



WARKWORTH AREA BRANCH NEWLETTER

Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand

Warkworth Area Forest & Bird, P.O. Box 238, Warkworth 0941

May 2019

Chair's report to 2019 AGM

2018 - 2019 has been a steady year for our branch.

My thanks to the committee who have all continued to play their part in keeping things moving along smoothly.

Special thanks to Jo Rodgers who stepped in as KCC co-ordinator. She put considerable time and effort into trying to get the group going again, with unfortunately, little success. We think this is because there is already lots going on in the area for children with sports and cultural activities. Jo has shifted up to Kaiwaka and has reluctantly decided to resign for now. Current members of our KCC branch have been put in touch with the North Shore branch so that they can join in with their activities.

Membership numbers remain fairly constant at around 150.

Written submissions have been made on your behalf on issues such as the:

- Waste Transfer Station Sandspit Road
- Warkworth Spatial Plan
- Warkworth Structure Plan
- Warkworth to Wellsford motorway
- Matakana Link Road
- Te Arai RP Management Plan Additional
- Springhill Waste Disposal Site
- Lake Road Quarry Te Arai
- MPI Kauri Dieback Consultation x2

Roger Williams has done the work on these submissions and I thank him very much for his expertise and willingness to give his time to do this for us.

Work has progressed well on the track at Mathesons Bay. The track is now safer, kauri trees are protected and some work down by the river is all that remains to be done.

Planting started at Heritage Lane with the vision of connecting the walkway with a swing bridge through to the showgrounds. More planting is planned for this coming winter.

The Forest and Bird Community Coast Care group, Leigh, have reached the point where they've pretty much dealt to the weeds in their area and are now looking at pest control. Whatever wild life can be brought back with this initiative remains to be seen but it's a great community lead programme and we look forward to seeing their results.

Their Korora (little blue penguin) scheme is off to a good start. Over 40 boxes have been put out in areas where penguins have been seen in the past. My thanks to Jenny Enderby for leading this programme.

We continue to help the Kauri Bushmen's Association in Parry Kauri Park on a few working bees during the year. Roger's forest hygiene stations are being used and there is no kauri die-back there to date.

Raewyn and Rosemary initiated the production and sale of a range of tea towels featuring our own Ruby Watson's bird designs. These earned a profit of \$1655 and along with calendar sales of \$866 were our

fundraising efforts last year. As a branch we don't ask for a capitation grant from Head Office, preferring that our membership fees are used for National campaigns.

Weeding continues in Kowhai Park, though only by a small weeding team who continue on the first and third Wednesday mornings of each month. We'd love to see some more helpers. Weeds are starting to grow back where we started several years ago so we do need to keep on top of them.

Last winter's talk series was well attended with talks on a variety of topics which included birds, fish stocks in the Gulf and dogs that could sniff out rats

A gung -ho potting group went across to Cue Haven, on the Kaipara Harbour again to help pot up plants for their nursery. They like us coming because we know what to do and just get on with the job.

A picnic and walk around the Ti Point trail was an enjoyable summer activity for many in the Branch. Our usual end of year pot luck dinner was an enjoyable occasion too.

It's good to see some new faces at the activities that we organise for you. Please remember that we love to hear your ideas for similar outings, or better still you could offer to help organise one. Health issues and the busy pace of life has got in the way of arranging other activities this summer. But there are a few things in mind for the future.

Last April we hosted a Regional get together.

National Office ran workshops and discussions to get feedback on how the society is doing - what works well, what needed to be improved.

One of the items discussed then and more recently, was how the Society chooses its board members and office holders. Some people think that it would be more democratic for voting to be opened up to all Forest & Bird members rather than for branches to direct their counsellor how to vote. At our branch committee meeting we decided to leave things as they are. "If it's not broken, why try to fix it?" This issue will be decided at the National Conference in late June. If you wish to voice an opinion, please get in touch with me.

I attend a meeting in Auckland every second month where the Chairs for all the northern branches get together to discuss issues.

Since roughly half of NZ's Forest & Bird members come from the Auckland region, this is a good forum to find out what's going on, to give support and to get ideas.

