

North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

April 2019 to June 2019

COMING EVENTS

We will keep you posted by email about events as they approach. If you are interested but not on our email lists, please let us know so we can keep in touch by other means. KCC members and their families are welcome.

April 11: Project Reef Life presentation + AGM 7.00 pm, Community House

Have you heard about *Project Reef Life*? There's a two-to-three metre-high rocky shoal 23 metres deep and 11 km off the Patea coast. Its a unique geological feature, made of ancient super-hard marine terraces. It's an important marine habitat.

The South Taranaki Reef Life Project started in 2015 and has gone from strength to strength . . . (awards, Parliamentary visits, TEDx talk, TV) but I won't say any more because the Reef Life team are going to come and tell us about it! They promise a memorable evening, with great film footage from their on-reef cameras and a range of gear to show us.

Oh, and we'll have the *AGM* first. We guarantee to make it speedy and won't press-gang you to join the committee (but don't let us stop you if you are interested. We would love some new faces)!

Friday 26 April–Sunday 28 April (3 days, 2 nights): Pureora Forest

Is your interest photography, fungi, bird spotting, or just enjoying the forest beauty? Pureora Forest is one of the few remaining and easily accessible virgin forests in the North Island. The forest is home to some of our rarest birds, bats, invertebrates, huge podocarps, ferns and other plant life.

Our programme is flexible, but we plan to visit Omaru Falls on our way north, rise early to listen for kokako, visit the easy nearby attractions such as Totara Walk and the Tower Walk where anti-logging protestors climbed trees in 1978, travel the Link Road to the Rimu Walk and more.

We will travel by rental van (limit 12) and stay in Pureora Forest Lodge. Estimated cost is \$185/person. This includes travel, accommodation, evening meals and two lunches. Note: the cost may vary depending on numbers.

Please let us know if you are interested as soon as possible — 5 April at the latest.

Contact: Janet 06 756 9165 or janethuntnz@outlook.com.



RECENT EVENTS: SUMMER 2019

We've made the most of the extended summer, with three different events over the past months and a couple more planned before winter sets in.

Wilkie Pools visit, Saturday January 19

The day could not have been better — clear and not too hot. Our group of 12 made an early morning start up the first-class track to the pools where Beth and Sam, the youngest and boldest among us, stripped down to togs and toe-by-toe got in. There was not much snow up top but even so, it was gaspingly cold!

The rest of us just relaxed, exploring and taking in the beautiful surroundings — the dramatic rocks and crystal-clear waters of Kapūni Stream, the forest and Taranaki's peak above us.

Some of us returned via a less-formed track that runs parallel to a small watercourse before it meets the main stream. There are several pretty waterfalls and a number of flowering plants.

We all met up for a bite to eat at the Dawson Falls Lodge. *Excellent.*



TOP: Sam tests the waters; LEFT: Gary and Marion Adlam enjoying the forest walk; RIGHT: One of many little waterfalls on the return loop.

Tongaporutu evening, Wed 6 February (Waitangi Day)

A group of nine including three KCC members met at Tongaporutu just on dusk. The tide was low and conditions were perfect for a leisurely hour and a half exploring the sands on the western side of the river. The constantly-eroding coast makes an ever-changing sculpture exhibition, with arches, stacks, caves, tunnels and reflections in the afternoon light.

We spent some time watching a young mollyhawk (juvenile black-backed gull) testing its wings on what appeared to be its first flight. It was working out how to stay aloft and also how to land in the reasonably stiff breeze, looking a bit like a plane coming in to land at Wellington airport. Its sibling and an adult were watching with interest from a high rock formation nearby, presumably its nest site.

After tea back at the carpark some of us visited the Rapanui grey-faced petrel colony. No petrels are resident at this time of year but the views as evening came on were breath-taking.



Mollyhawk is not at all sure about this flying lark!



Looking west from Rapanui Grey-faced Petrel Colony.



KCC members, Sonya, Dylan and Clyde Bates.

Mahood-Lowe Reserve, Sunday March 10

There was a solid turnout (21) for our visit to Mahood-Lowe Reserve, with KCC kids, NP Botanical Society members and two people from South Taranaki joining us. This 134-ha reserve, a rare wetland forest (not very wet at the moment) in the vicinity of Egmont National Park, has been recently purchased by the Native Forest Restoration trust. Toutoutwai/robins have been reported and there are whio on the river. Fabulous!

Tony Green, who has been doing a lot of work up there, trapping, recording and photographing, pointed us in the right direction. Many thanks Tony!



Open spaces that were once grazed are great for viewing the forest profile.



Barbara and Karen with cameras while Mick and Bill botanise.

FROM THE RESERVES

Things in the reserves have been fairly quiet over summer.

Tom & Don's

In conjunction with the regional council, plans are under way for weed control and infill planting along the riparian margins and for a new planting on the western side of the property in an already-fenced hollow.

Predator control continues using mainly A24s. A high number of unspecified hits (87) was recorded in mid-December when David Cockeram, Lyndon de Vantier and Kelsi Bayly went round the traps but that covers quite a few months in which the traps had not been checked. The regional council have put tracking tunnels out to monitor the rodent population particularly, but we have not yet received results from that.

All the A24s currently have counters (some are faulty) but they will be replaced by Bluetooth technology (called Chirp) within the next 6 months that can automatically update recent kills to the trapping team's phones.

Te Wairoa

Paul and Erin McDaid spot-sprayed the *Tradescantia* in the lower wetland area recently. Thirteen people turned out for a working bee in February and tackled a variety of tasks including work on the steps on the Mountain Rd side of the reserve (see right), cutting back flax alongside the horse paddocks of the neighbouring farm and spot weeding in the wetland area while it was dry enough to get in there. A number of species are slowly invading: arum lilies, ivy, cherries and of course, *Tradescantia*. It was good to have so many come along.

Vermin are being controlled by a network of traps, some A24s and the rest DOC 200s. The traps are checked and rebaited on a monthly basis, with results being recorded on Trap.NZ. This system seems to be working well. Thanks to our rostered checkers, Tony, Quin, David & Jackie, TRC, Paul & Erin and Peter.

The new mower is doing a grand job (along with those who push it!) and the reserve is looking very neat and tidy.

IN BRIEF: LITTER ACTION TARANAKI

Trevor Woudt from Litter Action Taranaki recently gave a short presentation to the committee. When he moved to Taranaki he was shocked by the of rubbish in public places and responded by initiating Litter Action Taranaki. The aim is not only to clean up roadsides but also to develop ways of changing the behaviour that leads to littering in the first place.

Litter Action Taranaki has organised six litter collecting events that included counting and identifying the types of litter collected, building data bases, and contacting the companies that sell the especially bad littering products. The next project is to clean up Surf Highway, with tips to residents on ways to reduce plastic use, and things they can do to help the environment such as joining Forest and Bird, avoiding buying plastic and picking up rubbish outside their property.

Learn more at <http://www.litteractiontaranaki.co.nz> (the website is in development but you get the idea).



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