



Forest & Bird
TE REO O TE TAIAO | Giving Nature a Voice

Waitakere
BRANCH



Wai-o-te-Kauri Stream where the Kauri grows Forest and Bird Waitakere - Newsletter September 2018



Local scout group Waimauku- Motutara Cubs became kaitiaki of the Colin Kerr Taylor reserve, with the original donors of the land to Forest & Bird on the left.

Openings and closures

Kauri are loved by many, as we've seen the past months. From the support for the closure of our local Forest and Bird reserves Matuku and Colin Kerr-Taylor (the last one with the help of the local cubs, see below), with a lot of media attention, to the very well attended Kauri Dieback Info Evening we organised in August. Over 140 people came to hear the panel experts with Phil Brown, Mels Barton, Jack Crow, Nick Waipara and Edward Ashby. Working with them the past year on this terrible infestation has been an honour for me, and a steep learning curve about the impact it has on our whole forest system. Like the "Jarrah dieback" in Australia, dubbed "biological bulldozer", our *Phytophthora agathidicida* (phyto=plant and pthora = destructor) attacks more than just kauri: it will be a full forest collapse. That is why it is hard for me to contain my disappointment with the MPI, who are still doing "have your say" sessions with the community, instead of doing any actual work on the ground. They haven't done much in the past 10 years, and it doesn't look like they feel any sense of urgency now. Community projects had to find their own specialists and write their own processes to stop the spread of kauri dieback!

Hopefully in the coming months the ministers will ask other organisations to do the work, fund the research and get work done.

And in the meantime, with Spring now in full swing, we can all do our own bit for the environment at home or in one of our many projects: Ark in the Park has restarted its predator control programme, the Ark Bufferzone, predator control on private properties around the Ark is working well, Matuku Link has an average of three groups a month helping out and Harbourview has done several very successful planting days. Too much has happened to include all of it in this printed newsletter, so if you haven't already: sign up to our monthly email bulletin, just email waitakere.branch@forestandbird.org.nz with the words "email newsletter" in it.

Hope to see you at one of our talks, activities or at our shared lunch in Piha!

Your chairperson – Annalily van den Broeke.

www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/waitakere or www.facebook.com/forestbirdwaitakere and
www.facebook.com/habitattehenga and www.facebook.com/arkintheParkNewZealand
Twitter: #Arkinthepark

Waitakere Kiwi Conservation Club report

September 2018



KCC planting day at Matuku Link

Waitakere KCC has been busy since the last newsletter. In April we learned about Kauri Dieback from Christine Rose the Kauri Queen from Auckland City Council. In May we joined Auckland Central branch on a Fungi Hunt and in June we planted some trees on Motutapu, also with Auckland branch. In July we went on a “behind the scenes” tour of the Auckland Museum where we were fascinated by the unusual specimens kept in jars in the Museum vaults. In August we met at Matuku Link on a sunny and warm winter’s day. It was interesting seeing

what was new, and how much the trees had grown since we planted them last year. We planted some harakeke and met and named the local hungry eels. Please get in touch if you have some expertise you’d like to share with Waitakere’s up and coming environmentalists, or if you would like to help out on an ongoing basis with organising and leading monthly outings. You can contact us at waitakere@kcc.org.nz

Jean and Raenyn – KCC coordinators Waitakere

Forest & Bird Calendars & Diaries 2019

- Support your local Waitakere Branch!

Funds raised from the sale of our Calendars & Diaries are used for local conservation projects like Ark in the Park, Habitat te Henga, Matuku. Encourage your neighbours, friends to support nature! Great for overseas gifts. Exceptional quality and value. Just \$16 for the calendars (\$19 in store) and \$24 for the diary.

Contact us at Waitakere.branch@forestandbird.org.nz or call 021-2207136



Ark in the Park update: rahui, restart, census and Spring!

