

A month of protest

The month of May has been dominated, in a way we've not seen for some time, by protests against some major potential developments in mining and power generation.

About 50,000 people marched in Auckland on May 1 to tell the Government national parks should be safe from mining. The march – organised by Forest & Bird, Greenpeace, ECO, Coromandel Watchdog and FMC – drew the largest crowd in decades in Auckland.

Forest & Bird members around New Zealand collected thousands of submissions against the Government's plans to open national parks and other Schedule 4 areas to mining. Submissions closed on May 26, with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) receiving about 40,000. Forest & Bird delivered the last 4,000 submissions collected – including some collected by the Green Party and Greenpeace – to the MED office in Wellington on May 25.

The Government has proposed that mining be allowed in the Coromandel Peninsula, Great Barrier Island and in Paparoa National Park.

The closing date for submissions is now past, but we still need to keep up the pressure. Forest & Bird recommends you try the following:

- Sending an e-card to Mr Key by clicking on the mining banner at www.forestandbird.org.nz
- Mailing the postcard to Mr Key found in the May edition of *Forest & Bird* magazine. E-mail office@forestandbird.org.nz for more copies
- Writing a letter to the editor of your newspaper
- Visiting your local MP to tell him or her the importance of protecting our national parks.

Mokihinui River Dam

Another big issue for Forest & Bird members is the proposal by Meridian Energy to dam the Mokihinui River for a hydro-electric power station, flooding about 14 km of the river.

Forest & Bird is planning to appeal against the decision to allow the dam. They estimate a cost of \$100,000 for the appeal and other campaign work and are seeking donations.

Check out the Forest & Bird website for more information on these and other campaigns.

Concert for the birds



Photo ©Simon Fordham/Naturepix

The Waitakere Branch of Forest & Bird invites you to a Concert for the Birds to be held on Friday 18th June at 7.30 pm in Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre.

Proceeds will go towards introducing more kokako into the Ark in the Park, Waitakere Ranges.

Special guest artists include:

- Patricia Wright (soprano) with accompanist Judy King
- Jubate (classical, gypsy, American and Irish fiddle music)
- Show West Singers (musical director Judy King)
- Yuko Takahashi (mezzo soprano)
- Greg Patel (tenor)
- Together with supporting artists.

Light refreshments will be available.

Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre
15 Glendale Road, Glen Eden
Phone: 818 5751

Bookings: www.iticket.co.nz Phone: 09 361 1000

Tickets (booking fee not included):

\$25 adult

\$20 unwaged

\$10 child.

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Get your branch newsletters by e-mail

The majority of our members receive a printed version of the Branch Newsletter via NZ Post. This is both expensive and not so good for the environment. If you have an e-mail address, and are willing to read the Newsletter on the Forest & Bird website (www.forestandbird.org.nz) rather than receive a paper copy, please let me know. Those of you that elect to read on line will be releasing more of our scarce funds for work protecting our birds and their habitats – and you'll be able to view the photographs in colour.

To switch to reading on line, please send me an e-mail with 'Online Newsletter' in the title. Then, each time a new edition of the Newsletter is available, I'll send you a brief e-mail to let you know. And, if you change your mind and want to go back to receiving a paper copy, you can e-mail me asking to switch back.

Thankyou

Janie Vaughan
Secretary
kevinv@clear.net.nz

Operation Possum Blitz

It is a busy time of the year for possums, judging from the many phone calls I have received regarding requests for Timms Traps.

People are anxious about the possums eating our native trees, fruit trees, vegetables and buds from roses and geraniums. Recent figures from 2006 show that every year possums cost New Zealand \$111 million.

Using a Timms Trap could be the answer to the destruction caused by these pests. Operation Possum Blitz has been in action since 2009, and was first mooted by Friends of Arataki AGM that year.

We now have at least 90 Timms Traps out there working for the environment. Over 100 possums have been reported caught. The majority of trappers report back to me with numbers killed and I really appreciate this feedback.

If you suspect you have possums, do phone me. We are available seven days and open all hours. This is a voluntary community project, supported by Auckland Regional Council and Waitakere City Council. My last sale of a trap was at 1.00 pm and twenty four hours later a gleeful trapper reported 'two possums less'.

