

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter December 2022

Editorial: New Year's resolution.

When I wonder why I became a greenie at about 25, I recall a walk to Butterfly Creek behind Eastbourne with an older friend. He showed me a rimu and said that to log it would take about 6 minutes. On the ground, it would be worth about \$60. It could yield about \$600 of timber. It was about 600 years old. I thought, 'There is something wrong with our economic system. We surely cannot take something that nature took 600 years to grow, that has all that life, and price it at \$600.' I have been a greenie ever since. But that's not the only reason I'm green.

If I saw broken glass in a park, I would pick it up. Why? Because I attach some value to a future person, their discomfort or pain, if injured by it. It does not matter to me if that happens next month or after I have passed away, to a person I know, or don't know, who is related to me or not. Many of us feel that way and would take the same action.

If I saw a trap that killed native animals for no purpose, such as an abandoned nylon net on a rocky coast, I would remove it, if not too much trouble. Most of us would, I hope.

Many people, taking this a little further, pick up plastic and other rubbish because of the harm it may cause, mostly unseen.

I, like most volunteers, work on things that make a difference to the world. It costs them/us time and money but we get some satisfaction from leaving the world a little bit better off than it was. We are looking to the future and taking actions to avoid the negative consequences of it.

The world is facing unprecedented times. Human or civilization's future is far from assured. Biodiversity's future is much bleaker though ultimately some form of it will survive. We know the causes. We are demanding far too much of earth's systems. They are breaking under the strain.

We are creating an impoverished future world, one that our children will find a much harder life in. This has happened before in history, but not on a world-wide scale.

We can see the potential negative threats to humans and our fellow species in broken glass and a discarded fishing net and even plastic and other rubbish possibly because they are in our immediate surroundings.

In comparison, Afghanistan has floods and droughts affecting harvest; Bangladesh has loss of land from sea level rise; Chad's Lake Chad is now a dustbowl; Haiti has had an increase in number and severity of hurricanes; Malawi suffered from cyclones floods and drought; Pakistan has intolerable daytime temperature, drought and floods (1/3 under water 2022). Much more reported locally are floods and fires in USA, Australia and NZ. Species are dying out at hundreds of times the natural rate. A major reason for the loss of biodiversity is that natural habitats are being destroyed. The fields, forests, dunes and wetlands, where wild plants and animals live, are disappearing.

Like the broken glass, we can see the future problem but world future solutions are harder - not consuming as much, making purchase decisions based on earth's future instead of value for money, changing diet and lifestyle, not developing but retiring land, putting retirement savings in green funding organisations, voting for the planet. These are today's actions to save the future world.

If I want future people to have a good life or I want to leave the world in a better condition, I now have to make changes (resolutions) that will impact my lifestyle and financial position.

It is not always easy being green!

Russell

WECG and Weggery Group collaboration

We're delighted that, as a result of discussions at our December meet and greet, the Waikanae Estuary Care Group have kindly gifted a load of carex grasses to the Weggery Group who work on the other side of the Waikanae River and a little upstream, and are looking to collaborate further with them. These are exactly the kind of connections we were hoping for. Here's a photo of the planting. Keep up the good work everyone (that's for ALL you volunteers out there...)!



Photo: Julian Buchanan

O Tātou Ngahere Conference

In late October 2022, over 1000 people descended on Te Papa to attend this conference on the *Why and How of regenerating our landscape with native forest*. The conference was the largest of its kind in Aotearoa New Zealand, and was sponsored by Tane's Trees Trust, Pure Advantage, and the Tindall Foundation amongst others, and facilitated by Fenwick Group. There were over 50 great speakers including Prof Tim Flannery, three New Zealand Government ministers, Dr Rod Carr, Penny Nelson, Dame Anne Salmond, Prof James Renwick, Melanie Mark-Shadbolt and Te Kapunga Dewes. A wide range of topics were covered looking from different perspectives and towards the future. Check out the full speaker and topic list here: <https://www.otatoungahereconference.org.nz/programme/>

A number of sessions are available on video with links in the aforementioned list. Among the recommended are the Rangatahi Panel, Paul Quinlan and Adam Forbes.

As a taster, watch the highlights video <https://vimeo.com/778701144> from which I include two quotes:

" the main purpose of forests is to cover the whenua the earth, to grow the soil and keep it in place and to hold the water we need to survive" *Rob McGowan - Tane's Trees Trust*

"New Zealand's forests are just so special for a number of reasons, they are moist temperate forests ... the most carbon rich forests on our planet. You have more potential per hectare to draw down carbon and store it permanently than most other places on earth" *Professor Tim Flannery - author, and ex-Australian of the Year*

Now Crimson crimson Christmas Trees, Pohutukawa rim the Seas...

So begins the Pohutukawa Carol penned by Father Ted Forsman serving in the Libyan Desert in World War 2 (listen @ 6:30' here: https://www.mz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018776618). Pohutukawa have a special place in the hearts of New Zealanders and their flowering brings the excitement of summer and Christmas arriving. They, and their cousins, the Rata, are also important in Maori tradition, the flowers representing the blood of the fallen warrior Tawhaki who sought heaven but fell back to earth. In Rongoa practice they are used as anti-inflammatories and to dress wounds. In our area, while

beautiful Pohutukawa abound, we should in fact be enjoying Northern Rata. How do you tell the difference? Pohutukawa leaves are larger, darker and generally rolled on the edges. They are also covered with fine white hairs on the underside. So now you'll be able to tell whether you are looking at a rata, a pohutukawa, or perhaps a hybrid (of which there are many). Whatever the case, don't hold it against the tree you're looking at, just get out there and enjoy summer.

Meri Kirihimete!



Photo: Pene Burton Bell

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Meaningful Year Ahead

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Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome as would contributions to future newsletters.