



February 2026 NEWSLETTER

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Message from F&B Manawatū Chair

Welcome everyone to this new year.

What incredibly topsy-turvy weather there has been so far and what a terrible time for our fauna and flora with all the uncertainty of hot and cold temperatures, unpredictable amounts of moisture and wind events.

Excessive wind has caused havoc in our region to both native and exotic trees. Now excessive rain has created a disaster for much of the north of Te-Ika-a-Maui. Fortunately we do seem to avoid the weather extremes felt in other parts of our motu.

A brief window of nice sunny weather gave me the opportunity for a bit of camping which included a night at Lake Rotokare in the Taranaki. This is a large predator free sanctuary which incorporates hundreds of hectares of bush around the lake and the birdlife is outstanding. Now I can cross hearing the dawn chorus at Rotokare off my bucket list.

We are welcoming new volunteers to our working bees on alternate Fridays in the Poutoa Walkway gullies, Summerhill, where we are working with PNCC to restore the native vegetation. It has been a wilderness of blackberry, convolvulus, old mans beard, honeysuckle, ivy, muehlenbeckia and more!

We are going into our fourth year there now and we are starting to see results.

Many thanks
Margaret, Chairperson



February 2026

Tuesday 10th February from 7.00.pm.
PN City Library, George Street Entrance, Palmerston North

Talk: Southern Ruahine Kiwi

Speaker: Robert Gibb, Ruahine Kiwi Project Lead



Southern Ruahine Kiwi (SRK) is partnering with ENM to become an independent Charitable Trust grounded in local iwi values and aspirations. Once home to kiwi, the southern Ruahine Ranges have been without them for more than 50 years due to predators. SRK is leading a collaborative effort to bring kiwi back and over 2,000 traps are now in place.

Robert will talk about the work in 2025 with Save the Kiwi to develop comprehensive plans for pest management and environmental monitoring, exciting new tech on the horizon, progress with setting up a charitable trust, funding successes and what we are doing with the money raised. There is still work to be done with funders to back the full plan and create jobs for fieldworkers. In the meantime, we are pulling out all the stops to keep the momentum going.

All welcome. Gold coin donation appreciated

If you would like to stay in touch, please sign up to our
Mailing list on our website: www.naturesvoicemanawatu.org.nz

F&B MANAWATŪ FEBRUARY 2026 TRIP TO EXPLORE KEEBLES BUSH

Saturday 21st February 2026



Join Forest & Bird Manawatū to visit Keeble's Bush, which is normally closed to the public. Keeble's Bush is a 23 hectare protected bush reserve considered to be one of the finest examples of podocarp/broadleaf lowland forest in the Manawatū. It is privately owned and managed by the C.T. Keeble Memorial Forest Trust for scientific purposes. Restoration efforts include weed and pest control. You will look at the riparian-strip restoration-planting, then into the main bush

DEPT. TIME: **1000** sharp on Saturday 21st February 2026

MEET & CAR POOLING FROM: Opposite Salvation Army shop,
Church St. Palmerston North

What to bring: Please bring Gumboots or sturdy boots, snacks, water, raincoat/warm clothes, walking stick (if you use one)

Type of terrain: The ground we walk over is fairly level but is rough and uneven underfoot. The bush area does not have formed tracks and there may be a stream crossing if the water is low.

Duration: The tour of Keebles will take about 2 hours

SPACES ARE LIMITED PLEASE CONTACT BRONWYN TO REGISTER FOR TRIP –

Contact: 027 435 8008 or manawatu.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

FOREST & BIRD MANAWATŪ NOTE CARDS (sold in a pack of 5)

IMAGES OF THE F&B MANAWATŪ NOTE CARDS



We will be selling our Note Cards at the Monthly Meeting – see Anthea at the meeting

- These will only be sold in a pack of 5 cards – see above the images on the cards
- The cost for the pack is \$10.00
- It will be cash sales only. We are not offering internet banking on the cards
- If you wish to buy a pack/s between meetings, please contact manawatu.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Vote for the Avatar moth for Bug of the Year .



*Photo by Birgit Rhodes
(male)*

Forest & Bird is backing the avatar moth – a tiny, beautiful, day-flying moth that lives only on the Denniston Plateau.

It was discovered in 2012 and named after the film because its home – like Pandora – is under threat from a mining company.

The entire known habitat of the avatar moth fits within a single plateau under active mining pressure. It is, quite literally, one bulldozer away from extinction.

By voting in Bug of the Year, you can help rewrite the ending for this species – and shine a national spotlight on why the Denniston Plateau is too important to mine. Get your vote in for the avatar moth now!

Voting closes midnight, 16 Feb 2026. <https://bugoftheyear.ento.org.nz/vote-here-2026/>

Please note: the voting platform works best when using Chrome as the web browser.

