

# North Taranaki Forest & Bird Newsletter Winter 2025

PO Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

www.facebook.com/forestandbirdtaranaki/

Lake Rotokare

## RECENT EVENTS

### April 16 AGM & Gabriel Lennon Politics of Governing Taranaki Goats

The recent AGM saw some changes in committee members; an increase of members to 177 as of 30 March; and a summary of activity in our two local reserves.

A presentation followed from Gabriel Lennon, a PhD Candidate in anthropology from Stockholm University. His current research is considering goats in this region, Taranaki appears to be the NZ region most heavily populated with goats. While his research is not complete and he is still collecting data and conversations; he has established the key factor in how goat populations are managed is how they are perceived – as a problem pest species or as a resource to be managed.

One somewhat striking detail – the origin of the word “Bush” he traced back to Australia and then further back to Africa as a derivative from the Dutch “Bosch” with connotations of an unfinished or underutilised or unoccupied land. It seems to have a similarity with the Latin “Terra Nullius” meaning empty land, and “Terra Nullius” is a controversial justification used in colonial days for acquiring land in Australia and New Zealand.



Gabriel Lennon

## Recent & Upcoming Calendar – F&B & friends

- April 16 AGM & Gabriel Lennon Goat Politics - Presentation
- May 17 Halo Project - Presentation & Lake Rotokare - Walk
- June 5 Wai Connection: Reviving our Waters - Presentation - [Wild for Taranaki](#)
- 15 Tarapuruhi Bushby Park, Whanganui - Regional Hui
- 22 Seed Propagation - Workshop
- 28 Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society - Online AGM
- 29 Planting Day - [Rapid Reforestation](#)
- 30 Predator Free 2050 Strategy Submissions close - [TRC](#)
- 30 Night Tour - [Rotokare](#)
- July 9 Night Tour - [Rotokare](#)
- 12 Planting Day - [Rapid Reforestation](#)
- 16 Pest Control on Te Ara o Te Ata - Mt Messenger Bypass – Soup & Presentation
- 27 Planting Day – NPDC & [Rapid Reforestation](#)
- 29 Night Tour - [Rotokare](#)
- 30 Te Wairoa weeding – WITT students
- August 2 Let's Compost Workshop – [Sustainable Taranaki](#)
- 6 Night Tour - [Rotokare](#) – F&B members use the Promo Code FOL10 at checkout
- 12-14 Bushy Park Tarapuruhi Workshop – [Sanctuaries of NZ](#)
- 20 Taranaki Predator Free Trapping Presentation- Jenaya Munro NPDC – Soup & Presentation 6.30pm Community House next to the YMCA
- Sept 13 Te Wairoa - Working Bee, Clearview Road, Lepperton, 10am
- ? South Taranaki F&B Colliers Bush – Christmas Visit?
- 2026 Mar 7-9 Taranaki Anniversary Ruapehu F&B Lodge – expressions of interest needed to confirm this

See also some inspiring stories of what we can achieve on page 6 and notes from the Committee on page 7.



© Carey Knox

## May 17 Rotokare Halo Project Presentation & Lake Rotokare Walk

The North Taranaki Forest & Bird Branch support the [Rotokare Halo Project](#) (removing predators from the surrounding land); and we attended a fascinating talk by Kane, Rotokare's Site Manager and Lance, Halo Ranger about the Halo Project's work. The current Halo area is 4,700ha.



Lake Rotokare and surrounds



Lance & Kane

The Rotokare Halo Project is the most successful of its kind in the country. The Halo area is all farmland and trapping on farmland is very different from bush trapping. Most of the land is open grassland sheep and beef farms, with few planted areas. It previously supported large numbers of stoats, ferrets, cats, hedgehogs, goats and rabbits - each presented their own

issues. The project has collected a wealth of data and understanding on successfully linking remnant bush areas to create a safe corridor for birds to move between and successfully live in even small patches of bush. Other sanctuaries around Aotearoa are now getting on with their own halo projects.

The South Taranaki Forest & Bird Branch have been active trapping and maintaining facilities in the nearby Collier and Tōtara Blocks since the 1970s. They have partnered with the Taranaki Kiwi Trust to release Kiwi in the Tōtara Block. The Halo Project provides a link between Rotokare and these blocks and there is a long-term vision with the Taranaki Kiwi Trust and the 800 Trust to create a safe corridor in further areas.