We were very proud of two of our Branch members who received National Forest & Bird honours last year. Roger Williams was awarded an Old Blue in recognition of his outstanding work for the environment over many years. And Warwick Massey received a Ti Kōuka award, recognising his long-term commitment to the running of this branch. I also wish to acknowledge their wives Patte and Hueline for their wonderful support. ("Behind every successful man stands a fantastic woman")

Sally Richardson Chair

Warkworth Area Branch

Activities since November:

Visit to Burgess Island and the Mokohinau Island group

In early January a mixed group of Forest and Bird and Northern New Zealand Seabird Trust members and guests embarked on a long anticipated and frequently rescheduled trip to the Mokohinau Islands.





Up to the lighthouse on Burgess Island

These pristine islands situated in the northern Hauraki Gulf are pest free and home to several New Zealand's smaller endangered species such as the Mokohinau Skink the Mokohinau Stag beetle and the robust skink, They provide forage for flocks of bellbirds and visiting Tuis as well as many endangered plant species and are the nesting site of many of the Gulf's seabirds. Piers Barney and his wonderful boat the Norma Jean transported us over calm waters. On the way we stopped to look at the sea birds diving on many fish boil ups dotting the ocean. A highlight was a sighting of two of the extremely rare New Zealand Storm petrels.



The Norma Jean at anchor at Burgess Island



Committee and friends trip to Motu Kaikoura Island

A large group embarked again with Piers to visit Motu Kaikoura island, situated at the mouth of Fitzroy harbour Great Barrier Island. Not such a smooth crossing but the boat managed well.

The lodge was new and very welcoming and the accommodation in the various huts a bit of an adventure as many of the huts were accessed through steep bush.

Over the weekend walks were undertaken over and around the island to observe the natural regeneration of the vegetation.

The Trust that operates the island are allowing natural regeneration to take place and our botanist Maureen Young was kept busy noting new and old species that have returned following the removal all the introduced wild life over a decade ago.

Notable were the flocks of Kaka feasting on the cones provided by the coastal pines near the lodge and the tiny but perfect native orchids growing in bare clay alongside the track by the airfield.

Walks were completed across the island to the beach and around the island to the lookout points.

Food and good company completed a very enjoyable weekend.

The grown ups hit the beach



A botanist's work is never done



After the grown ups went home





View from the top

The island has a dense Kanuka canopy



View from the top on the other side



View from the lodge looking towards Fitzroy.



Winter talks:

This winter's series is all about "Curious Creatures"

May 16 Grass Esposti . local expert on bees

June 20 Chris Green - wetapunga

July 18. Tony Enderby. "Opisthobranchs - the Butterflies of the Sea"

August 15 Mike Chillingworth - NZ reptiles

September 19. To be advised

Forest & Bird's kids club, Kiwi Conservation Club, is asking New Zealanders to "Be with a Tree" in June to celebrate how amazing and vital trees really are.

From **31 May to 9 June 2019**, KCC and their partners are setting 10 different tree challenges. The challenges are designed for young people (and the young at heart) from all over Aotearoa to participate in, even if they are in the middle of the city.

One of the challenges is to visit a 'tree of significance'. You may have a tree in your area you'd like to highlight. Another challenge asks people to vote for their favourite 'hero tree', a bit like Bird of the Year. The full list of challenges and more information about the event is available on [KCC's website](#).

10 days 10 Tree Challenges

1. Meet a type of tree you haven't met before
2. Find something living in a tree
3. Play bark bingo
4. Meet a tree of significance
5. Find a tree that provides us with food
6. Vote for your hero tree – there will be 4 species of tree that people can vote for on social media
7. Plant a tree/ seedball
8. Find a non-living tree
9. Step out the length of a kauri
10. Share why you think trees are important. This will be done by people writing on an outline of a leaf from one of the hero trees and sending it to KCC.

Top tips for community trappers in a mast year

Time your operations carefully to coincide your increased effort with the likelihood of pests entering your traps or bait stations. For example in a beech forest, once the beech seed germinates; in a podocarp or broadleaf dominated forest you might want to start earlier – when the fruit rots.

If you trap, add bait stations to your project. If you use bait stations, add traps. Best practise is to change your method every few years, but if you have 'shy' animals who are evading your bait stations or traps, this is the year you really want to stop them breeding. Consider also changing the lures you are using in your traps.

Contact your Regional Council and DOC and ask for more support this year. Whether it is expertise, resources, or boots on the ground, your regional and national authorities are likely to be able to provide some assistance.