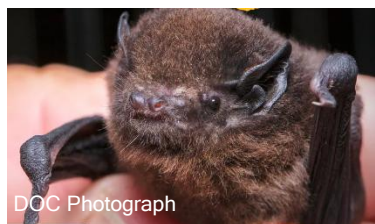
Need funding for your environmental project? (up to \$15,000) apply before 15 March. **Environmental Initiatives Fund** administered by Environment Network Manawātū (ENM). <https://pncc.smartygrants.com.au/Large-25-26>

Simplifying Local Government Proposal: Central Government wants to remove regional councillors and instead have all the mayors in a region work together as one team to make regional decisions. Submissions close on 20 February and ENM is submitting against the proposal. ENM believe it risks weakening environmental protection <https://www.enm.org.nz/about/resources/current-submissions/submission-environment-network-manawatu-simplifying-local-government-proposal>

DOC Wellington (which includes the Manawatū) are seeking board members for the Wellington Conservation Board. DOC are seeking someone with Manu whenua connections or legal background or policy or all of the before mentioned!

Contact sally@leesolutions.co.nz if you're interested.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/>



Exciting news from the Manawatū River Catchments Collective—another catchment has been confirmed as home to the long-tailed native bat, the Pekapeka. This population has been identified on the bush edge of native forest alongside the Oroua River in Apiti. Thanks to the great work of local farmers, and support from Horizons, the bush area has now been fully fenced to keep deer out, protecting both existing forest and newly planted trees.



Kākāpō only breed every two to four years and this year's season could be the best yet following a bumper mast, or mass fruiting of rimu berries.

They are predominately based on Whenua Hou, three kilometres west of Stewart Island/Rakiura, with two other breeding populations on Fiordland's Pukenui/Anchor Island and Te Kākāhu/Chalky Island. You can now watch Kakapo live Cam at:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/BfGL7A2YgUY> or

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/kakapo-recovery/what-we-do/kakapo-cam-rakiura-live-stream/>



A huge milestone has been reached for the toroa/albatross colony on Otago Peninsula with the hatching of the 1000th chick.

"We've had chicks popping out, sometimes four at a time, so it's been super busy. We carefully manage each one, watching the first signs, the eggs cracking as the chicks start the process of hatching. We can hear them 'pipping' as they prepare to hatch so they do give us a bit of warning," DOC Biodiversity Ranger Sharyn Broni says. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2026-media-releases/1000th-toroaalbatross-chick-hatches-at-pukekurataiaroa-head/>

Forest & Bird is concerned government changes to the planning system will increase the risk of permanent damage to wildlife and native habitats.

The conservation organisation said the decision to weaken national environmental direction removes vital safeguards New Zealanders expect, with chief adviser Richard Capie saying the government is declaring a "war on nature".

Last week, the coalition celebrated changes to the Resource Management Act coming into force that make it easier to consent to mines and quarries.

The government said the changes will help create jobs by ensuring essential materials for infrastructure can be produced.

Forest & Bird has criticised the removal of the criteria to show mining projects deliver a national or public benefit. (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/584517/war-on-nature-forest-and-bird-says-govt-changes-put-wildlife-at-risk>)

Meet the 52 year old plaque that's just been restored



Forest & Bird Kāpiti-Mana Branch organised a blessing for a restored plaque celebrating our founder, Captain Val Sanderson.

Captain Val started Forest & Bird to provide a voice for nature after seeing the destruction of native flora and fauna on Kāpiti island from invasive pests.

He was dedicated to building a movement to defend the taonga of te taiao nature.

Sanderson built close bonds with iwi of Kāpiti and spent years as President of Forest & Bird to amplify nature's voice.

It was a true pleasure to restore this plaque, first installed 52 years ago. The project was led by branch chair Pene Burton Bell, the Kāpiti Coast District Council, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira. Justin, Sanderson's grandson, was even in attendance like he was back in 1973 as a child!

Next time you're in Paraparaumu, keep an eye out for this small but mighty token of our appreciation at MacLean Park

WORKING BEES

- [F&B Poutoa bush restoration](#) –Every second Friday morning 9 – 11 a.m.
Contact: 022 473 1096 or margaret51mckenzie@gmail.com
- [Ahimate Reserve](#)
- [Dune Gardens, Foxton.](#)
- [Green Corridors Summerhill](#) Help maintain corridors of native trees.
- [Apollo Butterfly Park](#) Planting for Monarch butterflies, etc..
- Growing natives from eco-sourced seed.
- [Pit Park Roslyn](#) A restored urban native bush habitat.
- [Manawatū Estuary Trust](#) - **Most Sundays** keeping exotic species out of the wetland

MARCH 2026 MONTHLY MEETING

**Tuesday 10th March 2026 from 7.00 p.m.
Palmerston North City Library – George Street entrance**

Talk: Bryophytes – difference between mosses and liverworts

Speaker: Leon Perrie, Curator of Botany, Te Papa

(This talk is to be confirmed)



Marchantia sp., a thalloid liverwort. Kapiti Coast. Photo by Lara Shepherd. Te Papa



Dicranoloma menziesii.
Photo Leon Perrie. © Te Papa

Leon will talk about the difference between these species

That is all for this month. Hope to see you at our meeting in February

Best wishes

Nigel

Nigel Fitzpatrick

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