

# Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter

## April 2025

### Greater Wellington buys Eastbourne Farm

Many years ago, a Regional Park Plan for an East Harbour Regional Park was published by GWRC. The plan imagined that most of the farmed low fertility gorse and bush covered hills between Eastbourne and the Wainuiomata Coast Road would become regional park. Its centrepiece was the protected bush between the Wainuiomata Hill Road and Burdans Gate at the end of Eastbourne with the popular Days Bay and Butterfly Creek tracks. Butterfly Creek picnic area was very close to Gollans farm and we were dismayed when a boundary fence was put through the beech forest immediately behind the popular Butterfly Creek picnic spot.

When Wellington and the Hutt were deciding where their sewage would be treated, I, representing Lower Hutt F&B and two others suggested locating it in a side valley off Gollans Stream and the main valley become regional park. For a while it became the consultant's number 1 option. Buying the farm, they said, was small change. They also began investigating Wellington Harbour because Wellington sewage would have to cross it to get to the site. They found that the deep sediment and earthquake aspects of the harbour meant at a pipe across it was not feasible. Option 1 became option 'Not'.

Many years later the Pencarrow block, containing lakes Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri and land further to the east, came up for sale. See ecological values of the lakes:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2002/01/Pencarrow-Lakes-Conservation-values-and-management.pdf>

Lower Hutt Forest & Bird suggested to GWRC that they should buy the land and offered \$5,000 to start a fund to buy it. (I was chair at the time.) The fund grew but the purchase was complex. The land to the east of Lake Kohangatera was purchased by a farmer who could not raise sufficient funds to buy the Pencarrow Lakes block. A deal was struck. GWRC would buy the Lakes block but the farmer would have the use of it for 15, or was it 25, years. Once the years had passed, it would become regional park.

The next land for sale was Baring Head / Ōrua-pouanui. Local councils and GWRC plus one private person raised the money and the block was bought. It has coastal platforms and scarps and valley escarpments with their important grey scrub communities. See Baring Head ecological values:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/03/Baring-Head-Ecological-Values-Report.pdf>

The three areas are outlined in yellow in the map below.



There were 3 disconnected blocks of land that made up East Harbour Regional Park – see above. From north to south in yellow - the Forest Block behind Eastbourne, the Lakes Block including Pencarrow Head, and Baring Head.

A month or so ago, Gollans farm, see green outline above, came up [for sale](#). This land joins the northern Forest block with the southern Lakes block. Gollans Stream flows through the middle of the farm and because of the flat nature of the valley, it weaves from side to side as it travels to the wetlands below. Greater Wellington has just bought the 1366 ha farm and it will be added to the regional park.

<https://wellington.scoop.co.nz/?p=169648>

This is perhaps the most significant area of land that could be bought for our regional park network. A GW Lake Water Quality and Ecology publication said "Overall Lake SPI (Lakes Submerged Plant Indicators) scores of 63% and 89% were calculated for Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera respectively. This places Lake Kohangapiripiri in the 'high' category and Lake Kohangatera in the 'excellent'

category for ecological condition. According to de Winton et al. (2011), out of the 206 lakes in New Zealand surveyed using this method to date, Lake Kohangapiripiri is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> and Lake Kohangatera 10<sup>th</sup>."

The wetland of Kohangatera extends about 1km into the farm and cattle roamed the edges. The middle of the open water of the wetland below is the farm/Lakes Block boundary.



Google Earth shows that farm roads were being built over almost all of the farm and large areas have been sprayed and turned to farmland since the latest farmer took up residence. Lake Kohangatera would have been degraded if that had continued. With this purchase, the whole eastern backdrop to the Wellington Harbour is in public hands and is a significant ecological asset protecting Wellington's best wetland. Kāpiti-Mana F&B congratulates and thanks GWRC for this purchase.



*Russell*

## Public meetings

### **April - Making Room for Rivers**

At our recent public meeting in Waikanae, Freshwater advocate Tom Kay gave an excellent talk about how our rivers are increasingly being confined as channels, but in the end the river usually wins. To prevent flooding, it is far better to plan and make room for a river to spread and increase in size if needed. This will support biodiversity as well as reduce the impacts on infrastructure, housing and businesses. The floods in Hawkes Bay, Gisborne, Westport and Auckland are all examples where making room for rivers would have greatly reduced the impact on communities. Climate Change is likely to cause more heavy rain events so we need to act soon. Tom noted that one barrier is that many kiwis are tax and rate shy and this means that it is hard to find the money to make adequate preparations.

