



MARCH 2021

Kia ora koutou

In this first edition of the year, we invite you to register for our first event of 2021 which will take place on Thursday 15 April. We're lucky to have Jim Lynch come to talk to us about his work which has helped shape the natural environment we enjoy today in Wellington. We will also hear about the exciting vision for the vast 3350-hectare tract of virgin lowland forest sitting on the other side of Wellington Harbour (think Zealandia's area times 15 and then add 500 years).

Also in this edition we update you on branch projects including Tanera Gully, Pukehīnau 'Kiwifoot' Reserve, Forest & Bird Youth Wellington branch, and the Outer Green Belt. Each of these groups is always looking for keen new volunteers, and so we have provided contact details in case you'd like to get involved in a project near you.

We also remember Colin Ryder, a Wellington Forest & Bird Branch stalwart and recount the enormous legacy that he leaves to us all here in Wellington.

Some short stories and details on upcoming events can be found in a section at the end of this newsletter.

Event: Natural Wellington to Wainuiomata - Thursday 15 April 2021



The Wellington Branch of Forest & Bird will kick off its events programme for 2021 on Thursday 15 April. We're delighted to have Jim Lynch QSM talking about Natural Wellington to Wainuiomata. Please click on the button below to register to join us.

As many of you will know, Jim was one of the authors of [Natural Wellington](#) a seminal Forest & Bird Wellington Branch document that laid the groundwork for the creation of the Karori Sanctuary, now [Zealandia](#) — and it was largely Jim's drive and enthusiasm that ensured that the ambitious concept actually came to fruition. His catch cry was "Bring the birds back to Wellington"

Now, 30 years later, Zealandia is widely adjudged to be a huge success. Jim will describe how that 1989 Branch project led to Zealandia's establishment in the 1990s and, looking to the future, to [a fenced sanctuary in the Wainuiomata water catchment area](#). Jim will also discuss what this means for conservation regionally and nationally.

The talk will be preceded by a brief AGM. Nominations are open for the

positions of Branch Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and committee members. For more info ring the Branch phone (021 102 4493) or email wellington.branch@forestandbird.org.nz If you think you might be interested in joining the committee contact us — or just come along to the meeting

When: Thursday 15 April 2021, 6.00 pm AGM (doors open 5.30 pm).

6.30 pm Refreshments, 7.00 pm Jim Lynch

Where: St Peter's Garden Room (enter from Ghuznee Street, behind St Peter's Church)

Register for this event

Tanera Gully



This is a project to restore a neglected gully previously overgrown with weeds and littered with rubbish, that runs between Epuni Street and Tanera Park in Aro Valley.

Our vision is that this 'wilderness' area will, in time, resemble a pre-European forest

It's our seventh year of continuous releasing, planting out, trapping and junk removal in Tanera Gully. The benefits are showing. Some of the growth has been spectacular: [Kahikatea](#) planted out in Koura Creek, a year-round moist location, with clear sky above, their 'sweet-spot', are now more than three-metres tall. [Kōtukutuku](#) growth in the same location has been similarly impressive. More modest growth can be seen elsewhere.

We continue to order in over 1,000 plants each year, from Wellington City Council and Forest & Bird's Highbury Nursery. Locally sourced and selected on the basis that we are putting back what was there before 1840, the planting out is the 'easiest' of our many tasks. Weed suppression remains the most challenging. Our strategy of locating tall stakes with most newly installed plants has been crucial in successfully protecting against plant loss following the Spring weed tsunami. Regular, monthly+ working parties, [Conservation Volunteers New Zealand](#) and corporate groups have all contributed significantly to this vital task. Because of existing seed and regular re-invasions, it's a task that will engage us for many years to come. Volunteers, especially ongoing generations of volunteers have a vital role to play!

Wellington City Council has backed us in many ways, including regularly removing inorganic waste subtracted from the Gully as well as largely funding the installation of a new track. Another track is contemplated, not least because of our discovery of existing, benched passages in the Gully: for reasons lost in time, some years ago a bully-driver decided to carve out what are now hillside walkways. Some simple extensions and a few dozen steps will eventually see the creation of a north-south walkway through the Gully, between the top of Mortimer Terrace and Epuni Street.

So, a big thank you to Wellington Forest & Bird for nurturing this project but also to our volunteers – those who have put in many hundreds of hours releasing existing plants, putting in new plants, trapping and taking out junk!

