



## Habitat - North Shore Branch news

### Bar-tailed godwits, and the shell barrier beaches of Ngataringa and Shoal Bays



In September every year between 200-300 bar-tailed godwits descend on the shell banks in Ngataringa and Shoal Bays on the inner Waitemata Harbour, to rest and feed after their 8 to 9-day, 11,000 km non-stop flight from Alaska. Other smaller and larger groups of godwits find their way to estuaries all around New Zealand to spend the summer months feeding up before returning to Alaska to breed.

How they came to find the shell banks in Ngataringa Bay is not known, but we do know why they choose them.

These shell banks – technically known as chenier barrier banks – are globally rare; the largest in New Zealand is at Miranda and it is the only chenier bank in the world that is still increasing in size. The



banks occur in tidal zones where shellfish are prolific, and are formed when a storm surge radically disturbs the seabed, uplifting shellfish from their bed of sediment and depositing them on the shore. Over time and with many storm surges, a high bank of shells forms.

These banks provide seabirds such as godwits, dotterel and oystercatchers with both a place to roost, and access to a fertile feeding ground.



But their existence is threatened by human development. Water quality deterioration and sediment runoff caused by urban growth pose a threat both to the shell banks and to the birds' feeding grounds. People also pose other threats to the banks and the birds.

Godwits congregate in flocks on the shell beaches, and they can be extremely wary birds, flying away on approach. Disturbance interrupts their resting, and given that they have lost almost half their body weight on the flight to New Zealand, rest – after eating - is necessary for them to regain their fitness. In order to survive the flight back to Alaska via China for breeding, the godwits spend their days eating until up to 55% of their body weight is fat, and then reduce the size of their gut, kidney and liver by up to 25 per cent to compensate.



On the Ngataringa and Shoal Bay shell beaches, disturbance is often caused by walkers – locals who are enjoying the coastal area, or walking their dogs, and others who come specially to see the godwits and other birds. At critical times - when resident local birds like variable oystercatchers are nesting, or migratory birds like the godwits have just arrived or are preparing for long distance flight to their

breeding grounds - people cause disturbance both to the delicate structure of the shell beaches and to the daily life of the birds.

**NOTE:** Shell banks in Shoal and Ngataringa estuaries are designated by Auckland Council as Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Marine 1 sites, although one at Ngataringa Bay was missed off the Unitary Plan. We have assurances that this will be added at some stage.

Photos: Philip Moll

## Volunteers Needed

### Do you have time to volunteer for Forest & Bird?

The branch operates with the assistance of our many volunteers, and we are always looking for more people to help us in all areas. We would especially like some enthusiastic new committee members. We meet on the third Thursday evening of every month to plan our events and projects.



### Specifically we are looking for:

**A new Chair from our AGM in April** – Richard has been in this role for 8 years and it is time to step down. We will give the new chair lots of support. The main aspect of the job is running committee meetings, attending the Auckland Chairs meetings alternate months and running some of the branch nights.

**Membership liaison** – someone to look after membership matters, usually about 2 hours per month.

**Community promotions** – to arrange and help out at community events, promoting Forest & Bird

**A minute taker** - someone to join our committee and take good minutes when our secretary is not available

**Our AGM is on Monday April 1 at 7.30pm. Nominations are called for committee, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.**

Please contact us at [northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz) or call Richard on 021 216 1296 if you would like more information.

Many thanks to our two members who have offered their services as graphic designer and the RMA monitoring role.

**Also, for our Kiwi Conservation Club ...**



We would welcome new co-ordinators to our team. North Shore KCC has around 200 families for whom we endeavour to organise monthly events. To spread the load, bring in new ideas and keep up to date with IT communications, we would welcome young and enthusiastic helpers in the team.

For information please contact Marilyn Gulliver [candmgulliver@gmail.com](mailto:candmgulliver@gmail.com)

## Public Meetings

Public meetings take place on the first Monday of each month (excluding January), including public holidays.

**Venue:** Takapuna Senior Citizens' Hall, The Strand — through the courtyard at the rear of the Takapuna Library.

**Time:** 7:30pm - starting with Native of the Month and environmental updates, followed by our guest speaker.

**Admission:** **Non-members** are welcome. A koha/donation is appreciated to cover costs.

Please join us afterwards for supper and an opportunity to meet with our speaker and committee members.

