



Forest & Bird

GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Upper Hutt Branch Newsletter

February/March 2010

PO Box 40 875 Upper Hutt

February Meeting

Topic: BBQ and Picnic
Date: Wednesday 24th February
Time: 6.00 pm
Place: Barbecue Area 1 -.Kaitoke Regional Park
Bring:

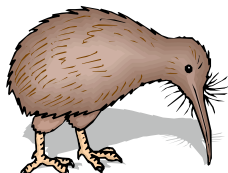
- Your own food and drink
- \$1 coins for the barbecues
- \$1 coin for the raffle

To Get There: Turn off State highway 2 to Kaitoke Regional Park. Take the loop road to the left at the end and it's the first barbecue on the right.

March Meeting

Topic: Painting Nature Through Photographs
Speaker: Sue McKee
(tramper, photographer, teacher and artist)
Date: Wednesday 24 March 2009
Time: 7.30pm
Place: Heretaunga College Staffroom

Sue's passion is painting nature through photographs. She does this through exquisite macrophotography and extraordinary perceptions of nature's beauty and diversity. A visual extravaganza.



Willows go at Moehau Park



Using funding provided by the Community Conservation Fund, the willows at the site of the Moehau Park riparian restoration project were felled and removed several weeks ago. This is a major part of the project and the removal has totally transformed the restoration site. The willows were a haven to numerous adventive plants, caused the stream to remain sluggish, stagnant and collect mountains of rubbish from stormwater runoff. In addition, many had fallen over or had large branches broken off, creating a potentially dangerous environment. Now that the trees have been removed, the stream bed should deepen, allowing greater water flow and a healthier environment to establish. Extensive replanting with natives will assist in restoring the area to a health riparian habitat.

From The Chair

Having just returned to work after a 6-week break has transformed a daily routine of labour-intensive work in the garden or tramping around remote places in the country, to one of paperwork, computers and across-the-table meetings and face-to-face negotiations. There are too many places to visit and too little time to visit them.

The year 2009 ended on an extremely sad note; Forest and Bird's Communication Manager, Helen Bain, was killed in a tragic accident on the Ruamahanga river on 29 Dec, plunging friends, family and work colleagues into deep shock and mourning. This was a terrible way to end the year and a tragic loss for the Society. Helen had not only transformed the way we communicate but had brought a new energy and vibrancy to promoting the Society and what it stands for. She will be sadly missed.

2010 will be a difficult and challenging year for the Society. The government is presenting us with some major challenges, through threats to the conservation estate from mining, the Mackenzie basin from intensive dairying, water storage and use issues and lack of commitment and action on climate change. Imperative across the Branches is the need to be more proactive and more engaging with decision-makers, in order to get the conservation outcomes we want. As I've stated before, we need to be a much stronger Voice for Nature. All our voices need to be heard, more than ever. This year, I urge you to get more involved, get vocal, get mad - the natural wild places and flora and fauna of New Zealand need to be protected for our children and our children's children.

North Island Branches Meeting

Several Branch members attended the North Island Branches meeting, held late last year in Auckland. The meeting was well attended by North Island Branches, with over 70 people participating. Similar to the South Island meeting, staff presentations were made on the rebranding, new conservation campaigns and

conservation challenges for 2010. One of the most significant of these is the threats to the arid landscapes of the Mackenzie Basin in Canterbury. Long been recognised as home to a significant number of rare and endangered plant species only found within the Canterbury region, these ancient floodplains are now being threatened with agricultural development from dairying. Forest and Bird is preparing a major campaign to protect these iconic floodplains. Along with Central Office staff, National Treasurer Graham Bellamy ran a very successful treasurers workshop to help Branch treasurers do their job with greater confidence and understand the requirements of the position.

Attendees at the meeting also visited the Ark in the Park project at the Auckland Regional Park, followed by a hangi hosted by Auckland Regional Council rangers.

One of the highlights of this meeting was the amount of time given over to meeting and greeting other Branch people from around the country and hearing about the great work being carried out by the Branches. Often meetings like this are too crammed with business to allow for this but getting to know what goes on in other parts of the country, over a few wines and nibbles, is often just as important.

Potty People Having Fun



The shade house

Tuesday morning 9.00 -12.00 am at the Upper Hutt City Council old Parks and Reserves Facility is a regular date for some F&B members. Rain, hail or shine through the

summer up to a dozen people can be found there potting on plants that Sue Millar has grown locally from harvested seed.



At the bench potting on

Anybody is welcome to join them. It's convivial, relaxing and satisfying watching the plants grown from fingerlings to 1 metre tall, ready to be planted out at Hull's Creek, Moehau Park or sold to local organisations to fund the buying of potting mix. 6,000 plants are produced annually using 350 bags of mix. Any surplus are give to other groups to pot on.

Lynne McClennan



Utah makes sure the shade house stays well weeded.

