



Annual Report 2024-2025

North Canterbury Branch Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ.

You are invited to our AGM and the Lance McCaskill Memorial Address given this year by
Grant Davey (Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group):

The 2024 - 2025 Ashley/Rakahuri Braided River Bird Nesting Season

7.30pm Tuesday, 13th May, WEA 59 Gloucester St, Christchurch

Chairperson's Comment

Firstly, I would like to thank all members and supporters of the North Canterbury Branch of Forest and Bird for your ongoing actions and efforts to protect our natural world. All contributions add to the collective and on-going strength of Forest and Bird as a community organisation providing an effective independent voice for nature. This voice is very important especially at present when the present coalition government is adopting policies and laws which are antagonistic to the protection of our precious indigenous species and habitats. However you participate -whether by helping restoring habitats through planting or pest removal, or by giving money or time, for example, in writing a submission against the Fast Track Bill- your interest and support is necessary and can make a real difference. As an organisation Forest and Bird has proved resilient in good times and bad and with over 100 years of activism we know that, in the long run, we can make a positive difference to protecting and sustaining the taonga of our natural environment.

As a branch it is important that we provide opportunities for our members to help protect our precious habitats and species. You can see from the activities and events outlined below, the branch continues to be very active in providing talks, opportunities to carry out practical conservation work and other events for members.

I want to thank all the branch committee members for the friendly and effective way they go about this 'business', the warm welcome they gave me on my joining the committee in March 2024 and in supporting me in the role of co-chair of the branch which I took on last July. I particularly want to thank my fellow chairperson Diana Shand who has been a great colleague and helped "show me the ropes". She has decided to stand down from the role of chairperson, but very fortunately for us she is willing to stay on the committee.

We are so grateful to all our committee members and key supporters who do such fantastic work in a variety of fields; from leading habitat restorations, to catering for meetings, to organising events and speakers, in writing and sending out our newsletters and in carrying out the essential secretarial and treasurer duties. You can read about some of that great work in the reports below.

We do want to express our particular thanks to the following supporters and committee members:

- Eleanor Bissell, For your fantastic and on-going commitment to leading KCC and to your fellow coordinators Deschia Sutherland and Susan Miles,
- Bruce Craig, For your work in The Sanctuary reserve and Boyle Base trapping and hut maintenance,
- Dave Evans, For technical expertise and committed support in conservation and environmental work,
- Michael Godfrey, For combining with efficiency and effectiveness dual roles as co-treasurer and as e-news editor and distributor,
- Helen Hills, For all the work you do and co-ordinate in the field,
- Mick Ingram, For work in the Calder Green Reserve,
- Joy Talbot, For your work on Wilding Pines and River Clean-Up coordination,
- John Thacker, For your work as guardian of the Rhodes Reserve,
- Frances Wall, For superb secretarial services,
- Maria & Paddy West, For the after-meeting suppers which add so much to our gatherings.
- Rod Hay, Louise Holmes, Hugh Thorpe, Valerie Campbell and Ann Godfrey, For your many and varied contributions to committee meetings and to the branch in general,
- Rick Robinson a special mention, For his co-treasurer and accountancy back-up role, especially the major task of preparing our annual financial report,
- Also special mentions to Eugenie Sage, a wonderful board member, supporter and advisor and Nicky Snoyink our tireless Regional Conservation manager for Canterbury and the West Coast.

Finally, I would like to say that we would really appreciate some additional committee members and helpers to spread the load. Every offer of assistance is welcome and I can vouch that volunteering can be enjoyable and rewarding. From my own experience, I can assure you that you don't need great knowledge and experience, so do let us know if you would be interested in joining us.

Ruth Littlewood, 2025.

Co-Chairperson.

The Sanctuary Ecan Wetland Reserve Coutts Island Road, Waimakiriri River.

The North Canterbury Branch of Forest and Bird has a working relationship with Environment Canterbury (ECan) to undertake Predator Control and to undertake two planting days at the Sanctuary, a 30 hectare ECan Wetland Reserve situated within the stop bank and Waimakiriri River adjacent to 590 Coutts Island Road.

In the 2024 planting season, two planting days were held.

- On Saturday the 13th July, 26 adults and 5 children (members, friends and ECan staff) planted 558 plants adjacent to the gate on the main stop bank, followed by a bbq put on by ECan.
- On Saturday the 17th August, 20 helpers planted 505 plants adjacent to the main access track just before the turn off into the 360 walking track that passes through the central area of the Sanctuary. A total of 1063 plants in the ground.

