

The lovely Te Henui stream.
See programme, p.2

North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

November 2020 to March 2021

From the Chair

Hello fellow Forest & Birders
The year continues on its erratic way, with not only Covid-19, but the weather being so unpredictable. Not a lot has been happening: our AGM has been and gone, while the New Zealand elections proved that a lot more people are becoming aware of the need for some serious conservation effort.

I attended the recent Taranaki Regional Council conservation awards and was very pleased to see that New Plymouth District Council, the Department of Conservation, the regional council and the farm advisers all appear to now be on the same page, with some deserving award recipients.

As the year draws to a close all that is left for me to say is may Christmas treat you as you wish, and hopefully 2021 will be a lot better than 2020 has been.

I look forward to seeing you at our film/xmas gathering.

~ Tony Collins

Check out the KCC news on p.5!

A night at the movies: end-of-year film evening+ pot-luck supper

Wednesday 9 December, 7.30pm, Community Centre



We haven't been able to have many events this year so are pleased to announce our end-of-year film evening. We have two excellent conservation-themed short movies to show you: *Fools and Dreamers: Regenerating a Native Forest* (30 mins) and *Mauri o te Kauri* (50 mins).

Fools and Dreamers is an inspiring documentary about the regeneration to native forest of the 1500-hectare Hinewai Nature Reserve on Banks Peninsula. It's also the story of the reserve's kaitiaki/manager, botanist Hugh Wilson, who controversially—but oh-so-successfully—used the 'weed' gorse as a nurse canopy. Fabulous!

As the title suggests, the award-winning, *Mauri o te Kauri* tells the story of our magnificent but imperilled forest giants, that grow from the tiniest seeds to be among the largest living trees on earth.

Bring a little something to share for supper.



FOR SALE — Forest & Bird's gorgeous 2021 Conservation Calendar. It's a great gift, full of superb photographs from leading nature photographers. It weighs less than 200g and comes with envelope. \$20. Contact Dawn: (06) 758 3252 or rjmills58@gmail.com

Coming events

For your diary!

Sunday 3 January 2021, 10–12: Te Wairoa working bee + barbecue

We haven't had working bees in Te Wairoa for some time — first there was lockdown and then it was winter and the weather wasn't so great.

So we're hoping to kick off 2021 with a good turnout.



We have a number of tasks for the willing! The steps Tony built on the Mountain Road side of the reserve need filling with shingle. The shingle is currently on the grass outside the Clearview Rd entrance and needs to be uplifted to a trailer and then taken to the Mountain Rd side of the reserve and bucketed over the fence and up the hill.

While we're thinking about that side of the reserve, the August 2015 plantings in the South East corner need releasing and there's a goodly patch of *Tradescantia* that is crying out for attention down there.

Another relatively urgent task is for the clearing of the path through the lower reserve. It's getting overgrown. There are some small kahikatea there that would appreciate being moved off the path at the same time!

And if there is spare energy, we are now turning our attention to the wetland where there are weeds aplenty. Take your pick: lilies, blackberry, *Tradescantia* — and I'm sure there's plenty more!

Afterwards, we can look forward to a barbecue lunch in the clearing, courtesy of Tony.

Sunday 7 February, 10–12: Te Henui walk

Some will remember that in the years 2011 to 2013 there was a series of working bees and planting days along the upper Te Henui walkway, inspired and led by Carolyn Brough (see photos opposite).

We think it would be a good thing to take a look at our handiwork nearly a decade on! And of course, if you weren't part of all that, you might like to hear about it.

Park and meet on Cumberland Street at the bottom of the hill, where it joins the walkway. We will follow the stream south to the steps to Durham Avenue, and then loop back down Heta Road. It's not a difficult walk but moderate fitness is required.

Sunday 7 March, 10–12.00 Te Wairoa working bee

See the 3 January description of tasks needing attention.

Sunday 21 March, 10–1.00: Potaema Bog + Kamahi loop walk, picnic lunch

Carpool from Rogan Street carpark (beside Pukekura Park) at 9.00 or contact a committee member (see p.6) if you would like a lift.

Otherwise, meet at the Potaema Track entrance (off Pembroke Rd, 3km inside the Mt Taranaki park boundary) at 10.00. We'll walk to the Potaema Bog lookout through Taranaki montane



forest and hope it's fine enough to see the mountain across the wetland. Fernbirds have been spotted just beside the platform in the past, and there are often tomtits on the path.

It's an easy walk on well formed track and takes 15–20 minutes return.

From here we'll continue on to the Stratford Mountain House and take the Kamahi Loop. It's another easy walk (15–30 minutes return) through the splendidly gnarled, twisted and moss-hung goblin forest.

Take lunch for a picnic before heading home.

Sunday 16 April, 10–12.00: Mills wetland walk

A walk around the Mills property at 50 Hydro Road. Dawn and Rob Mills have substantially improved their place, enhancing a lake and wetland area with plantings. We walked around there in May 2018, but nothing is static.

