



Golden Striped Gecko –
Te Wairoa Reserve

North Taranaki Forest & Bird Newsletter Spring 2025

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UPCOMING EVENTS

22 November Combined Christmas with South Taranaki F&B



A visit to either [Colliers Bush](#) or the [Totara Block](#) – with a stay overnight for those that are keen.

- BBQ dinner (Smoker available)
- Vehicle access available to the site for less abled.
- Please register interest for further details.

7-9 March 2026 Taranaki Anniversary Ruapehu Visit

We are heading to Whakapapa for the long weekend, staying in the [F&B Ruapehu Lodge](#). A great opportunity to experience the varied & beautiful central plateau.

The Lodge is near Whakapapa Village with varied-length walks such as Silica Rapids, Taranaki Falls & Tama Lakes. The Gondola is a great way to access more walks & a cafe, & sunsets are wonderful. Whakapapa Village has cafes & ice-creams plus Waimarino (National Park) is just down the road. There is something for everyone.

The Lodge has heaps of space; a well-equipped kitchen, great dining area with a deck and a choice of 3 lounges - one with Ruapehu views. For sleeping there are a mix of rooms and a semi-divided bunk room. There are ample showers, a drying room & free WIFI. Self-catering, bring own bedding plus towels etc. Own transport, but carpooling will be explored as will interesting stops on the way.



Taranaki Falls

- Please register interest with northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz for further details.

Recent & Upcoming Calendar – F&B & friends

- July 16 Pest Management Programme – Te Ara o te Ata
- August 6 Night Tour – [Rotokare](#)
- 20 Talk: Predator Free Programme - NPDC
- Sept 3 [Youth Voices in Biodiversity Restoration](#)
- 5 Open Day
- 6 Cleanup @ Ngāmotu Beach – [Sustainable Taranaki](#)
- 7 Volunteer Trapper Hui – [East Taranaki Environment Collective](#)
- 11 Taranaki Science Symposium – [Venture Taranaki](#)
- 21 Working Bee: Te Wairoa Joint F&B & WITT student
- 18 Online Wetlands Talk – [Wild for Taranaki](#)
- 15-29 [Bird of the Year](#) voting
- 24 Talk: Taranaki Tūturiwhatu (NZ dotterel): A fragile success story
- October 9 Biodiversity Forum – [Wild for Taranaki](#)
- 15 Talk: – [East Taranaki Environment Collective](#)
- 19 Taranaki Kiwi Trust AGM Hawera
- 22 [Biosecurity Showcase](#) -
- 24 Applications close for free [Browning Trail Cameras](#)
- 30 [Wild for Taranaki](#) AGM
- 31 Applications close [for International Terre de Femmes Award](#) (women committed to nature)
- 31-Nov 9 [Taranaki Sustainable](#) Backyards Trails
- Nov 5 Botanical artist Emily Harris – [Puke Ariki](#)
- 6 Biodiversity Corridors – [Wild for Taranaki](#)
- 8 Seedsavers Workshop in Waitara – [Sustainable Taranaki](#)
- 12 & 15 Regenerative Farm Tour – [Sustainable Backyards](#)
- 14 Environmental Awards - [TRC](#)
- 22 Christmas BBQ – [South Taranaki F&B](#)
- 2026 Feb Possible joint wetland trip
- Mar 7 Ruapehu Visit Taranaki Anniversary Weekend



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RECENT TALKS

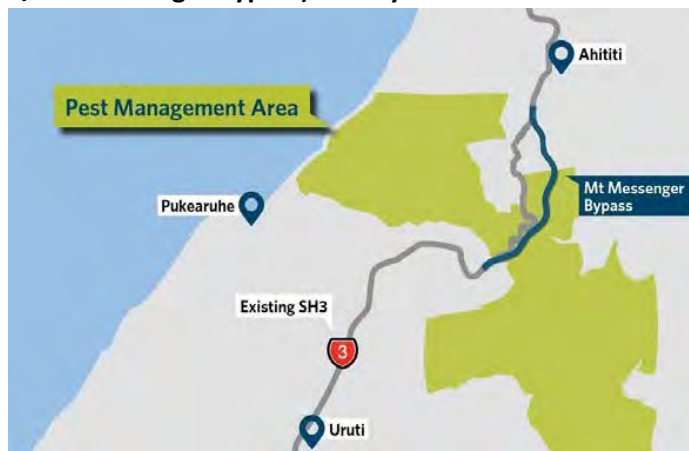
16 July Pest Management Programme Te Ara o te Ata (Parininihi/Mt Messenger Bypass) – Stacy Lockie & Conrad O’Carroll

During road construction through native bush, standard practice has been for Waka Kotahi to plant native seedlings to offset bush lost. But, no new seedlings could become productive bush as quickly as effective pest management can on the existing 3650ha ngahere – get rid of the rats and the undergrowth in the bush will repair itself. So, that was the philosophy developed in partnership with Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust and Ngāti Tama – who had already been active in trapping on the west (seaward) side of the highway.