If you are interested in joining the fun please contact **Sue Millar**

Potting Mix - Hidden Dangers

Potting mix can sometimes harbour dangerous legionella bacteria which can cause pneumonia. This organism thrives in temperatures of 25 - 45 degrees. This temperature can easily be

reached when potting mix bags are left out in the sun. The bacteria are not spread from person to person but by inhaling air containing large amounts of bacteria. The bacteria can be caught by anybody; however the elderly the young, the infirm and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk. The bacteria can be treated with antibiotics - but the best remedy is prevention.

- Read the safety warnings on the potty mix bags prior to use
- Open bags carefully with scissors in a well ventilated area and keep face turned away
- Avoid inhaling the mix - ideally wear a mask
- Keep mix damp when handling
- Wear gloves and wash your hands after use.
- Clean up by wet sweeping or vacuuming

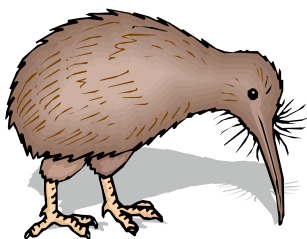
Sources; Dom Post and safety warnings on potting mix bags

We'll be Going Round the Mountain...



Mt Taranaki

Four of us (Barry & Rosemary Wards, Penny and Tony Madsen) ventured around Mt Taranaki on a 4-day tramp in mid-January. For some of us, it was a first trip, others a third, but the mountain always offers a different experience each time. It had been 20 years since I last took this journey and, at more than a few times, my body was telling it! What appears to be a perfect peak, jutting up into the clouds, Mt Taranaki is highly eroded and subject to numerous slips, rock falls and river deluges. We saw plenty of evidence of these every day. The round the mountain track can be relatively easy or highly challenging even in the best of conditions, mainly through having some options to take low altitude tracks or high altitude tracks. The choice to do so is largely dependent on fitness and weather. Fortunately, we were reasonably fit - the two men were lugging 4 litres of wine between us so we had to be! Following a rather cold and misty 4-5h walk from Dawson Falls (near Stratford) to the first hut at Lake Dive, we were blessed with fine weather to take the high altitude track to Waiaua Gorge hut the next day. This route offers magnificent views of both the mountain and the surrounding countryside and, while it was raining in Wellington, we were slowing getting sunburnt on the slopes of Mt Taranaki! Perhaps the most exciting day of the whole trip, this track took us past towering volcanic bluffs, deep water-gouged gorges and through magnificent leatherwood scrubland before heading down a long spur towards the Waiaua River and the gorge hut. Typical of many parts of this track, the final journey to the hut involved a river crossing, steep climb and a 10m scramble up a ladder strapped to the site of a cliff! There are almost no bridges on any of the river crossings due to the frequency of slips and deluges.



The ladders were very challenging!



The third day was marked by torrential rain before arriving at Holly hut, comfortably nestled against the mountain with a wonderful view of the nearby Pouakai Ranges. The hut overlooks the extensive Ahukawakawa wetland. This unique wetland was formed ~3500 years ago and is the home of many unusual shrubs

including the large red tussocks which thrive in these types of medium fertility wet soils. Small herbs, grasses and mosses make up the ground cover on the floor of the wetland.



Holly Hut

The hut itself is a bit of luxury item, with solar-powered lighting activated by sensors when the light levels reduce to a specific level. Unfortunately, the day's activities (and consumption of the last of the 4 litres of wine) saw us well asleep by the time the light levels reached the trigger point!

The final day, ending back at Dawson Falls, courses above the bushline again, through the Maunganui ski field and down through lowland podocarp forest.

This is a wonderful tramp, marked by spectacular vistas, comfortable huts and a variety of routes to satisfy varying levels of fitness and changes in weather.

Now Where will we go next?

Barry Wards

Wild Rivers

On Sunday 29th November the three area F&B branches held a very successful afternoon at Kaitoke Water Works celebrating the National Wild Rivers campaign opening. Wellington, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt branches worked together in planning and running the event. We started at 3 pm in the open grassed area over the bridge on the way to the water treatment station and had speeches and displays by F&B,

KCC, Fish & Game, HV Tramping Club and Wellington Regional Council.

We had a late start due to fire in the camping area that Steve (Park Warden) had to attend, and at this stage there were a few people around. With the speeches over the activities started and seemed to be going well with a few people looking at the various displays and I wandered down to the river by the car park to look at the water activities. There were a few watching the tramping club doing a river crossing. I went around the corner and could hardly move for parents and children at the kayaking. During the afternoon the people from the kayak club really earned their "keep". This afternoon proved to be a real success in terms of promoting F&B and other organisations involved in the use of the Hutt River. One good result of the afternoon was the signing up of our local Labour MP (Chris Hipkin) as a F&B member.



Hutt River looking south from Maoribank - Saturday 28th November - Very wild!