The South Taranaki Branch provide "on the ground" volunteers in the Collier Block, Tōtara Block and Taranaki Kiwi Trust area. The North Taranaki Branch view this project as being important and provide support in the form of a monthly donation.

One of the project's success stories is the Pāteke. The fence helps prevent animals getting into the sanctuary, but these rare ducks can fly out. Only two weeks after the first 20 were released, twelve were found dead in the Halo area - killed by feral cats! The Halo Project had not appreciated the extent of the feral cat problem but quickly swung into action, dispatching 65 that year. Live capture cage traps with sensors are used, and checked quickly so that if a pet cat is caught it can be released (although only one pet cat has ever been caught). Now over 500 Pāteke have been released in Rotokare and breed all around the Halo. Many Toutouwai (robin) and forest geckos are now seen even in smaller bush remnants in the Halo.



Peppa



Forest & Bird members, with Pūkeko

After the talk we visited Peppa, the Duvaucel's gecko who will be 40 next year! The day was capped off with lunch; and a walk around the Lake. ~ Karen Hamer



June 15 Hui at [Tarapurui Bushy Park](#) Reserve, Whanganui



Bushy Park Homestead

The day was well organised and ran smoothly. The homestead is beautiful, and we were well fed and watered. The attendees were approximately half Forest and Bird National Office people and speakers, and half regional members.

Kate Graham, our President, welcomed everyone and a karakia was sung.

The first speakers spoke about the amazing

Taranaki Bight seabed area threatened again by Trans-Tasman Resources (TTR), an Australian company that wants to mine the seabed here for ironsand, vanadium and titanium. This project has gone under the new Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. Under this legislation, only those entities who are directly affected can submit to the expert panel, who are chosen in a 20-working day period. The primary focus of the legislation is economic. Much work is being done to ensure that the feelings of the Taranaki iwi; South Taranaki District Council and New Plymouth District Council are heard. Resistance is widespread.

Bruce and Karen from [Project Reef](#) spoke next. From the website you can learn about this biodiversity hotspot that is home to 39 types of sponges and 35 marine mammals, as well as being a fish breeding ground. Next, we heard from a very impressive lady, Kate Parris. Kate spoke for Kiwis Against Seabed Mining, describing the work being done to protect the unique sea floor. Charlotte Melser spoke with Kate. Charlotte is a Whanganui District Councillor trying to get the council against the project. Kate Graham urged us all to submit on the Regulatory Standards Bill, which will be closed by the time you read this (23 June).

Elvisa gave an update on her activities, which mainly revolve around the reopening of the Waihi mine (another project returning under the Fast-track Approvals Act). She is liaising with other groups on this, and other the Fast-track projects.

After lunch, we went on a guided tour, which is very impressive. It is 100 hectares.

Scott spoke passionately about the Denniston Plateau. This unique landscape is again at risk of mining, and unlike the Taranaki seabed situation, the local kaumatua and others are in favour of the project. This is despite the fact that the damage will be irreparable and the economic gains very small.

The last speaker talked about his project to make Whanganui the first urban area to eradicate pests. He was very enthusiastic on this and his plans for the future, as well as the urban trapping lines he has already developed.

This is a very brief summary of what was a very informative day. If you wish to know more please contact Elvisa, our regional representative, through [e.vanderleden@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:e.vanderleden@forestandbird.org.nz). ~ Karen Hamer & Dawn Mills



Age Personified

## June 22 Native Seed Propagation Workshop

We are lucky to have an expert native tree propagator on our committee. Janica hosted ten members at her nursery for a workshop. We began by matching the seed to the native tree. This was surprising, as one of the largest trees, the pōhutakawa, has the smallest seeds! Many New Zealand native trees have fleshy or “wet” seeds, which do not store well, e.g., pūriri and pukatea. Janica showed us how to tell if the seeds are ripe (usually a colour change) and viable (cut into a seed to find the embryo). Pūriri have an amazing trick of sometimes having more than one viable embryo per fleshy fruit. Many NZ tree seeds are dispersed by birds, so when preparing seed for planting we must mimic the process that occurs in a bird’s digestive system. This may involve soaking the seed to clean it of debris and outer coat,



Karo cutting and sticky karo seeds



Sieving Karamū seeds

rubbing the seed over a sieve, rolling with a roller, or soaking in acid! Generally, viable seeds sink in water, although cabbage tree seeds are an exception and always float. To ensure seedlings grow in the spring, they can be “cold stratified”, which mimics a winter cold snap for them. Kōwhai seedpods are so hard that the pods should be opened with secateurs, soaked in boiling water, or soaked in acid before sowing!

