



Forest & Bird

GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Wairarapa Branch Newsletter - August 2015

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What's been happening?

AGM for 2015/2016

In May, the Wairarapa Branch held its AGM at the Services' and Citizens' Club. When the committee arrived early, we were most impressed by the huge line-up of motorbikes and the crowd of leather jacketed riders filling the carpark. But no, these people were here to support the Masterton Services Club.

However, we also had a good attendance and were delighted to welcome Hone McGregor, Forest and Bird CEO, and Amelia Geary, Lower North Island Regional Conservation & Volunteer Manager as our special guests. Amelia gave an excellent PowerPoint address on visions of a predator free Aotearoa. She began with the first historical success in the 1960s, Maria Island, which has an area of one hectare, and was cleared of rats to protect a breeding colony of storm petrels. Then she described the clearances through the years since then, ending with the latest plans and actions to clear Rakiura Stewart Island by 2020. She then went on to describe the weapons being used and the developments of possible future weapons in our armoury against predators. Thankyou Amelia....Inspiring!



Internet Photo

We thanked and farewelled Brett Cockeram from the committee. He has been our Kiwi Conservation Club coordinator since 2013 but family commitments mean he can no longer carry on in this role.

This of course means that we need a new coordinator who would be well supported by the Wairarapa committee and by the National KCC Coordinator. If you have children and want to encourage them to become involved in fun and useful activities of an environmental nature, or maybe you know someone like that, then our committee would love you to contact us urgently.

We welcome Ray Stewart back to the committee, he returns after a few years' break.

The committee for 2015/2016 is listed, with contact information, at the end of this newsletter.

At Norfolk Road Nursery

The Native Plants June afternoon was sunny and still. About twelve people attended and enjoyed a time packed with information as we were welcomed to and guided around Evan's Native Plants Nursery in Norfolk Road. This place is a treasure trove of rare Wairarapa-sourced plants as well as other native and non-native trees and Evan can tell you the conditions that these special plants prefer. Reintroducing them to your Wairarapa place would be a great way to fight against the rapid loss of biodiversity.



The afternoon finished, of course, with a cup of tea and some fruit loaf served off the back of Colin and Jo's ute. Water boiled on a thermette, just like the old days!

Thanks, Evan and Trevor, for sharing your knowledge and expertise so willingly, it was an excellent afternoon.

Left: Evan sharing his knowledge of plants

Photo: Jean Russell



Right: Norfolk Road Nursery

Pigeon Bush Reserve Planting Day

Another great Wairarapa place is Pigeon Bush Reserve

On the 5th of July 2015, ten people from Forest and Bird descended on Pigeon Bush Reserve for a native plants planting session.

Pigeon Bush is a native bush reserve just south of Featherston off the Western Lake Road. This block belongs to the Native Forest Restoration trust. It consists of 1178 Hectares of regenerating forest and is a Queen Elizabeth Second covenant (protected land).

200 native plants have been put in along the Prince Stream area known as Whare Gully. This retired farmland has been closed to stock since year 2000 and is making a good recovery which can be seen from the train as you speed to or back from Wellington. The people who went that day in July felt justifiably proud of their efforts, mattocks and picks were needed to combat the river stones lying under the topsoil!

More planting is planned to assist this recovery over the next five years.

At the end of the planting and after lunch (trusty thermette again!), Trevor Thompson demonstrated how to choose the right tree and place and attach orchids to it. He had brought some orchids along from his own place. Trevor said the plants would be very quick to establish themselves on their new trees.

Visitors are welcome to explore and enjoy this reserve and access can be gained by contacting the ranger (Colin) for this block. Phone Colin at 06 3788235 or 0274 303587.

Photos: Colin Shore



Lunch



An orchid is ready for attaching



The selected tree is on the right

Fensham Reserve

The big planting day at Fensham this year is on Saturday 22nd August, starting at 1.00pm. Chris Surman has been busy digging holes in readiness. He has done 150 already....700 to go! If you can help with this, you would be very welcome at Fensham on Tuesday mornings, starting at 9.30am. This gives us a couple of Tuesdays to get those holes dug, many hands and all that.

For planting, bring a spade and/or a trowel, warm clothes appropriate for the day and a friend or two who would like to help.