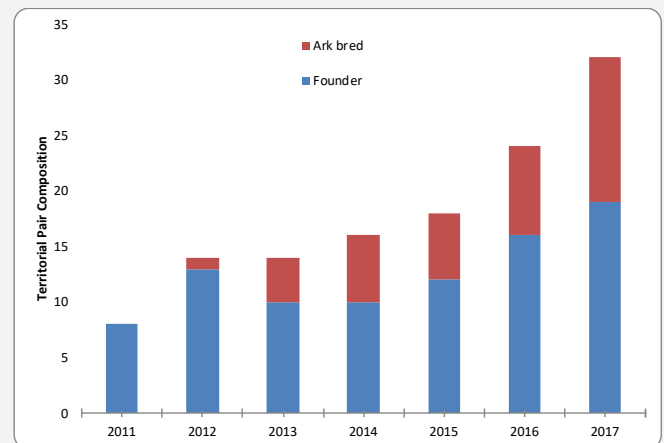


A grey warbler feeds its shining cuckoo foster chick last Spring, photo by Jacqui Geux

As many of you will know recreational access, tourism and conservation work within the Waitākere Ranges has been restricted since December 2017 with the placement of a rāhui. Following this a Controlled Area Notice was applied and all Ark work halted for a period of a month in May. From this we have worked with Council biosecurity and biodiversity staff to gradually re open areas of the Ark and pest control has now almost fully resumed. The next baiting round plus return to the full complement of trapping will be crucial to suppress rat numbers over the bird breeding season in particular.

The annual kōkako census is underway with results are due at the end of October. The graph below shows the growth of the Ark kōkako population across the years since they were first reintroduced in 2011. The census results so far indicate that the upward trend will continue, and it seems to be the season of long-established pairs swapping partners with Ark bred birds. This is probably not surprising given the growth of the red portion of the graph bars below, as there are more and more Ark bred birds (as compared to birds caught elsewhere and released at the Ark) making up the population.

Facebook stars Frances and Zelah (a kōkako pair) continue to delight residents along Scenic Drive with regular visits to key food trees such as pigeonwood and mahoe in people's backyards. Most of these residents are now actively involved in the Ark's buffer zone programme offering protection for our wandering wildlife.



The recently introduced monthly induction sessions for new volunteers are proving a success. They give new volunteers a wide ranging introduction to all aspects of the Ark and then they are taken as a group along an easy bait line. This adds to the social element and fosters a great learning environment.

Now we are waiting for the first call of the season from the shining cuckoo, pīpīwharau, to confirm that Spring has truly arrived!

Gillian Wadams - manager Ark in the Park

Forest & Bird Conference 2018 report by Robert Woolf

In June conservationists from around the country came together at Te Papa Museum for the largest conference that I can ever remember (going back over 20 years). Keynote speakers, including three ministers, drew a large crowd for their presentations on Saturday, in the evening followed by the Sanderson Memorial dinner. On Sunday the AGM and smaller workshops took place. The Saturday presentations can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCdQoi_HN5k&list=PL3nlmQIPMT-v36ucHOMhybDPcQrLmrKke

My selection of highlights:

1. Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage

Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage admitted that the \$181 extra million that the Government will provide for DOC over the next 4 years 'was not as much as we wanted' but 'is a good start'.

She announced that the Government will begin an operation to rid the remote Auckland Islands of mice, cats and pigs. It comes after a mission to rid the sub-Antarctic Antipodes Islands from mice was found to be a success earlier this year. This will be the most ambitious island pest eradication undertaken by the Department of Conservation with the Government providing up to two million dollars for initial scoping work. The total cost could stretch to \$40-50 million over ten years and is part of the plan to make New Zealand predator-free by 2050. She wants to 'rebuild DOC's RMA advocacy function. This is long-overdue but we will have to wait and see how solidly this is done.

She also stated that 'Measuring Wellbeing' is the environmental philosophy to be used. This is distinct from the 'Instrumentalist' approach which just asks 'how can we exploit the resource concerned?' and is certainly laudable.

2. Sheridan Waitai - Ngāti Kuri

Dean Baigent-Mercer introduced Sheridan Waitai of Ngāti Kuri. She described the very exciting 'Protected Pathways' proposal. This is an 8.5 km predator-proof fence in Te Ara Whānui being proposed by Ngāti Kuri to protect Te Paki, the northern tip of the country, from pests such as possums, stoats, rats and feral cats. The Far North is home to some of our

rarest flora and fauna, and this fence could see native wildlife like the kākā, kākārīki, kākāpō, weka, kiwi, tuatara and various burrowing seabirds that used to live at Te Paki return to the area.

3. Stuart Nash on Marine and Fisheries

Stuart made the interesting comment that: "Mr Talley and Mr Hague actually have the same goal: abundant fisheries!" Talleys are one of the biggest commercial fisheries in New Zealand and also key lobbyists for their industry. Stuart is taking a paper to Cabinet on cameras on boats to convince the Government that there is a good case for them to be installed. He noted that a legal battle lasting almost four years against fishing giant Hawke's Bay Seafoods showed that commercial fisheries 'will be held to account'. In that case four fishing boats could be forfeited following 130 convictions (stemming from fishing catch regulation breaches involving under-reporting of catches following a multi-agencies raid).

