

NEWSLETTER November 2019

Kapiti - Mana Forest & Bird



The next meeting will be held Wednesday 27th November at 7.30 pm in the Presbyterian church, Ngaio Road Waikanae. The speaker will be Peter Cooper of Rimutaka Forest Trust and their successful reintroduction of Kiwis into the Rimutaka's, most years, the threat of ferrets. There is something in this talk for everyone. Non members are also welcome to attend.

Photo Birds over Miranda

Editor: Russell Bell, Email russelljamesbell@gmail.com. Phone 0212266047. Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome, as would a contribution to future newsletters.

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Chairman's Report

Some things in conservation really inspire, and one of those is the efforts of the Remutaka Conservation Trust - our speaker this month is from there. The catchment of Turere Stream, off the side of the Orongorongo River, was selected and trapped by this organisation. No fences - just dedication by a group. It's a very large area and has been sufficiently trapped for many years to a standard where kiwi were allowed to be reintroduced. Most have eggs removed from nests and returned when the kiwi are big enough to fend off predators but some have bred in the valley unassisted. Some of the adult birds have spread to adjoining areas of the Orongorongo.

Many people have considered reintroductions or similar in Kapiti.

This group did it in Wainuiomata and it is such an amazing restoration story, it gave people like me hope for future ventures. But since then we have to consider climate change, the problems of past years, the possibility of ferrets and also the problem many restoration groups now face - ageing membership.

How is the trust dealing with these issues? What lessons can we learn from this group? Is Turere Stream a place we can visit? Come along and hear their story.

Conservation News - Farming Queen Elizabeth Park



This picture shows what Greater Wellington Regional Council Parks department allows and supports in Queen Elizabeth Park.

These are the things related to this photo that should not happen in the park.

- The land is used for cropping. That means that weeds and insects are eliminated. Lime and fertiliser have been applied changing the chemical nature of the peat base. Cropping is a mono culture.
- These crops have been grown for winter feed when growth in the rest of the farmed park is not sufficient to feed the number of stock. To maximise the use of the crop, a small amount is electrically fenced and all the stock are driven in. They eat until there is nothing left. Then they are moved to the next small bay to repeat the experience.
- Because of density, high numbers of stock in a small area, the amount of effluent is fairly extreme. The area where crops are

grown is very close to the Whareroa Stream. In fact two small streams from the east of State Highway One cross under the road and traverse the cropped land. These and other field drains are not fenced. Winter rains flush the effluent into the tributaries of the Whareroa Stream.

- The land surface has no cover. The soil is exposed and washes away.
- Should cattle be treated like this?

What are we doing about it?

- We and the Friends of QE Park have taken walks up Mataihuka where an aerial view of the area can be had and talked to groups of people about what we want and why.
- I was invited to talk about some water related issue and chose this one in a presentation to the public at the launch by MfE of the National Policy Statement on Fresh Water in Wellington.

- Friends of QEP ran a “Walk in the Park” through the farmland between the wetlands attended by 90 people and talked about the GWRC Parks department attitude.
- One of the Friends, Wayne Mitchell, recorded a quarter hour interview with Radio Paekakariki. It was played once a day for two weeks.
- We know that we have support from one GWRC councillor, Thomas Nash and maybe more.
- Penny Gaylor, has said more positive words than previously though they are not very definite words about the restoration of the park.
- And finally, new GWRC Chair Ponter said in a Dominion Post article “We need to put a practice emphasis on Climate Change. We have a broad outline but we need to lay out

a plan for how we are going to get there. Returning ... pastoral farming land to other uses such as wetlands and forestry was one option. Much of that land was leased out with many leases soon up for renewal.”

There is more to do but compared to where we were a few years ago, we are making progress. Since I have been working on this, we have achieved a great deal.

- About 12 hectares of wetland were retired a few years ago and have partially been rewetted and revegetated in swamp vegetation.
- In the last few months, 23 hectares of old wetland have been removed from the farmers license and will no longer be farmed.

Forest Ecosystems of the Wellington Region

October Speaker

Our speaker at the October 2019 meeting was Dr Philippa Crisp of GWRC, who spoke about the background to a report produced by Greater Wellington on Forest Ecosystems of the Wellington Region, which you can read here:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Our-Environment/Environmental-monitoring/Environmental-Reporting/Forest-ecosystems-of-the-Wellington-region-reduced.pdf>

The report used GIS mapping and LIDAR information to identify the different ecosystems, and the best remaining examples

of each. Philippa's presentation helped us to drill down into the detail of the types in our district, where the best examples were, and which were most at risk. The western half of Greater Wellington's domain, has much more remaining forest than the eastern half (which extends to the Wairarapa). The three most important sites representing marginalised forest ecosystems in our branch area were Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve, Forest Lakes Christian Camp, and Nga Manu.

