

North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

June to September 2018

COMING UP!

What's a whale shark? Only the biggest fish in the ocean! The largest known specimen, according to that well-known expert, Wikipedia, measured 12.65 metres and weighed 21,318.841 kg.

Will it kill you? Well, no. These inhabitants of tropical waters are filter feeders, meaning that, like baleen whales, they eat plankton.

Wouldn't it be great to learn more about these astonishing creatures? If your answer is 'yes', don't miss Dr Simon Pierce's talk in August.

Simon grew up on a farm near New Plymouth. From the outset, he was nuts about nature and it was inevitable that he would end up doing something incredibly interesting. He describes himself as 'whale shark biologist, marine conservation scientist and



underwater photographer'. He's going to talk and show some of his amazing photographs in August. See the programme p.2 for details. And in the meantime, check out Simon's

excellent website: <https://www.simonjpierce.com>.

ABOVE: Simon with one of his friends. He's the tiny figure in the top right of the image.

FROM THE ED

This newsletter is thinner than usual because we are no longer combining with KCC (Kiwi Conservation Club). Electronic media (especially email and Facebook) allow KCC members to communicate more immediately and directly, to share news and photographs about events between newsletters, meaning that it is no longer necessary to include them here.

We will still include their events in our quarterly programme listings and aside from that, if you are interested in following their activities, you can also find them in Facebook under kiwi 'conservation club/forest & bird taranaki'.

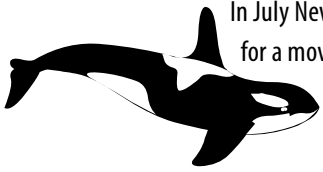
As always, items for the newsletter are welcome.



ABOVE: The kohekohe in Te Wairoa have been magnificent this year. On a quiet day, you can hear the patter of flowers, like rain, hitting the forest floor. Maybe that's caused the explosion in rat numbers? See last item, p.4.



Sunday 8 July, 2.00 pm: *The Last Ocean* movie afternoon, Cue Theatre, 34 Matai St, Inglewood



In July New Plymouth's Friendship Force are joining us for a movie with afternoon tea to follow.

The Last Ocean (2012) was filmed by award-winning director and cameraman

Peter Young, who spent decades filming the

Antarctic's Ross Sea and putting the case for the halting fishing in that pristine environment.

A gold rush mentality had developed in the late 1990s after the world's

fishing fleets began taking the dominant fish predator, Antarctic Toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) for world markets. These amazing fish grow to over 2 m in length and weigh more than 150 kg. They are vital to the Ross Sea food chain. You may know what happened . . . come and see.

Running time is 87 minutes.

Our thanks to Peter and to Fisheye Films for permission to show the movie. Entry by gold coin donation.

Saturday 11 August, 3.00 pm: KCC visit to Rotokare

The cost for this KCC visit is \$4.50 per child (no charge for accompanying adults). KCC members please keep an eye on email and Facebook for more details closer to the day.

Postponement date is 18 August.

Contact: sonyabates@googlemail.com | 0210674751

Since the introduction of a booster population of robins (RIGHT) to the Rotokare reserve, they are often seen along the lakeside track, looking for insects that you disturb as you pass.



Thursday 16 August 5.30 pm: Whale Sharks with Dr Simon Pierce, Central Baptist Church auditorium, 89 Liardet Street

Wow. We are really looking forward to this! Because it's winter and not great for going out after tea, we are experimenting with an early evening time (and welcome feedback).

So put the soup on standby for later, wrap up well and we'll see you there.



ABOVE: Simon in his natural element.
LEFT: *Rhincodon typus* a.k.a. whale shark.

RECENT EVENTS

Rapanui grey-faced petrel reserve

In early May Eve Cozzi and I made it to a working bee at the predator-fenced Rapanui grey-faced petrel colony north of Tongaporutu. It's not a Forest & Bird reserve as such, but many of our members have played a big part in its creation and on-going protection. There were plants to be trimmed away from boardwalks as well as general weeding and rust-proofing of the main fence.

There were no petrels in residence because they come ashore at night (and that will be worth a trip another day) but it was good to see the reserve and the spectacular rock stacks along the coast. — *Janet Hunt*



TOP: This nesting box and tunnel is one of a number made by Forest & Bird member Gary McCracken a few years ago. ABOVE: The predator-proof fence.

Wetland visit, 13 May

A group of a dozen or so visited the property of Dawn and Rob Mills on Hydro Road, not far from Burgess Park. Over many years Dawn and Rob have progressively removed pine trees and replaced them, mainly with natives. They have also planted riparian strips and have created a small lake with wetland margins.



TOP: Visiting the Mills property. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? ABOVE: The lake.

North–South annual get-together, 9 June

We had planned a visit to a wetland at on a farm near Te Wera, with lunch at the Whangamomona Hotel to follow. Recent weather was against us, however, and the paddocks were too muddy to cross. Plan B!

We met at Malone Gates in Stratford and took a couple of hours' walk through the parks along the Patea River. Lovely! We did a similar walk a couple of years ago but there's always something new to see and it was especially good to observe the growth in the arboretum on Cloten Road. Nice lunch too, at Colonel Malones' restaurant.



AROUND THE RESERVES

Tom & Don's Reserve

Plantings

This is a good news–bad news story.

First, the good: the 300 young plants for 2018 are in the ground and looking great, thanks to contractor Brett Simpson. Second, the bad (or sad): during changeover in the management of the farm, stock have been able to get into the riparian planting in the east and have given many of the young trees a jolly good pruning. We don't think they will die, but it's definitely a set-back. I'm promised that the fences will be repaired before stock return again in spring.

Te Wairoa Dorothy Baker Memorial Reserve

Storm damage fixed



ABOVE: Rob Mills hurls the cut branches into the reserve.
BELOW RIGHT: Colt Gardiner, next in line on the chain gang.

Cyclone Gita on 14 February toppled trees across the fence along the Mountain Road boundary. On 5 May we had a great turnout for the working bee: Quin Amooore led the charge with his chainsaw and a small chain gang carted the debris into the reserve. There were so many on hand to help that some of us had to go weeding. Thanks to all who came. Many hands and all that!

Predator control

We have a great team of six groups rostered to do a monthly trap run. Two recent checks within the last month resulted in 12 rats and a number of mice (and that's not including the A24s) so it seems there's been a baby boom in Rodent Land. We will double our efforts until numbers come down. Thanks to the teams: Quin Amooore, Matt Kyle, Tony and Anne Collins, David and Jackie Cockeram, Paul and Erin McDaid and Peter Haines. 🌿



TOP: The good news — one of the new plantings. ABOVE: The not-so-good news — one of our 'pruned' trees.



Who's who at North Taranaki F&B & KCC

Chair/newsletter editor: Janet Hunt (06) 7569165 | janethuntnz@outlook.com

Secretary: Anne Collins (06) 7511 927 | anne46@orcon.net.nz

Treasurer: Dawn Mills (06) 758 3252 | rjmills58@gmail.com

David Cockeram (06) 758 7580 | davidcockeram@gmail.com

Jackie Cockeram (06) 758 7580 | jackiecockeram@gmail.com

Tony Collins (06) 7511 927 racingfrog27@gmail.com

KCC: Sonya Bates | sonyabates@googlemail.com | 0210674751