
WAITAKERE FOREST AND BIRD NEWS



Forest
& Bird

Wai~o~te~Kauri

‘Stream where the Kauri grows’

July – October 2005



THE CO-CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT TO THE AGM - HIGHLIGHTS

Like the mainland birds of New Zealand, Forest and Bird is at a turning point. In recent years there has been a change of emphasis from the all-out necessary preservation of our endangered species on offshore islands to work on how to conserve them on the mainland. The concept of mainland islands started in Mapara has extended to various parts of the country such as Karori in Wellington and our own Ark in the Park open sanctuary project within the Waitakeres. This project builds on the success of the ARC's Operation Forestsave and the elimination of the possums. Telltale signs of the recovery are seen in the more frequent sightings of pied tits in some areas and the spectacular flowering of rata and fruiting of kahikatea.

This year the work of the many volunteers in setting and maintaining bait lines and stoat traps has seen a great reduction in the number of these and other vermin. This removal of predators has resulted in the Springtime transfer and, we hope, establishment of whiteheads from Tiritiri Matangi Island, and the recent introduction of robins from Mokoia Island. It is indeed a landmark to record the re-introduction of these two birds into the Waitakere Ranges – after an absence of at least 80 years. We are

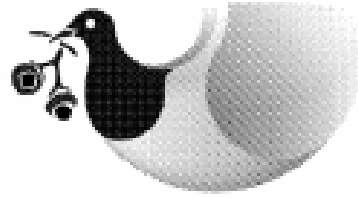
grateful to the volunteers for all their hard work, to the Ark Committee for their management and involvement in this Project and to the ARC and other sponsors for their support throughout the year.

Coupled with the halt in the decline of our native flora has been a reduction in the membership decline of Forest and Bird. Our branch is amongst the leading branches in holding its membership - congratulations to all involved in that. I am pleased to report that, as a member of the Society's Executive, there is light at the end of the tunnel and that the difficulties experienced in the past few years seem to have been overcome.

At a Branch level, I must on your behalf congratulate the various Committee Members who have served during the past year. It is always dangerous to mention particular members - but certain members deserve particular mention. Ken Catt has continued his yeoman service to the cause and was rewarded with a QSM. I am particularly grateful to him for filling in for me in many activities, as I have been flitting up and down the country during the past year.

ARK IN THE PARK

“ALL EYES SKYWARD . . . ”



So read a newspaper headline on the occasion of our robin release and indeed both the spectators and the 31 robins released on Saturday, April 16, had their eyes focused on the canopy or beyond. Like the elusive halfback that jinks this way and that from the back of a rugby maul, each bird burst from its box in a random, erratic flight path, sometimes alighting momentarily on trunk or bough before disappearing into the trees. Over 100 guests and supporters watched the culmination of the past 10 months of planning, applications, disease testing, and capture, then attended the reception at Karanga camp. Here, after addresses from Mike Lee and Christine Rose of the ARC, we wined and dined at a wonderful meal organised by the Friends of Arataki.

Everything went well for the translocation. The disease screening at Mokoia Island in March showed the population was healthy and served to train a few volunteers in the use of the clap-traps for robin capture. Later in mid-April, when a 20-strong party travelled to Mokoia, these people became the leaders of the five catching teams. We were well prepared - clap-traps, transport boxes, tents, cookers, food, and importantly, our own waiata to sing at our welcome powhiri at the island. Frequently over the next 3 days an odd refrain of our waiata was heard, the Von Clap-Trapp Family singers perhaps?

Toutouwai were caught fairly easily, 31 on the first day and David Pattemore, Sandra Jack, and assistants worked into the dark weighing, banding, and feeding them. Because of the time taken to feed this number, it was decided to send some to the Ark site on Friday and 22 were transported north and released. This made the logistics of feeding the remainder over the final day quite manageable. The volunteers had glorious weather, marvellous food (thanks to Lyndell Lyon), and several times were able to relax in Hinemoa's Pool after their generally

modest exertions. Who could ask for more? Among the 22 released on Friday and the 31 on the Saturday were a high number of females, which promises well for the future.

