



North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

October to December 2019

From the editor

It's tui time — a.k.a. spring! Despite the cold and wet, the flowers keep coming and tui are into them in big numbers, batting and squabbling, snatching a drink or a caterpillar, before chasing or being chased.

By comparison, it's a relatively quiet time on the local branch front, although there's plenty happening around Taranaki and beyond. This is Conservation Week with the branch hosting a stall at the Conservation Adventure Race at Pukeiti organised by DOC (see p.2).

This is also the month for the Great Kererū Count

(see p.2), while, on the subject of our feathered friends, Birds NZ are looking for citizen scientists (ie *YOU*) to help compile the next NZ Birds Atlas (see <https://birdatlas.co.nz/>).

Meanwhile, slightly behind the scenes, members of the branch have this week attended consultation meetings on the subject of the freshwater reform proposals and the government's new biodiversity strategy discussion document, *Te Kōiropa o te Kōiropa*.

We will be flying the flag at the climate strike on 27 September. Meet at the Huatoki Plaza at 11.00.

Recent event — KIWI CONSERVATION KIDS encounter kororā / little penguins



Calling all parents and kids! Do you know about Forest & Bird's Kiwi Conservation Club? For 30 years it's been connecting young Kiwis to our wildlife and environment in a fun and interesting way. There are over 5000 KCC members in New Zealand.

At the end of August, our local branch organised a great evening centred on the little blue penguins that live around our coast. Read Dylan Bates' awesome report and see more photographs on p.4.

Contact Sonya Bates (below) for more info.

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

Chair: Tony Collins (06) 7511 927
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Treasurer: Dawn Mills (06) 758 3252
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Newsletter: Janet Hunt (06) 7569165
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Recent events

Conservation Week Adventure Race at Pukeiti

This was a lot of fun. The race follows an orienteering format, whereby teams complete a route with a list of questions to answer. Anne, Tony and David represented Forest & Bird, with a station along one of the tracks.



Top: David Cockeram and Tony Collins, ready for action. Above: one of the teams passing through.

In brief

They are not events as such but North Taranaki Forest & Bird members are kept busy with meetings and consultations on a wide range of topics, from climate change awareness and activities for change, to freshwater reform proposals and biodiversity strategies.

Tony and Anne recently attended a Dolphin Threat Management Plan meeting and came away with a new awareness of the threats to these mammals. In particular, it is now known that the *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite carried by cats is a serious factor in the decline of Maui and Hector's dolphins. The toxoplasmosis enters the ocean via stormwater systems. Read more about it on the DOC website.



The great kererū count



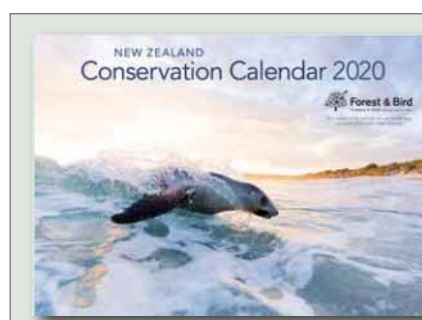
These splendid creatures are VIBs (Very Important Birds!) in our forests because only they eat and spread the seed of large trees such as puriri. The Great Kererū Count is the country's biggest citizen science project. Your observations (whether you see kererū or not) will help determine how many there are, where they live and what they're feeding on. The count takes place from 20–29 September. Go to <https://www.greatkererucount.nz/how-to-count>.

What's on

Wild for Taranaki have a monthly calendar of events — email contact@wildfortaranaki.nz if you would like to be on their list.

Likewise, Sustainable Taranaki has a page dedicated to matters environmental, from crop swaps to sustainable Taranaki workshops. Check them out at www.sustainabletaranaki.org.nz.

While you're at it, you might like to peek at what Taranaki Conservationists are up to: www.taranakiconservationists.com/.



There are not many copies of 2020's gorgeous Conservation Calendar left (the diaries are sold out, sorry)!

It's a great gift, featuring beautiful New Zealand through the superb photographs of leading nature photographers. It weighs less than 200 g and comes complete with envelope.