During the Fishing Forum that followed Stuart's address, Megan Hubscher (F & B's Senior Media and Communications Adviser) noted that 97% of fisheries reported nil penguin deaths whereas where observers were present, 13 out of 14 deaths were reported! Richard Wells, Fisheries Specialist from Resourcewise Ltd (representing the fishing industry) admitted that there were 'information gaps'. He added that tools like electronic monitoring, cameras, and observers each had their advantages and disadvantages.

4. Forgotten Places Campaign Launch - panel discussion

I was intrigued to hear Rebecca Stirnemann, Forest & Bird's Mid-North Island Regional Manager select the Kaimai-Mamaku Ranges as her 'forgotten place'. The Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park covers an area of approximately 37,000 hectares and forms a rather rugged barrier between the Bay of Plenty and Waikato regions. Rebecca said that amazingly little predator control is being done there. Perhaps an ideal candidate for using 1080?

The Sanderson Memorial Address, Sunday AGM and Council meeting will be covered in the next newsletter.

Robert Woolf - Waitakere Branch Councillor

Other activities

As your chairperson I attend several meetings and groups, which I'll quickly highlight here, more in the next issue but if you can't wait: contact me. I went to the Forest & Bird Conference and AGM in June and had a meeting at the Wellington Forest & Bird office on Monday morning. Afterwards, the former chair of the Wellington Branch, Peter Hunt, was very generous with his time and showed me around all the projects their branch is involved in, including a tour around Places for Penguins!

The Watercare Community Liaison Group, established to discuss mitigation strategies for the new watertreatment plant in Titirangi/Waima, has been going for a year and Robert and I make sure one of us is there to get the best outcome for the environment. www.watercare.co.nz/About-us/Projects-around-Auckland/Huia-water-treatment-plant-community-liaison-group

All the chairs of the Auckland Region get together six times a year to discuss and to learn from the staff in the Auckland office what's happening.

With Richard Hursthouse, chair of the North Shore branch, and some other volunteers I'm on the board of EcoNet: a newly established group aiming to support conservation by connecting software tools. (www.econet.nz)

And you might see me at a market, community day or student event in our stall! All very worthwhile activities, if you're interested in knowing more or how to join in, let me know.

— Annalily van den Broeke (info@artants.co.nz).

Habitat te Henga- murmurings from the marsh.

Possoms, while not a major target in the trap line around the te Henga wetland, can still be a predator of wetland birds and are certainly a nuisance when they are trapped in the traps set to catch feral cats. The owner of a large property along the wetland edge has recently had several Goodnature A12 traps placed which our contract trapper, Matt, is checking on his route. The traps seem to be successful so we wait to see if more ferrets can be caught. PAPP, a new humane toxin developed for stoats and feral cats is regarded as being superior to trapping as a control measure for feral cats, so we might investigate its use and legal requirements.

Another trap line, along the ruggedly beautiful te Henga Walkway, is currently short of sufficient volunteers so anyone wanting an occasional energetic four hour walk please contact me.

Although bitterns at te Henga and elsewhere are normally monitored by detecting the booming calls of territorial males in the four-month breeding season, this is an inexact technique and totally misses the females and non-breeding males. I considered that thermal imaging of bitterns using UAV [drones] should be evaluated as the thermal image of a male would be similar to that of a female and finally after several years funding finally came through. Thus it was that in the near zero

temperatures around the winter solstice, a small group of us stood around a screen in the pitch black nights and pre-dawns at the Pukehina estuary, near Whakatane. Here two bittern with transmitters fitted previously were being studied by Emma Williams. Using the infrared camera on the UAV, the black and white images were sent back to the screen we watched and recorded for later analysis. With fascination we watched a ferret at about 700m away hunting through the salt marsh vegetation, we saw a rat crawling under the kikuyu near to our group, pukeko with their heat-retaining back feathers but brilliantly hot beak and shield glowing white against the dark grass; ducks and probably a bittern.

Flying a second UAV with an optical camera immediately afterward at dawn on the same flight path gave additional information as to what had been seen. Many questions were answered with this first trial but many new questions arose. The IR camera on the UAV is getting a second trial soon at Tawharanui where rabbits have managed to get around the pest free fence and the managers wish to find out how big a population there is- [an opportunity also to determine the thermal signature of the kiwi there.]