And since then? Post-release monitoring has been led by Uta Langershausen, a student volunteer from Germany. Uta is steadily walking over many of our bait lines listening and looking for robins, ready to feed them meal worms. To date, several have been found close to the release site on the Auckland City walk. Any positive sightings you might make should be sent to our email address - arkinthepark@paradise.co.nz - with date, location, and leg band combinations. Note: leg bands are recorded as first the left leg, then the right leg; for example, “YM/G” would be a yellow over metal on the left and green on the right. Sightings are one thing but equally joyous is to hear the song of robins in our Waitakere forest - what a sound and missing for so long. Let's make sure it remains.

Hihi Haven Draws Nearer

Sandra Jack, our manager, and Su Sinclair, ARC ranger at the Cascades, attended the Hihi Recovery Group AGM at Maungatautari at the end of April. The recovery group discussed possible translocations and Sandra's PowerPoint presentation aimed to show the suitability and preparedness of our Ark site. The first concern is that Tiritiri, which will be the source of any transferred birds, continues the breeding pattern of recent years and that sufficient birds will be available for transfer. A second concern is that predator control at our site is robust. After the AGM, several members travelled up to the Ark site and were shown some of the habitat. Isabel Castro, of Massey University, and Raewyn Empson, of the Karori Sanctuary in Wellington, were both very impressed with the quality of the habitat, saying it was the nearest they'd seen to

that found on Little Barrier Island, home of the only naturally occurring population of hihi. The magnificent heavy seeding of kahikatea and flowering of the climbing rata (*Metrosideros fulgens*) were most impressive - the rata, of course, being a hihi food source. We will be applying to the Department of Conservation for the consideration of the recovery group and a translocation in 2006.

HELP-A-HECTARE

Don't forget that the Help-a-Hectare appeal is still operating and your support will count!

For details, see:

www.forestandbird.org.nz/arkinthepark/index.asp
Or contact John Sumich on: (09) 818 5267, or
cjnk@xtra.co.nz

Successful Fundraiser Held

Fundraising is a norm for any voluntary group and a very successful fundraiser was held on the last weekend of April. Karen Staniland and a small group of helpers put much effort into presenting an Antiques and Collectibles, Arts and Crafts Fair. Visitors first passed a dramatic five-panel diorama painted by Derek March that showed the Waitakeres at the end of the 19th Century - the felling of forests, pest introductions, forest regrowth, changes brought about by predator control, and a future scene full of all the re-introduced species. Here, also, was an antique doll ("Victoria") dressed in period outdoor wear. Many collections were

displayed including dolls, pedal cars and other toys, and glassware. With over 50 stalls of crafts and collectibles there was something for everyone, and the hard-working team in the kitchen supplied tasty food and beverages. All up, a successful weekend financially, and importantly, an opportunity to promote the Ark.

Diary Entry – May 7

Went early to the Ark volunteer day. Saw and heard two robins singing their lungs out. Constant sound of tui. Loads of Kereru cruising by, feeding on kahikatea. Autumn flocks of silver eyes, pairs of grey warblers, and fantails, of course. Fed meal worms to tomtits, disturbed morepork while walking on bait line. Miro berries on the ground, therefore no rats. Seven kaka cruising and circling for 10 minutes with their mix of whistles and raucous sounds. And we've only just begun!

Volunteer Days

Remember, our volunteer days are the first and third Saturday of every month. Meet 9am at the Ranger's station.

Ark in the Park contacts

Karen Colgan Phone: 837 0443
E-mail: mcolgan@netaccess.co.nz
John Sumich Phone: 8185267
E-mail: cjnk@xtra.co.nz

We need your email Address

From time to time a number of urgent or interesting items arise which we distribute to members on e-mail. If you are on email but have not received any messages from Ken, such as the recent item on pollution of the West Coast Beaches, please advise him at kiwicatt@xtra.co.nz. Please also note that we can save postage by emailing the newsletter to you. If this is agreeable to you please advise Ken. Phone: 8346214 or email: kiwicatt@xtra.co.nz

◆ *Kaipara Considerations* ◆

Kaipara Section soon to become branch

The Kaipara Section is in the throes of becoming a separate branch of Forest and Bird. Once it has had all the relevant approvals, the proposal will go before the national Council meeting in November. A new Kaipara Branch would be responsible for most Waitakere Forest and Bird members living in Rodney.

