



March 2017

Water, water, everywhere...

Where has summer gone? If you've stayed in Auckland, enjoying the Waitakere Ranges and all that the regional and local parks have to offer, you might have concluded that there was a lot more rain than usual. Whether that is due to climate change (wetter in the west, drier in the east) or is just a case of natural variation this year, we don't know. But those who came to Adelia Hallett's talk on Climate Change in February, the first of the Third Thursday Talks of 2017, did learn a lot of things that are related to Climate Change. For instance, I knew that in droughts kiwi can't get their beak into the solid earth to forage for insects and thus run a high risk of starving to death. However, I didn't realise that possums also contribute to the problem: because they eat the leaves, there is less leaf litter on the forest floor. Leaf litter not only creates insect habitat (and thus food for kiwi), but also works as a sponge: absorbing the rain and releasing it slowly into the ground below, keeping the ground moist and accessible for kiwi. No leaf litter means the rain will just wash away the soil instead of being absorbed by it.

So there you have it: possums create floods! Yet another reason to get rid of these pests, in your back yard, local reserve or regional park. Yes, there is always an opportunity to get stuck in and help out.

On another water-related topic - emotions are flying high about the proposed new location for Watercare's Huia replacement plant. Should people be asked to move from their family homes, should old kauri give way to the water needs of the people or can we all learn to use 20% less water to make the current facility last longer? Perhaps the developers of thousands of homes in Kumeu and Huapai, the areas the new facility will service and another reason for the rebuild, could find another way to provide water, for instance with rainwater harvesting? Water conservation isn't part of the equation as yet...but should be and Auckland should be getting used to it, after first a drought and now a flood, both causing Watercare to ask us to save water. Climate change or a plant relocation change: well, change can often be difficult and to find solutions we should all be thinking outside the square and working together on for future-proofing our environment.

See you out there, rain or (preferably) shine!
Annalily (Chairperson Waitakere Branch Forest & Bird)

The future of Harbourview

Kent Xie shares one of his photos from his Xmas holidays down in the South Canterbury lakes district. The signs are from the road to Lake Heron and the Harper River inlet to Lake Coleridge. They ask people not to endanger the breeding grounds of the rare wrybill, banded dotterel, black-fronted tern, black-billed gull, and South Island pied oystercatcher. All these long-distance commuting birds turn up at Harbourview. You can see them roosting in the Te Atatu Pony Club grounds (fenced off from dogs which would otherwise drive them away), or feeding on the foreshore and seabed around Te Atatu Peninsula. Our suburb is critical to the continued survival of these threatened birds.

Proposals to develop Harbourview Park represent a risk to these birds' habitat. Auckland Council is going to consult over a new plan for Harbourview Park (the old plan has expired). People who favour development of Harbourview Park (marae, bus interchange, buildings, roads, car parks) are putting their short-term selfish and commercial interests ahead of these birds that fly as far as their ancestors did for thousands of years, long before humans arrived in New Zealand. There is no room for complacency!

Friends of Harbourview must make certain in the consultation process that the voice of the birds is heard to

ensure not only their safety, but also for the pleasure and education of those in our community who want their own descendants to continue enjoying the birds' presence. As residential property development in Te Atatu Peninsula is intensified under the Auckland Unitary Plan, large open space such as we enjoy at Harbourview Park will become supremely valuable for birds and humans. Building on that open space cuts it down. Let's not muck it up. We must defend what we have before it's too late!

Kent Xie - Friends of Harbourview



Open Day at Matuku Link

It never rains in sunny California and never it seems in West Auckland when our special days are held. From whitehead, kokako, or robin releases at the Ark in the Park to pateke releases at Habitat te Henga, fine days seem to have graced us over the past 13 years of such events and the Matuku Link Open Day was no exception. Held as near as possible to World Wetland day (February 2) our Saturday was a sunny success from start to finish. Arriving early the various folk involved with the several organisations we had invited to join us, set up their tents, stalls and exhibits. The National Wetland Trust; Waitakere Rivercare; New Zealand Native Forest Restoration Trust; Kauri Dieback; all had stands and Paul Woodard (aka Afashionado) set up his native freshwater fish tanks. Meanwhile stalls appealing more to body than brain were also being arranged- "Niceblocks" in about eight different flavours proved very thirst quenching, two barbeques to sizzle beef burgers and 4 varieties of sausage, corn on the cob fresh cooked and also real coffee with the freshly roasted beans in a special "Matuku Blend" from local roaster, Bethells Beanz.

