

# Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird

## Newsletter September 2023

### The Election

Climate change has featured in the election runup this year but in an appallingly way.

The climate fund was set up to get us out of this crisis by taking money from carbon polluters and using it to help carbon reduction (e.g. electrifying a coal fired process) or carbon absorption (planting a forest). Taking the money from the fund to fix damaged infrastructure or reducing the fund and putting the money into general funds to help people with their grocery bill and other payments will not get us out of this mess. But that is what parties have proposed.

Apart from robbing the climate fund, the absence of policy by political hopefuls suggests that climate disruption is like deer control, not too serious but ongoing.

You would think that we were over the worst of climate disruption and could now reduce the fund. Any person who watches the news knows that climate disruption is destroying lives, livelihoods and built and natural environments around the world and here. Taking from the climate fund is short term expediency to get votes but will condemn us to much more difficult future.

I had a discussion with my nephew a few years ago. The question discussed was "Was the economy more important than the environment or the reverse?" He believed the economy was the most important, reasoning that you cannot have a good environment if you don't have a good economy. Business leaders

are of the same view this year saying whoever the government is they need to improve the economy. As you would expect, I take the counter view because climate events wreck the economy – not the other way around.

*In Europe, the heat led to wildfires and exacerbated drought, affecting food production, energy generation and river transport. (New scientist 11/08/22 p14).*

The cost of Cyclone Gabrielle is estimated to be \$13.5 billion, similar, said Grant Robinson, to the Christchurch Earthquake. There are immediate losses from farms, orchards, and businesses. There is infrastructure to fix, land to restore, crops to reestablish, and the permanent loss of land taken out of production. And there is all the private buildings, machinery and belongings that need fixing or replacing.

These are hits on the economy. The frequency and severity of these hits is increasing. If nothing is done about climate disruption, the economy will be wrecked. It would be interesting to ask those who have suffered, "Would they sooner have a good economy or environment?" Would their opinion swing before and after Gabrielle?

Climate disruption is not real in Kapiti or Mana because we have not been hit, but we will be. It's a question of when, not if. If Gabrielle had hit here, if lives and livelihoods were lost, infrastructure wrecked, houses no longer habitable, no power or water for weeks and vegetable prices through the roof, and we realized that worse events would surely follow, would we then decide that we need to

fix the environment first before we can have an OK economy.

It is similar to the World Wars. The loss of lives, futures and property was huge, but the alternative was unbearable.

There is one other reason I think my nephew is wrong. A wrecked environment may wreck the economy so badly that we cannot repair climate damage and cannot take measures to slow and stop climate change. In that

## Kōwhai

The beautiful yellow (kowhai means yellow in te reo) blossoms of kōwhai is always a harbinger of spring for me.



*Sophora microphylla* is the local kōwhai species endemic to the lower North Island. It has finer and smaller leaves than the larger-leaved *sophora tetrapetra*. Some also consider *sophora chathamica* an endemic species, being known as coastal kōwhai, however there is debate on whether it was naturalised by pre-European Māori or if these are true natural occurrences. In our garden the kererū love to use our kōwhai as a

case, the fate of civilization will be sealed.

Environment over economy will decide my party vote. I will be ignoring the short-term benefits of all parties. I will be voting for the party that promises the long-term benefit that slowing and hopefully eventually stopping climate change can bring.

*Russell*

lookout point and enjoy eating the fresh green shoots (never the flowers). This works fine until the bolshy tūi get territorial about the trees as they come into full bloom and shoo them off! Then the kererū are forced to find something else to nibble. The trick to growing kowhai is to pierce the hard shell of the seed before propagating them. There are several methods using a file, nail clippers or boiling water. The effort is worth it to encourage the presence of these trees which grow in a wide range of habitats. There are quite a few kowhai around Waikanae and who hasn't enjoyed the splendid display of flowering *sophora chatamica* kōwhai south of the Paremata roundabout ! I took the photo on the left while walking Te Ara Harakeke. If you're heading north around this time you'll also catch a grand display of mature trees (over 20m tall) nearing Taihape.

Māori hold kowhai in high esteem for their hard durable wood and for the medicinal properties of the bark which is good for bruising.

As for me? I just love their flowers and delicate foliage and dappled shade they provide.