On this note, Kāpiti Coast District Council is asking residents to contribute information to help them get their flood maps right - more details in the "Have Your Say" section further below.

### **May - Enough Fish in the Ocean?**

Our next public meeting will be on Sunday, 11 May 2025 (2.15pm for 2.30pm start) at St Andrews Church, 11 Steyne Avenue, Plimmerton. Coin Koha appreciated.

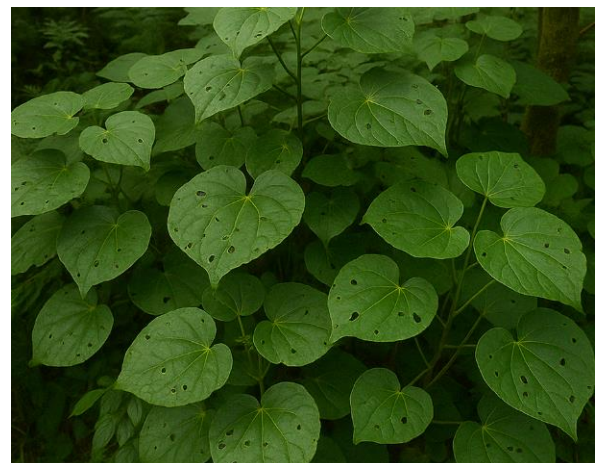
Retired Marine Scientist and curator from Te Papa, Chris Paulin, will be speaking about the management of fisheries around New Zealand from the late 70s to today and how large-scale fishing has impacted fish stocks - is it sustainable?

Do come along, and bring a friend.

## Plant of the Month: Kawakawa – A Healing Taonga for People and Birds

*Stacey Perkinson*

Tucked into the shady edges of Aotearoa's native bush, often beneath the shelter of taller trees, grows one of our most treasured taonga – kawakawa. With its lush, heart-shaped leaves and vibrant green presence, kawakawa (*Macropiper excelsum*) has long been respected for both its healing properties and its quiet but vital role in the ecosystem.



Kawakawa is more than just a plant — it's a connection between the whenua, the birds, and the people. While it's widely known in rongoā Māori for its use in traditional medicine, kawakawa also offers powerful benefits for biodiversity and native restoration projects.

Kawakawa naturally thrives in lowland forests, coastal fringes, and damp, sheltered environments. Its adaptability makes it perfect for home gardens, riparian zones, or forest regeneration projects. Once established, it grows quickly, tolerates shade with ease, and requires little maintenance — a true ally in restoring the land.

But perhaps one of kawakawa's most important contributions lies in the food it provides. In summer, the plant produces clusters of bright orange berries, which are a favourite kai of the kererū, Aotearoa's native wood pigeon. These beautiful birds play a vital role in the forest by spreading the seeds of large native trees, helping new life take root. By planting kawakawa, you're feeding the birds, supporting the forest's natural cycles, and creating a living refuge for taonga species.

As the kawakawa patch begins to grow, so too does the movement of life around it. You might notice a tūī darting between nearby flowering trees, the delicate song of a riroriro (grey warbler) echoing from within the foliage, or the cheerful flicks of a pīwakawaka (fantail) dancing along the undergrowth. Kawakawa is a

magnet for birdlife — a sign that your garden or project is not just thriving, but alive with purpose.

Its significance doesn't end there. For generations, kawakawa has been a cornerstone of rongoā Māori. Its leaves are steeped into teas to support digestion, infused into oils and balms to soothe skin, and used in wairua cleansing rituals to restore spiritual balance. A plant that offers healing to people as much as it does to the land.

If you're thinking of planting kawakawa, choose a sheltered space beneath larger natives like tōtara or kānuka. Give the plants a bit of room, about a metre to a metre and a half apart — and protect young saplings from harsh wind and sun until they're well established. When it comes time to harvest, look for leaves with insect holes. In traditional knowledge, these are the leaves that have already offered their strength to the natural world and are ready to be shared with us.

Kawakawa is more than a plant. It's a story of resilience, of connection, and of restoration. When you plant it, you're doing more than just filling a space, you're contributing to the future of our ecosystems, our culture, and our health. In garden design we often recommend kawakawa as a beautiful and functional choice.