Visitors drove down our driveway from the busy road aided by Fulton Hogan employees on traffic patrol and with volunteers expertly managing the car parking, the attendees smoothly transitioned to see all on offer. An estimated 400 people arrived over the day with most taking one of the suggested walks. These walks were of varying lengths with the longest being the walk from Matuku Link via our neighbour's property all the way to Matuku's waterfall. Several went on the intermediate walk into our forest where great examples of kahikatea, kawaka, rimu totara and kauri stand tall. Most though walked the easy circuit that followed the meandering old riverbed with raupo beds, open water and baumea; various shallow seeps and wonderful damp sedge beds of carex and cyperus ringed by kahikatea; ti kouka, and kaikomako.

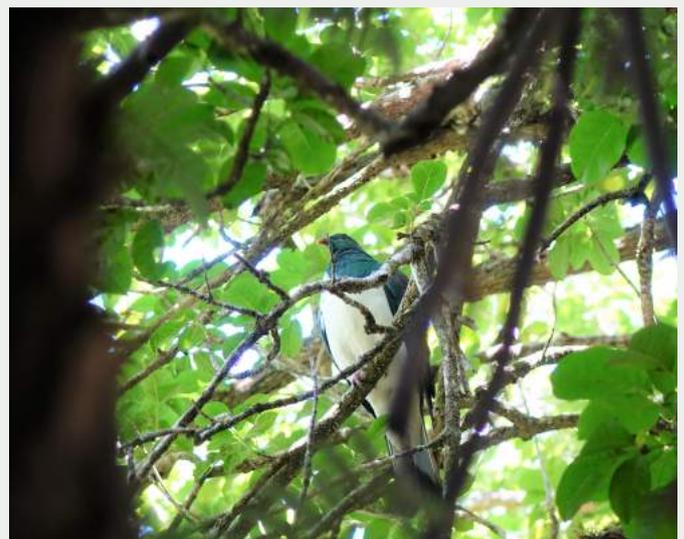
Plant sales, donations and food and drink sales brought in some useful dollars but more important were the many offers of assistance, the interest in volunteering and the good relationships made with neighbours, the local community and our fellow organisations. Once the visitors left we who remained tidied up and enjoyed a BBQ while relaxing with a glass of wine supplied by supporters Babich Wines. The property is now officially closed while we work on the various long term projects. The house is virtually ready and our caretaker installed but the planned nursery; re-vegetation of the flat land; predator control all over and the conversion of the barn into a Sustainable Wetland Education centre, will all be steadily worked on.

Don't forget to vote every day for us: we receive \$5 for every vote towards our Sustainable Wetland Education Centre. That's a pain free way to give money! You can vote every day, once with every email address you have. We 'only' need 20,000 votes to receive a whopping \$100,000 from The Trusts, before April 30th.

<https://www.milliondollarmission.co.nz/finalists/matuku-reserve-trust/>

And keep an eye on our Facebook page if you're interested in coming along to one of our working bees:
www.facebook.com/matukulink.

John Sumich, Matuku Link Trustee



Photos: Jacqui Geux

National campaign update



With elections coming up in September, Forest & Bird's national staff have been busy looking at the major issues facing nature and how we can make sure they are high on the public agenda this year.

The latest research shows that New Zealanders think our wildlife and wild places are doing okay. That is far from the truth. More than 80% of our native birds are threatened with extinction and less than 0.5% of our marine environment is protected.

This year we will be presenting some strong themes and raising public awareness that nature is in crisis. It's not in good shape or being protected in the manner that most people think it is. In fact nature is up for grabs - from Ruahine Forest Park in Hawke's Bay, to Point England reserve in Auckland. Central and local government are routinely prioritising short-term interests over environmental sustainability and profit over protection. They're using the housing crisis to fast track development and circumvent democratic processes.

The government agencies who are supposed to be protecting the environment are not doing their jobs and in many cases are actually being captured by the industries they are supposed to be regulating – think ECan allowing farmers to illegally take water in Canterbury and MPI's ignoring of fish dumping.

Our major campaigns this year will continue to be Climate Change, Nature in Crisis, Freshwater and Marine but these strong narratives will run through all our campaigns.

It's not all doom and gloom and we believe Forest & Bird can help defend nature by making sure the public know the truth about what is going on and hold our government agencies accountable. It's an election year and this is when we can really be a voice for nature.

Melissa Irace – Auckland Forest and Bird Communications Officer

To our Wonderful Supporters who helped us sell right out of our stock of Calendars and Diaries!