*Pene*

## F&B Favourite Walks in Kāpiti-Mana: Ara Harakeke - Shared bike/walkway

**Distance:** 6km from Pukerua Bay train station to Plimmerton train station (about 1 hour 30 minutes)

**Attire:** Comfortable walking shoes, or bicycle

**Transport:** Train stations (and car parks) at either end, can take the train back.

**Food and drinks:** Dairy in Pukerua Bay, dairy and cafés in Plimmerton.

**Toilets:** 3 - at Pukerua Bay shops, halfway at Whenua Tapu cemetery, and next to Plimmerton train station.

**Dogs:** Allowed on leads, be aware of cyclists.

**Why is it special?** One of few long fully sealed walkways away from urban areas, passing through regenerating bush near Pukerua Bay, and past the nationally important Taupō Swamp.

Taupō Swamp formed when the area was uplifted by the 1855 earthquake from a lagoon which was an inlet of Porirua Harbour. The 30ha wetland has survived over 150 years of human intervention, harvesting harakeke (flax), attempts to drain it, farm it, and rail and road construction next to it, and is the largest remaining harakeke swamp in the Wellington Region.

The area was the first major [wetland protected](#) in the region (in 1986) and remains a culturally and spiritually important wetland to Ngāti Toa.

The Ara Harakeke Pathway was developed as part of the SH1 widening project over 20 years ago to provide safe walking and cycling access between Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay. Today Taupō Swamp is recognised as a [key](#)

[native ecosystem by GWRC](#) and the [Friends of Taupō Swamp and Catchment](#) group runs planting days and working bees, lobbies for adequate protection of the wetland from proposed Development (See Porirua Northern Growth Area on last page).

**Directions:** From Pukerua Bay train station, walk up Teihana Road East and cross SH59 to the shops. From there, Ara Harakeke starts on the right side of SH59 and continues as a shared walking/cycle path all the way.

After 200m, the path crosses its own railway overbridge, which marks the exit from the suburban area of Pukerua Bay. From here on, a mix of native plants is slowly regenerating, as well as some mature cabbage trees. During early spring, you can spot the native clematis [paniculata](#) (see below), a few kōwhai, and many five finger with their white pompom flowers or black pompom-like seed heads.



Clematis Paniculata/Puāwananga © P Burton Bell

A small stream runs along to the right of the path, more noticeable after rain. This is one of the small tributaries to Taupō Stream, and after about 20 minutes the first small part of the wetland can be seen to the right before reaching Whenua Tapu, where the path crosses Airlie Road.



Shortly after Airlie Road, if you look closely, you can still see road markings and reflectors on the surface of the path as this stretch used to be SH1 before it was realigned (notice also the cut on the hill).

The path continues between SH59 to the left and Taupō Swamp on the right where huge swathes of harakeke flower from about November to February, attracting tūi and other nectar-feeding birds. Along the path are two rest stops

with benches and information panels about the history of Taupō Swamp, its protection by a QEII covenant, and the native plants, birds, insects, and freshwater fish calling it home. The bird life includes swamp harrier, kererū, tūi, riroriro/grey warbler, kingfisher, pūkeko, pīwakawaka/fantail, tauhou/ silvereye, paradise shelduck, spur-winged plover.



At the southern end of Taupō Swamp, the path continues through the Plimmerton industrial area and Ulric Street. Cross the road to Plimmerton Domain for a more pleasant walk, which leads to the car park and toilets at Plimmerton train station.

*Tom Pesendorfer*



## Breaking News

Dr Greg Sherley, our most recent speaker, talked about the unusual breeding aspects of our smallest native bird, the rifleman. He also corrected our spelling of their te reo name, which has an extra 'ti': titipounamu, meaning 'water running over greenstone'. On 19 September an article was published by

the well respected by Colin Miskelly also on riflemen, and an unexpected dietary finding. Riflemen were believed to be entirely insectivorous but careful observation and a very good camera and lens showed otherwise. Read more here: [Forensic photography applied to forest ecology | Te Papa's Blog](#)

## Reports about other Kapiti Conservation Groups

### Waikanae Estuary Care Group

WECG had their AGM last month, and a change of both secretary and chair, but the organisation is in good health and has achieved much over the last few years. As with all programmes funded by DOC, WECG has no guarantee of future funding, so they have managed to secure a Stewardship and Funding agreement with Lemu Global (<https://le.mu/about-us/> ). Lemu is a cutting-edge global conservation group linking potential funders to global conservation efforts with the mission of crowdfunding the planting of 1% of the planet's land within 10 years. WECG's selection is a first for any group in Australasia. They were chosen because of their high rate of data reporting and excellent conservation practice. You can find out more about WECG's work on their website: <https://sites.google.com/view/waikanaeestuary/home> but here are a few highlights from the Chair's report for the past year:

- Partnered with Paraparaumu College in their horticulture and environment courses.