Fensham is a wonderful treasure worthy of every member's support. We have goals to reintroduce special Wairarapa rare plants and perhaps even birds such as tomtits

Did you know?

Talking about endangered species...Shrubby tororaro (*Muehlenbeckia astonii*) is a nationally endangered species. It is at its northern limit in the Wellington region. Only about 50 individual plants survive in the wild in the North Island. Plant it for a superb hedge. (Text and photos taken from Wellington Regional Native Plant Guide, GWRC)



Henley Lake Rat Warriors

Did you see Colin and his granddaughter? They were paddling on Henley Lake as part of their campaign to create a safe place for Black Billed gulls (also known as Bullers gulls) to nest. This was well reported in the Wairarapa Times Age. They are setting up a trapping programme for rats and this will have to be an ongoing campaign during the gulls' nesting time. Worthwhile considering the status of this highly endangered species. Bullers gulls nest on land bare of vegetation and breeding colonies are usually found on the shingle of braided rivers. Last season, many of our gulls set up on the man-made island on Henley Lake that had been moved westward in 2014. Unfortunately, all chicks and eggs from that season were predated by rats. Below left is the photo taken by the Times Age photographer, Lynda Feringa, of Colin and Shylo in their kayaks. If you, too, would like to help contact Colin.



Our Man at the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society AGM – Chris Reports Back

I represented our branch at this year's AGM in Wellington on the 27 June.

The addresses of the president, Andrew Cutler and the CEO, Hone McGregor, were excellent and certainly left one confident that the society is in good hands. Andrew and Hone are young, forward thinking, enthusiastic and obviously capable. Heartening to me also was the frequent use of Te Reo Rangatira by the staff and speakers.

Here follows a summary of the three major talks that inspired me.

The first one was on the complex process involving multiple interests, including of course Forest and Bird, underway to restore a viable and sustainable marine eco-system in the Hauraki Gulf.

The second was on the Sir Paul Callaghan inspired Predator Free NZ Project which seems to be gathering some encouraging traction with Government and others. John Innes from Landcare Research has said that the "developing silence" in our bush with the depletion of its native birdlife is down to just three reasons: predators, predators, predators! Working towards Predator Free NZ is NZ's equivalent to the US Apollo Programme. Nevertheless, significant advances in technology, better strategies, support that although undoubtedly a multi-generational, aspirational target it's possibly possible. And it will, of course, cost

The third inspiring talk was from Michael Tavares, the young man who sat up in the kauri tree in Auckland. Although a New Zealander, he'd cut his teeth in environmental activism in Tasmania opposing hydro and logging projects in national park areas there. Michael was particularly interesting in his discussion about the Rights of Nature legislation that is slowly getting recognition around the world.

Michael challenged Forest and Bird to ramp up its advocacy here in NZ and, personally, I think he's right on the button.

Chris Peterson



Photo: internet image

Conservation Calendars and Diaries for 2016

These beautiful publications are on sale again. Think ahead for Christmas presents!

The calendar features superb photographs of our extraordinary wildlife and wilderness habitats taken by some of our leading nature photographers. The calendar weighs less than 200g and an envelope is included.

The diary has a new photo of our unique landscapes, plants and wildlife each week. This quality week-to-view diary features public holidays and a lay-flat spiral binding.

Prices are less than the recommended retail price and a great buy:

Calendars \$14

Diaries \$23

Contact Peta at 063774882 or text to 0212558712



Upcoming events

Tuesday mornings Fensham Reserve weekly working bee, 9.30am
Queries? Contact Chris Surman 3727719

13 August Birds NZ Tony Simpson shares his East African birding experiences with us.
Time: 7.30 Venue: DoC, South Rd Masterton. Please bring supper and koha

22 August Fensham Reserve planting 1.00pm Spades, trowels and appropriate clothing

Notice: Walls Whare Road is now open to road end

**If you have anything of interest (news, trips, events or photos) that would be suitable to be placed in an upcoming newsletter please email details to: Wairarapa.Branch@forestandbird.org.nz
Peta Campbell - Secretary/Newsletter**

Wairarapa Branch Forest and Bird Committee Members for 2014 – 2015

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