The two planting days accounted for 160 volunteer hours.

The Predator control has had similar numbers of kills as the last two years. The area has some streams and springs as natural features but is unfenced so we get possums migrating from the adjoining farmland and river margins to the west and east. Extra traps were added for the 2024 year at Lorimas Road plantings and near Bailes picnic car park. The traps were generally checked fortnightly. The tallies for 2024 were (in brackets 2023 numbers): Possums 63 (53), Rats 99 (100), Weasels 12 (15), Stoats 2 (1), Hedgehogs 22 (23), Mice (bycatch) 18 (32), Blackbird 1 and feral cat 1 (1). A total of 218 pests removed from the environment. We had two extra volunteers for most of the year which allowed for track maintenance and plant maintenance during the year. A total of 300 volunteer hours were involved with the trapping, track maintenance and release weeding.

The 2025 planting days have been confirmed with ECan and these are on Saturday the 14th June and Saturday the 19th July, with a bbq being provided by ECan. These will be on the ECan website as Forest and Bird planting days. Put these dates in your calendar now and help restore the diversity of the Reserve.

If you are interested in this project, please contact Bruce Craig **021 027 68961** or email Bruce at barbandbruce@xtra.co.nz

Bruce Craig

Calder-Green Reserve



Calder Green Reserve site is doing well with various reeds growing on the mudflats and saltmarsh ribbonwoods mostly along the river-bank edge.

- **Predator Control:** The Christchurch City Council coastal team have now integrated predator control within the Ferrymead Regional Park, which was initially done by Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai Trust. The predator trapping area is along the tidal zone of the Ōpāwaho/Heathcote River to the Tunnel Road. This includes around the Calder-Green Reserve and Lizard Sanctuary area.
- **Working with Christchurch City Council / Ferrymead Regional Park:** About 600 plants were planted in 2024, mostly various sedges, tussocks and *Coprosma spp.* A further 600 plants are planned for 2025 planting.

The CCC Ferrymead Regional Park team has removed most of the pines (some large trees, mostly gums were left for roosting purposes) and planted 12,000 plants to revegetate this area. See areas highlighted in image above. Very pleasing to see the CCC Ferrymead Regional Park team being funded for this area of the Heathcote/Ōpāwaho River.

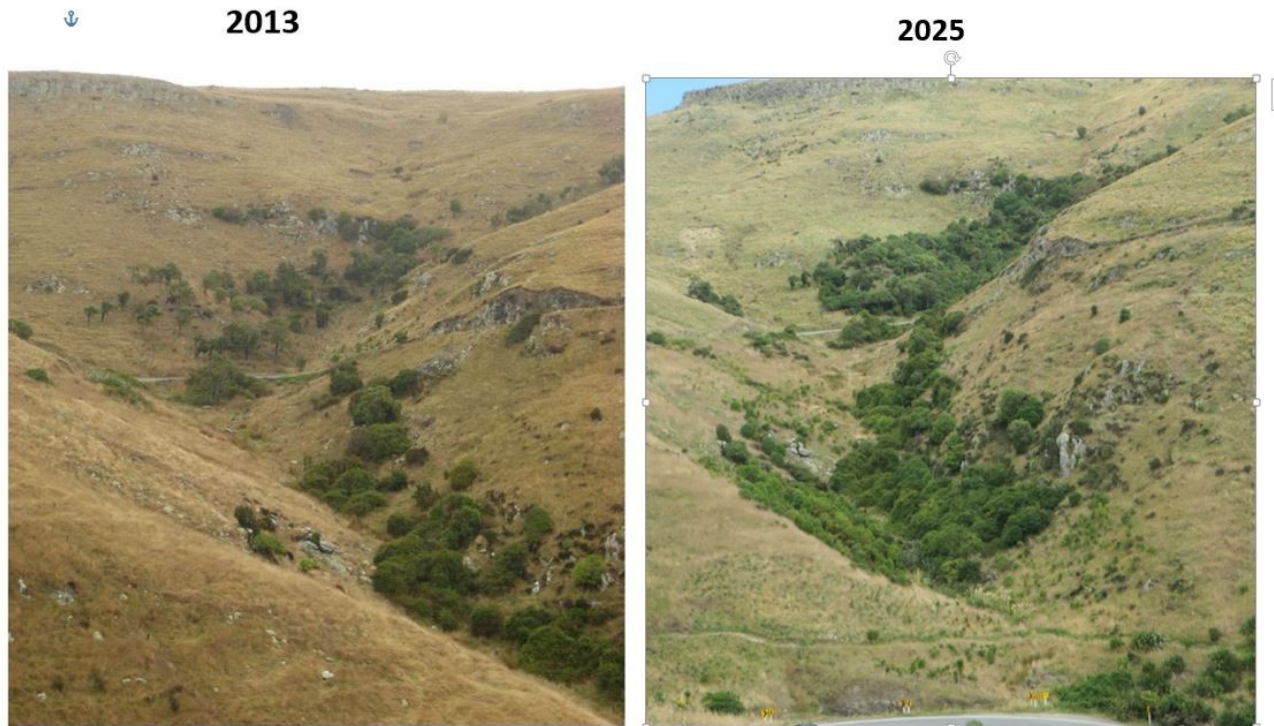
The 2024/25 summer has been very good for the F&B as well as the CCC plantings, which are growing well.