- Connected with other schools for an 'estuary experience'.
- Had a Waikanae based team looking after the Waikanae side of the Reserve weekly.
- Had a major PR campaign concerning the new signage and the changed Reserve usages for bikes and pets in particular, which involved distributing 2000 letters to neighbours.
- Launched an "Adopt-a-Plot" scheme whereby members "own" a part of the Reserve to look after the plants in their first few years when they are getting established.
- Planted 3000 plants (mainly grown in their nursery).
- Have at least 10 scientific projects underway in the Reserve.
- Participated in regular measures of rubbish and plastics in the Scientific Reserve's beaches.
- Expended 3886 hours of volunteer effort, all monitored using online reporting tools. *(There are opportunities to volunteer both during the week and on weekends, contact them to find out more).*

### Friends of the Waikanae River

The friends had their AGM recently. One of their mandates is to comment how Greater Wellington Flood Control has managed the river over the past year and to pass a vote of satisfaction or

otherwise on their performance. This could become more critical as larger storms hit the coast however in the last year the river had no significant floods events.

The guest speaker was Forest and Bird's Tom Kay whose subject was *Making Room for Rivers*. Tom showed how we have confined rivers to channels much narrower than earlier times, straightened them by cutting through meanders and curves and forced them to stay put rather than filling up their channel with gravel and moving sideways. Then we confined them within stop banks and built houses or farmed immediately behind those stop banks. These actions lead to two negative consequences, flooding risk for people and loss of habitat for

### Whareroa Guardians Community Trust

Congratulations to the team for winning the Supreme Kāpiti Community Award for their outstanding conservation work on Whareroa Farm. It was primarily the Friends' lobbying that saw the farm returned to DOC ownership in 2005. Since their inception the Guardians have planted over 70,000 plants and given over 4000 volunteer hours to return this damaged land to its former glory. It's a lovely place to go for a walk (there's a range of options of different difficulty). For the brave it is a great place to test your mountain biking skills, and did I mention the views of Kāpiti Island? Find out more here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/wellington-kapiti/places/whareroa-farm/?tab-id=50578> .

### Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet (GOPI)

GOPI has its final planting day of the season at Browns Bay on Saturday 30 September at 2pm. All welcome. Limited parking is available at the Browns Bay public parking area. The meeting point will be on the lawns in front of the Browns Bay parking area. Refreshments will be provided. Bring warm clothes, shoes that don't mind getting wet (or gumboots if you have them), drinking

ecosystems. In some cases, the river simply broke its bank and moved back to its old course. Tom's talk can be viewed on Youtube and is highly recommended: <https://youtu.be/AA0J3Pd-1Yo?feature=shared>. Members had an opportunity to ask questions of GW's Principal Flood Control Adviser, Graeme Campbell, and of Tom. The evening was very successful and enjoyed by all.

*P.S. the Friends are looking for a new secretary to make bookings and take minutes a few times a year. Contact Russell to discuss if you're able to help.*

There are also plenty of opportunities to volunteer. Details on their website: <https://www.kapitibiodiversity.org.nz/whareroa>



(Image supplied by Whareroa Guardians)

water, sunblock and hat (or a rainproof jacket if the weather isn't too promising).

Please let them know you're coming: [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com)

## Forest and Bird 2024 Calendars and Dairies

**ACT NOW: we have only a few weeks left for sales** of these well-loved calendars and diaries as our branch fundraiser. Diaries are \$25 and Calendars \$18. They're available now from our treasurer Peter Kentish -call on 04 298 1255, or 021 0277 0520 or email [pk2003\\_595@hotmail.com](mailto:pk2003_595@hotmail.com) (note the underscore after 2003 in his email address). You can pay Forest and Bird Kapiti Mana Branch online: 38-9020-0171967-00, or cash on delivery.

**Next Public Meeting: 25 October 2023** - GW Councillor, Quentin Duthie on - Has Greater Wellington really gone green? Or is it just 'smoke and mirrors'? At: Waikanae Presbyterian Church Hall, 43 Ngaio Rd starting with tea or coffee at 7.10 pm (until 9pm)

## Have Your Say...

### Vision Kāpiti

KCDC wants to know if they have their priorities right in the strategic changes that Council wants to make over the next 3 years. The document is not so easy to read and, from what I read, climate change and environment activity is in a planning phase,