The F&B Wild River campaign is to continue for the rest of 2010 and the branch committee have agreed to have further activities relating to the protection of a very important resource at our "doorstep" - recreational and environmentally important. At this stage we plan to discuss with Wgtn Regional Council the straightening of the river, the grading/raking of the river and the use of willows for stabilising of the banks. We look forward to having support from local members on these issues.



Sunday - Calmer water - Kayak activity

Wellington Restoration Day

This will be on Saturday 22nd May 2010 at Silverstream Retreat. Registration forms will be sent out shortly. Contact **Barry Wards** for more information.

Forest and Bird Local Branches

F&B Lower Hutt Branch meeting:
Meets 1st Thursday of the month

F&B Wellington Branch Meeting
Meets 3rd Thursday of the month

Kapiti Branch Meeting
Meets 4th Wednesday of the month

Other Groups

Wellington Botanical Society
Meets 3rd Monday of the month 7.30 pm
www.wellingtonbotsoc.wellington.net.nz

Web Watch

Forest and Bird has a great website with heaps of interesting information. It now includes past copies of our newsletter.
www.forestandbird.org.nz

Also check out:

Kiwi Conservation Club www.kcc.org.nz

NZ Ecological Restoration Network
www.bush.org.nz

NZ Plant Conservation Network
www.nzpcn.org.nz

Newsletter Deadline

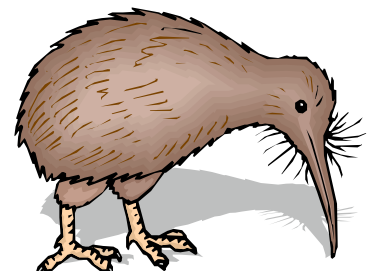
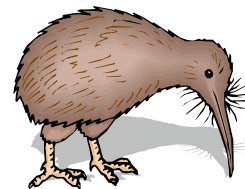
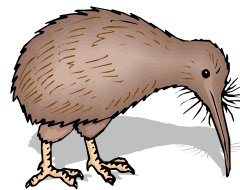
The deadline for the next newsletter is:
31 March 2010.

Please send any items to Penny or Marion, preferably by email (so we don't have to wear our fingers out typing!) **Thanks ☺**

Editors Note

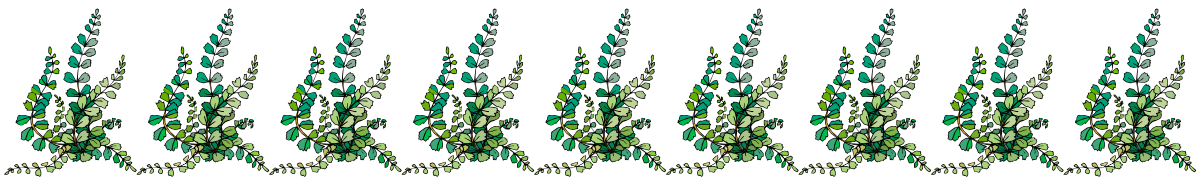
Thanks to our contributors this month, Barry Wards, Lynne MacClennan and Grahame Bellamy.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Forest and Bird as a whole. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. Any errors or omissions are regretted. Correspondence should be addressed to PO Box 40 875 Upper Hutt.



Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Contact
February	Wed 24th	6.00 pm	Upper Hutt Branch Meeting	Barry Wards 04 970 4266
March	Wed 24th	7.30 pm	Upper Hutt Branch Meeting	Barry Wards 04 970 4266
April	Wed 28th	7.30 pm	Upper Hutt Branch Meeting	Barry Wards 04 970 4266
May	Sat 22nd	Times to be confirmed	Wellington Restoration Day	Barry Wards 04 970 4266
Every Week	Every Thursday	5.00 - 7.00 pm	Working Bee, Hulls Creek, (until daylight saving ends)	Sue Millar 04 526 7440
Every Week	Every Tuesday	9.00 am - 11 am	Potting up, Upper Hutt Depot	Sue Millar 04 526 7440



2009 Branch Committee			
	Phone		Email
Barry Wards	04 970 4266 (hm) 04 894 0475 (wk)	Chairperson	barry.wards@maf.govt.nz
Graham Bellamy	04 526 3053	Treasurer	gbellamy@slingshot.co.nz
Fred Fowler	04 528 3127	Secretary	Fred.fowler@ontrack.govt.nz
Marion Callus	04 527 8692	Newsletter/committee	callus@xtra.co.nz
Penny Madsen	04 528 5303	Newsletter	penny.madsen@ihug.co.nz
Lynne McLellan	04 526 7775	Newsletter Distributor	lynne@letterlinks.co.nz
Sue Millar	04 526 7440	Horticulture	millark@ihug.co.nz
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Gill Murgatroyd	04 970 3042	Committee	
Richard Northmore	04 526 2572	Committee	
Stella Watson	04 971 5076	Membership	stellaw@paradise.net.nz
Adam Langford	04 973 7302	Committee	
Heather Blissett	04 526 3668	Committee	
Georgie Dobson	04 526 5119	KCC	ralph.georgina@xtra.co.nz