- **Sea Lavender:** A ‘search and destroy’ blitz was done again in February 2025 along with a large team from the Council. The true right (the side of F&B Reserve) is looking great, with no plants found on the islands and only 13 in total along that stretch. On the true left however, we found about 740 plants, mainly along the Settlers Crescent strip, where we haven't found all that much before. The historic areas that we have been covering for years are looking positive but we keep finding new areas we need to stay on top of. Further on going monitoring and control work will be done next summer too.
- **Volunteer hours:**

Lizard Sanctuary maintenance events	180 hrs;
Site plant care and general	40 hrs;
Sea Lavender	30 hrs; (<i>estimate</i>)
Other including rubbish clean-up day	70 hrs; (<i>estimate</i>)
Total	<u>320 hrs</u>

Mick Ingram
Forest and Bird Calder-Green Reserve Manager

Mahoe-nui Restoration Project



Mahoe-nui is a lovely gully of remnant native bush behind Sumner. It is on CCC land and has been fenced off from surrounding farmland since 2006. It is situated from Evans Pass road (near Rapanui bush), to above the summit road. Forest and Bird with the Sumner Environment group provide volunteers to help restore the bush under the guidance of dedicated Port Hills rangers Di Carter and Fiona Fenton.

We have two planting days in winter and two releasing days in spring and again in autumn, when the long grass that surrounds the young plants is cut back and used to mulch the plants. We plant 600 trees each year and it is lovely to see the valley filling up with native bush. We have had a good survival rate of plants due to a careful planting regime, and some summer rain this year.

The working bees are only 2 hours long and there is a cuppa and some baking to enjoy afterwards. New people are always very welcome. Total volunteer hours for the year were 236. A big thank you to all our volunteers who make this project happen, especially 'the regulars' who love this site as much as I do.

Helen Hills

Lewis Pass – Boyle Base Trapping Project

The Boyle Base trapping Project is located in the Lewis Pass area near the Boyle village. We have about 140 traps in 3 circuits to catch rats and mustelids (stoats and weasels) to protect native wildlife in the valley. It takes about 2 days for volunteers to get around the traps which are cleared and re-baited monthly.

The trapping management team is Helen Hills, Bruce Craig, Phill McEntee, Geoff Mahan and Rick Robinson. Numbers of predators caught (Oct 23 - Oct 24) were 32 stoats, 23 weasels, 92 rats and 13 hedgehogs. About 4 years ago, a DOC Community Fund grant enabled us to replace 60 of our Fenn traps with DOC 200s. In 2023, we gratefully received a \$4000 grant from the McFarlane Trust which has enabled us to replace most of the remaining Fenn traps with DOC 200s. Thank you to Bruce, Phill, Rick and Geoff who made the boxes and bait cages. These are now installed in the field.

We are one of several groups trapping in the Lewis Pass area, together called the Lewis Trapping Alliance to share knowledge and generally help each other out.

Boyle base Hut has been well used, especially by The Doubtless Trapping Trust who have installed trap lines up the Doubtful valley and beyond. Boyle Base was also booked by many other individuals and families who enjoy using the hut as a base to explore the beautiful Lewis Pass area.

Thank you to Di Cowan and Dave Evans who do our bird counts in spring and autumn. Bird numbers seem similar to previous years. These are bellbird/koromako, rifleman/tītipounamu, grey warbler/riroriro, tomtit/ngirungiru, robin/toutouwai, silver eye/tauhou, brown creeper/pīpī and occasionally kākārīki, falcon/kārearea, and tūī.

