rere – the most recent being Wayne Birchell who s producing a dvd for the Branch. As well as the stunning scenery and good penguin footage Wayne spent a day interviewing Fergus in various places about the colourful history of our reserve – watch this space!

Brian Rance

Next Te Rere Trip Date for your Diary

**Saturday 13 December 2008 Te Rere full day
penguin count and work day.**

Leader Brian Rance – bookings essential 2131161. Petrol Vouchers for drivers.

Southland Branch Committee

Craig Carson (2130732)

Rob and Peggy Snoep (2169103)

Christine Henderson, Lumsden (03 2487605)

Arthur Williams (2168985)

Barbara Carson (2130732)

Neill Robertson, Manapouri (03 2499595)

Marie Lockie (2178720)

Ruth Dalley, Te Anau (03 2496664)

Jenny Campbell, Mossburn (03 2486398)

Chris and Brian Rance (2131161)

Margaret Hopkins, Stewart Island (03 2191126)

Christine McKenzie, Fortrose (03 2469526)

Forest and Bird Addresses:

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www.converge.org.nz/fbsth

Southern Region Office – Sue Maturin

PO Box 364, Dunedin

Central Office – PO Box 631, Wellington

www.forest-bird.org.nz



**Newsletter
October 2008**

Southland Branch
PO Box 1155
Invercargill