

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter

May 2024

Changing NZ

I generally ignore human related issues. That is because I believe that a poor environment will, in the longer term, cause suffering to the majority of the human population. An example, boat owners can catch fish off our coast, but our fisheries have diminished to the extent that non boat owners find it difficult to get a feed fishing from the shore as my grandfather did.

But there has been such a change to human conditions in NZ lately that I am almost persuaded to become involved.

I cannot understand the change in the smoking laws. How can any right-minded person believe that this is a change for the better? - for the present and future generations, for the environment, for the economy??

I cannot understand changes to the firearms legislation. Knowing who has guns, and what type, and being able to destroy any gun not registered or not with their owner seems to me to be sensible in a country where innocent people get shot more often. And who needs the convenience of a gun that fires bullets for as long as the trigger is pulled?

But my primary interest is the environment and on that, walkable /bikeable cities, light rail, clean car discounts, - proven climate change strategies. – Gone. Ban on oil and gas exploration, repealed. And now a few men after listening to an advisory group can decide to mine, dam, build over, develop or sell, land, whether protected or not, ignoring

environmental legal processes established over years, ignoring existing legal decisions and doing that with no consultation.

A country that is early in its development phase can act like this because resources are plentiful, nature and the environment are not compromised and the economy needs to ramp up to support the population, but this changes as the country develops. The economy needs to move from exploitation to sustainability. Natural resources, forests, fisheries, undeveloped land are no longer plentiful. Air, water, soils have been degraded to varying degrees. The population has grown and future generations should have the expectation of nature, resources and environment to supply their needs. If we exploit and use resources like commodities when we are developed, we are being greedy, self-serving and not valuing the future.

NZ is at the stage of development where remaining resources need to be carefully managed, and nature preserved. Exploitation decisions need to be carefully considered. The world is in a similar situation so it is useful to look at country ranking.

The [Our Land report from Stats and MfE in April '21](#), shows we use 51% of the land - much of it for overseas markets. That may not sound like much but we use the gentler, fertile areas and leave the mountainous difficult to use areas for nature. Yale's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) ranks us 87th in 180 countries for

ecosystem services. These are the availability of services that we use from the natural environment (water, air, soils, materials and spiritual benefits).

An [April '23 report](#) shows that more than 75% of indigenous reptile, bird, bat, and freshwater fish species in NZ are at risk of extinction mainly due to habitat loss and damage by predators and pests. No wonder Yale's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) ranks us 40th in 180 countries for biodiversity.

Our Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) ranking is 34th and heading worse. We are in the low group. The reasons are: poor climate policy and high climate gas emissions despite having a high level of sustainable energy. Our energy supply is good while agriculture and transport are bad. To stop NZ declining further, CCPI require agriculture to be included in the NZ ETS, a full oil and gas ban and a move to low carbon production using regulation. Yale's EPI ranks us 88th in 180 countries for climate change mitigation.

NZ is a first world country and while wealth is unequally distributed, we are wealthy with a small population density. We should not be thinking short term, money oriented, and selfish values. We should resolve inequities and issues in our society, resolve

Ngā Manu Winter Lecture Series

If you haven't already signed up, why not get along to the fabulous winter lecture series at Ngā Manu Reserve in Waikanae. Zoe Studd from Mountains to Sea recently spoke about seaweed. The next lecture is Saturday 1 June

environmental issues, not decrease taxation and increase the wealth of the rich and well off.

It seems to me that the current attitude is *'Why should I not smoke and damage my and my children's lungs and other nearby people's lungs. So what if that causes clogged hospitals in years to come.'* *I want a gun that fires bullets for as long as I pull the trigger. What I want it for is my business. 'NZ needs to dig whatever minerals we want out of the ground and dam rivers for more irrigation and more dirty dairy or power irrespective of climate change, loss of natural land, biodiversity, pollution, or what locals, iwi, or kiwis in general think'. You voted us in and that's enough for us to make unilateral decisions without consultation. See you in 3 years' time.*

I predict that in three years' time, land use by us will decrease because of other factors, but quality native land will decline, 75% of native species at risk of extinction will increase, our climate change world ranking of 34th will be lower, storms will be greater, more people will be in poverty and our health ranking of 25th will also be lower.

This is what we, as a country, voted for and I must accept that but it is not the direction I want NZ to be taking.

