



North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

January to April 2020

Congratulations George

A big round of applause to longtime Forest & Bird member, Dr George Mason. George has been named an Officer of the New Zealand Order of the Merit in the 2020 New Year Honours for services to conservation, philanthropy and the community.

Through the George Mason Charitable Trust, he has enabled and supported a wide range of projects, many in the form of scholarships and grants aimed at the betterment of the Taranaki environment.

Read more about them online: just look up the New Year's Honours list. Well done George. We greatly appreciate all that you do.



Right: George at the opening of the new clinic at Wildbase Hospital in Palmerston North in 2017. Among many other acts of generosity, in 2016 the George Mason Charitable Trust established a doctoral scholarship of \$50,000 per annum for three years, to fund a Massey University Wildbase study into parasitic disease in kiwi reared in captivity.



Coming event

Bush walk + shared lunch Saturday 22 Feb, 11.00–3.00

Our first event of the year! Put Saturday 22nd February in your diary and join us for a get-together at the property of Carolyn and John Brough at 31 Durham Avenue.

Carolyn will show us around their splendid property, including a tract of forest above and alongside the Te Henui Stream. We'll follow that with lunch at their house.

Meet at 11.00 (park on the street) and bring a plate of food to share.

Left: looking down on Te Henui Stream from the nearby forest.



We hope to secure the movie, *Mauri o te Kauri*, to show at the AGM on 16 April. Put it on your calendar!

From the editor

Oops, sorry

Apologies: this edition of the newsletter should by rights have gone out before Christmas but it was just one of those years and it wasn't possible.

Committee news

Jackie Cockeram has recently resigned from the committee. Other interests have taken centre stage for her and she will now be able to pursue them more wholeheartedly. Our thanks, Jackie, for your years of service.

Jackie's departure leaves us a little light on the committee, however, and increasingly thoughtful—if not outright concerned—about the future of the North Taranaki branch! We need people coming through for the day when others of our current committee, who have been on the scene for a number of years, move on.

If you can offer some time and enthusiasm, don't hesitate to put your hand up. We'll be delighted to have you on the team. We meet approximately once a month for an hour or so.

Our primary responsibilities are our two reserves (Te Wairoa and Tom & Don's) but there are also matters relating to wider issues of conservation in the Taranaki area and beyond (including and especially climate change) some of which we take a more active part in than others. We are a first call for people with injured birds and members of Wild for Taranaki.

As well, we traditionally have a programme of events: visits, talks, walks and so on. These are among the more demanding of our activities to organise and are where we have made cuts in order to concentrate on our core responsibilities. But, of course, the fewer of these events, the fewer people involved and tuned in . . . it's a negative spiral! And just as in the old saying, many hands make light work, the reverse also applies: fewer hands puts more load on those who are there.

Feel free to contact any committee members if you have an interest, and come along to an obligation-free meeting.

(Oh, and did I mention that what we do is both very satisfying *and* we have a lot of fun?!)

—Janet Hunt

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

Chair: Tony Collins (06) 7511 927
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Book review

The Meaning of Trees by Robert Vennell
(Harper Collins, 2019)



This recently-published book may interest many members.

It tells the history and use of Aotearoa New Zealand's native plants. Illustrated with botanical drawings, paintings and photographs, it explores how our unique flora has been used for food, medicine, shelter, spirituality and science.

The author, ecologist Robert Vennell, has spent many hours since his childhood in the New Zealand forest, even managing to eat almost every edible plant in New Zealand, except for a few poisonous or endangered species.

In the book he explores the myriad of ways in which this extraordinary flora has been used in cuisine, crafts, medicine and culture, providing everything from seafaring canoes and tasty treats to medical marvels and sacred objects.

The book is organised in groups including: Bush Kai—once important sources of food; Jurassic Giants—Kauri and the podocarps; Traveller Beware—climbing, sticking, and stinging plants and Fringe Dwellers—commonly found around the coast.

Vennell's goal in writing was to excite and interest people in the history and uses of our native flora. It certainly did that for me!

—Marion Adlam

From the reserves

Tom & Don's

In 2019 we employed the services of Mark Perham of Bushguard Pest Service for predator control at Tom & Don's. This entailed checking and rebaiting of all traps in early January and was a follow-up to a trapping round done by Kelsi Bayly from the regional council in December. All results were entered into the database in Trap.NZ and also sent to the TRC. They make interesting reading. We don't know the species caught in the resetting A24 traps (because the bodies are carried off by unknown creatures) but Mark noted the presence of 13 possums in his preliminary visits to the site. Hopefully they are no more!

