



Forest & Bird
TE REO O TE TAIAO | Giving Nature a Voice



Waitakere
BRANCH



Wai-o-te-Kauri Stream where the Kauri grows

Forest and Bird Waitakere - Newsletter May 2018



We are blessed – but for how long?

I hope you had a great summer holiday, I certainly did! I spent the four weeks of February in our campervan driving from Auckland to Bluff and back, with many stops in between. Did I enjoy it? Enormously. Was it depressing? Even more so. We immensely enjoyed our time in the Catlins, with the rare Hector's Dolphins choosing to swim with us clumsy humans in the freezing waves of Porpoise Bay, waiting for the hoiho (yellow-eyed penguins) to clamber onto the rocks of Kaka Point to feed the chicks in their burrows, and admiring the total relaxation of sea lions lying on the beach. And we weren't the only ones: scores of tourists come to the tiniest of towns for exactly the same reason: to enjoy the wildlife. And while there, they spend their money in the local shops, go out for lunch or dinner and pay for accommodation. Even at the end of summer, the campgrounds and hotels were fully booked. At the same time all the wildlife they are coming to see is under threat: numbers declining: loss of habitat (houses/beaches/people/dogs) and feeding grounds (fisheries). I am amazed that the locals aren't up in arms to stop the international fishing fleet depleting their shores. Commercial fishing like that brings in only a couple of badly paid jobs, and very little money for the

locals, while sustainable tourism is the much better economic option.

We were there during the tropical storm Gita. And guess what? The huge sprinkler installations which irrigate huge fields of grass and swedes, food for cows to produce milk, not to produce food for humans, kept on spraying! That was a sad sight indeed. If only the water was taxed, then farmers wouldn't be using it this casually.

I came back feeling blessed to live here in the Waitakere Ranges, because the environmental challenges are even bigger in our beautiful South Island, Te Waipounamu. Even though we have Myrtle Rust, kauri dieback disease, Maui Dolphins under extreme threat, possums eating our forests...I feel that we all are making a difference every day: respecting the rahui, trapping pests, educating our younger members and hopefully voting for a budget for Auckland Council for the next 10 years which will include a fully funded pest management plan to support our environment. More about all of that in this newsletter.

Your chair, Annalily van den Broeke

www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/waitakere or www.facebook.com/forestbirdwaitakere and
www.facebook.com/habitattehenga and www.facebook.com/arkintheParkNewZealand
Twitter: #Arkinthepark

Waitakere Kiwi Conservation Club report March 2018



Kia ora from us at the KCC. Our KCC year has just begun with our first trip in March. It has been a little tricky to plan trips this year with the Waitakere Ranges closed, nevertheless we have managed to put together a varied program. As in previous years we have combined with central Auckland on a few trips, which has been particularly helpful this year. Our trip this month was to visit the very resourceful West Auckland Archer Family of 6. Who have the impressive target of minimizing their rubbish to one bin for the year. So far they have filled two small jars so they are well on track. The day was started with an informative talk by 8 year old Isabel who told us about some things her family have done to reduce their waste. The children got to enjoy a waste-free game of parcel the parcel with chalk and reusable straws as prizes, all wrapped in reusable cloth and ribbons. Another highlight of the day was watching the dad of the household melt down polystyrene in acetone. He then uses the styrene produced to make things; apparently it is also a very effective glue. We finished off the day planting seedlings into yogurt powder foil bags thus providing another use for what otherwise would be a one-use item. To follow the Archer family's progress or to get helpful hints, google: "Practically Green".

April's trip will be on Kauri Dieback at the Arataki centre. As always, we are on the lookout for keen environmentalists to help out on these trips. If you have questions or are keen to help, please contact us at Waitakere@kcc.org.nz.

Jean and Raewyn – KCC coordinators Waitakere



Autumn Events

If you'd be interested in joining our team of volunteers at the Waitakere Forest & Bird stall, which we take to markets, schools and community days, we'd love to hear from you. Our aim is to raise awareness about conservation by answering questions and giving out free information. Contact Chris Bindon to learn more: kereruchris@gmail.com or 0274 305 407

Sea Change for the Hauraki Gulf



Forest & Bird is launching a new campaign to help save the Hauraki Gulf and we need your voice. We're calling on the Government to put the Sea Change plan into action, as a package and without delay. The Sea Change marine spatial plan is the first of its kind in New Zealand. It was produced by a multi-sector Stakeholder Working Group after extensive community and iwi engagement and addresses the range of issues facing the Hauraki Gulf, including the need to improve water quality, better manage our fishing and protect our marine environment. The plan includes recommendations to remove bottom trawling and other destructive fishing methods from the gulf, and to create a network of marine reserves to protect sea life and help replenish our fish stocks. But since its launch the plan has been sitting on a shelf – and that won't help the Hauraki Gulf.

