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APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

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Message from F&B Manawātū Chair

There's not a lot to report this month except that I had a super meeting with our Manawātū Kids Conservation Club Coordinator. She is doing a terrific job with our Forest and Bird families, giving the children experiences in the outdoors.

She also likes to do crafting sessions with the children and has asked for old F and B and KCC magazines to be donated to the Club.

If you are able to help **please bring these craft resources to our monthly meetings** at the Library and I will get them to her.

Margaret McKenzie
Chairperson



APRIL 2026 MONTHLY MEETING and AGM

Tuesday 14th April from 7.00 p.m.
PN City Library, George Street Entrance, Palmerston North

The Manawatū Branch **AGM will start at 7.15 p.m.**
followed by the Monthly Talk
(The talk only will be streamed via **zoom starting about 7.30 p.m.**)

Talk: Agapanthus: Friend or Foe?

Speaker: Murray Dawson AHRH, MNZM, Cultivated plants project manager
Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture



Beaurepaires Agapanthus White cultivar Murray crossing agapanthus
Photo: M. Dawson
Photo: Rachel Innes

Kiwis have a dramatic love-hate relationship with agapanthus, however, there is more to their story than these polarising perceptions. In his talk, botanist Murray Dawson will explore the good, the bad and the ugly of agapanthus and will highlight the recent breeding of sterile 'eco-friendly' selections. These new seedless/low seed-set cultivars provide a win:win for both horticulture and the environment.

Join Zoom Meeting from 7.30 p.m.

[https://forestandbird-org-nz.zoom.us/j/86596818635?
pwd=TetwXJaaEiRxugh87W65lsmbqtzSWC.1](https://forestandbird-org-nz.zoom.us/j/86596818635?pwd=TetwXJaaEiRxugh87W65lsmbqtzSWC.1)

Meeting ID: 865 9681 8635

Passcode: 528058

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



May Monthly Meeting 2026

Tuesday 12th May from 7.00 p.m.

Palmerston North City Library - George Street entrance

The talk will be streamed via zoom

Talk: The Natural World of Moonshine Valley

Speaker: Barry Scott, Conservationist, Palmerston North



This talk will provide an overview of the natural world of two PNCC reserves in Moonshine Valley (Aokautere) – Moonshine Valley and Tutukiwi – and efforts to restore and protect the flora and fauna. These reserves comprise remnant podocarp forest which was once dominant throughout this region.

Moonshine Valley reserve (4 Ha) is a small strip of land that runs across the valley from the East to the West and will in the future provide a walkway link between Pacific Drive and Polson Hill. Tutukiwi (13 Ha) is the more significant piece of forest with some magnificent rimu, kahikatea, hīnau, totara and tawa trees. The reserve is named after the native orchid *Pterostylis banksia* found along the Mangaotane/Bryants stream which flows through this reserve. The stream has kōura (freshwater crayfish), kākahi (freshwater mussels), giant kōkopu and tuna/longfin eel.

All welcome. Gold coin donation appreciated

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F&B MANAWATŪ APRIL 2026 TRIP

Sunday 19th April 2026

Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre|Mt Bruce, Wairapapa



Pukaha Mount Bruce is more than just a wildlife sanctuary; it is a collaborative endeavor that brings together the Department of Conservation, the National Wildlife Centre Trust, and Rangitaane o Wairarapa.

A visit to Pukaha Mount Bruce is the chance to witness some of New Zealand's rarest species up close. From the elusive kiwi bird to the playful kākā, the sanctuary is home to an array of unique wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else on mainland New Zealand. Visit our many aviaries, then check out the kiwi nursery where they raise kiwi chicks for release. We have a guided trip arranged for 2pm.

DEPT. TIME: 0900 a.m sharp

Palmerston North – MEET & CAR POOL 0900 a.m. at Opposite Salvation Army shop, Church St. Palmerston North

Feilding: 09.00 a.m. MEET & CAR POOL from Railway Station carpark

WHAT TO BRING: good walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, walking stick (if you use one), water, snacks and do not forget your camera. Bring your own lunch or you can buy your lunch at the Cafe

Required fitness level: Easy (there are some hilly sections)

TO REGISTER FOR TRIP – please contact:

Rosemary: 021 476 731 or cullenrjr@gmail.com

If you would like to stay in touch, please sign up to our
Mailing list on our website: www.naturesvoicemanawatu.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 below 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
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Nature Calls & Regional Pest Management Plan

You are invited to attend an evening of discussion and consultation on two important policies under consideration by our city and regional councils. This is a special opportunity to hear from experts and decision-makers about wastewater and pest management policies that will affect the health of the catchment for years to come. Your specific experience and local knowledge is invaluable to this endeavour.

The event will run from **5.30pm to 8.30pm on Monday the 13th of April** at the Wilkins Theatre at **Te Manawa Museum**.

PNCC will present first on Nature Calls, a \$480 million project about the future of how we discharge our wastewater. PNCC will invite feedback on Nature Calls soon and this meeting will help to provide insight on [Nature Calls](#).