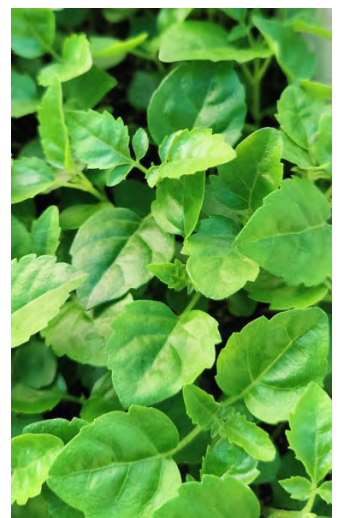
Janica demonstrated the planting process, using bark potting mix in the base of a tray, topped with seed raising mix. Seeds were then added to the tray and covered with seed-raising mix or left exposed in the case of native grasses. For very slow germinating species such as mataī, propagating sand should be used to cover the seeds as it discourages liverwort. Trays are kept in a shade house to protect them from strong sunlight, heavy rain, and damage from birds and cats.

Seedlings are pricked out into small pots in spring. A pot suitable to the plant size improves drainage and reduces storage space

requirements. The control of pests and diseases was briefly discussed. Finally, the group went off to view the native seedlings and collect fuchsia (kōhutuhutu) cuttings.

It was a very informative afternoon, and I will put several tips into practice to achieve better results with growing native trees at our place. Many thanks, Janica, for sharing your knowledge with us all, and taking the time to prepare all the plant specimens.

~ Dawn Mills with photos from Karen Hamer



Pūriri seedlings



## OUR RESERVES *Volunteers are Wanted! If you are able to give some time, please talk to a committee member.*

**Te Wairoa (Lepperton)** – any time, but log weeding hours with [peterjwinter@hotmail.com](mailto:peterjwinter@hotmail.com).

**Tom and Don's (Okato)** – a roster needs to be devised, and also participation in refurbishing traps.

**Pest weeds** - We have any number of pest weeds in our reserves, particularly Te Wairoa. These were inherited with the properties, but Forest and Bird volunteers have worked steadily over many years to reduce the presence of these weeds. Blackberry has now been almost completely eradicated from Te Wairoa.

This plant, *Rubus fruticosus*, beloved of pie makers, is a nasty weed to deal with, as it forms thick tangled mats of very prickly stems, pegged down at intervals by suckers that reach out over the ground to spread the plant. Gauntlets are required when interacting with blackberry!

Large patches, if not interspersed with desirable plants, can be sprayed with triclopyr with a dessicant added (e.g. Grazon and Pulse). This will kill all the leaves and some roots, but patches will regrow! These will need to be resprayed or treated with picloram/aminopyralid gel (Vigilant gel, Cut 'N Paste). For small infestations or where other desirable plants are mixed with the blackberry, the only option is to locate all the roots painstakingly, cut them and paste them. This method is slow but effective. The fenceline along Clearwater Road at Te Wairoa was rid of blackberry in this way, without harming the flax. ~ Dawn Mills



Blackberry

### Te Wairoa Trapping Check



Peter Haines on the monthly trapping round in June 2025. No catches.



The bench seats built by Peter Winter are in place in the clearing.



Mind your fingers!