Please join the campaign here
www.forestandbird.org.nz/seachange.

If you want to know more about the problems facing the Hauraki Gulf, the 2017 State of the Gulf report is a useful summary. The report was released on 1 March 2018 and gave a worrying picture of continued degradation, mainly due to increased population pressures. Forest & Bird made sure there was strong media coverage including stuff.co.nz, TV3 and this in-depth piece in the NZ Herald.

Melissa Irace – Auckland Communications Officer Forest & Bird

While you were sleeping:

Long-tailed bat study at Ark in the Park



During February a bat study funded by Auckland Council was carried out with operations based from Falls Road, in the northern part of the Ark. The study involved trapping bats in order to attach transmitters so they could be radio tracked. This is phase one of three, with the aim being to find out which parts of the local environment bats are using to move, feed and roost in. This knowledge will help researchers understand the possible impacts of urban expansion on bats and identify roost sites which could then be protected with predator control, if they aren't already.

Ark volunteer Grant Capill braved the long night shifts and voracious mosquitoes to lend a hand and learn about the process and has shared some of his photos with us.

Harp traps and mist nets were set up on Whatitiri and Auckland City Walk tracks with sound lures used to call bats in. This is a newly developed method and it proved successful with 3 bats caught over the four nights of trapping.

Two were female and had transmitters attached, the male was too small to carry a transmitter. For welfare reasons only bats over a certain size can carry transmitters, which also must not exceed a certain percentage of body weight.

For ease of reference the two transmitted bats were named Alicia and Beatrice. Alicia and Beatrice's signals were picked up strongly in the days following the survey; Alicia in the Whatitiri area and Beatrice at the Scenic Drive end of Anderson Track. However, within a week both bats had unfortunately dropped their transmitters. Hopefully next time they will stick for longer so more can be learnt about these secretive nocturnal natives!



Long-tailed bat with wing extended and transmitter attached, photos by Grant Capill

Note that researchers were granted a warrant for their activities by Te Kawerau ā Maki and practised good kauri dieback hygiene procedures with cleaning footwear and study equipment before, between and after work at different sites.

Gillian Wadams - Ark in the Park Manager

Bat facts:

- Long-tailed bats are smaller than the short-tailed bat, chestnut brown in colour, have small ears and weigh 8-11 grams.
- They are believed to produce only one offspring each year.
- The bat's echo-location calls include a relatively low frequency component which can be heard by some people.
- Bats can fly at 60 kilometres per hour and have a very large home range (100 km²).
- An aerial insectivore, it feeds on small moths, midges, mosquitoes and beetles.

Reference: doc.govt.nz

The plans, Pest Free Waitakere and you!

Pest Free Waitakere aka 'Pure Forest Waitakere' (PFW) has been developed to provide a platform where community groups (with the same aim) can come together to drive the idea of the whole of the Waitakere Ranges as a Pest Free Area, a sanctuary for native flora and fauna and to restore the mauri of the Ranges. 'Pests' includes all pest organisms including weeds, mammals, invertebrates and microorganisms (like Kauri Dieback). Forest & Bird are a key player in PFW. Recently PFW collaborated with Waitakere Ranges Conservation Network on a public meeting at Arataki talking about Council's Long Term Plan and the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP). Councillors and senior staff were on hand providing valuable information. Coincidentally both of the plans are being reviewed and new versions developed at the same time.

Auckland's Regional Pest Management Strategy was last reviewed in 2007 and a lot has changed since then, both in the numbers and range of pests and changes to the Biosecurity Act. Auckland Council is now reviewing the existing RPMS and producing a new plan to align with the National Policy Direction for Pest Management 2015. The new plan will provide a statutory and strategic framework for the effective management of pests in the region. Key new initiatives are better cat control in and around biodiversity hot spots and establishing mandatory control for certain particularly nasty weeds on private land adjacent to Regional and local parks. Oh, and crucially doing much more on Kauri Dieback, including track upgrades and better cleaning stations.