For more information and opportunities to get involved see our [Facebook page](#). Contacts: Denis Asher: denis.asher3@gmail.com Julia Stace: jbwstace@gmail.com

Pukehīnau 'Kiwifoot' Reserve - the hunt for volunteers continues



Nestled within the Zealandia halo, a small group of local reserves in the Aro Valley / Kelburn area are now receiving the attention they deserve. In the coming weeks an agreement will be signed with the Wellington City Council to add four reserves to Forest & Bird's 'Aro Valley Restoration Project'.

The largest of these four reserves is 'Pukehīnau' (hill of the hīnau tree) – also known to locals as 'Kiwifoot' (given the three-toed form of the bush outline when viewed from above/on a map). This reserve has steep terrain and limited public accessibility, but is proving to be a real gem. A wide range of endemic plants are growing well and, being a short flight from Zealandia, it is an important habitat for juvenile birds seeking new homes beyond the fence.

The other three reserves being added to the project lie nearby – Raroa Road, Norway Street and Adams Terrace Reserves – thus connecting discrete sites into ecological corridors

Volunteer work in these areas is critical to avoid the constant threat of pest plants and predators tipping the balance in a negative direction. And more volunteers are needed.

As a new project there are opportunities for all ages and levels of experience. Working bees are held on the last Sunday of the month, and experienced team members are always on hand to help.







Cecilia Warren

For more information and opportunities to get involved please contact the Forest & Bird Wellington Branch



Conservation volunteer groups in Aro Valley and Kelburn



<p>1. Wild Aro 2. Devon St Gully https://www.facebook.com/groups/wildaro wildaronz@gmail.com</p> <p>Backyard trapping around Aro Valley. Contact us to set up a trap at your place. Weeding, planting and trapping in Devon St Gully.</p> 	<p>5. Polhill Protectors https://www.facebook.com/groups/Polhill info@polhill.org.nz</p> <p>Polhill Protectors/Ngā Kaimanaaki o Te Waimapihi are the patrons of Polhill / Waimapihi reserve. Trapping, weeding and planting to lay out the welcome mat for the spillover birds from Zealandia.</p> 
<p>3. Tanera Gully Restoration Project https://www.facebook.com/groups/tanera tanozagully@gmail.com</p> <p>Trapping, weeding, planting and track building in Tanera Park and Gully. Restoring the area to its pre-1840 biodiversity, including flora and fauna.</p> 	<p>6. Kelburn Conservation Network 7. Pukehinau 8. VUW trap line https://www.facebook.com/groups/kelburnconservationnetwork kelburnconservation@gmail.com</p> <p>Backyard trapping in Kelburn. Planting, trapping, weed control and track building in 'Pukehinau' linking Kelburn and Aro Valley. Trapping in VUW grounds.</p> 
<p>4. Upstream - Friends of Central Park https://www.upstream.org.nz/ info@upstream.org.nz</p> <p>Restoring the Moturoa Stream, planting and maintaining native vegetation and beautifying Central Park through amenity planting.</p> 	<p>Old Man's Beard Must Go https://www.facebook.com/groups/ombmg ombmgustga@gmail.com</p> <p>A community campaign to remove all Old Man's Beard in Wellington's Aro Valley across parks, road reserves and private property.</p> 

Forest & Bird Youth Wellington branch update



Forest & Bird Youth Wellington has had a busy start to 2021 with lots of exciting events planned for the next few months!

Our team has recently kicked off our newest restoration project at Prince of Wales Park. In association with other local restoration groups and Wellington City Council, we will be aiming to hold regular weed control sessions. A weeding event was held last weekend at the site, with great progress already made clearing large patches of [tradescantia](#) with close to a tonne of plant matter collected. A planting day is planned for May with several hundred plants to be supplied, keep an eye out for updates!

In collaboration with Experiencing Marine Reserves and Mountains to Sea, the team attended a public snorkel day and ran a sustainable beach art competition to raise awareness of ocean plastic and engage with the public around marine issues.