Come and have a look. Park outside the property.



Upper Te Henui stream plantings in days gone by: clockwise from top left: a KCC planting group, June 2011; July 2013: planting the bank further upstream. You won't recognise these areas today; the walkway; 2011 planting.

From the reserves: TE WAIROA

There's not a great deal to report from Te Wairoa after a relatively quiet year. Our appreciation to the excellent team who make monthly checks of the DOC 200 traps. We have installed additional self-setting traps to help the never-ending task of controlling the rats. Our thanks to TRC and Quin Amoores especially for his assistance in this.

From the reserves: TOM & DON'S

This year we reconsidered the issue of access to Tom & Don's and have decided to remain with the status quo — namely that we control animal and plant pests largely through contractors paid from the lease of the grazing land and continue to gain access through the King's farm. We will be renewing their grazing lease for three years from 2021.

Following a site visit on 19 November, we have a list of things to be done.

The first is to add protection to a group of trees currently outside the reserve on the north east corner. We have decided to ring fence this group to allow continued grazing access to the area beyond. We will underplant as well.



The QEII Trust biennial inspection took place in October, with nothing special to report.

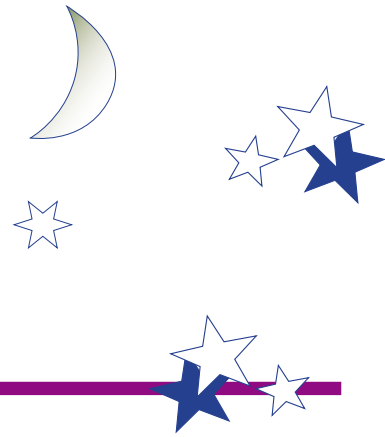
Please note the working bees scheduled for January 3rd and March 7th next year. We have shifted our working bee day to Sunday and have altered the time to 10 to 12.

The fence on the eastern boundary is in poor condition. It is old and constructed of concrete posts, rusty barbed wire and and rusty chain 'battens'. We plan to upgrade this whole section to a standard boundary fence.

The caravan is tidy inside but looking a bit organic outside — covered in lichen and in need of a clean! We plan a working bee some time in the future. In the meantime, we have cut back the encroaching forest and removed a small amount of trash.

Below from top left: Peter Winter measures the fenceline needing repair; the group of trees to be protected; David at the caravan; the old fence—an artifact of other times!





Rotokare visit

It was the sixth of October and we were going to Lake Rotokare on a hunt for the wonderful and mischievous animals of Aotearoa.

We started off by learning all the native birds that lived here at the sanctuary. There were tons! There were kiwi, tieke, and even brown teal.

After that Ash, our guide, showed us her pet lizards which was so fun to watch, then we set foot into the bush.

Right from the beginning we had already spotted our first native bird. Ash was talking about the chaffinch, and 2 or 3 people spotted a tiny bird among the trees, it was a grey warbler (riroriro).

About 2 minutes later another bird appeared it was a tieke (saddleback), unmistakable with its orange back and wattles sticking out from its face.

We then went on to the bird feeders where we saw a female stitchbird (hihi), named after its unique clicking sound. We kept walking until we were interrupted by a North Island robin (toutouwai), that had seemed as if someone had woken it up.

As we ventured further I noticed Ash kept flashing her light in holes to see if any weta were in hiding.

Then Ash stopped and told us to look at a tree and find out what's different about it. Everyone looked in confusion at what was different about this ordinary plant. I was thinking the same thing but then I saw another plant and looking down the stalk it was connected to a different plant. This was the native mistletoe.

We walked further. Ash spotted a flock of whiteheads and another stitchbird, this time it was a male with black and yellow feathers.

We decided to turn back after an hour and 20 minutes. We reached the wharf, Ash was telling us about all the jobs and the efforts to make this place a bird paradise and the future of Lake Rotokare.

There's more over the page ►



As everyone left I decided to go look for kiwi with just me and my nana.

At twelve o'clock we went back out into the bush to find the elusive kiwi. There are over 258 kiwis in this forest so it was highly

likely we would find one—and we didn't—we found two!

It was an extraordinary day and night and I was so happy to be there.

~ Arlo, 11 years old



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

Chair: Tony Collins (06) 7511 927
racingfrog27@gmail.com

Secretary: Anne Collins (06) 7511 927
anne46@orcon.net.nz

Treasurer: Dawn Mills (06) 758 3252
rjmills58@gmail.com

David Cockeram (06) 758 7580
davidcockeram@gmail.com

KCC: Sonya Bates 0210674751
sonyabates@googlemail.com

Newsletter: Janet Hunt (06) 7569165
janethuntnz@outlook.com

Peter Winter: (06) 752 0167
peterjwinter@hotmail.com



Top and left: here we all are, at the table in front of the lake! Arlo is at the back left hand side in front of our teacher and guide, Ash.

Above: Ash tells us all about the creatures we will meet.