NZ Birds - Tui

Also, parson bird, koko, mockingbird.

Endemic to New Zealand i.e not found anywhere else

Status Abundant

As a noisy and usually solitary bird, the tui is normally seen in the treetops where it can often be heard and seen chortling and chuckling. Its call has a wide variation that combines bellbird like notes with clicks, cackles, timber like groans and wheezes. Its contact call is a melodious ‘hiccup’, but it can burst into marvellous song. As it possesses a

dual voice box, it is famed for its mimicry and is thought to have hundreds of sounds at its disposal. It can exactly re-create sounds such as a telephone ring, glass shattering, car alarms, beeps, whistles and other sounds. It can also remember some words and short sentences. Some of its sounds can be too high for the human ear to hear so if an apparently silent bird is seen with its beak open and chest puffed out, it is singing.



Item and image by Alan Froggatt

Early Maori often kept it in cages, trained it to speak and even welcome visitors to a marae.

When mating occurs in spring or early summer it can be extremely aggressive and noisy and will chase all other birds from its territory. Its nest is an untidy structure of large twigs and roots lined with finer twigs, lichen, tree fern scales and moss and is sited in dense vegetation, in a forked branch or against a tree trunk. 2 to 4 eggs are laid between September and November. The chicks fledge at 11-20 days and are independent after 2 weeks.

Outside the breeding season, it may become partially nomadic and travel from its home territory to towns, rural gardens and forest patches in search of nectar and fruit. The yellow on this bird's head is nectar. These feeding territories can be 20 plus kilometres apart. It is quiet and reclusive by nature and can sometimes be seen sitting on branch in the deep shade quietly watching the watcher.

It has earned the well-deserved reputation of being a glutton. Come springtime it is often seen guzzling on berries and will do anything, including hanging upside down in a tree to get

a good feed. But when it eats too much it must sit in the sun to digest it. When the weather is good the ripe fruit in its crop can ferment and turn to alcohol. This will get it sufficiently 'boozed up' to give new meaning to the term 'daylight drinking.' In years when fruit is plentiful it has been known to fall from trees too drunk to perch and it's not unusual for intoxicated birds to be taken to wildlife centres to sober up. It will also eat fruit and hawk large insects. Some have been seen to jump around and beat a bush to disturb stick insects and cicadas.

As the dominant New Zealand honeyeater, it is courageous, aggressive and pugnacious and will chase other birds, especially kereru and bellbirds from its feeding territory. It has also been known to attack swamp harriers and magpies but will feed with other birds on a tree outside its territory.

Both sexes have notched wingtips but those of the male are larger. These allow it to beat the air heavily thereby announcing itself as a heavy weight and achieving control of source food. Sometimes single birds or a number can catch the unwary by whizzing past at a disconcerting waist or shoulder height.

Christmas Dinner

Join us for our branch Christmas dinner at the Front Room, Waikanae Beach, on Wednesday 11 December 2019. Two courses for \$35 per person. RSVP by 1 December 2019 to Sue Boyde, Email: sm.boyde@gmail.com

Restoration Contribution To Kapiti and Mana

I hope to present a restoration group in this and following newsletters in the hope that those groups receive a bit more physical help in their endeavours. Most of them are making a significant contribution to our environment. The restoration group this month features the [Greendale Reserve Project in Otaihanga](#).



This reserve was created in the mid-90s as the reserve contribution when surrounding land was developed. Apart from a small grove of native trees (mainly kahikatea) at the south eastern corner, the reserve was mainly blackberry and box-thorn and used by locals for free grazing. In 1997, Forest and Bird and reserve neighbours Phil and Viola Palmer got the support of KCDC Parks and Recreation to begin restoring the reserve. With helpers from Forest and Bird, the local botanical society, Kenakena School and Kapiti College, Phil and Viola have led the charge to improve the ecological values of the area, and to improve the bird corridor. They have made significant improvements receiving a conservation award in 2006 for their work. In 2018, they were also runners up in the Kapiti section of the Wellington Airport Community Awards. While the group has not yet achieved their dream of connectivity to the Waikanae River the hard work of revegetation is nearly complete, but there is still work to be done to upkeep the reserve. The group meets on Tuesday morning and would love to have some new members. Check out their naturespace page for contact details. <https://www.naturespace.org.nz/groups/friends-greendale-reserve>



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