For further information, email us on [northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz)

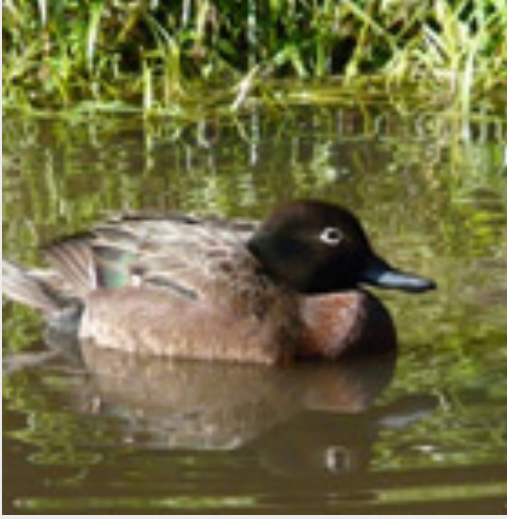
### Monday 1 April 2019 7:30pm – Our brief AGM

... we have noticed in previous years that turnout to our (very brief) AGM has been low compared to other meeting nights. Please be assured that just because you are there does not mean you will be coerced to join our committee. And it would be a shame to miss our wonderful speaker ...

### Sally Richardson - Tawharanui

Tawharanui Regional Park is New Zealand's first integrated open sanctuary, combining farming, public recreation and conservation of native species.

The Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society (TOSSI) was formed in 2002 to help make the open sanctuary project a reality, and in 2004 it helped fund a 2.5km predator-proof fence across the Tawharanui Peninsula. See <http://www.tossi.org.nz/> for more information.



Sally Richardson, Chair of Warkworth Area F & B branch and TOSSI committee member, will speak about what's going on at Tawharanui Regional Park. Find out about translocations, successes and challenges at this widely acclaimed local gem.

**Monday 6 May 2019 7:30pm**

**Katrina Goddard, Marine Conservation Advocate, Forest & Bird**

Our precious Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana/Te Moana Nui a Toi is in trouble. Over two lifetimes, the health of these waters has been severely degraded by overfishing, bottom trawling, pollution and climate change. [Sea Change/Tai Timu Tai Pari](#) is a plan that could reverse this damage and rebuild the health and mauri of the gulf; it is the product of many voices, including mana whenua, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, communities, scientists, and conservationists. Forest & Bird's marine advocate Katrina Goddard was on the plan's working group.

## Tuff Crater



The Tuff Crater Restoration Project on the North Shore commenced in 2000 with the planting of the Millennium Forest and has continued with major pest plant control, planting and predator control ever since. A major part of the work involves finding and removing threats from noxious alien invaders such as moth plant and wild ginger. It also includes releasing of new native plants so they do not get smothered by growth such as kikuyu grass or morning glory. Planting occurs in the winter months and the more energetic may get involved in path and drain maintenance.

No previous experience is required. If you do not know your plants, you will be guided by, and learn from, other team members..

**To get involved, join our [mailing list](#).**



## Weekly Thursday working bee

Anne Denny and Paul Pyper run a half-day working bee every Thursday from 9:30am. Sign up to the mailing list to learn more.

## Saturday working bees

We run a working bee at 9am on the second Saturday of each month. **The next working bee is Saturday 13 April.**

We will be carrying out vital pest plant control at Tuff Crater to ensure our native plants are not suffering from being smothered. Join our mailing list for up to date details on this and other working bees at Tuff Crater.

## Upcoming Trips

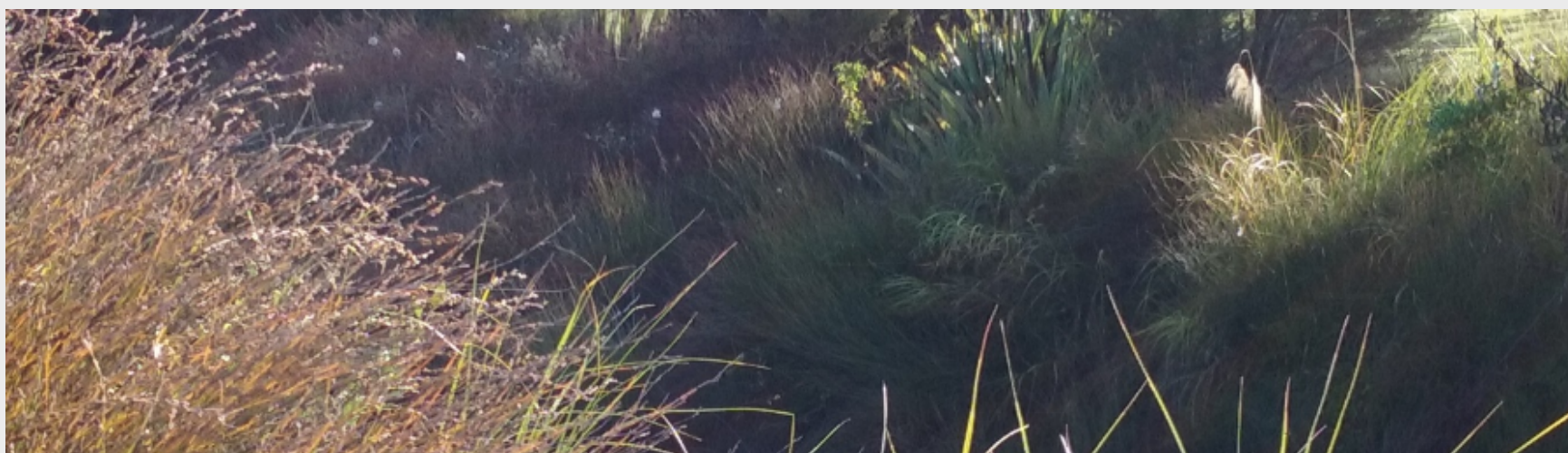
### Sun 28 April 10am – 3pm Matuku Link working bee and walk