Environment Network Manawatū will provide dinner, then Horizons representatives will speak and consult on the [Regional Pest Management Plan Review](#).

Nature has the power to protect local communities from the impacts of climate change while boosting biodiversity and human wellbeing.



Nature-based solutions: a Forest and Bird Campaign to promote investing in essential natural infrastructure to keep us safe and healthy. Submitting on draft annual plans, <https://www.pncc.govt.nz/Have-your-say/Draft-annual-budget-2026-27>, or Manawatū District Council who are redeveloping their Strategic Goals <https://makeyourmark.manawatudc.govt.nz/mdc-strategic-goals> and voting helps local government support this. See <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/campaigns/choose-nature-based-solutions> for more information on this campaign

Northland Mudfish wins fish of the year



The Northland (or burgundy) mudfish is found only within a 25 km radius of Lake Omapere. If their wetland home dries up, they simply bury themselves in damp mud or logs and breathe through their skin until the water returns!

Sadly, they face big challenges from farming, weeds, and the aggressive introduced mosquito fish and are a key indicator of Northland wetland environment's health.

(Photo and story from <https://www.mountainstosea.org.nz/fish-of-the-year>)

More than 100 kākāpō chicks hatch in record-breaking breeding season



Photo: Maddy Whittaker / DOC

With 78 females nesting across Whenua Hou islands, the 100th chick of the 2026 breeding season hatched making 2026 the biggest ever kākāpō breeding season on record. Because there are many potential pitfalls for the newly hatched chicks, they don't get counted as adults until they reach 150 days of age, and are independent. For the first chicks hatched this year, that's around

mid-July.

(<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/590633/over-100-kakapo-chicks-hatch-in-record-breaking-breeding-season>)

Native speargrass and other plants survives Tongariro inferno virtually unscathed



Doc photo

“Key species such as red tussock, which is a major component of the ecosystem there, was regenerating within six weeks of the November fire across a really wide area, ” said DOC technical advisor and botanist, Paul Cashmore.

Volcanic Plateau Speargrass, which is one of the threatened native North Island endemic species that occurs in the area, appeared to have survived the fire. ...

"One of our memorable experiences in the field was walking into a completely intact stand of Hall's tōtara, with a chorus of native birds including toutouwai/robin."

"Remnant patches of vegetation like this act as refuges where flora and fauna have survived, which can assist with natural recolonising of the burnt area."

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/589882/native-speargrass-survives-tongariro-inferno-virtually-unscathed-report-reveals>



Roberts Line Planting grows from a difficult start in 1990

In 1990, at the age of 18, I planted a small 2-acre bush lot on my parent's farmland in Roberts Line, Palmerston North.

It was a bare plot, equally spread over both sides of a pond that used to frequently dry out completely over summer. My first plantings suffered from a

particularly dry first summer, but also a very wet and windy winter, losses were high, and I learnt what trees or bushes stood the greatest chance of survival. Watering over summer relied on me carrying two buckets of water from a further pond, some distance.

Flax, manuka/kanuka, pittosporums (*tenuifolium*, *eugenioides*, *ralphii*), and some hebes fared the best, and after a short while, even podocarps and beech trees took well. Over the years, more and more trees, plants, ferns and even orchids have taken well, the tallest Kahiketea is now easily 10 metres high.

Later on, while we had use of a digger, the pond was deepened at one end, and an artificial island was left in the middle. This also has native plants on it, mainly manuka. And about 20 years ago, a further area next door to my plantings, was also “retired”, and I have planted this out also.

The natives are not strictly true to the area, it has become a selection of rare and vulnerable plants that have been put in since, thought process being that this was never a remnant, and is therefore open for all! Tecomanthe, rare plants from the Kings Islands, northern and southern trees and plants are all welcome! There is even a 30 year+ old Kauri amongst them.

My hope is to find a way to get Brown mudfish introduced into the pond, 50% of it is very shallow (less than half metre deep), and the years have allowed detritus from tree limbs and branches to build up, giving it a very natural appeal, even the trees are starting to reach out and touch each other over the pond, making it less susceptible to the effects of evaporation over summer. It has not dried out in the last 30 years.

A QE2 covenant is also an option now too, I will certainly look into this. My hope is that members will be able to come and see this planting at a later date, to be organized.

Article and photo by [Kerry Griffiths](#)



Manawatū Branch Stories needed

Many thanks to Kerry for his article, about planting in Roberts Line.

Please send more stories and pictures. A picture and 350 words would use a page in the newsletter and make the newsletter more relevant/interesting for our region.

Send the article and picture to manawatū.branch@forestandbird.org.nz. Thanking you in advance, Editor (Nigel)

**Conservation Week/Te Wiki o Te
Taiao
20-26 April 2026**

Earth Day on April 22, 2026



For more information go to <https://www.doc.govt.nz/always-be-naturing/>



Since 22 April 1970, Earth Day has been mobilizing more than a billion people annually. See <https://www.earthday.org/>

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

Nigel

Nigel Fitzpatrick

Newsletter Editor

F&B Manawatū Branch

Manawatu.branch@forestandbird.org.nz



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