The new section was first mooted by John Staniland and Chris Bindon from the Waitakere Forest and Bird Committee. Nearly two years ago, this idea was taken up by Suzi Phillips, and with the help of other South Kaipara members, she formed the Kaipara Section. The Section became official with its inaugural meeting in June last year and has continued to advocate for conservation issues in the north west. Members who live in areas such as Taupaki, Kumeu, Riverhead, Huapai, Waimauku, Woodhill, Helensville, Parakai, South Head, Kaukapakapa, and north to Glorit, come into this area.

Some of the issues the Kaipara has already had input into include the proposed new subdivision developments at Waimauku, planning issues in Muriwai and South Head, aquaculture and fostering the Atuanui Restoration Project. Any members interested in coming on to the Kaipara Committee to get more involved in local conservation are very welcome. We also appreciate that many of our members do not have time for closer involvement, and their subscription is very important to the work of Forest and Bird, both locally and nationally.

Convenor - Suzi Phillips

Art Auction Attracts Leading Artists

Kaipara Forest and Bird is organising an art auction “Art for the Kaipara” to raise funds to protect the Kaipara Harbour and its coastal environment for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The art auction

is intended to gain support and raise funds to pay for our Environment Court case against the establishment of a 30ha mussel farm near the top of the South Head Peninsula near Te Kawanu and adjacent to the coastal walkway at Omokoiti. Forest and Bird believes this would set a precedent for large scale aquaculture in this area and dominate the pristine seascape. Forest and Bird appealed the decision to allow the mussel farm and the case will be heard in the Environment Court in September.

Many of New Zealand’s artists are contributing work to the art auction to help raise funds – a catalogue will be available soon. We hope you can attend the “Art for the Kaipara” art auction and support this cause.

Art for the Kaipara

Art auction at BeesOnline Café
Waimauku
Saturday & Sunday 27/28
August

Many of New Zealand’s leading
artists represented with
paintings, photographs,
sculpture and ceramics

For more information phone **Britta** on 09 420
-2500 *Organised by Kaipara Forest and Bird*

Calendars and diaries

2005 Forest and Bird Calendars and diaries will be available in late July. Calendars are \$13 and diaries are \$21. You can pick them up at monthly meetings or alternatively contact Chris Bindon on 8336363 or email him at giant.weta@orcon.net.nz. Postage and packaging are extra.

FIELD TRIPS

Wear strong, non-slip shoes or boots and bring rainwear, jersey, lunch and drink. Trips are usually held wet or fine, but if in doubt phone the contact person for confirmation. For all queries please phone the contact person.

Sunday July 31, 2005

Motuora Planting

A day at Motuora Island planting natives and seeing the restoration of flora and fauna on this island will be a day enjoyed. Motuora is off the coast from Warkworth. The ferry cost is \$15 for adults; \$4 for parking. Children under 12 are free. The ferry departs **Sandspit at 8am** and returns to Sandspit at 4pm. For bookings and carpooling arrangements contact Glenys on 818-3241. *We need to know numbers so book before Wednesday July 27.*

Saturday August 27, 2005

Onetangi Reserve, Waiheke

Enjoy another island day walking tracks in the 50 hectare Onetangi Reserve (owned and administered by F & B) and looking at Atawhai Whenua (a 15 hectare revegetation project near the wharf). Depart Auckland on Fullers ferry at **9am** and return from Waiheke at 5pm. Sailing time - 35-45 minutes. Return fares: Adult - \$25.50; Senior Citizen - \$22; Children (5-15 years) \$13.00; under 5 free. We will use the public bus service to reach Onetangi. There will be a 20 minute walk to the Forest & Bird cottage near the Scott's Terrace entrance to the reserve. *Book with Glenys (phone 818-3241) by Wednesday August 24.* (ferry tickets can be purchased on the morning of the 27th). Fares are subject to change without notice.