Stringent pest eradication, and in perpetuity, are requirements of the project. The Environmental

Court required targets include: at the start of the breeding season in November [tracking tunnels](#) are to provide evidence that no more than 5% of their surface is covered by pest footprints.

Stacey is employed by the Mt Messenger Alliance as Operations Manager for the Pest Management Team, and Conrad has had a long-term involvement in kaitiaki of the bush in this area & is the Field Lead in this project. Trapping has been used since 2007 to initially protect kiwi from stoats, and in 2017 [kōkako](#) birds were re-introduced in a very good-news story. Another species being supported by trapping are pekapeka/bats, who have a wide-ranging territory. The Team are aiming for 2 traps per hectare, but in practice because of the rough terrain a lot of the traps are near the boundaries. Boundaries can only be fencelines, there are no natural boundaries such as cliffs or rivers to protect re-infestation, so developing relationships and further pest management plans with surrounding farms is integral to success. Some cameras have been attached to the bait stations, so that behaviour can be observed and evidence-based improvements made. Rats learn, so baits need to be changed, generally in a 3 year cycle. A cereal-based bait is helpful in that it can be carried away, but less helpful in that it can go mouldy in wet weather, & rats can learn to avoid cereals. Paste bait



The project - Te Ara o te Ata

lasts better, but it takes time to work and also can't be removed from the bait station. Cameras showed that a dominant rat would defend the paste bait station and prevent other rats from accessing the bait.

While this project has had a remarkable success, a couple of cautionary comments were that improvements in technology are important – especially in monitoring and recording, to help evidence-driven decisions. Also, that control of pigs and other ungulates (mammals with hooves), requires a national consensus decision – currently there is the camp who wants them eradicated and the camp who wants them managed for harvesting.



Janica of F&B welcoming participants to the first Soup & Talk evening for this winter

20 August Toward's Predator Free Taranaki – Jenaya Munro

In 2016 Prime Minister John Key launched [Predator Free 2050](#). In 2018 the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) committed \$11.7 million to the goal, and in 2020 the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) signed a 3-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TRC to be part of the programme. Jenaya is the Coordinator for NPDC and looks after 2000 hectares and 2000 traps with mainly 130 volunteers looking after 1587 traps and bait stations. This is to deal with possums, mustelids and rats. The traps are checked monthly, or more often, with reporting available on the [trap.nz](#) app.



Trap.nz screenshot

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September - Taranaki Tūturiwhatu (New Zealand Dotterel): A fragile success story – Dr Emily Roberts

These birds are funny creatures. They really don't have nests. What they do have, is on the beach they scoop out a tiny bit of sand to make a depression and lay 1-3 eggs, 4 weeks later (if still there) the eggs hatch and 6 weeks later (if still there) the fledglings are big enough to fly. In Taranaki this happens between late September to late March.

Previously they mainly lived up north, now, maybe with warmer conditions down here or maybe because of recovering populations up north, there are more on our local beaches. We have around 50 tūturiwhatu now, which is around 15 breeding pairs. Hopefully, they 'nest' mainly above the high tide mark, and hopefully people can be encouraged to move mainly below the high mark, and keep dogs and horses under control and vehicles off the beaches between September and March – because Emily knows that is what is needed for these birds to survive and thrive here. A few more nikau palms to hide eggs from avian predators would be helpful too. [NZ Tracker](#) is one way you can check to see if you may have these birds around, and checking up with [Te Whānau Toroa](#) - Wild for Taranaki is another.



Jenaya with Anne of F&B

Rats produce a litter of around 6-12 young per year, and live up to 18 months. To effectively become predator free, Jenaya also recommends each home use a rat trap and check it routinely. She says a full or waning moon is the best time for catching rats, and the TRC have a useful [Trapping Guide](#).

KEEPING OUR BEACHES BIRD-FRIENDLY:

We share our beaches with penguins & other birds, and it is sad when we hear of penguin deaths such as:

[Roving dogs suspects in penguin killings | Stuff](#); [Public encouraged to help protect little blue penguins in Taranaki | Stuff](#) & [Little blue penguin dies from injuries, footage of 'suspicious vehicle activity' sought - NZ Herald](#).

What we can do to try & avoid this is:

- Talk to friends & whānau about staying below the high-tide mark, especially during breeding seasons between August & April.
- Where dogs or vehicles are prohibited, & this is ignored, if it doesn't feel right to talk to the people involved you can take photos of number plates to send to DOC/NPDC.