A crucial point to remember is that the Long Term Plan will set the level of Council's expenditure on the environment over the next 10 years and thus determine the degree to which the RPMP can be implemented. The higher the level of targeted rates set by Council the more effective pest control can be. Council are proposing three possible options:

Status Quo: Current budget - significant decline	Option A: Limited additional targeted protection and enhancement including tackling kauri dieback disease	Option B: Targeted ecosystem and species protection including addressing kauri dieback disease
Costs in line with current budgets (\$109 million over 10 years) and deliverable with current funding sources	Additional cost over the 10 years of \$136 million (total of \$245 million) to be funded by a Natural Environment Targeted Rate (set on capital value) of an average of \$21 per residential property and \$98 per business property (\$0.40 and \$1.88 per week)	Additional cost over the 10 years of \$311 million (total \$420 million) to be funded by a Natural Environment Targeted Rate (set on capital value) of an average of \$47 per residential property and \$219 per business property (\$0.90 and \$4.21 per week)

Naturally we eschew the status quo and prefer option B over option A. However, we support a fourth option - 'B+'. This would provide even more income than 'B' and enable Council to have better control of pest plants and animals over a larger number of significant ecological sites within parks. Although the formal submission phase for these plans has now closed you can still lobby Governing Body Councillors for the highest possible environmental rate level.

Robert Woolf – committee member

Looking for a Calendar and Diary coordinator.

Our annual sale of calendars and diaries is one of our main fundraisers for our branch. We are looking for someone to coordinate this. All systems are in place and our former coordinator will show you the ropes. Tasks include: keeping track of the sales, posting them, checking payments. If you're interested, please contact Annalily at Waitakere.branch@forestandbird.org.nz or call 021-2207136. Funds raised from the sale of our Calendars & Diaries are used for local conservation projects like Ark in the Park, Habitat te Henga, Matuku.



Valley Notes

Habitat te Henga continues steadily and although no formal monitoring is done it appears that the released pateke and/or their offspring are still present and enjoying their surrounds. Matt, our contract trapper, sees them occasionally in the western ponds while they have been observed in the big pond visible from the Bethell's Road and along some river sites. Bittern and spotless crake are heard or seen at times while fernbird are everywhere. Two new species have been recorded on the big pond by a keen birder so Scaup and Little Black shag are now on our list. All four black-footed shags have now been recorded at te Henga - the others being Black Shag, Pied Shag and Little Shag. [Note, other native shag species have pink, yellow or brown legs] Additional DOC 200 traps placed from the outlet of Lake Wainamu and down the Waiti stream will help control more pests there while several A24 traps have been sited on the western edge of the wetland to control possum numbers.

Further up the valley at Matuku Link great progress has been made on the nursery with its potting-up area complete, storage shed in use, and the first plants grown from seed gathered at Matuku Link, planted out. These were Umbrella sedge but already trays of *Carex secta* are growing under the shade cloth with home-sourced *Carex virgata* and *Carex lessoniana* sprouting and ready to take their place in the shade. Helping construct the nursery have been many volunteers: stalwarts from the Waitakere Rivercare group, new locals and many overseas volunteers spending part of their time assisting conservation programs. Although the conventional wisdom is to release plants from the weeds and grasses surrounding them to allow rapid growth, we had no time to do this task. However in the hot dry weeks before Christmas, this grass sheltered and protected most of the hundreds of plants placed over winter so that there were few losses. Now we can start to eliminate this grass [what ingrates!] and by next spring many of these plants will have good root systems, will be above grass height and will be able to fend for themselves even through a dry summer if that should eventuate.

Volunteers have made the barn a more useful space with internal cladding added to the open part of the barn and a gravel floor added. In the closed part of the barn, new electrical wiring, LED tube lights and a new fuse box have made for a safer site. The tidy up was very useful at the World Wetlands Day /Open day held on February 3 when a moderate number of people came to see the changes. Wet weather in the early morning would have put some potential visitors off but the day improved so that most of the rest of the day was perfect. Showing how changeable the conditions can be, those helping were relaxing after the end of day clean-up when the heavens opened and within 45 minutes of intense rainfall the river was up 3-4 metres and all our paddocks under a metre of water.

John Sumich – trustee of Matuku Link



Kauri Dieback Campaign update



Kauri dieback, photos by Dr Ian Horner

After many months of round-the-clock campaigning, Forest & Bird were relieved and ecstatic to see Auckland Council vote unanimously on 20th February to close high risk forested tracks within the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park to help stop the spread of kauri dieback disease.

Forest & Bird worked tirelessly on this campaign with The Tree Council, Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and Friends of Regional Parks to support the rāhui placed on the ranges by local iwi Te Kawerau a Maki. This included ensuring constant media coverage and scrutiny, holding meetings with council, creating www.waitakererahui.org.nz and social media pages and garnering huge public support.

These closures happened by 1st May after community consultation and will buy time to improve tracks and hygiene stations and hopefully find a cure for the disease. To this end, Forest & Bird is working at a national level to lobby for an improvement in the management of the kauri dieback

programme which we believe has been woefully mismanaged by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). Kauri dieback is a national crisis and needs urgent action and until now this has just not been happening. In December, again after campaign pressure, the government announced a National Pest Management Plan for kauri dieback which is the strongest piece of regulation available. Meetings with government ministers and MPI are planned and we will continue to be a voice for kauri every step of the way.