Small numbers of Caspian terns and dotterels nest on the Boyle river bed near the confluence of the Lewis and Boyle rivers. To help protect these, we have applied to DoC for permission to trap feral cats which have been sighted long the river bed and around the hut.

Thank you to the volunteers who have helped with trapping and hut/lawn maintenance/firewood collecting. Volunteer hours were approximately 475. We are a small team and any new volunteers are welcome.

Thanks to Bruce Craig who has sourced some firewood for the hut from a farm forester friend. So important for keeping the hut cosy in the winter.

If you wish to book the hut (which is like a cosy tramping hut) to explore the beautiful Lewis Pass area or to help us with the trapping programme or hut maintenance/mow lawns, please contact Helen Hills: 021 0232 6155 or email helenhills.mcp@gmail.com

Helen Hills

Stocker Scholarships

North Canterbury Forest and Bird received a generous bequest some years ago from the Stocker family, and decided in 2024 to add to it, as we did in 2023. This enabled us to offer postgraduate students the opportunity to win up to \$10,000 for environmental and/or conservation related research in Canterbury. A condition of the scholarship is that the student give a short presentation at one of our public meetings in the subsequent year.

The winners in 2024, for research to be carried out in 2025 and who will present a summary of their progress in 2026, were all either Masters or PhD candidates at Lincoln University. Each received \$2,500.

Ushawarni Mendis: Mermithid nematode parasites of spiders.

Jean-Louise Roberts: Possum low-density eradication on Banks Peninsula.

Friederike Espinoza: Weed invasions in NZ shrublands/kanuka stands)

Maryanne Walker: *Naultinus* gecko habitat.

Our four 2023 winners, who carried out their research in 2024, will be presenting in June and October this year, with another deferred until 2026. Details of their topics will be given in the e-newsletter at the beginning of the month.

Frances Wall and Ainslie Talbot

Newsletter/Website

Since the last AGM, we have put out ten email newsletters, advertising public talks, working bees, field trips and events by other Christchurch environmental groups. The eNews is sent out to around 1100 members each month with an average opening rate of 60%. We also maintain a website with information about our projects and upcoming events as well as overheads from our public talks. Thank you to those who sent notices of events, overheads and photos.

Mike Godfrey

Facebook Page

The Branch Facebook page is managed by Rod Hay. Drawing on the eNews, it posts details of all Branch meetings and other activities, and shares other items of general and local interest to members and followers. It provides an opportunity to pass on information from National Office and other Branches, along with like-minded organisations. Members with items suitable for our Facebook page are encouraged to provide details to Rod at rodhay@outlook.com.

Rod Hay

Forest and Bird Youth

Alongside crushing a regular life, our leaders for 2024 managed to organize some stunning events. These events varied from tree plantings to art competitions. We collaborated with some amazing groups, especially groups based at the University of Canterbury, such as BioSoc. and EnviroSoc. It was a full year filled with exciting opportunities and good times. As we turn to 2025, we bid farewell to leaders Jessica L, Paula T, Rewa G, and Anja F, their experience and contributions will be sorely missed. However, the hub has gained several new leaders: Sharon W, Nina E, and Nathaniel S. With a team of four leaders including Jessica P. 2025 is looking like a good year.

These are the events of 2024/early 2025:

- Picnic at Riccarton Bush
- Arthur's Pass Trapping (building traps)
- Promoting Tieke for Bird of the Year
- Native Tree planting with BIOSOC
- Hinewai Reserve with ENVIROSOC (conservation chats, tramping and picnic)
- Nature Art Competition
- Spoke at March for Children protest in August
- Represented at Festival of Women and Girls in Science

Nat Stephenson

Public Meetings

2024

- **July 9** Emeritus Professor Dave Kelly: *How will mast seeding respond under climate change? Recent discoveries show winners and losers.*
- **August 13** Dr Morgane Merien: *The Hidden Lives of Stick Insects*
- **September 10** Public Meeting: *Fight for Nature Canterbury*
- **October 8** Paul Brody: *Marine Environments as a Store of Carbon*
- **November 12** Professor Dave Kelly: *How EVs and Rooftop Solar Can Help Save Money and the Planet*
- **December 10** Rick Head: *The Five Natural Wonders of the World in Canterbury (that you will likely never see)*

2025

- **February 11** Nicky Snoyink: *Wild Animals, Costing Us 'Deerly'?*
- **March 11** Prof Em. Jon Harding & Dr Antony Shadbolt: *Styx (Puharakeknui) River (threats and restoration)*
- **April 8** John Leathwick: *Where to, for New Zealand's Biodiversity?*