[Stacey Perkinson](#)\*

\*Stacey recently joined our committee



## Events

### **April - Picnic/BBQ at Pāuatahanui**

About 30 people came along to our end-of-season event at Pāuatahanui. We had perfect weather, excellent company and surroundings. Hopefully we'll do this again next year. Look out for the advertising and put it in your diary.

### **April - iNaturalist City Nature Challenge**

Did you contribute to this challenge last weekend?

Lots of people got out in their local park and recorded as many native critters as they could, in the interests of documenting what is there (which is useful for scientists).

Citizen science like this is playing an increasingly important role in decision-making by councils and the

government. They use it to define what's where (and if it's not recorded, it's assumed it's not) and then act on that information. So, for example, if you know there's a rare orchid on a section, and put it on iNaturalist, a council might take this into consideration before allowing a developer resource consent.

### **May - F&B Walks with Doug**

Our next botanical walk will be on Sunday, 25 May at 2pm where we will walk through the Waikanae River Estuary Reserve. (There was no walk in April due to Easter)

The walk will start from Otaihanga Domain (off Makora Road):

<https://g.co/kgs/vPDMrhP>

Contact Doug Miller for details on 020 464 5537 or [doug.miller@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.miller@xtra.co.nz).

## Have Your Say

### **Kāpiti Flood Maps - your knowledge sought by 8 June 2025**

KCDC is seeking feedback on our draft flood maps to make sure they reflect what you see and experience at your place and local areas of interest – whether that's drainage issues in your neighbourhood, historic flooding you've witnessed, or unique property characteristics their modelling might have missed.

<https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/floodmaps>

### **Kāpiti Freedom Camping Bylaw - consultation closes 1 May 2025**

KCDC is considering changing from their current 2012 policy to a bylaw, and your views are sought.

No further sites are being considered.

<https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/freedomcamping>

### **MfE Waste Management legislation Amendments - consultation closes 1 June 2025**

MfE is asking for feedback to inform the rewriting of the 1979 Litter Act and the 2008 Waste Minimisation Act (WMA).

Suggested changes include extending producer responsibilities, clarification of the roles of central and local government as well as the waste sector, allocation of waste levies and how they can be spent, tools and controls for compliance and reduction of waste.

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/waste/waste-legislation-proposed-amendments/>

### **MfE Proposed product stewardship regulations for agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics - consultation close 1 June 2025**

Feedback is sought on proposed regulations to enable a national take-back and recycling scheme for agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics.

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/waste/agrichemicals-their-containers-and-farm-plastics/>

## **Other Items**

### **Call for KCC Volunteers**

Kāpiti Mana KCC group are looking for volunteers to assist our current KCC Kāpiti Mana Coordinator Lindsay.

If you can provide any assistance in a range of tasks including:

- administration of the email box
- adventure record keeping
- contributing to the KCC branch newsletter

- organising events

- assisting in the field at events

it would be great to hear from you.

To learn more about KCC register your interest in volunteer roles, visit their web site and complete the sign up form.

<https://kcc.org.nz/volunteer-for-kcc/>

### **Predator Free Auckland Islands**

In case you missed it, there was a fascinating article on the eradication of pests from the Auckland Islands in the Saturday copy of the Dominion Post. Big ambitions and big dollars but very inspiring. You can read it here:

<https://www.thepost.co.nz/environment/360662919/last-island-killing-200-years-predator-domination>

### **Planting Days Coming Soon**

Waikanae Estuary Care Group: Meet at their Hana Udy Place nursery, Paraparaumu at 9.00 am on 24 May.

Ngahere Korowai: Community planting at Cannons Creek Lake Reserve 9:30 am 'til noon on Saturday 24 May.

## Local Government Elections are approaching - Voting 11 October 2025

We need good governance at all levels of government. Campaign time isn't necessarily the best time to note which politicians/councillors perform the best and some of the things they claim are untrue. We need to act in the interests of the things we hold dear - like the environment. We invite you to take an interest in how your local mayor and councillors, and Greater Wellington councillors have performed, as you start thinking

about who you might vote for. Sometimes the richest candidates with the loudest voices are not the best candidates, and you might even be able to help the right people get into office. Right now, though, the most important thing is to check you are registered to vote at <https://vote.nz/>, especially if you haven't received a letter from the Electoral Commission in the last month or so.

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

*Russell and Pene*