Saturday September 10, 2005

Twin Streams Project - again

Our branch is committed to helping the Waitakere City Council with planting/releasing the stream banks of the Opanuku and Oratia streams. This project gives us a chance to enhance our city and improve water quality in our streams. On June 11th we planted and spent time releasing earlier plantings. Today we

repeat the process to beat the weeds. So do come along for another couple of hours of exercise! Park at the end of Fitzwater Place at **10am** and then take the walkway into the reserve. Wear gloves and strong footwear. If you have your own spade then bring it; if not the Council folk do bring extras. *Book with Glenys (818-3241) by Wednesday September 7 so we can let Council know the numbers.*

Saturday September 24, 2005

La Trobe Track walk

Meet at Karekare Beach carpark at 10am. From there we will carpool to go up Lone Kauri Road to the top end of La Trobe. This track follows a ridge before eventually descending steeply on the north side down to Karekare Road. We'll be identifying native plants and the birdlife. Book with Glenys (818-3241).

Saturday October 22, 2005

Omaha Sandspit Birds

Jim McKinley of Mid-North Forest and Bird will lead our trip. We will walk out on to the Spit to view various bird species including dotterels and terns. Jim has helped DOC for some years to monitor and protect these birds (in particular dune-nesting birds) as people and predators have increased in numbers. Omaha Sandspit is over the causeway and at the end of Omaha Drive. Meet at the carpark beyond the last houses at **10:30am**. For carpooling meet at the **Kelston Community Centre at 9am**. Book with Glenys (818-3241).

Saturday November 26

Otuataua Stonefields

Dr. Peter Maddison will lead this trip to take a look at the 20,000 year old stonefields and lava fields where there is evidence of old Maori occupation and early European farming. The stonefields are now connected by the newly completed Watercare Coastal Walkway with Mangere Mountain and Ambury Regional Park. This could also be an opportunity to walk some of the coastal walkway. Meet at the end of Ihumatao Quarry Road (off Ihumatao Road.) **at 10am**. For carpooling meet at Kelston Community Centre at **9am**. No jandals/sandals. Book with Glenys (818-3241).

EVENING MEETINGS

These are held at Kelston Community Centre on the corner of Great North Road and Awaroa Road at 7:30pm and feature illustrated talks. Refreshments are provided and donations for the hall hire are appreciated.

Thursday July 21, 2005

How moths become mothers and the smell of success

Dr John Clearwater is one of the scientists involved in developing pheromones for the control of moths and is keen to see the reintroduction of several butterfly species to the Ark in the Park.

Thursday August 18, 2005

From the mountains to the sea: a world of wetlands

Keith Thompson will give an illustrated talk on wetland types, nationally and overseas, and discuss some of the important conservation management issues. Keith is a trustee of the National Wetlands Trust and a retired lecturer from the University of Waikato where he taught ecology, botany and environmental science.

Thursday September 15, 2005

The NW Wildlife Link

David Pattermore, our Northern Conservation Officer, will give a Powerpoint presentation on the Auckland Naturally Project. This project aims to bring the birds back into suburbia and is important for the whole of the Auckland region.

Thursday October 20, 2005

Bird Behaviour on the Loyalty Islands

Mick Sibley will present a data show on the behaviour of birds which he has been studying this year. Mick is a behavioural psychologist and he will have just returned from three months on the New Caledonian Islands observing several species of birds.

Thursday November 17, 2005

Richard St. Barb-Baker – “Man of the Trees”

Adrienne Grace first met Richard St. Barb-Baker when she was a young woman. The Englishman's teachings about the importance of trees/plants has remained with her through the years. She will show us a video of his projects and speak of the importance of his conservation work.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held on the 19th May. First the Co-Chairperson gave his report (as summarised earlier) and was followed by the Treasurer.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bryan Elston presented the Financial Report and Accounts for 2004/5. He gave a summary of the activities relating to the Branch, Tai Haruru, Reserves, Baker Reserve and Ark in the Park accounts. He expressed the opinion that the Branch affairs are sound and there are sufficient funds available to meet commitments. Mike Whiting was then appointed as auditor.

Tai Haruru Lodge Report

Bryan Elston, Convenor of the Tai Haruru Sub Committee, gave this report. He noted that the bathroom has been refurbished, furniture upgraded, and the grounds are in excellent condition after some years work. Because of a high demand over the December/January period a balloting system is now operating. Occupancy of the main unit was a very satisfactory 80% and surplus income was available after expenses for conservation work.

