

# Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter

## June 2024

### Cat management

Our June public meeting was about cats, their impacts and looking at an approach that starts to focus on both wildlife benefits and the welfare benefits for cats as a whole. As soon as you talk about cats and their effect on wildlife, it gets complicated, but there is a way through. There are many combinations to consider, such as owned, un-owned, microchipped or not, confined or roaming, stray and feral and it is often challenging to discern which is which.

First, considering owned cats. Some roam at any time while others are kept in at night. Some cats are house cats and don't leave the house. Some have cat enclosures where they can spend time outside but cannot roam. There are a variety of these cat enclosures (Catios) on the net. Some owned cats are microchipped and others are not. Some local councils will have a bylaw making microchipping mandatory: Wellington and Hutt City require microchipping and de sexing and about 95% of cats are microchipped. Kāpiti and Porirua have no requirements.

Cats hunt. They hunt both introduced and native birds and animals, lizards, even insects. We cannot complain about them wanting to hunt or train them not to hunt. It is in their nature.

Wellington City, in collaborating with local cat rescues and the SPCA has been live-trapping stray cats. If a microchipped cat is trapped, it is identified from its microchip and

returned to its owner. If it is not microchipped, quality of life is an important criterion so if the cat appears friendly and looked after, attempts are made find an owner through social media. If that fails, re-homing through a cat refuge is tried. All these outcomes are beneficial for the cat.

At the other end of the scale, some unchipped cats have long term disease, malnutrition, unhealed injuries and cancerous growths. Some are wild and untamable. From this information, decisions can be made and some will be put down for their own good.

In between these groups are cats that are treated, get well and have, or develop, a friendly manner and they can be homed.

There can also be another upside. Owned cats that roam can get into fights with stray cats. This can have implications for the owned cat's health and lead to costly vet bills.

Cat management happens successfully in Wellington City. The program is run by the City Council. It is supported by both the SPCA and local cat rescues. The council see it as beneficial to both owned and un-owned cats and very beneficial to Wellington's native species.

The conversation over cat management, first publicly raised by Gareth Morgan and continued by Forest and Bird, has matured. Both the benefits to our ecosystems and the welfare of cats need to be considered

and rather than having sides for or against the control of cats, there can be majority support for the emerging view for a humane approach that benefits all.

Wellington City had one great advantage over Kāpiti and Porirua. Well before this program was discussed, considered and finally put into action, the Wellington City Council passed a bylaw to make microchipping of cats mandatory. This gave cat owners a period of some years to get their cats microchipped so that when live trapping started, most owned cats would be quickly returned home. This is the first thing that needs to happen before any management could happen in Porirua and Kāpiti.

KCDC is currently asking "What is the public's vision for Kāpiti in the years to

## Kohekohe

We have many beautiful native trees in our area, but one of the most loved is the kohekohe or New Zealand Mahogany. Its scientific name used to be *dysoxylum spectabilis*, it has been renamed *didymotechon spectabilis*. Why was it renamed? Well, a good explanation is above my paygrade, but one source I found said that after a study in 2021 it was found to be from a different ancestor (it was not paraphyletic with the *dysoxylum* genus), but we'll leave the scientists to their name games for now.

To me, the glossy pinnate leaves of kohekohe, as well as its smooth bark, its fragrant 30cm sprays of pure white flowers coming directly from the trunks (this attribute is more common in the tropics and is called cauliflory) – their nectar draws birds from miles

come?" I hope that we will see a vibrant ecosystem in our reserves but also in our residential areas. That should happen because we are restoring many native areas and because trapping of mustelids, rats and mice is becoming more widespread and effective. Already there is an increase in flowering and seeding of native plant species and an increase in native bird populations. I also hope that Kāpiti (and Porirua) will manage its cat populations and that will result in even greater native species abundance.

*Russell*

## Responsible Pet Owner guide

F&B and the SPCA have put out guidelines: <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/responsible-pet-ownership-guide>



around so walking through a kohekohe forest in flower becomes a magical adventure with a cacophony of sound.

Only some trees have both male and female flowers, making the species gynaeceous. At the moment you can experience the wonder of flowering kohekohe on the section of the Waikanae River downstream of Edgewater Park, and in Wi Parata Reserve, Waikanae, as well as in the Dell at Whareroa Farm. Another interesting attribute of kohekohe is that it will not flower until its fruit from last season has matured and fallen. Since fruit takes a year to mature, trees fruit in alternate years (but not necessarily on the same schedule). The seeds are delivered in a green bauble type pod, containing tricuspid

pairs set in an aril of orange jelly. Kohekohe are easy to propagate when fresh but are not as common as they should be in our area having been eaten out by possum. Historians think Kāpiti Island would have been covered in kohekohe forest before it was cleared. It used to be common in damp coastal and lowland areas. The leaves are said to have been used to make a tonic with similar properties to quinine (handy against mozzies), and parts of the tree are also used to treat throat conditions and women's issues. Try and get out and enjoy some kohekohe forest before the last of the flowers fall.



Pictures and story © P Burton Bell



## Planting Events ...

Waikanae Estuary Care Group, Hana Udy Place 29/6/2024: 9 - 12. [secretary@waikanaeestuary.org](mailto:secretary@waikanaeestuary.org)

Whareroa Farm, 7 and 21 July: 9 til noon email [whareroa.sec@gmail.com](mailto:whareroa.sec@gmail.com)

Queen Elizabeth Park (Tues/Wed/Fri mornings – contact **Pene/Russell**) and 6 July 9.30-12.30

*(If you want a conservation event advertised, get it to us by the 20<sup>th</sup>)*



## Forest and Bird National AGM

This was held online, on Saturday 22 June 2024. Over 100 people attended, and 4 hours later when it ended, there were still 73 participants online. Here are some highlights from this meeting (and the council meeting that followed): President Mark Hanger is now Deputy President while ex-Deputy President, Kate Graeme, has stepped into the President role (photo below).