Penguin & human footprints
Labour Weekend 2025 Mokau



Sign at Wai-iti Beach, Uruti

15 October East Taranaki Environment Collective – Kat Strang

This collective started in in 2004 with 18,000 hectares in Purangi. Kat as Conservation Manager of the Collective works with 40 landowners and 3 iwi. The location and shape of the land means it is not practical to use volunteers to manage the traps. Her solution: work with the farmers and their teenagers. The teenagers do the rural equivalent of a paper run – they manage the 2000 traps at \$2.50 per trap, and their parents are both appreciative and supportive.

Kat also is involved in [Everett Park](#) and the [Pouiatoa Conservation Area](#). Together, this is an eastern Taranaki hill bush corridor allowing wildlife movement between Parinihi/Mt Messenger and the Whanganui National Park.

One useful event has been a Fun Run in June in Everett Park, helping raise awareness and funds without causing harm to the environment. One success has been increasing sightings of pīpīwharau/roa /shining cuckoos from 1 bird to 11 birds within a 2-year timeframe, and releases of lizards and kōkako. This has been possible because of reduction in predators – mice, rats, possums, mustelids and feral cats (traps are checked to ensure domestic cats aren't destroyed). In 2025, Everett Park tracking tunnels showed rats on only 6% - down from 72% in 2021. Pouiatoa however has really high rat levels this year, and 1080 will be used to address this.



Kat Strang

Predator Story:

In Australia, efforts were made to exterminate the apex predator – dingos. Afterwards the population of foxes increased, they are the next-highest predator. Effort was then put into exterminating foxes. Once dingoes and foxes were both reduced, [feral cats became more abundant](#) being the new, next-highest predator. Moral of the story – keep recording and analysing data and make evidence-based decisions, and don't develop eradication campaigns in isolation. Stoats are larger than weasels. An anecdote is that when a local stoat population reduced, and the neighbouring weasels gained better access to food sources, the weasels increased in size.

Feral cats are clever, don't like humans and try to avoid anything that looks human. It is best for any campaign to catch them to be done over winter when they are hungry and before the bird breeding season starts. It is necessary to make any plan as robust as possible, as cats are not likely to fall for the same plan a second time.

A past life researching feral cats means Kat is happy to receive any fresh, or frozen, dead feral cats or mustelids. She is keen to check their stomach contents.

Feral cats do not control rat or mice populations; the rat and mice breed too fast. Feral cats do reduce native species which have a slower breeding rate, and their scat can contain Toxoplasmosis which can kill kiwi, dolphins and pregnant or immunocompromised people [Brutal truths: 7 feral cat facts - Predator Free NZ Trust](#).

F&B run the “Bird of the Year” campaign to highlight our amazing manu and the risks they face from predation and habitat loss, and how we can help.
This year's winner is [Kārearea / NZ Falcon](#)



Buller's Birds of New Zealand, 1888

NORTH TARANAKI F&B RESERVES

Te Wairoa (Lepperton) – WITT Student Support & Volunteers Working Bee

About a year ago Powerco needed to cut down the trees growing on part of the reserve as unfortunately the powerlines go across a bank and the



Before: hydrangeas and Himalayan honeysuckle mixed with woolly nightshade. A weedy mess!



The students get in there...

The next step is to re-plant with suitable low-growing natives and another WITT student has actioned this as a part of her course work. ~ Karen Hamer

Note: Wandering Willie / tradescantia biological control – tradescantia is rampant in wet, shady areas and hard to remove completely. Manaaki Whenua / Landcare Research have [identified beetles and rust](#) which are highly host-specific, so can only eat and damage tradescantia. These beetles and rust can be collected from established populations, and distributed as appropriate.



trees were getting too tall. The bank is not easy to access for the regular volunteers and a whole lot of weeds had grown up into the space. On August 29 some level 4 WITT ecology students eager to gain experience proved up to the task and spent the day making a massive improvement. The WITT students are enthusiastic and we thank them for them volunteering their time and energy.

If you can help with the weeding and trapping roster, please contact northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz.



... after, weeds are gone!!!



Awesome work, the rain held off almost until the finish, very successful day

21 September – Joint WITT Student & F&B Te Wairoa Working Bee & Planting

High winds on 13th September meant the F&B Working Bee was rescheduled to 21 September and it became a joint WITT students and F&B working bee. Volunteers brought gumboots; gloves; tools; water bottles and enthusiasm.

There was a sausage sizzle at lunchtime to keep us going.

A possum ramp was installed thanks to Joshua.

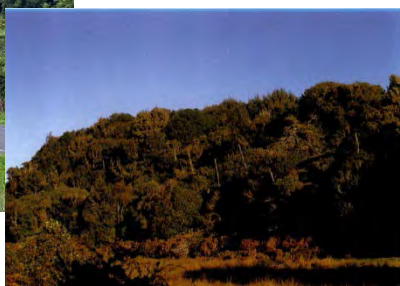
Fence-line & green goddess plant clearing thanks to Janica, Dawn and Karen, and track cleared thanks to Nico. Thanks to Debra & Neil for the barbeque and cooking, and Peter for arranging the portable toilet plus removal of black bags of tradescantia. ~ Karen Hamer



Cleared
fenceline and
new possum
ramp



The new plants!