At this time of year, possums can invade a cosy loft or even worse. A local college phoned to say they had a possum under the stage and would be collecting a trap soon. A performing possum is a first for me.

For Timms Traps contact:
Phone: June 817 8315 or Linda 817 4338

Email: op.possumberblitz@hotmail.com

\$35 to purchase a Timms Trap
\$25 refundable bond for short term loan

Best time for trapping – any time!

June Henderson

More Kokako for the Ark

On Saturday 29th May, two more Kokako were released into the Ark in the Park. The birds, a male and a female, have been transferred from Tiritiri Matangi. These two will add to the six birds already released in the Ark. The male bird, known as Moby on Tiritiri, has the band combination M/OY which means metal band on the left leg and orange over yellow colour bands on the right leg. The female, known as Punga, has the combination YM/R, yellow over metal on the left leg and red on the right. Moby is three years old and has already bred successfully, raising two young this year. Punga is two years old and had two unsuccessful nests this year. Hopefully, these young birds will attempt to breed in their first summer at the Ark. The birds have been fitted with radio transmitters so that their whereabouts can be determined for the first few months after the release.



Volunteers are needed to help with the radio tracking and, if you are available to help for a few mornings during the next month, please contact Karen Colgan on karen@colgan.co.nz. For those new to tracking, training in the use of the telemetry gear will be provided.

Ruapehu lodge

The roof is now on Forest & Bird's new lodge, and it will be lined in early June. Project manager Jon Wenham believes it will be open for bookings in early August.

Start planning now to make use of this stunning new accommodation.

Your views on pest control?

Landcare Research wants to know the most important issues in pest management for biodiversity protection. They would like to hear Forest & Bird members' views on:

'What, from your perspective, are the most important questions in terrestrial weed, pest and disease research and management that need to be addressed in the next 20 years for protecting and restoring native biodiversity and ecosystems in New Zealand?'

Please e-mail your responses to:
pests2020@landcareresearch.co.nz

Giraffe Weevils at Matuku

Chrissie Painting is undertaking a study of Giraffe Weevils at our Matuku reserve for her PhD. Chrissie reports that she 'was able to find an incredible density of these beetles, despite being advised that they were rare and hard to find'. We'll bring you more news about the study as it progresses. Meantime, here's one of Chrissie's photos of a pair of these amazing creatures.



The BioBlitz

BUMPER BIOBLITZ: Forest & Bird's Central Auckland, Waitakere, South Auckland and North Shore branches banded together at the BioBlitz held in Auckland in mid-April. The branches ran a stand, with stuffed ferrets, stoats and kiwi attracting lots of interest. A total of 1521 plants and animals were found during the 24-hour event at Auckland Domain.

More dolphin deaths

Forest & Bird is calling on the Ministers of Fisheries and Conservation to better protect endangered Hector's

dolphins following news of two dolphin deaths in fishing nets, kept quiet by the Government until late May.

Forest & Bird was shocked to discover that the Government kept under wraps for six months the deaths of two Hector's dolphins in commercial set nets. Three Hector's dolphins have been reported drowned in set nets in the past year:

- 8 May 2009 – Sub-adult male off Kaikoura
- 1 November 2009 – Sub-adult male caught in South Bay, Kaikoura
- 26 January 2010 – caught north of Timaru.

The Hector's dolphin is an endangered species. In 2008 the Minister of Fisheries placed a set-net ban within four nautical miles off the east coast of the South Island, except along the Kaikoura coast.

Forest & Bird is calling for increased protection of Hector's and Maui's dolphins, particularly off Kaikoura, Timaru and Taranaki, where they are still being caught in fishing nets or are unprotected. There are about 7,000 Hector's and 111 Maui's dolphins left.

Field trips

No trips are planned for July or August, but there will be a spring programme which will be publicised in our next edition. For field trips you should wear strong, non-slip shoes or boots and bring rainwear, jersey, lunch (for full day trips) and a drink. Trips are usually held wet or fine, but if in doubt phone the bookings person for confirmation. Please note that bookings are essential for all trips. All bookings are to Glenys on 832 6238 (except as noted below).

