

# Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Branch Newsletter - March 2023

Editorial: A lesson from the past and a glimmer of hope.

Some will remember the scrapie outbreak at the Mana Island quarantine station. I am told that the bulldozer that buried the sheep was buried with them. It was not allowed back on the mainland. Shortly after, the ministry in charge of Mana asked for submissions on its future. I thought "A sister to Kāpiti". At the time I knew the Wellington F&B branches, the Wildlife Service of the Internal Affairs Department, Ecology Division of DSIR (Kevin Hackwell worked there) and a few others I cannot now remember. Work was not intense, so I used a few days to get submissions written by those entities effectively say the same thing, *A sister island to Kāpiti*. If I remember correctly, fourteen submissions were received - thirteen for preservation and only one for some other purpose. I thought it was a great win. In its way, it was, but not enough.

The late Colin Ryder set up the Friends of Mana Island (<https://manaisland.org.nz/>) and soon declared war on mice (numbering millions), the islands only predator. That action allowed biodiversity to increase on Mana Island. The rest is history - see Mana Island reference later in this issue. The point being an area can be protected but unless it is managed so that biodiversity is increasing, it is only of potential value to conservation.

Captain Val Sanderson did the same as Colin years before for Kāpiti Island. *"He gave the government no peace until fences were erected, noxious animals destroyed, a caretaker appointed, and countless trees and shrubs planted. This allowed the native habitat to recover, and over time, Kāpiti became the glory*

*that it is today"*. (See F&B Journal 387, Autumn 2023, p31). He worked and fought until biodiversity increased on Kāpiti Island.

In December last year, nearly 190 countries, including NZ, signed an international agreement to conserve 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030. Protection (as defined in the agreement) means biodiversity must increase.

That is a huge step in the right direction. NZ has close to 30% of its land "protected", but most of that land is not sufficiently predator and pest controlled to allow native biodiversity to increase. To meet the conditions, NZ will have to step up management and predator and pest control by a huge amount. The agreement should also affect the recent considerations over Stewardship Land.

Regarding the sea, NZ is well behind the leaders, so we should see very large changes in this space. I think that protection from overfishing, bottom trawling, mining etc. may be sufficient to increase biodiversity in the sea.

The final benefit of this is that nature seems to have carbon sequestration as a default setting. If we protect and restore nature, it will increase all forms of life and use carbon to do it. So, this should be very good for climate change.

But I am sure some of you are saying "It's only an agreement" and you are right. We can assume that the provisions will not be met in the timeframe. But it's a significant goal like no other we have had before. Parts will fail but other parts will succeed. All the change under this

agreement is headed in the right direction. There are now no mice on Mana, nor predators on Kāpiti Island. Possum was not eradicated from the island in Sanderson's lifetime.

This agreement will probably take time especially the issue of protection that allows an increase in biodiversity to occur. We cannot rest yet, or perhaps ever.

*Russell*

## MIRO : *Pectinopytis ferruginea*

Miro is a handsome native tree and a member of the podocarp family. It has been renamed a couple of times. It can grow to 25m and 1.3m in diameter though I've never seen any near that size. It is currently fruiting prolifically in Hemi Matenga Reserve and on Mangaone Walkway and is a favourite food of the kereru (NZ Wood Pigeon). Māori evidently did not use the timber much, but they built water troughs nearby to trap kereru and kaka. The fruits are large and red when ripe, unlike any other native New Zealand fruit and taste rather like turpentine (no wonder the birds wanted a drink).

When I collected these drupes there was a constant sound of flapping above me as the birds moved from one berry cluster to the next.

Some people struggle to identify miro - it can look like yew when young, and can be confused with matai, especially as the bark of both these trees look like they've been hammered (like pewter). A

few helpful hints to distinguish between matai and miro are: Miro leaves will lie flat on your hand and narrow to a point, while mature matai will have needles facing many directions and leaf tips are more rounded. The matai leaves are whitish underneath while the miro are green. Miro leaves also tend to be a darker green.



Miro, Pic: Pene Burton Bell

## Our next public meeting: Wednesday 26 April 2023

Speaker: Dr Greg Sherley NZOM – the breeding ecology of the rifleman.

While this might seem a little scientific, evidently rifleman believe in the avian equivalent of *'it takes a village to raise a*

*child'*. Greg is a great speaker. Come along to find out more about this interesting small New Zealand native bird. At: Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall, 43 Ngaio Rd starting with tea or coffee at 7.10 pm (until 9pm).

## F&B Centennial Celebrations

Our organization is 100 years old, and our local celebrations will be on the weekend of 29/30 April, in Paekakariki where Captain Val Sanderson lived for many of the years while protecting Kāpiti Island and running Forest and Bird. (See opinion piece above)

A Plaque about Sanderson will be unveiled beside the recently restored Waikakariki wetland (A project under the Inspired by Sanderson grant) and Sanderson Way (the walking track beside the wetland) will be officially opened. This is *Invite only* due to space restrictions.

Everyone's welcome from midday on Saturday 29 April, there will be a few talks in St Peter's Hall as well as an exhibition of history and conservation-related posters and tables, a walk to Sanderson Way at 3pm, and the Kiwi Conservation Club team will be there from 2-4pm.