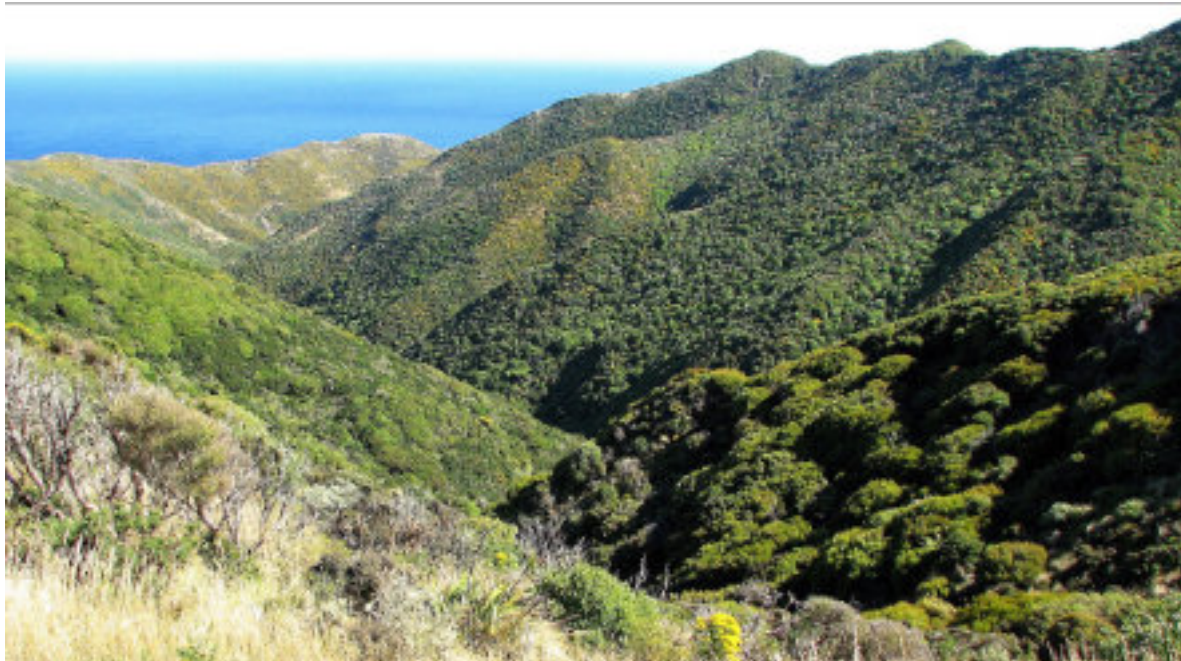
The team has been actively engaging with local issues; representatives of our team recently met with Wellington City Council councillors to make a submission on the funding proposal to lend \$75 million to Wellington International Airport Limited (WIAL). This was well received and subsequently [the council agreed to remove this point from the funding proposal](#).

We will be running a free Bird Identification Tour at Zealandia on Sunday 21 March from 10-12pm. This will be open to the first 20 members of the public who sign up. Please get in touch for more information and registration details.

Kaya Freeman

For more information and opportunities to get involved visit [our Facebook page](#) or email: youthwellington@forestandbird.org.nz

Te Kopahou and our Branch's Outer Green Belt Programme



In 1990 the Wellington Branch's Natural Wellington document

promoted a vision of linked forest corridors and abundant fauna, which was echoed in Wellington City Council documents. In 2004 it was included in WCC's Outer Green Belt Management Plan.

However, we have been concerned for some time by the amount of track building in the Outer Green Belt (OGB), primarily for mountain bike use. It's detrimental to the OGB as an ecological corridor, which is the primary reason for our support of the OGB concept.

Vision

Last year, the Branch initiated a programme of work with a vision for the OGB that's only slightly changed from WCC's original (our added words are in bold):

*"The Outer Green Belt is a continuous green belt following the ridges to the west of the city from the South Coast to Colonial Knob, in which indigenous vegetation **and fauna** are restored **and protected** and an informal recreation network is widely accessible."*

Te Kopahou

Recent activity in the OGB Programme has focussed on Te Kopahou Reserve. This reserve, lying between Zealandia and the South Coast, is easily the largest in the OGB and the least accessible.





Te Kopahou is special because, like Zealandia, it's been left alone. Our principal focus is on the catchments of the Waipapa and Hape Streams, where the native forest is slowly regenerating. These catchments contain rare flora and important habitat for some rare and endangered species. They will be part of the [future home of Wellington's kiwi population](#).

In November, WCC published a draft Te Kopahou track plan, which proposed the building of several new bike-only tracks. Writing a submission on this draft plan has been the first Branch activity within the OGB programme. We are not anti-mountain bike, but do not believe this fragile area should have any more tracks than the existing ones, which provide adequate access for walking, running, pest control and fire control. We will continue to speak for Nature during the oral submissions phase of the WCC consultation.

Meanwhile, with the help of Branch members, we will continue to work towards our vision for the OGB as an area where both conservation and recreation are practised, but conservation is given a very much higher priority.

Ken New

Opportunities to get involved:

If you are keen to allow Te Kopahou's Waipapa and Hape stream catchments to regenerate undisturbed as prime future kiwi habitat, why not drop your local councillors a quick email to tell them so? [You can find their email addresses here](#).

Colin Ryder



We are very sad to record that long-term Forest & Bird member and Wellington Branch stalwart, Colin Ryder, died in an accident recently.

