

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird

Newsletter June 2023

Give Nature a chance and she will respond

Before I came to the Kapiti Coast, the Raumati South Residents Association with the help of GW staff began restoring one of QEP's wetlands. When I say "wetlands", it was described to me, by one who was there, as a pond in a farm paddock. This is a 2006 photo from that time taken by Rob Craven. You can see the pond but also the wetland beyond which has manuka and some wetland plants. So, I take it from this that planting was around the wetland and pond. That has protected the wetland and allowed it to recover. Accounts differ so I hope this is reasonably correct.

GW kept it free of weeds and continued to plant around it and Michael has run a trapping line around it until the present day. It looks great and shows little visible signs of once being paddock.

On June 3, I walked through it and heard the unmistakable sound of a fernbird pair. The sound is described as U-tick but to me it sounds like the word "tulip". If fernbirds had been introduced, I would have known, so I am assuming that the birds self-introduced. I have thought for a long time that fernbirds were more mobile than given credit for.

On Saturday, we asked two wildlife photographers to check the hearing out and one returned with photographic evidence. There are fernbirds (one pair anyway) in a QEP wetland.

The internet says fernbirds are *absent from the southern North Island (apart from Waikanae Estuary)* hence the reintroduced birds to Pauatahanui came from Taranaki.

Further, tagged birds have not been found more than 800m from where tagged, but untagged birds have been found 10km from the nearest group.



The wetland in 2006 (Pic: Rob Craven)



The wetland now (Pic: R Bell)



A QEP Fernbird (Pic: Pam Stapleton)

Now, this is a big deal. It indicates that a wetland that in 2006 was not in great shape and not protected by surrounding bush can now, in less than 20 years, be good enough to let fernbirds self-introduce and because they are largely insectivorous, it indicates the insect life is sufficient for them. This interdunal wetland is like others in QEP we hope to see restored and some are within 800m. That means that QEP could become a significant Wellington habitat for fernbirds. It also means that Kapiti would have two fernbird populations.

Fernbird conservation status is described as At risk / declining so this is an additional reason to restore the wetlands of QEP.

We are not only facing a climate crisis, we are facing a biodiversity crisis where many native species all over the world are declining, becoming vulnerable,

Good news stories:

We'd like to add more 'wins' to our newsletter, thought the lead story this month is pretty good, so if you have a good news story (should be easy in planting season!) please send us the information and photos if you can.

Te Ara o Tipapa Walk in Queen Elizabeth Park

GW Ranger, Gary Wheaton, shares a video of a walk around one of his favourite places in Queen Elizabeth Park. This walk is buggy friendly and takes you through a range of habitats including wetlands, duneland and remnant kahikatea forest. It starts near the Marines Memorial on Whareroa Road (Mackays Crossing entrance). In school holidays you could also combine this walk with a tram ride.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU_Vd2bVDNA

critical, or extinct. Restoring nature is one of the activities that reduces both crisis.

We know restoring QEP to something like its earlier natural state will reduce significant carbon emissions, will allow many forest and wetland plants and animals to recover, will allow its wetlands and forests to sequester large carbon amounts for long periods of time, and will allow plants, birds, lizards and fish, currently not present in the park, to self-introduce.

It will make QEP a more exciting place to visit, a place where we can enjoy nature and maybe see, not just one, but more species that in other places in NZ are at risk. Our first at risk species has arrived.

Russell

Local Walks Series:

We'd also like to start a list of fabulous walks in our area to share with Forest and Birders? Do you have one (or more) you'd like to write (or video) about. We'd love your contributions. Walkers usually want to know:

How hard is it?

Do you need special footwear?

How long does it take?

Are dogs allowed (on/off lead)?

Can you reach it by public transport?

The route it takes and why it's special.

Paraparaumu Beach Restoration Group

This is a brand-new group being set up, meeting one Sunday morning a month. Next meeting is 18 June 2023. More details here:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100093383598502>

Ngā Manu Winter Night Walk

On 10 June 2023 Will Brockelsby from DOC took a small group on a night walk through the Ngā Manu forest to find what critters we could. In spite of it being a frosty night, about 15 of us with headlamps joined the adventure. We saw a number of moths (less than usual because it was so cold), but also saw some other interesting creatures, here's a small selection: A tree frog (not native, but pretty cute), A leaf-veined slug, a dead German wasp (killed by a variety of the *Beauveria* pathogen – that's the white stuff), and in the Top Drain we spotted a Banded Kōkopu (centre) and a kōura (far left).

The subject of his Nga Manu Lecture earlier in the day was about the relationships between Flax, flax weevils, and the *Beauveria* pathogen (seen on the wasp).