One of three flourishing *Syzygium maire* (a.k.a. swamp maire, maire tawake, waiwaka) that were planted in August 2023 to mark Forest & Bird's 100th anniversary. Two others were planted in Pukekura Park. ~ Janet Hunt

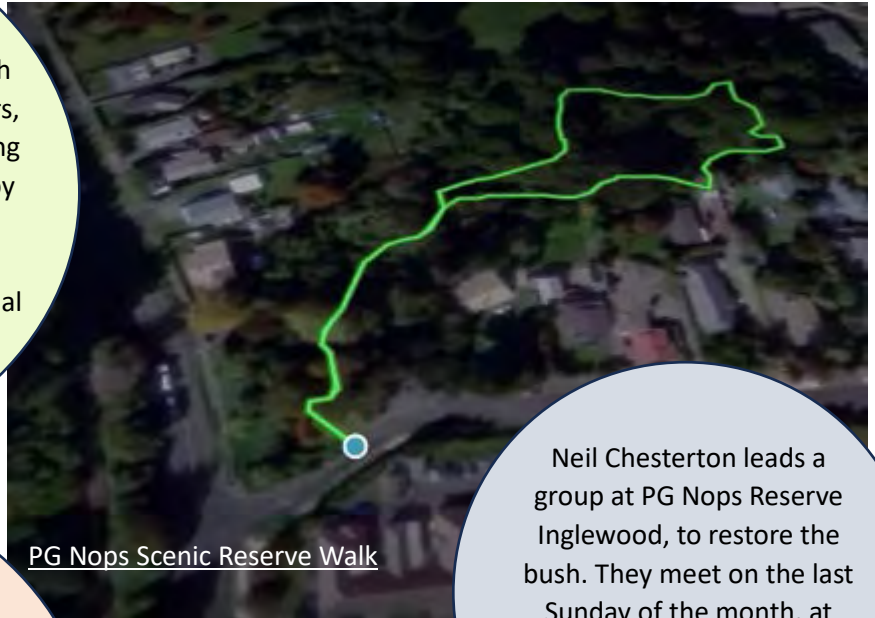


## THE POWER OF ONE ... WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE ...

[Find a group - Predator Free NZ Trust](#)

### [Seniors Newsletter June 2025](#)

showcases senior John Ruyters, who with Dianne Thorstensen and other neighbours, adopted, weeded and developed a walking track through a now-regenerating bush by the Waiwhakaiho River. The Taranaki Regional Council came on board and installed bait stations, with a consequential explosion of bird life.



[PG Nops Scenic Reserve Walk](#)

### [Shirley-Ann and Rick Mannering](#)

combine running a productive sheep, beef and dairy operation in Paparimu, along with a campaign to rid predators. When they saw the significant drop in the possum population after an Auckland Council campaign, they scaled up their own efforts, added a QEII grant, and up-scaled again.

Neil Chesterton leads a group at PG Nops Reserve Inglewood, to restore the bush. They meet on the last Sunday of the month, at the entrance on Tawa Street from just before 2pm – 4pm, any age volunteer is welcome.

Rosanna Jessop is completing a dissertation research project on the control and eradication of Wallaby in Aotearoa

<https://forms.office.com/r/eALFw1gZw4>.

She is able to provide further details from the University Committee [rosannajessop@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rosannajessop@hotmail.co.uk).

Anna Wentsch of Conservation Amplified has released a [podcast](#) of Dan Henry discussing how they eradicated rats in the Miramar Peninsula, Wellington

Derek Whitehead [popokatea@gmail.com](mailto:popokatea@gmail.com) has some tiny renga renga seedlings (also known as NZ rock lily or *Arthropodium cirratum*) free to a good home.

Amy Mills has created a [Birds NZ facebook](#) page to highlight Taranaki birdlife and birding events, and also a small group of people who are astonishingly knowledgeable about hotspots for different birds locally.





## FROM THE COMMITTEE ...

### 2026 F&B Diaries &

**Calendars:** We are ordering a few, please confirm with Dawn if you want one by the end of August, or you can order through the F&B website.

### Who's who at North Taranaki F&B & KCC

Chair: Janica Amooore

Treasurer: Dawn Mills

Committee Members: Peter Winter, Karen Hamer, Janet Fleury, Anne Collins

KCC: Lee McCracken

The Committee meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday each month – please contact any committee member with ideas or suggestions [northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz), or add photos and stories to <https://www.facebook.com/forestandbirdtaranaki/>

Secretary: Amy Mills

Newsletter: Debra Hitchcock

### Good Nature A24 Traps:

We have made a bulk purchase of gas cylinders. Contact Dawn via the branch email if you wish to purchase any. They are \$4 each, for either one cylinder or up to one or more boxes of 20 cylinders.