Colin, who received an Old Blue Award from Forest & Bird in the early 2000s, was active in the Branch for many years, serving on the committee in various roles — most recently as Branch Chairperson from 2016 to 2017. He also served on the National Executive of Forest & Bird for three years.

The New Zealand Herald article below describes some of the many contributions that Colin made to conservation in New Zealand, and to the Wellington region in particular. Other notable achievements were his part in the writing of the Branch's Natural Wellington document, which led to the establishment of Zealandia, and setting up the trust that oversaw the preservation of [Long Gully Bush Reserve](#) in South Karori.

Our thoughts are with his family and the many friends he made over the years.

[Read more about Colin's enormous legacy.](#)

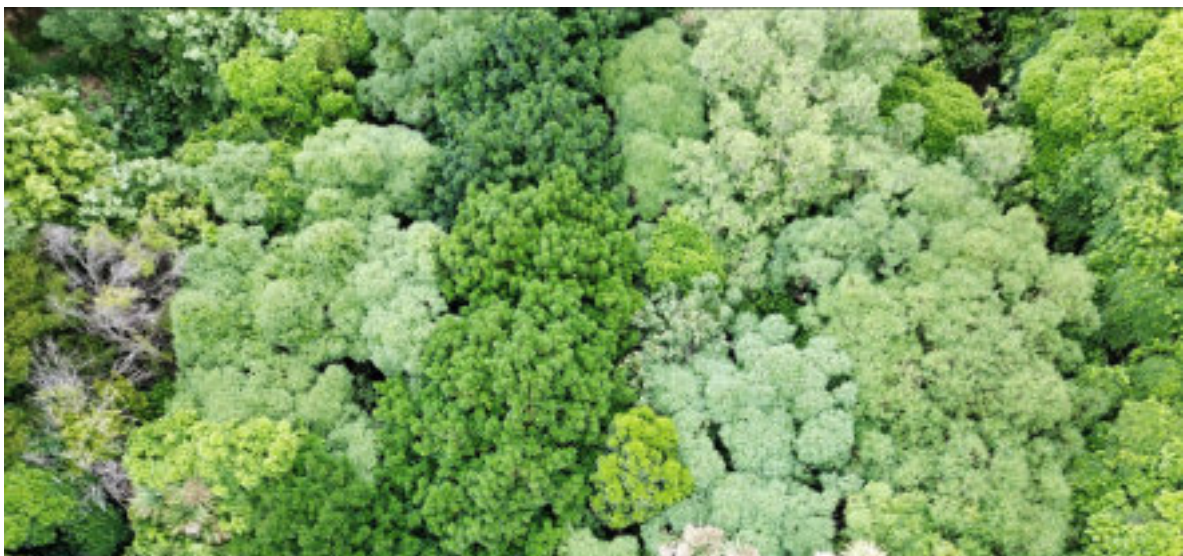
Ken New

Restoring Zealandia's lower reservoir



Zealandia is about to embark on a journey to restore the freshwater ecosystem in its lower reservoir. Currently it suffers from algal blooms each year and is full of so many introduced perch that native species cannot flourish. By lowering the lake and ridding the reservoir of perch the Zealandia team plans to restore the native ecosystem like it has already done with the upper reservoir.

Seeking volunteer trappers for Manawa Karioi



Manawa Karioi is Wellington's oldest restoration project and needs help to control introduced predators such as rats, stoats and weasels that threaten native birds and lizards.

Whilst Stage 2 of Predator Free Wellington's rollout is from Island Bay to the CBD, it does not include Manawa Karioi. The Manawa Karioi team wants a safe environment for visiting kererū, kākā and kārearea so they can nest safely in the reserve and we can help the recovery of these precious taonga.

The group is currently seeking volunteers to help clear and monitor trap lines in Manawa Karioi. Full training will be given by Wellington City Council. If you are keen to help bring back the birds to Manawa Karioi please contact Annie by emailing annieontour74@hotmail.com or calling/texting 027 440 0129.