We will join the Matuku Link team for a bit of work in the field or nursery and then enjoy a guided walk. BYO lunch.

Matuku Link is at 111 Bethells Road, Te Henga, Auckland

For more information <https://matukulink.org.nz/>

Contact Richard Hursthouse on 021 216 1296 or [Richard.hursthouse@gmail.com](mailto:Richard.hursthouse@gmail.com) to register or carpool.



### Sunday 26 May 10am – 12pm Whenuapai Airforce Base

The environment within the Royal NZ Air Force Base at Whenuapai is rapidly changing. Terry Walker, Regional Grounds Manager, will show us around the impressive work that he and his team are doing, especially the riparian planting along 15km of stream banks and the planting of large bare areas in native vegetation.

The terrain is mostly flat and walking is easy.

Meet: Front gate next to Whenuapai School, 14 Airport Road, off Brigham Creek Road.

Cancellation: If it is raining heavily, the trip will be cancelled. An email will be sent at 8:30am on the day of the trip to all people who register.

Registration: It is not necessary to register unless you wish to receive a cancellation email.

Contact John Brown:

- Landline: 09 4152054
- Mobile: 02290040
- Email: [john.alison.brown@outlook.com](mailto:john.alison.brown@outlook.com)

## Enviro Hui North

Saturday 13 April at AUT North Shore, from 08:30am to 3:15pm.



Forest & Bird is partnering with Kaipatiki Project to bring you a combined Festival North and Sustainability/Climate mini conference.

**Inspiration and Activation.  
Working Together to Increase Our Impact.**

For the first time, we present Enviro Hui North for the last celebratory day of the festival. All environmental groups and interested individuals from across Auckland's North are invited to come together, to share projects, hear what others are doing, and see how we can work together to increase our impact.

For Restoration Networks, there will be a Festival North workshop, for sustainability groups, there will be Live Lightly workshops, Then we'll bring it all together at the end to plan next steps and keep the momentum going throughout the year.

Join environmental leaders and committed conservationists from across the North.  
Everyone welcome.

For the detailed programme visit <http://kaipatiki.org.nz/ecofest/>

**Regional Meeting of Northern Forest and Bird branches in**



# the Auckland & North regions

Date: Saturday 27th April

Time: 9.00 to 4.00

Where: The Gardens Centre, (Upstairs), 5 Mount Lebanon Cres, Manurewa

South Auckland branch is pleased to host this event in 2019.

Aim: To meet, talk and share information—success and problems.

Proposed agenda (This may well change):

1. Tea & coffee 9.00am
2. Introductions at 9.30
3. Reports from each branch (10-20mins each) ( it's up to you—no pressure). Plantings, pest control, Reserve management, People, HO, KCC
4. Speaker: Andrew Veal—saving wildlife through genetic science
5. Lunch
6. Speaker Post pest eradication wildlife monitoring on Rangitoto-Motutapu - Annual wildlife surveys focused mainly on reptiles started after declaration of the pest-free status of Rangitoto-Motutapu. They resulted in detection of 4221 lizards of six species adding to our knowledge of the species composition, distribution, abundance and population density. The trends we found, species populations growth and range expansion are related to the positive effects of the multispecies pest eradication. Presenter: Dr. Art Polkanov
7. Naomi Harrison on the creation of an East West wildlink across South Auckland
8. Matthew Brajkovich: Protecting a damaged waterway—what to do !
9. Close 4.00

**RSVP Please** to Murray Gleeson with numbers attending - email: [murrayg@ts.co.nz](mailto:murrayg@ts.co.nz) Mobile: 021 143 5261

**Please do come !**



*Forest & Bird is New Zealand's independent voice for nature. Our mission is*

*To protect and restore nature in Aotearoa/New Zealand.*



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If you have any questions about branch matters please email us on [northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz)

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