*(2024/25 Develop a climate strategy, to reach our bold emissions reduction goals, and an environment strategy to set out the state of the Environment, and how we enhance it. 2025/26 Implement Climate and Environment action plans to deliver on goals.*

while development and tourism activity is in an action phase,

*2023/24 Enable residents to earn a living in Kapiti, through increased tourism and economic development.*

*Refresh our DMP to refocus effort and increase tourism.*

*Increase support for the tourism and hospitality industry.*

*Implement the housing strategy*

*Progress a Affordable Housing Entity or approach to improve access to housing.*

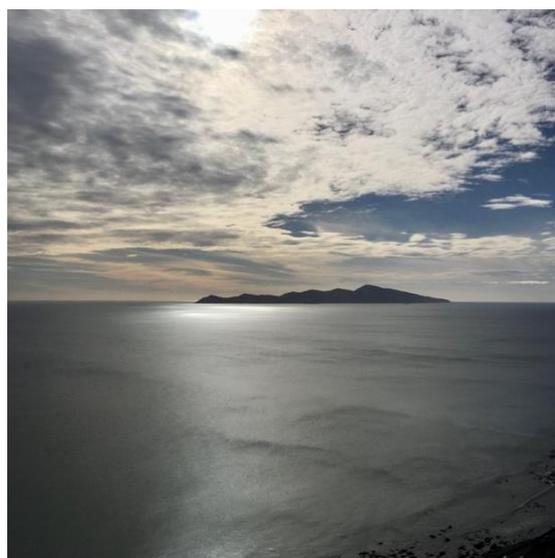
yet tourism and development have not been declared an emergency. The document states, *Ultimately, we want our services to support you, our businesses, community and environment to thrive no matter what comes our way.*

I would have thought that climate would be more important given Nelson floods, Cyclone Gabrielle, the floods, the

Mackenzie Country fires and the temperatures in NZ this week.

Perhaps it reflects that development is always on, but not much has been done on the environment for some time so planning has to be the starting point?

<https://haveyoursay.kapiticoast.govt.nz/hub-page/vision-kapiti> by 13 October '23



Pic © P Burton Bell

### The 3-30-300 principle

Could agencies adopt the Urban Trees Group concept of the 3-30-300 principle across our district. Three trees visible per section, 30% tree cover, and every resident within 300m of a public green space:

<https://iucnurbanalliance.org/promoting-health-and-wellbeing-through-urban-forests-introducing-the-3-30-300-rule/>

## Porirua Northern Growth Area:

Comment on the proposed Specified Development Project of Kāinga Ora.

As an individual, you can comment on any aspect of the plan which covers the area on the eastern side of Taupō Swamp right to, and around, Pukerua Bay. As Forest and Birders, we urge you to ask Kāinga Ora to:

- include community and environmental representatives on the Project Governing Body,
- put more importance on the environmental objectives 14 through 16 than the other objectives, and
- end Objective 14 at the word wetlands and remove all the words thereafter in Objective 14, and
- ask that any development creates designs and engineering methods that do not reduce the mauri of Te Awarua-o-Porirua, Taupō Swamp and other natural watercourses and wetlands,

This recognises that within the area, there is so much land that can be used for development and so little land area left that is “natural environment”. It also recognises that the world has a biodiversity crisis and requires improvements to biodiversity rather than degradation of it. This worldwide crisis prompted the UN 30 by 30 initiative which NZ signed up to in December 2022.

The 30-30-30 Initiative is to: Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective [area-based conservation measures](#), recognizing indigenous and traditional territories,

where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

### Objective 14

Urban development, including infrastructure design and operation, integrates with te taiao in a manner that respects the whenua, whakapapa and wai, including the mauri (life-supporting capacity) of Te Awarua-o-Porirua, Taupō Swamp and other natural watercourses and wetlands, while:

- a. recognising that the efficient use of developable land and delivery of compact form in the western region of the project area may require natural environment modifications in order to achieve other project objectives.

### Objective 15:

The use of mātauranga Māori to enhance the mauri of te taiao is promoted, when managing the health and wellbeing of indigenous biodiversity.

### Objective 16:

Identify and enhance ecological corridors and buffer areas between and around areas of ecological value and integrate these into public open space.

COMMENT by: 29/09/2023

[https://research.kaingaora.govt.nz/jfe/form/SV\\_9MpC4jtii1Yy6cS](https://research.kaingaora.govt.nz/jfe/form/SV_9MpC4jtii1Yy6cS)

*Russell and Pene*

*Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome as would contributions to future newsletter*

**Editors:** Russell Bell & Pene Burton Bell  
Email: russelljamesbell@gmail.com  
Phone: 021 22 66 047