Thank you for your purchases and discussions at our events and local stalls: including talks at Kelston, Ark in the Park events, Oratia Farmers Market, the Piha Playcentre fundraiser and Huia Little Market.

Thanks also for the payments and generosity through our electronic ASB account system – this was a learning curve for me and it really does work well. We know our calendars travel all over New Zealand gifted by Waitakere branch members and friends. We also know they go far and wide overseas including, Australia, Canada, the UK and Europe. So thank you all again for spreading our beautiful images of New Zealand's wonderful biodiversity and supporting your local conservation projects.

Kindest regards, Zena (Secretary Waitakere Forest & Bird Committee)



Engaging Youth in Conservation

Liz Anstey, Waitakere Forest & Bird Committee member, went to the North Island Forest & Bird Conference. Below she reports back about the new youth initiative and what we can do to engage with teenagers.

Connor Wallace, a young person who is a committee member for the North Shore branch of Forest & Bird spoke about how we could encourage young people to be involved in conservation. Connor won the Forest & Bird youth award at the 2016 F&B AGM.



These are the key points he made:

- There is a gap between when kids finish KCC at age 13 and the adult Forest & Bird membership at age 18 as there is no membership category or fee for young people between these ages
- Young people make great volunteers, many care about the environment and are keen to be part of change.
- We need to look at how to get them interested in conservation. A key part is to go into schools and talk about how they could become involved. Emphasise that they are important for conservation.
- Find out what activities young people like to be involved in.
- Don't underestimate them but still ensure your presentation is suitable for laypeople.
- Don't be negative, don't start with the main problem but instead focus on the vision.
- Need to be less serious - keep it fairly light
- Show them what opportunities are available
- Have more of an internet and social media presence
- Make sure that when they do volunteer work that they are well fed!

The North Shore branch is piloting a Forest & Bird youth committee with 15 young people from all over Auckland, with Connor leading the charge and supported by Richard Hursthouse, chair of Forest & Bird North Shore and instigator of this youth initiative. Contact Richard for more information: richard.hursthouse@gmail.com

North West Wildlink “Going Wild”



The North-West Wildlink is a corridor of ecosystems linking regional biodiversity hotspots on the east and west coasts. Native wildlife needs predator-free vegetation cover to move from place to place. The North-West Wildlink is expected to provide improved migration routes from Tiritiri Matangi Island to Shakespear Park and through to the Waitākere Ranges.

And on Wednesday 15th of February many of the groups who work on projects in this geographical area, came together to listen to Tim Lovegrove, Senior Regional Fauna Advisor, Biodiversity Group, Auckland Council, Dr Margaret Stanley, Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Centre for Biodiversity and Biosecurity, University of Auckland and others. The workshops after the presentations gave participants a chance to connect with each other and give feedback to the North West Wildlink project group on questions like: “how do you want to be informed”, “what should we focus on” and “what can we do to support groups like you”. More info here:

www.forestandbird.org.nz/what-we-do/projects/northwest-wildlink

Highlights from the North Island

Robert Woolf reports on the items discussed at the Forest and Bird North Island Gathering, held November 2016.

Saturday's programme

Kevin Hackwell on a predator-free New Zealand by 2050

F & B's Advocacy Manager, Kevin Hackwell said that the next really big step forward would be increasing the scale of 1080 use by employing fixed-wing aircraft rather than helicopters. Kevin noted that interestingly Budapest had been rat-free since the 1970's and that it would be perfectly feasible to make NZ cities predator-free also. He added that the Government's emphasis on public/private partnerships to do conservation was focusing too much on the corporate world and that the public will still need to be engaged to get mass buy-in.

Guest speaker, Mark Ryan MP for Rodney

Although Mark disclaimed any in-depth knowledge about conservation he did say that Conservation Minister Maggie Barry was about to appoint a Predator Free 2050 Ltd. board of directors.

Mark then invited F & B CEO Kevin Hague to come up front (he had earlier praised Kevin quite effusively). Kevin then helped moderate a very lively Q & A session. In answer to a question from Karen Field he said that conservation groups wanting Government money will be dealing with a contestable Government fund as part of the public/private rationale.

Kevin suggested that a partnership between F & B and the Government could be valuable and Mark agreed that this could be done by partnering with 'the Crown Entity'. Kevin commented that there is a 'perception gap' because people usually only hear about the success stories rather than the tough reality thus think that things are much better than they really are.