Forest & Bird member Mark Ayre sets a DOC 200 to protect mohua (yellowheads) in Makarora. Credit: Kimberley Collins Creative Commons



Keep detailed trapping and monitoring records. If you haven't started regular rat monitoring, consider starting. Rat catch rates are not a reliable indicator of rat numbers in your area. Record what is happening to your traps and bait. Are they being ignored because there's so much food on the ground, or are they full of hungry rodents? Everything we can learn about these masting events will help us all prepare better for the next one.



A DOC 200 Trap on Pigeon Island in Dusky Sound. Credit: Kimberley Collins Creative Commons

Advertise for volunteer help. You're likely to need more traps, and to check them more frequently when the rats start running out of fruit and seed. If so, you're going to need more people. Have a goal of doubling your volunteer numbers for your crux period. Write posts for Facebook and Neighbourly. Ask the local paper to help. The very best way to get people involved is to ask your friends, family and personal contacts. Ask your volunteer trappers do the same.

Use the support of any community hubs you might be involved in. Connect up the dots with neighbouring trapping groups. Share the effort.



Red-fronted kākāriki. Credit: Luc Hoogenstein

Protect your really special native animals. If you've got an important population of frogs, lizards, bats, birds, or invertebrates, consider intensifying your efforts around them. Carefully consider the risks of removing traps from elsewhere first though, if this is the trade off. If you know roost or nesting trees, you could consider banding them and the trees that neighbour them.

Make some noise publicly. Our best advantage is that we are the community experts in conservation. Our voices are important – but we need to speak up. Contact your local newspaper. Tell them about your work, why it's important, and what's at risk if DOC isn't funded to deal with extraordinary mast events. Include Min. Robertson, Min. Sage, Min. Peters and Megan at Forest & Bird in any emails you send to journalists or editors.

If you need help, ask us. Forest & Bird can provide guidance, support and advice too. Our staff and volunteers have expertise in conservation, trapping, and communications, so drop us a line if you need some pointers, and we'll do our best to help.

Conservation Week 2019 goes from Sat 14 to Sun 15 September (Festival 2019 and the Mayoral Conservation Awards will be held during that time).

Pest Liaison Group (PLG) - the next meeting is on Weds 1 May at the Fickling Centre in Three Kings. The following meeting will be on Weds 10 July, at the same venue.

If you want to hear about pest control and restoration work being carried out in the region, and network with others doing the same, come along! The start time is 10am.

Better ways to stop marine pests

Have your say on better ways to stop marine pests in the top of the North Island

As the movement of boats increases, so too does the risk of marine pests spreading.

With support from Biosecurity New Zealand, the four northern-most regions are considering new marine biosecurity rules.

Read the discussion document to find out more about the problem and the options being considered, then have your say.

The feedback period runs until 24 May 2019

<https://www.bionet.nz/control/marine-pests/marinepests/>

The Regional Pest Management Plan

A quick update

After many years of planning, research and engagement, Auckland Council resolved to adopt the new Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) on 12 March 2019.

The plan provides a bold strategic and statutory framework for the effective management of pests in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland for the next ten years. The plan represents a 189% increase in investment for protection of the natural environment from pests, compared to the legacy Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS).

The appeals period has recently come to a close, allowing those who submitted on the RPMP a chance to make an application to the Environmental Court.

When the full extent of the appeals received is known, we will be able to give an update, including when the RPMP is going to become operational.

If you have any questions please contact us at biosecurity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Trapping workshops for beginners

An introductory course for trapping in backyards and small reserves

If you are new to trapping and want to begin in your backyard or a small reserve, then these workshops are for you!

This half-day workshop looks at a range of tools for trapping possums, rats and stoats and is being offered by Auckland Council and the Department of Conservation as part of Auckland's Pest Free 2050 goal.

You will learn how to select the best tool for you, where to place your traps and how to monitor your trapping efforts. There is no cost to attend and no prior trapping experience is required.

Please choose from the locations and dates below and register your interest with Kat Lane kalane@doc.govt.nz. All workshops will run from 9am -12.30pm

Saturday 4 May, Bucklands Beach Bowling Club

Tuesday 14 May, Arataki Visitors Centre

Saturday 1 June, Glen Innes Community Hall

Tuesday 18 June, Takapuna Memorial Hall

If you are in a group and are interested in hosting a training session, please contact us directly.

Email Kat Lane from the Department of Conservation kalane@doc.govt.nz or call 09 307 9279

Warkworth Area Branch committee

May 2018:

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