Te Wairoa

Our appeal for help with lawn mowing in the reserve met little response so we have hired Lodi Amooore to do this for us. Lodi will be supervised by his Mum Janica, who has also put her hand up to assist with the trapping rounds. Thanks Lodi and Janica.

At our most recent working party, we spent some time releasing the small trees that were planted in August 2015 in the south east corner next to Mountain Road. The grasses are now high around them and we have lost a few in the intervening summers but it's great to see how tall most are.

We noticed while we were there that we have a mystery worker (or workers)! The trees had been released not so long ago but also, someone has undertaken some further pulling and bagging of the *Tradescantia* in that corner. Well done, that person. If you would like to own up, we can shake your hand! Our thanks for your efforts.



Top: Lodi Amooore and Tony Collins planting the trees in 2015.

Left: one of the now 2-metre tall waiwaka/swamp maire young trees.

Above: Neatly filled and piled black bags.

Coming events in brief

Bush walk and lunch 22 February see p.1.

21 March, 50 Hydro Road

A walk around the Mills property. Dawn and Rob Mills have substantially changed their property, enhancing a lake and wetland area with plantings. It's not long since we last were there, but nothing is static. Come and have a look.

AGM + movie night: 16 April Community House, 7.30 pm

We hope to show two movies. The first, *Fools & Dreamers: Regenerating a Native Forest*, is an inspiring documentary about Hinewai Nature Reserve (below) and its kaitiaki/manager of 30 years, botanist Hugh Wilson.

The second is *Mauri o te Kauri*, the story of our endangered forest giants. We'll keep you posted nearer the date.



Kiwi Conservation Club

Every group has its quiet times and KCC is in the middle of one right now. Sonya is our coordinator but it's not easy when there's just one to do the organising and not much response to events that are planned.

She has in mind a fungal foray in autumn at Te Wairoa and maybe a wetland bioblitz some time in the future.

If you know any budding junior conservationists perhaps you could join Sonya? She would love to hear from you!

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sonyabates@googlemail.com

Recent events

Pureora trip, October 2019

This excellent trip was organised by Anne and Tony Collins. Ten intrepid adventurers stayed in the Pureora Lodge for two nights, a Friday and a Saturday, and spent the days exploring. The weather wasn't flash but the forest is spectacular and we especially enjoyed the Waipapa Loop track behind the lodge where we heard (but did not see) the dawn song of kokako. The meals were first class, thanks to Tony, and the singing in the evenings was truly awful but we had a wonderful time!



Omaru Falls are a pleasant 30-minute riverside walk from the carpark off Omaru Road. We stopped there our way to the lodge and ate lunch at the lookout high above the falls.

Left: lunch (Anne Collins)!
Inset: a male miromiro accompanied us for some of the way.



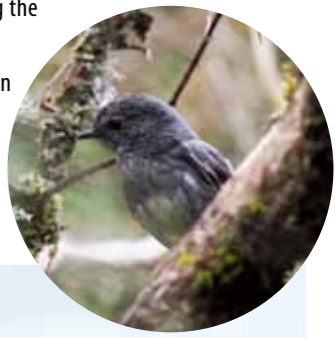
Left, from left — Janet Hunt, Sally Masson, Peter Haines, Murray Duke, Anne Coplestone, Gary Adlam, Marion Adlam, Elizabeth Smale, Tony Collins, Anne Collins.

Below: Pureora Lodge, and below that, Anne Coplestone takes aim at Peter with her walking stick (there's always one . . .)

Below middle left: Looking down from the top (4th) level of the 12 m high tower in the forest. It's a great spot for a bird's eye view of the canopy.

Bottom right: Elizabeth and Peter admiring the kotukutuku or native tree fuchsia.

And that's a toutouwai or North Island robin on the right. At least one was seen on each walk. Fabulous!





The chaps especially enjoyed looking at an ancient steam hauler and winch (used until the late 1940s to haul logs from the forest for milling) and a historic tractor — remnants of past activity in the area.



We're not called tree huggers for nothing! Murray communes with a tawa on the Waipapa loop.

End of year Get-together, December 2019

A similar number made the journey to Opunake for lunch at Headlands Indian Restaurant. It was superb and we enjoyed the meal.

Our after-lunch expedition was to Sandy Bay just north of town. It lived up to its name in dramatic fashion, pretty much sandblasting the party off the beach. But not before we got to see an oystercatcher pair and their chick. We will return!



Above: the oystercatcher pair. What a harsh environment in which to be raising their chick.



Left: Sandy Bay, living up to its name. Some were retreating even as others were setting out.