For those of you who will miss walking in the Waitakeres, there are still unforested areas that can be visited such as beaches and of course many other regional parks with no kauri. The Waitakere Rahui website (www.waitakererahui.org.nz) and facebook page (#waitakererahui) are useful resources for this information.

Melissa Irace – Auckland Communications Officer Forest & Bird

Magazines wanted

Have you finished with your Forest & Bird Magazines? We'd love to give them to our visitors at stalls and schools. Just connect with Margaret at 09-837 5274 or drop them off at reception at Waitakere Gardens Retirement Village. Thank you!

Activities Forest & Bird Waitakere

Third Thursday Talks are evening talks on conservation related topics hosted by our branch. Venue: Kelston Community Centre, cnr Awaroa/Great North Rd. Non-members welcome, join us for supper afterwards. Koha appreciated to cover hall hire. For further information ph Liz 0274 762732 lizanstey@hotmail.com.

Third Thursday Talk and AGM: Thursday 17th May 7:30pm

Gillian Wadams, Project Manager Ark in the Park

Species Translocation, Kokako Update and AGM

We'll start our yearly AGM with short updates on our branch projects - Matuku Reserve, Habitat te Henga, Ark in the Park and Harbourview/Motu Manawa plus Tai Haruru Lodge and our outreach and communication work. We'll thank the committee members who are leaving and welcome new members. This will be followed by Gillian's talk.

Gillian Wadams is project manager of the outstanding conservation project Ark in the Park in the Waitakere Ranges. Now in its 16th year, the project is currently 2270 hectares of unfenced, predator-controlled native bush on Auckland Council land. Gillian will talk about how the kōkako (that were first reintroduced to the ranges by Ark in the Park) are now doing, as well as update us on other translocated species – robins and whitehead. Have you ever wondered why certain species could be a candidate for translocation while others are not? Come and find out.



Robin on Anderson Track, photo Jacqui Geux.

Third Thursday Talk: Thursday 21th June 7:30pm

Gael Ogilvie, General Manager Environmental Services Auckland Council



Gael Ogilvie on the Machu Picchu walk.

Gael will present some of the highlights of her recent trip to South America. In a whirlwind six weeks, Gael and her husband Julian managed to visit Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Columbia and Argentina. Gael's pics will cover highlights from the local biodiversity through to amazing landscapes and local culture.

A whirlwind tour of South America.

Gael will present some of the highlights of her recent trip to South America. In a whirlwind six weeks, Gael and her husband Julian managed to visit

Other News

- We're looking at organising a day trip to Mataia, an inspiring restoration project in the Kaipara (http://www.mataia.co.nz/historic_homestead.htm). If you're interested to join us, please contact Robert.woolf@gmail.com

- Only for members: if you want to read an easy to read, well researched book, try "Protecting Paradise – 1080 and the fight to save New Zealand's wildlife" by Dave Handsford. Published by Potton & Burton, regular retail price is \$35. We can offer it with a discount of \$10 for only \$24,99 (excluding postage). Contact Annalily on info@artants.co.nz.

- the Forest & Bird AGM in Wellington on 23rd and 24th of June 2018 is open to all members. It will be held at Te Papa with the Minister of Conservation Hon Eugenie Sage as key note speaker. It will also include an expert panel discussing marine protection. Sarah Thompson, who took the New Zealand government to court over their inaction to protection New Zealanders from the effects of Climate Change, is our Sanderson Speaker. More info and registration on the website: <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/what-we-do/events/annual-general-meeting>

Contact details Waitakere Branch Committee Members as at May 2018:

Annalily van den Broeke, chair	832 6408	info@artants.co.nz
Zena R, secretary		waitakere.branch@forestandbird.org.nz
Liz Anstey, PR	833 4145	lizanstey@hotmail.com
Chris Bindon, Tai Haruru and outreach	021 914799	chris.bindon@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
Michael Coote, Motu Manawa and Harbourview	021 622 122	marquisnz@clear.net.nz
Dirk Reinhold, finance	021 2050 3013	dirk.reinhold@gmail.com
John Staniland, Matuku Reserve	810 9516	bushridge@slingshot.co.nz
John Sumich, Ark in the Park and Habitat Te Henga	818 5267	cjnk@xtra.co.nz
Robert Woolf, external affairs coordinator	816 8899	robert.woolf@gmail.com
Dave Allen, Kaipara connection		dave.allen@outlook.co.nz

Thank you very much to Soar Print, our design & print sponsor for this newsletter



The Power of Print