St Peter's Hall and exhibition is also open on Sunday 30 April from 10-3pm. Other F&B branches want to join in the celebrations, so this is a chance to mingle with other branches, as well as the public. On Sunday there will be walks to see the Sanderson plaque and Waikakariki wetland along Sanderson Way, and a trappers' drop-in advice table along with the exhibition.

Also on Sunday, Kāpiti Island Nature Tours is offering an exclusive trip to the island in celebration of Captain Sanderson's conservation success for \$125 per person. Return ferry transport, Department of Conservation Permits & delicious morning tea at the historic whare at Rangatira all included. There'll be a talk about the island's history by a nature guide, and co-founder John Barrett who will share the story of his unique whānau connection to Captain Sanderson. Spaces are limited, email [bookings@kapitiisland.com](mailto:bookings@kapitiisland.com) to book.

## From Farm to Forest - 50 years of ecological transformation on Mana Island

Colin Miskelly of Te Papa Tongarewa has written this interesting, if rather scientific, article on Mana Island. It shows what can be achieved when we put our minds to it. It also shows that given the opportunity, some people rise to the challenge, and overcome the odds. In this case, it was the late Colin Ryder who, with others, took this degraded farmland and made it into an ecological restoration success story: <https://tuhinga.arphahub.com/article/98136/>

## Ngā Manu receives Qualmark Silver Sustainable Tourism Business Award

Congratulations to Ngā Manu for achieving this award. Qualmark General Manager, Steven Dixon, said Ngā Manu Nature Reserve's achievement of a Qualmark Silver accreditation is a great acknowledgement of their sustainable practises and dedication by the staff involved in ensuring the preservation of New Zealand's native forests, wildlife and providing an amazing experience for manuhiri. If you haven't been recently, this would make a great outing for the Easter school holidays: <https://ngamanu.org.nz/>

## Snorkelling off Whitireia

In early March, I took the opportunity to snorkel in the bay off Whitireia Park with Mountains to Sea Wellington

(<https://www.mountaintoseawellington.org/>):



It was a slightly grey day but donned in a wetsuit (all the gear is provided by MTSW) we were put in groups of five with an experienced guide and paddled and floated around enjoying the underwater world. It didn't quite match my previous snorkelling experience on the Great Barrier Reef, but it was interesting to see the different types of seaweed, different underwater landscapes and of course different critters - several species of fish (some in schools), anemones, some saw stingray and there were seahorses too. On the

beach there were also some information booths about what we might have seen, and about the Giant Kelp Restoration Project planned for 2023 (Join the Love Rimurimu email list to find out more: <https://mailchi.mp/77e1bae86e4a/sign-up>).

Mountains to Sea Wellington is a charity focussed on enabling the public to enjoy these environments that might otherwise be inaccessible. They run five or six events in our region every summer and I'll be signing up to do more snorkels with them next year.



Photos: Kristine Zipfel

(<https://kristinezipfel.myportfolio.com/hello>)

## Urban Trees and Open Spaces of Kāpiti Group

A group is forming to deal with the issue in Kāpiti and will next meet on Saturday 20 May. Call Viola Palmer for more information: 04 2936639.

## Predator-Free Paekakariki

We know they're not the only trappers in our rohe, but nice to see this Kāpiti News article about trapping in Paekakariki: <https://tinyurl.com/mt7t59ks>.

## F&B Kāpiti-Mana Submissions group

Would you also like to be involved in something like this?

If so, please let us know by email [Kāpitimana.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:Kāpitimana.branch@forestandbird.org.nz)

You can meet some of the team at the Sanderson event later this month. Also, If you're doing good things with trapping in your area, YAY – and please let us know more.

## Calls for Action

### Three Waters Reform

We are keeping you somewhat up to date with this though not actively participating in it. The reasons are these. The 3 waters are drinking water, sewage and storm water. Three waters is about infrastructure, like plant and pipes. F&B's interest would be about taking water from, and releasing treated sewage and stormwater to, the environment. So, from an ecological viewpoint, if the infrastructure is improved and does a better job, that would be good. We can look at this from a parochial viewpoint and we might not see much improvement but from a NZ and ecological viewpoint, if the inputs and outputs from and to the environment are improved, we should support it and if not, we should not support it. *(RB opinion)*.

Porirua City Council has a web page dedicated to this topic and their actions to date: <https://tinyurl.com/4n3fukdd>

They also submitted on the Water Services Entities Bill earlier in the year. If you wish to you can find the relevant information here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2uad96>

Kāpiti Coast District Council also has a webpage on this, and also submitted on the Bill - you can find all that information here: <https://tinyurl.com/mrytax6y>

### Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use

Closes 6 April 2023

This MfE le inquiry considers past and existing land use and investigates:

- storm damage and its causes
- current practices
- regulatory and policy settings.

It will include the impact of storm damage caused by woody debris (including forestry slash) and sediment on communities, livestock, buildings, and the environment. It will also look at associated economic drivers and constraints.

You are invited to answer 10 questions on the site below by 6 April 2023: <https://tinyurl.com/53zd92bz>

Until next time....

*Russell and Pene*

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

**P.S. WE NEED YOU ....** Have you thought about joining our local branch committee? We are seriously limited in what we can do with our small team. Elections are in June, get in touch if you'd like to know more.