

Waitaki branch Forest and Bird Newsletter

Feb 2017



Welcome to all our new members and all our old members. We now have swelled our numbers to 100. We are so grateful to have your support and hope to meet you all at our events. Please feel free to contact us for a chat.

Kaki (Black Stilt) recovery

As part of Conservation Week 2016 the Oamaru Library hosted Dean Nelson, Programme Manager - Biodiversity Assets for the Department of Conservation at Twizel. Dean gave an excellent talk on the efforts to save the kaki, or black stilt (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*). The kaki is a native wading bird only found in New Zealand and they have been intensively managed since 1981, when their population declined to a low of just 23 birds.



Dean covered the biology of the bird and it was interesting to note that while they will hybridise with pied stilts recent genetic work shows they are a very distinct species. Dean also covered the risks to the kaki from predators and habitat loss and he covered the work that is undertaken to control predators and the wider benefits this has for the braided rivers and wetlands of the Mackenzie Basin, South Island. Finally we learnt a little about the day to day work of the Kaki recovery programme. A huge amount of work is undertaken to collect eggs, incubate them and then rear the chicks until they are large enough to have an improved chance of survival in the wild. Thanks to their efforts the wild adult population is now calculated to be 91 individuals. A big improvement on 23 but a long way to go yet!

For more information see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds/birds-a-z/black-stilt-kaki/> and the Facebook page Kaki Recovery Programme -www.facebook.com/Kaki-Recovery-Programme-145994298749770/

South East Marine Protection Forum Update

Our Forum met on Saturday for the first time this year. We received over 2,880 submissions. Forest and Bird report that 1,100 form submissions were sent in from the F&B website. It will be no secret that there is lots of opposition to most of the proposals – however there is also plenty of support for expanding the proposed network. Thank you everyone who made submissions – everyone counts. Sue Maturin—South Island Field Officer.

South Island Gathering -Geraldine Oct 2016

55 enthusiastic and knowledgeable people gathered for information exchange from 10 South Island branches. From a branch perspective, our issues were similar: engaging volunteers, especially youth, retaining committee members, pest control, plantings, managing partnerships with DOC, Council, iwi and others, dealing with indigenous flora and fauna loss and threatened species.

One key issue which is likely to affect all of us, is that the new DOC National Park Management Plans will most likely be weaker, lacking substance in their attempt to conserve native flora and fauna. The solution is that we must all be alert to reading these Plans and making submissions to ensure that they stay focussed on conservation and not on tourism, infrastructure and concessions.

Staff of Forest and Bird brought to our attention the pressing need to halt biodiversity loss. We aim to be more proactive and less reactive. In a challenging political climate, where we are often pushed aside in the name of economic progress, we must stay focussed on achieving set outcomes and not give in to the demands of others through endless negotiations. Forest and Bird has found that we are negotiating and collaborating with more and more parties, which weaken our goals. It seems like a useful distraction to wear us down.



Chloe Searle our Chairperson, on the left.

Things that we can all do to help are: force councils to be alert to breaches of the law. Tell them when something goes wrong and praise them when they do something right. Native vegetation clearance is illegal, so if you see some being removed or already removed, report it. Remember all native animal species are protected.

Upcoming events

Saturday 25 February 11am to 3pm - Seaweed - a beach clean-up and picnic - south bank of the Waitaki River mouth (access via Kaik Road). Join us from 11am for the beach clean up. Around 1pm we will have a picnic together. Please bring gloves and bags for the rubbish, picnic food and drinks and dress appropriately for the weather. If the weather is bad it will be postponed to Sunday 26 February. Any questions, please contact Chloe on 027 839 0423.

Monday 15th May at 6pm - AGM with Kevin Hague at the Oamaru Library

Come and meet our new Chief Executive and hear what he has to say about the future of Forest and Bird.

- Join us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/waitakiforestandbird
- Write to us via our branch email: waitaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz
- Check out our webpage: www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/waitaki