Sunday, 20th June 2010

Planting on Motutapu Island with other branch groups. This trip will be organized by Central Auckland F & B, we are invited to join with them this month to plant on Motutapu and perhaps see recently translocated kakariki. The ferry leaves at 9:15 and returns at 3:30pm. Tickets cost \$20. Bookings: with Marguerite on mpl418@gmail.com

In addition to the normal gear you take for a day's outing, bring some gardening gloves.

Tai Haruru Lodge, Piha

The Branch's Tai Haruru Lodge is a seaside haven set in a large sheltered garden on the rugged West Coast, 38 km on sealed roads from central Auckland. Close to a store, bush reserves and tracks in the beautiful Waitakere Ranges. There is one double bedroom and one bedroom sleeping three, plus a large lounge with wood burner, dining area and kitchen. A self-contained unit has four single beds. Bring food, linen and fuel for the

fire and barbecue. Off peak rates apply. To book contact Jean and Peter King, 10 La Trobe Track, Karekare, Waitakere City. Tel: (09) 812 8064.

Email: hop0018@slingshot.co.nz

Evening Meetings

These are usually held at the Kelston Community Centre on the corner of Great North Road and Awaroa Road, starting at 7:30 pm and feature illustrated talks. Refreshments are provided and donations towards the cost of hiring the hall are appreciated. If you need more information contact Ted Erskine-Legget on 817 5208.

Thursday 17th June 2010

Dave Bell will give a presentation about saving the New Zealand falcon (Karearea). Dave is the National Falcon Survey Coordinator for the Raptor Association of New Zealand (RANZ). The RANZ launched the National Falcon Survey to collect and collate records of NZ falcon from throughout the country. The Survey was intended to provide an up to date picture of the distribution of the NZ falcon and to provide data that could assist in making an estimate of the total population, possibly leading to a re-assessment of its conservation status.

Thursday, 15th Jul 2010

Ken Catt, our former Secretary and a Life Member of Forest & Bird, recently returned from an 11 day Arctic cruise. Ken will give a presentation on Arctic wildlife and a historical commentary on a balloon attempt to reach the North Pole.

Thursday, 19th Aug 2010

John Staniland, John Sumich and Chris Bindon will talk about 'Pest Control for Small Landowners' and how we can make our properties free of predators.

Thursday 16th September 2010

Kay Milton will describe how she and her husband John planned and created a new nature reserve on their Northern Irish smallholding and how the plants matured and the bird life changed over the next 18 years.

Thursday, 21 Oct 2010

Details to follow.

Thursday, 18 Nov 2010

Karen Baird of Forest & Bird will talk about the Kermadec Islands Marine Reserve.

Obituary

Long-standing branch members may remember Betty Bockett who died recently at the age of 91. Betty was a delightful lady who worked tirelessly for many years making jams and pickles to be sold at branch meetings and stalls to raise funds totalling thousands of dollars for both Central Auckland and Waitakere Branches. So outstanding was her effort that the Society awarded Betty the prized "Old Blue" Award for her services to conservation. At her funeral the branch chair spoke in appreciation, and extended sympathy to her family.

2010 AGM

Four new committee members were elected at our recent AGM. Welcome to Jonathon Spring, Raewyn Michael, Andy Warneford and Michael Coote who join John Staniland (Chairperson), James Smith (Treasurer and Deputy Chairperson), Janie Vaughan (Secretary), Glenys Mather, John Sumich, Chris Bindon, Peter Maddison and John Stewart.

Certificates of Appreciation were also awarded to the following for valued service to the branch:

- **Sharon Davies** for valuable help on the Tai Haruru Lodge subcommittee, and practical assistance and hospitality in mail-outs to members
- **Mike Whiting** for valued service as Auditor of Waitakere Branch financial accounts over many years
- **Robert Woolf** for service to Waitakere Branch on the Committee, as National Councillor, and as Newsletter Editor
- **Craig and Lisa Davies** for service on the Waitakere Branch Committee and in pest control on Matuku Reserve
- **Henning Hovmand** for valued assistance to the Society's Tai Haruru Lodge, and in growing and planting native plants
- **Grant Capill** for extremely hard work over the years as a volunteer in the 'Ark in the Park' project
- **Sheryl Tapp** for extremely hard work over the years as a volunteer in the 'Ark in the Park' project

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