A look back to May 1988

Tom and Don's (Okato)

22 September – TRC did possum monitoring at Tom & Dons and there were no possums, so that is good news given that the reserve is in the zero possum area.

10 October – I went out with Jess last month and she marked the areas of Japanese honeysuckle and contractors will spray it at some point. I have not been able to get out there since but will change out the A24 CO₂ & lure as soon as I can. ~ Karen Hamer



Health & Safety Talk



Planting on the hill

Three Flipping Timmys possum traps have just been purchased for Te Wairoa.

Peter has recommended: "boring the back [top] side out to 100mm and covering it with wire netting so the possum can see through the trap. I have two FTs and neither of them caught anything until I did this. Instant success."



Modified Flipping Timmy

There is additional guidance here:

[*Flipping Timmy possum trap*](#)
[*- Predator Free NZ Trust*](#)

FROM THE COMMITTEE ...

Some F&B calendars and diaries are available for purchase.

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

Chair: Janica Amoore

Secretary: Amy Mills

Treasurer: Dawn Mills

Newsletter: Debra Hitchcock

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

KCC: Lee McCracken

The Committee Meeting is on the 4th Wednesday each month – please contact any committee member with any suggestions northtaranaki.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

If you are able to receive this newsletter via email, please let us know as it will help reduce our costs.

A concern was raised from a member about quantities of whitebait being caught in the Awakino Awa to on-sell. The suggestion was whitebait would benefit from regulations mandating personal use only and sales not permitted. This is the same non-commercial protection [trout](#) have. This recommendation has been sent to the National Office for consideration.

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.

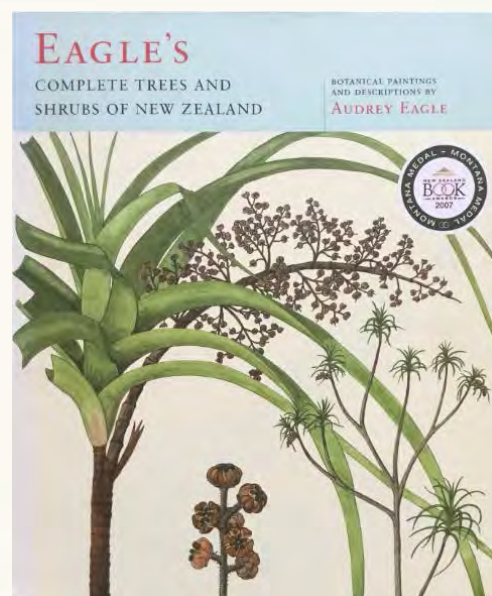
This beautiful two-volume set brings together Audrey Eagle's botanical artworks from her best-selling 1975 and 1983 publications. It includes over 170 new paintings, bringing the total number of plants to more than 800, all in colour and life-size. Flowers, fruits, and other features are shown in superb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



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



Kiwi Conservation Club - Hakuturi Toa

What we've been up to:

Plant Propagation Workshop - Saturday 26 July 2025

KCC kids were so grateful to our local Chair and her expertise as a local nursery owner to lead this activity for us.

Children learnt about what plants need to grow, different ways to grow more plants, looked at leaves, fruit and seeds, growing plants from cuttings and they were all into the hands on activity of taking some cuttings and potting them up to take home and nurture.

Native Orchid Hunt - Saturday 25 October 2025

Pukeiti will be the ideal spot for our orchid hunt this month. We will be joined by a well known plant enthusiast who will share her knowledge with the KCC'ers on what to look for. This will be a great opportunity for the KCC'ers to learn to slow down and look at the little things – the things they often walk or run past and overlook.

Coming Up:

February 2026

We will be learning to snorkel and will take a look at the Ngāmotu reef, under the guidance and supervision of the Ngāmotu Marine Society.

Interested in joining KCC – for ages 5 – 13 years? Visit <https://kcc.org.nz/about/> to find out more.

~ Lee McCracken

Editor's note: I wanted to provide some useful detail on the current state of the Trans-Tasman Resources application for mining in the Taranaki seabed, but found an overload of somewhat conflicting detail on the internet. After a decade of detail, the case is currently going through a hearing process under the [Fast Track Approvals Act 2024](#). A decision is not expected until 2026, as independent cost analysis detail is being collected. Using an [Evaluation Framework](#), here are two reasonable summaries of the current status: [Lack of current data, clarity in seabed mining fast-track application – report | The Post](#); [Seabed mine hearing exposes fast-track cost check concerns](#)

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