**Books available to borrow:** Copies of the late Audrey Eagle's two volume 'Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand' were gifted to the branch by Audrey before she left New Plymouth for the South Island. They are now available for members to borrow on request. If you would like to borrow them, please contact the branch secretary to arrange.

**Publication Date:** 2006

**Extent:** 2 volumes, 1114 pp in total

**Illustrations:** 500 full-colour

**Format:** 280 mm x 230 mm portrait

**Binding:** 2 hardbacks in a slipcase

**ISBN:** 9780909010089

**NZ RRP** (incl. GST): \$250.00

**Out of print.**

This beautiful two-volume set brings together Audrey Eagle's botanical artworks from her best-selling 1975 and 1983 publications. It includes over 170 new paintings, bringing the total number of plants to more than 800, all in colour and life-size. Flowers, fruits, and other features are shown in superb detail.

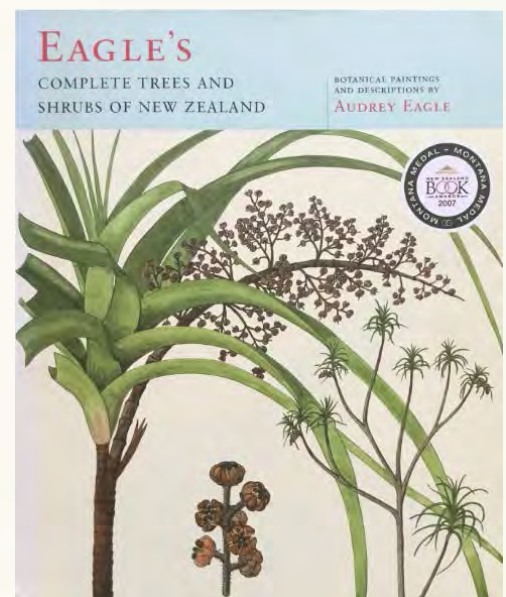
Comprehensive notes, written in consultation with expert botanists, accompany the illustrations. They provide up-to-date information on each plant's habitat, distribution, identification, nomenclature, and more.

This set represents Audrey Eagle's life's work. It is an outstanding contribution to botany in New Zealand - and an essential addition to any library.

Winner of the Montana Medal for Non-fiction 2007 and winner of the Illustrative section of the Montana New Zealand Book Awards 2007.

In addition, this book also won three awards in the Spectrum Print Book Design Awards 2007; Best Book, Best cover and Best Illustrated Book. The designers are Neil Pardington of Base Two (covers) and Robyn Sivewright of Afineline (interiors).

[Eagle's Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand | Te Papa](#)



*Editor's Note: Thank you to Janet Hunt for being the Newsletter editor for the last 12 years ... you have set a very high bar to follow, and thank you to Marion Adlam for delivering copies of these.*

*Newsletters are intended to be issued quarterly.*



## Kiwi Conservation Club - Hakuturi Toa

### What we've been up to

### **Learning about Rongoa - Saturday 24 May 2025**

We were blessed to have Whaea Marie, a very knowledgeable educator, take us on a walk in Barretts Domain and explain about the many uses of some of our native plants. The children tried particular leaves and berries and also enjoyed tasting some kawakawa juice which Whaea Marie had made for them prior to coming.

The parents took lots of notes! A very enjoyable learning experience.

### **Kiwi Tracking Dog - Saturday 14 June 2025**

Sian Potier, Taranaki Kiwi Trust, brought her kiwi tracking dog Kiekie along to meet us. Kiekie is a full of energy 4-year-old German short-haired Pointer. Sian talked to us about the training of Kiekie to get her accredited and also about the work Kiekie does in kiwi relocations.

After the talk Sian demonstrated how Kiekie works. We were all enthralled at how she races around so fast, then slows down as she approaches what she has found, then just lays down when she has found "the kiwi / burrow" and waits for Sian to catch up ☺

Interested in joining KCC - for ages 5 - 13 years? Visit [About – Kiwi Conservation Club](#) to find out more.

~ Lee McCracken



Kiekie and friends

Copyright Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International



*You may distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator.*