2024-25 Committee

Diana Shand:	Co-chair	Valerie Campbell
Ruth Littlewood:	Co-chair	Ann Godfrey
Frances Wall:	Secretary	Louise Holmes
Michael Godfrey:	Co-Treasurer	Eleanor Bissell
Rick Robinson:	Co-Treasurer	Rod Hay
Helen Hills		Hugh Thorpe

Forest and Bird Youth

Nat Stephenson

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Royal New Zealand Society for the Protection of Forests and Birds
North Canterbury Branch
Statement of Receipts and Payments.
Year Ended 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
Opening Balances - 1 January				
Current account	20,896.92		3,131.63	
Inv A/c #1 - Opening balance	35,640.75		38,841.89	
Inv A/c #2 - Opening balance	206,358.10		222,617.69	
Inv A/c #3 - Opening balance	<u>27,666.15</u>	290,561.92	<u>31,334.51</u>	295,925.72
Investment transfers into current account	-12,000.00		36,500.00	
Transfer Inv #1 to ON CALL Account	12,000.00		-5,000.00	
Transfer Inv #2 to ON CALL Account	0.00		-26,500.00	
Transfer Inv #3 to ON CALL Account	<u>0.00</u>	0.00	<u>-5,000.00</u>	0.00
Net Receipts				
Interest credited 90 day A/c	1,413.02		1,864.82	
Interest credited #2 A/c	12,691.02		10,240.41	
Interest credited #3 A/c	<u>1,875.75</u>	15,979.79	<u>1,331.64</u>	13,436.87
Kiwibank refund		7.04		
GST Refunds	2,214.71		1,218.11	
GST account - as yet unclaimed	<u>-2,160.91</u>	53.80	<u>-1,855.67</u>	-637.56
Waimakariri ECO & Landscape Restoration Alliance - Donation - Wildings	2,956.53			180.00
Wilding pines travel & expenses	<u>-230.43</u>	2,726.10		
Calendar & Diary sales	1,465.72		1,299.54	
Calendar & Diary expenses	<u>-838.26</u>	627.46	<u>-757.97</u>	541.57
Lumiere Cine Fund raiser (net)				362.66
Koha - Cash				144.20
Net Expenses				
Admin - Meeting expenses (rent, speaker gifts, etc)		-656.50		-330.43
Investment - Immediate Withdrawal Penalty ;				-65.96
Admin - NZ POST LTD - PO BOX RENEWAL		-195.65		-191.30
Admin - E news		-620.97		-690.29
Environmental Defence Society Conference Registration		-2,199.99		
F & B Conference - Travel & Registration				-611.65
F & B Commemorative Book Launch attendance		-103.91		
F & B Force For Nature Books		-385.18		
F & B National Office - Fast Track Oposition		-1,430.94		
F & B - The Point - Solar Farm Appeal Evidence		-3,500.00		
AGM costs				
- Koha - cash - agm			84.80	
- Annual Report, stamps, food, room hire, & gifts		-345.30	<u>-1,313.03</u>	-1,228.23
Public Talk - Airfare, gift, printing & laminating				-209.99
Stocker Grant - 2024 - Friederike Liane Espinoza	-2,500.00		-2,000.00	
Stocker Grant - 2024 - Jean-Louise Roberts	-2,500.00		-2,000.00	
Stocker Grant - 2024 - Maryanne Walker	-2,500.00		-2,000.00	
Stocker Grant - 2024 - Usha Mendis	-2,500.00		-2,000.00	
Stocker Grant - 2023 - M E RAMSBOTTOM (refunded)	<u>2,000.00</u>	-8,000.00	<u>-2,000.00</u>	-10,000.00
Lesley Shand Memorial Fund receipts		895.00		
Wildlife Rescue - South Island Wildlife Hospital				-727.39
KCC Work				
KCC - Project			-108.70	
KCC West Coast Schools Membership	-2,173.91		<u>-1,391.30</u>	-1,500.00
Pohatu - Penguins Project - membership	1,069.57			
Pohatu Penguins expenses, research & microchips	-1,043.48			
Eleanor Bissell - Willowbank	<u>-100.00</u>	-2,247.82		
Penguin Rescue - Thomas Stracke - freezer		-433.91		-1,129.92
Kea Summit - Registration	-206.09			
Kea Summit - Misc exp & travel	<u>-117.40</u>	-323.49		