



For information about Mid-North Forest & Bird – email Tony Dunlop, Chairperson, or contact any committee member (see final page)

From the Chair

What a wonderful series of talks on the Hauraki Gulf we had this winter. We were very privileged to have such experts make the journey up here to share their wisdom with us. It was timely too as the process for the Hauraki Gulf Spatial Plan “Sea Change” has just been launched. Three branch members, Roger, Frances and I, were at the first stakeholder meeting and we are working hard to make sure that conservation interests are well represented in the core Stakeholder Working Group to be established next month. We will keep you posted on the progress of “Sea Change” over the next couple of years.

I now have the privilege of being on the National Executive of Forest and Bird. It is largely a governance role with only four meetings a year plus online interactions. It also involves supporting local branches which for me means assisting any branches north of the Harbour Bridge. If you know any Forest and Bird members in Whangarei, that branch could use a few more active committee members. The first Exec meeting I attended was held in conjunction with the annual South Island gathering in Hokitika at the end of September. I got to have a say in the appointment of our new Chief Executive Hone McGregor who will be taking over in November. I am confident he will be a great asset. There were some great talks at the gathering. One of particular interest to me was on modelling of the glaciers in the Southern Alps. Not very good news for the tourist industry in Franz Josef I have to say. In fact the glaciers have retreated so much recently that you can only access the Franz by helicopter. I visited the Tasman Glacier lake earlier this year which is a must see if you are down that way – “icebergs”!

We also had a walk on the Denniston Plateau after the meetings. What an amazing and unique landscape. Sadly the current Bathurst Resources application to mine has been

granted after all Forest and Bird’s best efforts to stop it, and unfortunately this is just the thin end of the wedge as they have their eyes on the rest of the plateau as well. I live in hope that we will wake up to the climate implications of coal mining before we ruin not just the landscape and unique biodiversity of Denniston but the relatively benign climate we take for granted.

See you at the end-of-year function at our place on 1 December.

Mid North Forest & Bird native plants

We have finished selling native plants for the branch as we are now able to source plants through ACC. Our sincere thanks go to Hueline Massey and Anne Taylorson who have done such a great job of growing these plants as a branch fund-raiser over the years.



Summer Walks

The committee is organising a series of walks to be held on the second Sunday of most months and starting at 10am. Please take your lunch, water, suitable footwear, etc., and contact the organiser to let them know you’re a starter, to find out the details and to arrange for car pooling

- Nov 9 –Mt Tamahunga - Eliane** 027 514 9974
- Dec 8 - Leigh Coastal - Neil** 09 422 6001
- Feb 9 - Mataia (Kaipara) Tony** 09 422 3110
- Mar 9 - Mt Auckland Rosemary** 09 425 4181

For more information about the areas these walks will go to, look at the Nature Space website. This is a conservation site that gives information of ecological restoration projects all over the country. Worth having a look to see what's happening and perhaps getting involved : <http://www.naturespace.org.nz/>

<http://www.naturespace.org.nz/search/node/tamahunga>

<http://www.naturespace.org.nz/search/node/Mataia>

Falconry

I recently went to the Wingspan National Bird of Prey Centre in Rotorua and was most impressed by the work that is being done there to boost the conservation of our New Zealand raptors. I understand that it's the only place in NZ where one is able to witness falconry skills in free flight displays that show how the birds are rehabilitated prior to release. I thought that the advocacy programme was great and recommend it as a most interesting visit.



Check out the website on <http://www.wingspan.co.nz/>

Incidentally, last year's Forest & Bird's "Bird of the Year" competition was won by the falcon. (see our \$20 note) This competition is helping to raise the public's awareness of our endemic species. School children across the country are starting to be involved and to cast their votes - their involvement is vital for the future. Sally Richardson



From My Kitchen Window

The huge sea cliffs between Leigh and Mathesons Bay dominate. Yesterday they were a carpet of pampas scattered down to the sea. Today, thanks to the efforts of a knowledgeable landscaper, all the pampas, cape ivy and cotoneaster has gone. Tomorrow the cliffside will be planted- totally in natives endemic to this area.