In his report as outgoing President, Mark noted his thankfulness that he hands over the organisation in good spirit and with a long future ahead. Mark also noted that 16 men and women of the Society had been recognised for services to conservation in the New Years', and King's Birthday, Honours Lists. It was good to see them recognised in this way.

Our local branch member, Sharyn Gunn, has also been honoured with a [Ti-Kōuka Award](#) by the Society, for her tireless involvement in Kiwi Conservation Club activities. In her speech she noted that the focus of activities has always been Education, Fun and Responsibility. KCC is rebuilding in our area, so why not sign up your children or grandchildren to join in the fun?

CONGRATULATIONS Sharyn and a big **Thank You** from all of us.



Sharyn with KCCer Josh, and a tuatara called Oliver, 2005

CEO, Nicola Toki gave us an update on the year that has passed. She reminded us of the amazing celebration of our centenary but also noted that with the change of government, we cannot rest on our laurels – there is still plenty to defend and fight for. Several battles we thought we'd won, we now need to relitigate, and other challenges keep coming up. However, the more strategic approach which Forest and Bird is implementing called (Mahi Ngātahi) is helping to keep the organisation focused on the most important things (rather than knee-jerking to every issue) so we can sustain ourselves for the critical battles. She noted that a recent [Environment Perceptions report](#) by Manaaki Whenua stated locals felt the environment was of increasing importance. This showed in that there were well over 20,000 people who

came to the March for Nature event in Auckland. (We didn't do anything locally, but with Parliament on our doorstep, our turn will come). Nicola expressed her thanks to everyone who made submissions on the Fast Track Approvals bill and said she was very impressed with the calibre of submissions. She also noted that Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton, in speaking to the Select Committee about this bill, advised them to take heed of the position put forward by Forest and Bird (high praise indeed). There are plenty more challenges to come including the Review of Stewardship Land and the indications of weakening Freshwater legislation. We need to keep fighting against the War on Nature to minimise losses over the term of the current Government.

*Kia kaha everyone*

## Listen in...

Are only some species worth saving?

Forest and Bird's CEO Nicola Toki responds to Conservation Minister Tama Potaka's recent comments: [https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio\\_id=2018943322](https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018943322)

## Sensing Wetlands

EcoIndex are using remote sensing data and data science to work out where unmapped wetlands are with the ambition of returning wetlands (and other native ecosystems) to 15% by 2121. This 10-minute video helps to explain what this means and the opportunities for the future.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juckR16u1Q>

## 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. On 13 July from 1-3 pm, Prof Peter Deardon is speaking on Kākāpō Genomics, and on 28 July: 1-3pm, Wildlife Ecologist John Innes will give a career retrospective on his work with native birds including kākāpō and takahē, and their interactions with predators - is Predator Free NZ on the right track? Entry by paper koha. See the full listing and how to book here: <https://ngamanu.org.nz/upcoming-events/>

## Have your say

### Fresh water consultation

The [Resource Management \(Freshwater and Other Matters\) Amendment Bill](#) will remove hard-won protections for freshwater. F&B would like you to submit on this by **30 June 2024**.

F&B have provided guidelines [https://mcusercontent.com/056bc28505444958c9358e331/files/6e8b7b4d-e970-7984-c2f3-2e80104d1b8a/Guidelines\\_on\\_making\\_a\\_submission\\_on\\_the\\_Resource\\_Management\\_final.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/056bc28505444958c9358e331/files/6e8b7b4d-e970-7984-c2f3-2e80104d1b8a/Guidelines_on_making_a_submission_on_the_Resource_Management_final.pdf), and you might also like to add your own comments about the state of freshwater where you live; why it is important that the health of freshwater be put first in decision making; and

## Get involved...

### New Zealand Garden Bird Survey

29 June – 7 July 2024

Set an hour to observe in your garden and/or local park during this time, and record what you hear/see. You can brush up on your identification skills here: <https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/>. The results of these surveys help scientists to see how our manu are faring around the country, and especially in urban areas. You can have a look at the results from last year's survey here:

<https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/results/report-2023/>

### Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet AGM

26 June 2024 \*

Baptist Church Lounge, 69 Discovery Drive, Whitby, on Wednesday 26 June 2023 at 7.30pm

Guest Speaker: Dr Warrick Lyon on the importance of the Inlet as a nursery for Rig/Lemon shark

why you value clean, healthy, freshwater so much

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/54SCPRIIP\\_SCF\\_25161950-A4FC-47B4-ADA3-08DC7AB031FE/resource-management-freshwater-and-other-matters-amendment](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/make-a-submission/document/54SCPRIIP_SCF_25161950-A4FC-47B4-ADA3-08DC7AB031FE/resource-management-freshwater-and-other-matters-amendment)

### Vision Kāpiti

Check out what's being suggested in your area and see how this aligns with how you think Kāpiti should look in the future. Submissions close 30 June '24 <https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/hub-page/vision-kapiti>

\*GOPI's looking for a Secretary: email [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com) for more info.

### It's Matariki - Planting season is here

Planting season is upon us, and many projects will need planters (I know we do at QEP, and see listing on p.3). 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/>

Why not carve a bit of time out of your calendar for the next few months to help out 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.

## *Russell and Pene*

**Editors:** Russell Bell & Pene Burton Bell  
Email: [russelljamesbell@gmail.com](mailto:russelljamesbell@gmail.com)  
Phone: 021 22 66 047

*Your feedback on this newsletter, and future contributions would be most welcome*