[Find out more about Manawa Karioi.](#)

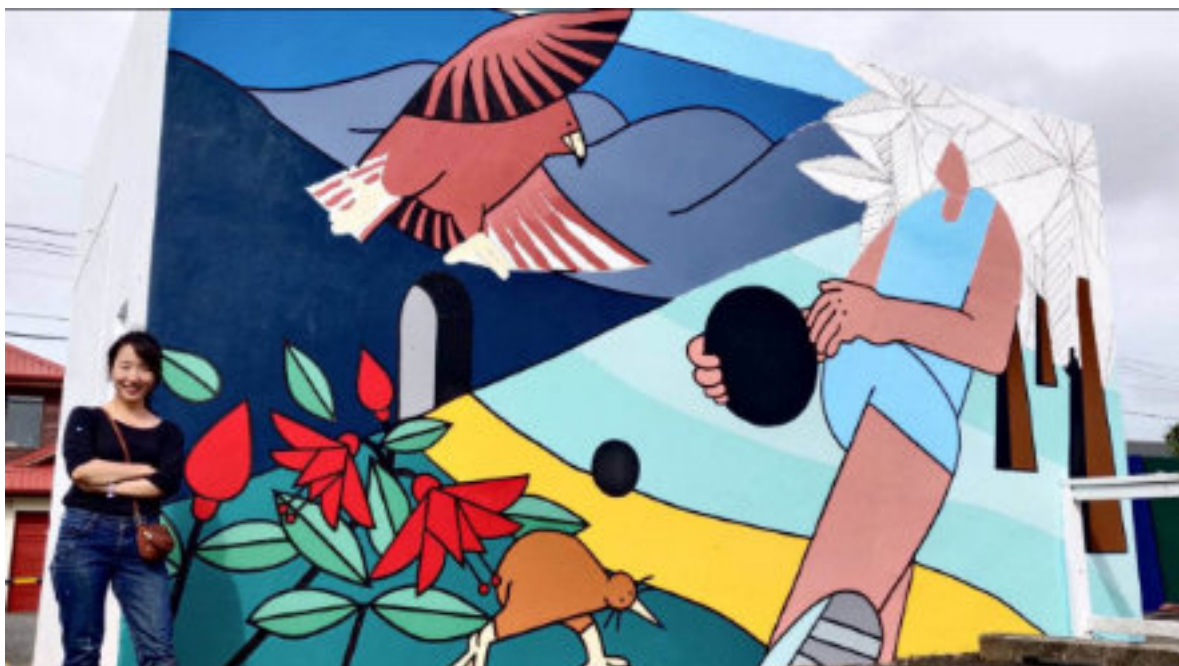
Rare matagouri found on Mount Albert to be propagated by our Forest & Bird Nursery



are listed as critical, endangered, or declining, Gary James at the [Forest & Bird Nursery in Highbury](#) is collaborating with the Council to grow 300 seedlings from a locally rare matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*) plant that has recently been discovered on Mount Albert in southern Wellington.

[Read more about the project.](#)

New Karori mural celebrating the birds and the trees



Graphic designer Keehwa Hong has cheered up a sorry substation next to Karori Pool with a mural depicting the suburb's unique features and emblazoned with locals such as kiwi, kākā, and kākāriki, as well as mamaku (black tree fern) and kōtukutoku (tree fuchsia) two of the many trees growing in the hills surrounding the suburb.

[Read more about the mural.](#)

Wellington's kākā baby boom



Kākā have been back in Wellington 15 years and, as most Wellingtonians will agree, have definitely made themselves at home.

[Read more about the burgeoning kākā population.](#)

"Why I'm a friend of the Taputeranga Marine Reserve"



Mareike Babuder, ocean-lover and volunteer with Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve, recently talked about what she loves most about this [marine reserve on Wellington's south coast](#).

[Read more in Mareike's Department of Conservation blog post.](#)

Eastbourne's dotterel chicks not all chomped by cats this year



Supportive cat owners and an educational campaign have made a big difference to this year's banded dotterel population, with three fledglings out of 12 nests surviving. This follows a number of previous frustrating breeding seasons for this nationally vulnerable species. [Read more in about the success.](#)

May Event



Fiordland revealed: a journey through Aotearoa's remotest corner with photographer Jean-Claude Stahl - Doors open 6.30pm, talk starts 7pm, Thursday 13 May 2021 at St Peter's Garden Room (enter from Ghuznee Street, behind St Peter's Church).

Jean-Claude Stahl showcases and discusses his photography documenting a joint Te Papa and Department of Conservation expedition to survey Fiordland's isolated coastline and interior. He introduces us to the critically endangered kākāpō, humpback whales, former Māori settlements and pounamu gathering sites, seal colonies, lush rainforest and the myriad seabirds he encountered along the way.



[Wellington branch Facebook](#) [Wellington branch website](#)

Wellington Forest & Bird Branch has decided to close its PO Box. If any member needs to mail anything to the Branch can they please contact the Secretary at wellington.branch@forestandbird.org.nz or ring 0211024493 for an alternative mail address.

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If you would like to contact Forest & Bird about membership or donations please contact membership@forestandbird.org.nz or call **0800 200 064**.