So far three houses have been built along the high end of this cliff edge. All three owners have worked together and cleared up the extensive weed infestations on their properties. They are restoring the areas between the few natives that have survived the colonisation of the weeds. It is a huge area and is looking fantastic.

Recently, the Forest and Bird COMMUNITY COAST CARE GROUP at Leigh lent a helping hand at a working bee of the Leigh Harbour Valley Society. This is a group of about 10 property owners who have farms or land feeding into the stream catchment at the head of Leigh Harbour. They are collectively restoring their land and streams. They have fenced off the bush to keep stock out, fenced off the streams, and done extensive planting and pest control.

A while ago while walking past Mathesons Bay Bush I met a couple removing tobacco plant from the edge of the reserve. They are active in their work on pest plant control in the bush areas around the bay.

All of this shows that people care, and more than that it shows that people are prepared to get out and do their bit. Some of the key players in these projects are F&B members, but others are not. Yet all are out there making a difference.

If this is what goes on in my back yard, and is replicated in other areas too, what a force we individual citizens can be!

Neil Sutherland.

Weekend Away

Keep the weekend of 22-23 March free if you're interested in a Forest & Bird outing. We're planning on going up to the area around Whangarei Heads. Raewyn Morrison is organising this, so phone her (09 422 9123) to register your interest.

End-of-year social function

This a BYO picnic/BBQ event at Tony and Barbara's place at 221 Sharp Road.

Date: Sunday 1 August - Time: 4pm until 8pm.

It is not at their house but further down the property. Drive in. Bring what you need or wish to share.

BBQ, pizza oven, water and composting toilet provided.

It is also a chance to have a look at the 2.5 Ha of bush they are in the process of covenanting with QEII.

Cancelled if raining.

RSVP to Tony on 422 3110 if you intend to come to give an idea of numbers.



Records Broken!!

Thanks, Mid North F&B members

With the support of all the Mid North Forest and Bird members who have bought calendars and diaries this year we have broken a few records!

Firstly we have sold more than ever before, but then there are the profits - which go to branch expenses and supporting local F&B conservation initiatives.

Yes we made a handsome \$720 this year, which included several donations. A fantastic effort!

To our many customers, this is a very tangible way of showing your support for the local branch of Forest and Bird. Thanks!

If you were too late ordering, please remember next year to get your orders in early. We buy limited stock and often Craig Potton Publishing sells out and can't give extra supplies.

Neil Sutherland.

What is happening on Tamahunga?

Tamahunga Trappers Inc have recently extended their trapping area on Tamahunga with three new lines on the north western side of the mount. So far, the new lines have been stocked with DoC250 traps at 200 metres spacing and tracking tunnels. We are planning to close the gaps between traps with smaller DoC200 traps to a spacing of 100 metres. There are now 117 traps spread over the mount on 9 trap lines.

Catches for the year to mid-October are 115 animals: 69.6% of those are rats, 16.5% stoats, 2.6% weasels, 3.5% hedgehogs, 2.6% cats and 5.2% others such as possums and ferrets.

But we have not only been busy in the field. On the planning side, a 5-year plan with a 10-year vision was drafted in co-operation with Kevin Parker. Once finalised, this plan will be available to anybody who is interested and/or would like to join as an active or passive member.

Our group has also been incorporated and is now a registered Charity.

With the expansion of trap lines and in line with our vision for the mount, we will need more members for working bees, line checking and future monitoring. All these tasks are pleasant and are good opportunities to become more familiar with the mount, and enjoy the rich life it harbours. The terrain is steep in places and a reasonable level of fitness is required. Contact our secretary, Sue Cameron TamahungaTrappers@hotmail.co.nz if you would like contribute in any way to making the mountain a safer place and a breeding ground for our native forest species.

Eliane Lagnaz



Boys checking out a rat trap at the Kowhai festival

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