Pene Burton Bell



Events

Planting opportunities

There is a public planting day at Battle Hill on 23 July 2023 and other regional parks (not in our area) on other days. GW is attempting to plant 1,000,000 plants this winter. Find out more here:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/get-involved/winter-planting-2023/>

If you can't make that date, contact one of the local conservation groups in your area, chances are they'll have something on. (See our new Conservation Opportunities pages at the end of this newsletter – they'll soon be available on our website too).

Make your voice heard:

Emissions Trading settings

The ETS is a government-controlled carbon share trading system that I have commented on before. It is very complex because the objectives are opposed. One objective is to reduce emissions. The other is to protect polluting industry so they do not disappear from NZ. The issue is that we want them to work out ways of operating without producing carbon or else disappear.

Submissions can only be about the settings, not the system itself. If I tried to make any comment on this, I could only say "The settings should drive maximum reduction of carbon and not preserve polluting industries." The

Russell and Pene

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Next Meeting (and AGM) – 28 June 2023
(amend your diary and please come along)

Yes, the date has changed since the last newsletter/email, the event is on 28 June at our normal venue – Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall at 43 Ngaio Road, at 7.10pm. Our brief AGM will be followed by a talk about the history of our branch and what we have achieved. We are still keen to recruit committee especially from the Mana end of the branch (to be our eyes and ears) and would also particularly welcome members of the local iwi as we'd love to be more connected. Get in touch if you want to talk this through. Pene 021 159 2409.

Presentation shows how difficult the subject is.

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/annual-updates-nz-ets-unit-settings-2023/>

Greater Wellington Greater Say Panel

There are currently no consultations with GW but you could join a panel which gives you a greater say on regional issues. If you do you will receive about 6 surveys a year on GW activity where you can give your opinion. This helps GW and democracy.

Check it out here:

<https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/>

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

Kapiti Coast Conservation Volunteering Opportunities

Fieldway Dunes Group (Waikanae), call Susie - 021 549 221

Friends of Waikanae River Monday 9-11.30, call Jo 022 083 1550

Friends of Wharemauku Stream 3rd Sunday 1:30pm, call Sue 027 846 5488

Greendale Reserve (Otaihanga) Meetup Tuesday 9-12, call Viola - 04 298 2952

Kaitawa Reserve (Paraparaumu) Meetup Thursdays 9-12, call Tony - 027 5514443

Kapiti Biodiversity Project, including Queen Elizabeth Park Stream Planting Group: Tuesday 9 – 12, email biodiversity.kapiti@gmail.com

Kapiti Weekend Wetland Restoration Group (Mackays Crossing, Paekakariki), 2nd Saturdays 9:30-12:30, email jillvissercox@gmail.com

Kotukutuku Ecological Restoration Project (Paraparaumu), call Peter - 021 215 9262

Ngā Uruora Kapiti Project (Paekakariki/Pukerua Bay) Tuesday mornings & 2nd Sundays from 9, email kapitibush@gmail.com

Ngā Manu Nature Reserve (Waikanae) Monday afternoons and plenty of other opportunities. Check out <https://ngamanu.org.nz/get-involved/>

Nikau Valley Restoration Society, call Wayne 022 395 5867

Paraparaumu Beach Restoration. Check out their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100093383598502>

Predator Free Paekakariki. Email : predatorfreepaekakariki@gmail.com

Queen Elizabeth Park Restoration Group (Mackays Crossing, Paekakariki) Wednesday 9-12. Email pburtonbell@gmail.com

Tikotu Stream (Paraparaumu). Sunday, monthly. Call Rose 027 756 2713

Waikanae Estuary Care Group (Paraparaumu Beach/Waikanae Beach) Saturday and Thursday mornings. Check out <https://sites.google.com/view/waikanaeestuary/home>

Waikanae River Trappers. Contact Alison 027 452 7425

Weggery Restoration Group. Call Julian 022 090 3868

Whareroa Guardians (Mackays Crossing, Paekakariki) 1st Sundays 9-12, more during planting season, email whareroa.guardians@gmail.com



Porirua Conservation Volunteering Opportunities

Friends of Battle Hill, email battlehillranger@gw.govt.nz

Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet, checkout <https://gopi.org.nz/>

Maara Roa (Cannons Creek) Meetup Saturday fortnightly 9:30. Call Sef 04 234 7747

Mexted Stream (Ranui). Call Bill 0276770180

Pauatahanui Reserve (Porirua Harbour). Email pauatahanuireservecommittee@outlook.com

Pest Free Porirua – email pestfreeporirua@gmail.com

Taupo Swamp and Catchment (Plimmerton) email tauposwamp@gmail.com

Whitirea Park Restoration Group (Titahi Bay) Check them out on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1055760224479856>

If you think your conservation volunteering group should be included, please email kapitimana.branch@forestandbird.org.nz, we'd be pleased to hear from you.