Reserves Report

John Staniland reported that pest control on Matuku is at a satisfactory level with few goats seen, but suggested that a closer network of bait stations in some areas will further reduce rat numbers. Mustelids are still being caught. A bridge has been constructed over the Kokopu Stream with Banrock Wines funding. A wetland day had been very successful in educating neighbours of the wetland concerning pest control. To date no pest control has been undertaken on the Kerr Taylor Reserve although bait lines had been planned.

Ark In The Park Report

John Sumich reported on plans to expand the area rather more quickly than originally proposed, the need to continue raising funds, and expressed his thanks for the many volunteers who are assisting the project.

Kiwi Conservation Club and Activities Report

This was presented by Glenys Mather who thanked her helpers for arranging the programme for children. She reported on the KCC co-ordinators camp in the Catlins attended by Corinna and herself. There was much to learn and ideas to share. She thanked members for their suggestions regarding field trips and evening meetings, many of which were adopted. In addition to interesting local trips visits were made to the Miranda Shorebird Centre, Tiritiri Matangi, and a river cruise was enjoyed in the upper Waitemata. Some fascinating audio visual shows during the evening talks covered moths, biodiversity, hedgehogs, bats, and translocation of tomtits.

Kaipara Section Report

Suzi Phillips reported on the first year of activities. A major project has been the appeal to the Environment Court regarding the Biomarine Mussel Farm (now due for a hearing sometime in September or October). She noted that there will be an Art Auction at Lopdell House in August to raise funds for the Environment Court appeal. She also reported on the Mount Auckland/Atuanui restoration project.

National Council Meeting 2005

As usual the AGM and Council Meeting was held in Wellington. Branch members attending were Robert Woolf as our Councillor, Peter Maddison as Deputy President and Ken Catt as an observer (with speaking, but not voting, rights as a Distinguished Life Member). Mark Bellingham also attended. He was our nominee for the Executive and was duly elected. Peter Maddison, who was nominated by retiring

President Gerry McSweeney, was elected as President.

We nominated Geoff Moon as a Distinguished Life Member of the Society and were delighted that our nomination was accepted. Geoff has been of great assistance not only to our Branch but also the society with provision of his wonderful photos to support articles and presentations. He has also assisted us with presentations to Council and spoke to support a West Coast Marine Park. He was presented with the certificate at the Council dinner. The dinner was followed by the Sanderson Memorial Address by Paul Jansen on "Kakapo and Kiwi recovery". This talk was very stimulating. Paul is a key expert in restoring endangered species and pointed out how we are still struggling to control pests with limited tools and how vital it is to improve these tools.

Senior officials from various ministries addressed us on the Biodiversity Strategy and MPs representing National, United Future, Labour and the Greens spoke for ten minutes on their conservation policies and answered questions. There was a gasp of dismay when the United Future representative mentioned the banning of 1080 as part of their policy.

Many of the workshops considered the forthcoming election and what policies we should be looking for from the various parties.

The branch put forward three remits. Following recommendations by the Remits committee these were accepted by the Council. Remit 1 was: "*that the Executive review the method of calculating capitation and other options to provide branch assistance*". The second was: "*That the Society actively promote a change to part 7(6) of the National Parks Act so that marine areas adjacent to the terrestrial area of National Parks may be included in the Park*" AND "*That the Society consider the options for protecting adjacent terrestrial, intertidal, and marine areas together, including the promotion of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves*". The third remit was: "*That the Society promote the banning of unsustainable fishing methods such as bottom trawling and recreational set netting (but not drag netting)*".

**Deadline for next newsletter:
24th October 2005**

Newsletter Editor Robert Woolf
Email – sprukam@yahoo.com.au

Letters and thoughts welcome

Assistance Needed

We are seeking people with a few hours to spare occasionally for sub-committee work. In particular those with experience in planning or accounting. If you have an interest in getting involved with aquatic resources, biodiversity/biosecurity, Harbour View Park, Kiwi Conservation Club, Marine/Marine Reserves, School Environmental Awards, Transport/Traffic, or Water/Wastewater/Stormwater, contact Ken Catt.

Waitakere Branch Committee 2005/6

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