In response to a bracing comment about DoC being very underfunded Mark noted that the Government was going into surplus so there could soon be more money for public services. He reiterated that he thinks that private enterprise does have a role in doing conservation and that that conservation will have to compete with other 'public good' interests like health and education. Mark said that a special levy on tourists at, say, the border could provide additional revenue for conservation. He said that he will investigate such a levy and report back to Kevin.

Pauline Smith and Dean Baigent-Mercer

Pauline Smith discussed Hibiscus Coast's Pest free Peninsula. She was followed by Dean Baigent-Mercer discussing the collapse of the Northern Forests. This included some drone footage which graphically demonstrated the dire state of some forests not least because of widespread uncontrolled possum browsing. Dean commented that his strategy for working with Nga Puhī (the main Northern Iwi) is to embed forest restoration in Treaty claims including the cost. He added that the Northern drought forces Kiwi to be concentrated on those few areas where there still is water and to take considerable risks by crossing roads in daytime. As Climate Change produces more extreme weather events this will increase droughts and thus put more kiwi at greater risk of death and injury.

Katrina Goddard - Hauraki Gulf Forum Report recommendations

Katrina is F & B's professional representative on the Gulf Forum. Katrina said that the group had now reached agreement on certain types of MPAs ('Marine Protected Areas'). Main points of the agreement were that these must include mana whenua; they must have a treaty clause for any no-take reserves and they must acknowledge customary harvesting rights. The assumption here is that while Maori do want recognition of their status as mana whenua in practice they would not actually exercise any customary rights they might have.

A key recommendation is the creation of Ahu Moana Mana/whenua Community Co-management areas. Katrina added that 'a few marine reserves' were actually agreed upon but not their precise areas and shapes. She emphasised the need to reach compromises between environmentalists and fishing interests, both commercial, recreational and traditional. The full proposed network for the Gulf went out for public consultation in December although agreement was not reached with mana whenua on some proposals.

Pest plants - Richard Hursthouse

Richard talked about the weed brochure that he had now produced with the intention of disseminating this across the Auckland region. Update: Richard has now had 50,000 copies printed.

Richard talked about the Alligator Weed - is it actually unkillable and uncontrollable? When Richard mentioned the Mexican Devil hilarity ensued - someone in the audience joked "Give it to Trump - he'll kill it!".

Connor Wallace - Youth presentation

Connor is a lively member of the North Shore Branch Committee and his presentation included an interesting 'feedback video'. See Liz Anstey's report for details.

Robert Woolf, Waitakere Forest & Bird Committee member

Update on Ark in the Park



Photo: Kokako chick by Jacqui Geux

Ark in the Park is celebrating its 15th Anniversary this year! We've organised a suite of walks to coincide with the EcoWest Festival and spread the word about the great work the Ark and all its volunteers have been doing over these last years. There will be a celebration event in the middle of the year, so stay tuned to our facebook page and website.

In other news news our feathered friends have had a good breeding season, the kokako survey has found 6 nests and 7 chicks successfully fledged. In total the census found 23 founders and 13 unbanded birds: 36 birds in 11 pairs.

Some of the Popokotea/whitehead that have been released at the Ark have made their home down the road at the Arataki Visitors Centre. Sightings of this species remain relatively low so its exciting that this season we have had fledglings both at Arataki and on the western boundary of the Ark, Long Road.

Let's hope the kokako and popokotea fledglings will do well in the coming months and start their own families in future!

In late February wasp control was undertaken across the northern quarter of the Ark. We need to continue monitoring for the next few weeks but initial results are pleasing.

Latest rat monitoring results are low, boding well for our native species as we go into autumn.

The Ark is pleased to have already welcomed 22 new volunteers in 2017.

Meanwhile in the Ark buffer zone another round of rat monitoring was done, showing lower numbers than last year, which is encouraging for the residents and our native birds! Several residents are now conservation savvy area-coordinators acting as hubs to dispense bait to immediate neighbours.

Gillian Wadams – Ark in the Park manager

KCC – Kiwi Conservation Club programme for 2017



The two coordinators for the Waitakere branch of the junior club KCC, for 5 – 12 year olds, have organised some cool trips in our local area for the upcoming year. The programme has been emailed out to KCC members, or you can read about them on the KCC website (www.kcc.org.nz/events). Did you know a KCC membership is a great present for a grandchild? At only \$24 a year the child will receive four attractive magazines and he/she can become a “KCC Reporter” via the www.kcc.org.nz website and of course meet other like minded children at the events. A membership can be purchased on the Forest and Bird website.

Contact: waitakere@kcc.org.nz if you have any questions.