Russell

from 1-3 pm, when Prof Claire Freeman speaks on Planning for Nature Connection in Cities. Entry by paper koha. See the full listing and how to book here:

<https://ngamanu.org.nz/upcoming-events/>

Kōtuku: A rare and special event

In early April, the Waimanu Lagoon at Waikanae Beach had a young male Kōtuku (*Ardea alba modesta*) move in to feed up on small fish, eels, frogs, and shrimp before continuing his journey south. This is not unusual; the species usually feeds solo. Māori have a proverb or whakatauki "he kōtuku rerenga tahi". Translated it says, "a white heron's flight is seen but once" and is used to refer to the rare sighting of a special visitor. They are considered tapu by Māori. The local bird is reasonably easy to get within a comfortable viewing distance of though now it is not in breeding plumage – so its beak is yellow instead of black, and it doesn't have those prized exhibition feathers which nearly caused the extinction of the species. In New Zealand Kōtuku, or White Heron, breed only near Ōkārito on the West Coast where there are about 100 birds. Colonies (heronries) can however also be found in Australia, India, Japan and China, where the bird is called the Great Egret. Kōtuku can only feed at certain depths which has increasingly been a problem near their Westland breeding colony, as the estuary seems to be flooding more frequently meaning parents cannot reach deep enough to find food to feed their chicks. The breeding season starts in September and runs to January, and you can book a tour with White Heron Sanctuary Tours (<https://www.whiteherontours.co.nz/>) to spy on them. The local bird may still be around here for a few weeks. To get to Waimanu Lagoon, drive down Te Moana Road to Tutere Street at Waikanae Beach then head south towards the river mouth. As you enter the parking area the lagoon is about

100m on your left.

It's an enigmatic bird that is a joy to watch, and I'm surprised it has not yet won Bird of the Year.

Thanks to Joy Glasson, for these two photos of the local Kōtuku



Over the page we've included a photo of a Kōtuku in breeding plumage by Rina Sjardin-Thompson.

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kotuku_%C2%B7_Rina_Sjardin-Thompson_WCSW.jpg)

City Nature Challenge

Sorry we never advertised this event which ran from 26-29 April around the Wellington region. This challenge is an invitation to encourage citizen scientists to record what nature they see. 322 species were identified in Kāpiti and 637 sightings for this area. Across the Wellington region there were just over 18,000 sightings (not quite enough to beat Christchurch who got 20,108 – maybe next year. See more of this year's results here:

<https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/council/news-and-information/news-and-stories/2024/may/results-are-in-for-city-nature-challenge-2024/>



Forest and Bird Public Meetings

Our next speaker, on 19 June 2024, will be Henk Louw on cat management

We have decided to change the regular venue for our public meetings to keep costs down and also to meet closer to the station (so meetings are easily accessed by rail). If you come by train, on exiting, walk north along the line until you get to the crossing, then turn right and the centre is behind the tennis courts next to the Memorial Hall. Please note that our public meetings will now be on the THIRD WEDNESDAY bimonthly. Mark them in your diary: 19/6, 21/8, 16/10, 20/11.

As usual we will start with tea or coffee at 7.10 pm (until 9pm). There's a train that arrives in Waikanae at 7pm, and one that leaves Waikanae at 9pm. Bring coins for raffle & koha.

Get involved

Kāpiti's Walking and Cycling Network:
Submissions close 7 June

The Ride 'n Stride Programme has run its course, and it is now time to form a new ten-year programme of prioritised projects to develop and improve Kāpiti's walking and cycling network. They're asking what routes we use, would like to use, and where improvements should be made.

<https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/walk-cycle>

Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2021: 2024 Mid-Term Review:
Submissions close 24 June

This plan includes public transport and roads, as well as other paths. It aims to enable a connected region, with safe, accessible, and liveable places. Review the plan and comment on changes made or planned here:

<https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/rlltp-mid-term-review>

Show us your list!

You may remember F&B forced the government to release a list of projects that would use the Fast track legislation. The government did not want to release it. A new Forest and Bird petition that is quick to sign will increase pressure on the government to ensure a select committee has an opportunity to consider the final list of

projects for addition to Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Bill and urge that committee to call for public submissions on that list of projects before reporting the bill back to the House.

<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/petitions/how-us-your-list>

Planting season is here!

We are again including the list of volunteering opportunities in our rohe this month, as planting season is upon us and many projects will need planters (I know we do on Wednesdays at QEP!). Why not carve a bit of time out of your calendar for the next few months to help, and make a tangible difference – winter is so much better when you're 'out there doing it'. Get in touch with your local group(s) to find out more. Contact us if you need more help finding a group or a place to volunteer.

You can find streamside planting opportunities through Porirua City Council here:

<https://porirua.govt.nz/your-council/city-projects/restoring-mauri-te-awarua-o-porirua/>

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