The calendar costs \$20. Contact Dawn.

From the reserves

Tom & Don's

Things are quiet at Tom & Don's over winter but the committee hopes to get out to see the recent plantings when the weather picks up. Meanwhile, a new predator control programme is under way.

Te Wairoa

After one postponement because of inclement weather, a group of nine from U3A visited the reserve in late August (below). After a brief introductory talk in the clearing and a short tour, we walked to the wetland where great inroads were made in the next *Tradescantia* patch along the path. Having worked up an appetite, the next move was to the very appropriately positioned Tawa Glen café for lunch.



An excellent use of soon-to-be-redundant red rubbish bags.



The U3A group attacked the task with enthusiasm and we soon had 8 bags full of *Tradescantia*.

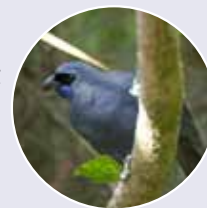
- The lawns in the clearing are looking great but we could do with a few extra hands to help mow! This is a shared job. It's not arduous and you mow when and how often you feel like it — once a week, once a month or once a year. If the clearing is mowed regularly, it only takes 30 to 40 minutes. Help make this spot a real gem and a pleasure to visit. Contact Tony if you are interested in helping out.

- Tony has been building an entrance pathway to the clearing to make moving the mower easier and to increase accessibility. The edging is now complete and the call will shortly be going out for help to fill it with gravel.

Coming events

Pureora Forest trip 18–20 October

This three-day trip to this magic forest is not far away! Most of the spaces are spoken for already but if you are keen, contact Anne or Janet.



Pukeiti visit, 16 November

Been to Pukeiti before? There's always something new to see! Meet at the gates at 10.30. We'll take a walk and those who wish, can stay on for something to eat at the fabulous Founders Café.

Sandy Bay, 8 December,

Carpool with friends and meet at noon for lunch at Headlands Hotel, Opunake for our end of year get-together. The tide will be low around 1.45 — perfect for exploring the at Ngati Tara Oaonui / Sandy Bay. (end of Tai Rd). The 35-ha sand dune reserve at the end of Tai Road is home to a range of rare and endangered plant and animal life including New Zealand dotterels.



Please let a committee member know if you are coming so we can book with Headlands.

Read all about it

Kiri Wallace's 2017 thesis, *Urban Restoration Ecology: Investigating environmental change, ecological function, and enrichment planting*, supervised by Bruce Clarkson and partially funded by the George Mason Trust, is available free online through the University of Waikato Research Commons at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/11608>.



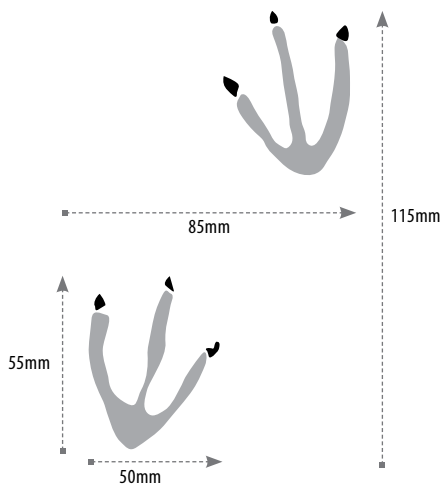
Little blue penguins

On 31 of August we went to the marine info centre and talked about the ocean.

Then we went to see where the penguins lived. They lived in a grassy area and the grass was flattened down where they had been walking. Next, we went on the beach to pick up rubbish. It was all from a broken down car!

Then we played a fun game called Penguins Pathway. We were the penguins and the adults were the obstacles. We had to jump with our feet closed along a 4x8 grid. One by one the four adults blocked random squares to stop us getting to the end. Later we went out at night and saw some adorable little blue penguins. They were swimming out to catch fish for their babies.

— by Dylan Bates age 9



Is that a kororā print on the sand? A kororā foot is about 55mm long and about 50mm wide. The steps are spaced about 85mm from the left side of the left foot to the right side of the right foot and about 115mm from the bottom of the bottom foot to the top of the top foot.