Waitakere Forest & Bird Walks and Talks

Our flagship project Ark in the Park turns 15 this year and we want to share our story with everyone!

The first activity is a suite of guided walks to showcase the results of years of volunteers working at predator control: a flourishing bush and rare reintroduced birds.

- The Sunset and Night Walk on Saturday 25th of March as well as the Dawn Chorus Walk on Sunday the 26th are now fully booked.

You don't have to book for the Guided walks during the day, the last walk will start at 2 pm. We'll also have a stall with Forest & Bird and Ark in the Park information.

- **Sunday walks 26th March:** Guided Walks from 10 – 3 pm. Continuous starting as soon as there are 10 - 12 people. Come to our stall at the Cascades Kauri Car Park - the walks will start from there. Our volunteers and experts will take you around the Auckland City Walk to highlight how special this area is. No booking is necessary - just turn up and be amazed!

Free but donations/koha towards our conservation work are appreciated.



Laingholm Weed Walk and Working Bee

Saturday 25th March 10 am-1 pm

Meet at 9.45 am by the Fishing Club, Sandy's Parade, Laingholm.

Join us in Laingholm, Weed Capital of Auckland! Doreen Sunman will lead us (she writes the “Weed of the Month” column in the Western Leader). We'll identify the top ten weeds for the Waitakere Ranges Invasive pest plants are a major ecological problem in the Ranges and only by working together can we effectively tackle these. What better way to celebrate March Weed Month than with a Working Bee? After morning tea we'll get started on cleaning up one unsightly corner. We'll rescue the native plants from below the weeds and work up an appetite for the free sausage sizzle afterwards. Wear sturdy shoes, bring gloves, secateurs (if you have them), a hat and jacket, sunscreen and insect repellent and morning tea. For more information: contact Doreen Sunman on 817 6486 or dlsunman@xtra.co.nz

Thursday 20th April 7:30pm – Third Thursday Talk

Sandra Murray, Environmental Consultant and co-ordinator for the New Zealand Product Stewardship Council: Sharing Responsibility for Waste

Sandra Murray discusses the problem of waste in New Zealand and explains 'product stewardship'. We used to use glass and paper packaging, and take our bottles back to the dairy, pub or milkman for a cash refund so we could use them over and over again. Bottle drives funded our kids clubs and litter was uncommon. Then we fell in love with plastic and other new products, abandoning glass for the allure of lightweight, single use packaging. We invented new products without a thought for what would happen when we no longer wanted them. We revelled in 'disposable' and were enthralled by a bevy of the quick and convenient – TV's, PC's, mobile phones, CFL's, plastic bags, batteries, cheap toys and cheaper rubbish. Now is the 'morning after', where we look around in horror at the litter and dead seabirds, see our landfills and rivers filling up fast with rubbish and our plastic love-affair turning into a sour toxic mess trashing our land, food, waterways and oceans. Can we turn back time and restore those take-back schemes? What would they look like today? And would they work?

Venue: Kelston Community Centre, corner Awaroa and Great North Roads. All welcome, join us for supper afterwards. Gold coin donation appreciated to cover hall hire. For further information phone Liz on 833 4145 or email her at: lizanstey@hotmail.com

Thursday 18th May 7:30pm – Notice of the AGM of Waitakere Forest & Bird Branch

Kelston Community Centre, Corner of Awaroa Road and Great North Road, Kelston

The agenda for the evening will be:

- Apologies
- Minutes and matters arising from previous AGM
- Chairperson's report
- Treasurer's report
- Other reports including subcommittee and project achievements (Ark in the Park, Te Henga, Matuku, Tai Haruru, Membership and Events, KCC, Communication)
- Election of officers and committee
- General business and awards

Third Thursday Talk:

Thursday 15th June, 7.30 pm: Dean Baigent-Mercer, "New Zealand's David Attenborough in Dreadlocks", on Northland Forest Collapse.

Thursday 20th July 7.30 pm: Wilma Blom - Curator Marine Invertebrates at Auckland Museum, about the use of BioBlitzes.

Thursday 17th August 7.30 pm: Election Special with candidates debating conservation and environmental issues.

All in Kelston Community Centre, see note on the left.

Magazines wanted

Have you finished with your Forest & Bird Magazines? We'd love to give them to our visitors at stalls and schools. Just connect with Margaret at 09-837 5274 or drop them off at reception at Waitakere Gardens Retirement Village. Thank you!

Contact details Waitakere Branch Committee Members as at March 2017:

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