John Sumich – Habitat te Henga



The drone.

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!

Harbourview-Orangihina Park: Te Atatu Peninsula's native bird hotspot



Rare native bird discoveries in Harbourview-Orangihina Park emphasize how nationally significant Te Atatu Peninsula is for conservation purposes. They underscore how little we know about our neighbourhood's natural ecology. Despite extensive subdivision and suburbanisation from the late 1950s onward, the peninsula remains critical habitat for some of New Zealand's most endangered birds. Harbourview-Orangihina Park's wetlands are long-known as home to fernbirds and banded rails. Wrybills, banded dotterels, New Zealand dotterels, oystercatchers and pied stilts roosting in the Te Atatu Pony Club's fenced grounds have been counted regularly by Birds New Zealand volunteers for over two decades.

Of more recent date at Harbourview-Orangihina Park was surprise arrival of two dabchicks at Longbush Pond in 2016. The pair raised one chick together but sadly have not since returned. In August this year, Community Waitakere's ecologist Dion Pou discovered two hard-to-find birds in the wetlands. He heard a spotless crane calling from dense reeds and filmed an Australasian bittern prowling about. The bittern find made

nationwide media headlines. These new bird observations raise exciting possibilities of actual breeding populations and not just isolated individuals hiding in plain sight at Te Atatu Peninsula. We have our very own "secret national park" right on our doorsteps.

The Henderson-Massey Local Board is working on a new masterplan for Harbourview-Orangihina Park that can help save the abiding ecological importance of the area. Dog owners can assist conservation by keeping their pets out of the Harbourview-Orangihina wetlands to protect rare birds from disturbance. For those wanting to help by volunteering, Forest & Bird Motu Manawa Restoration Group organises native restoration planting, weeding bees, predator control, educational walks and annual beach cleanup activities. For more information please email motumanawa@gmail.com or see Facebook "Forest & Bird Motu Manawa Restoration Group".

Michael Coote - chair Motu Manawa Restoration Group

Here is to a hot summer!

Tai Haruru Lodge in Piha has recently had an upgrade: a new fireplace to keep you romantically warm and a new heatpump to get you warm and dry in minutes after a swim or rainy tramp.

So why not book at Tai Haruru for your next weekend away? It sleeps five to six (with three singles, one double bed and a 'daybed' in the lounge) in the main house and has another four beds in the self contained annex. House and annex can be booked together or separately. Only meters from the beach and surrounded by a native garden.

Priced from \$50 per night for the annex, proceeds fund our West Auckland conservation projects and only the person booking the lodge needs to be a member. Interested? More info on <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/our-community/lodges/tai-haruru-lodge> or with volunteers Jean and Peter King (09) 812 8064, hop0018@slingshot.co.nz



Or come and have a look at it on Saturday 24th of November, see the last page.

A West Auckland environmental icon leaves us



I am very sad to report that Catherine "Trixie" Harvey has just passed away after a short illness (aged 79).

Trixie grew up in Hamilton and took up pharmacy work as a young woman. Not long afterwards she met her lifelong and devoted husband, Bruce. They then raised a fine family of three children - Belinda and twins Anna and Mark.

In the 1980's she went to the University of Auckland studying science, eventually obtaining a PhD with a thesis on the endemic plant *Pomaderris Kumeraho* aka 'Gumdiggers soap'. Trixie subsequently worked for a number of years at various scientific establishments (including Hort Research) concentrating mainly on Kiwifruit development.

Bruce and Trixie Harvey were long time Titirangi residents, with a particular interest in the history and biology of the Waitakere Ranges. She was the author or editor (with Bruce) of a number of significant books on both the history and ecology of West Auckland. These include:

Waitakere Ranges - Ranges of Inspiration - Nature, History, Culture; Saving The Ranges - The first 40 years of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society; Titirangi - Fringe of heaven

Only last year, as part of the West Auckland Heritage Conference, Bruce and Trixie held a guided tour of Titirangi's heritage sites for over sixty participants! Trixie was a very warm and caring person which was combined with a contagious enthusiasm for matters botanical. She had been a tutor at University and was a talented teacher on any plant questions. Indeed she and Bruce were proud curators of their own fine garden which was not only a decorative delight but also yielded many vegetables.

She was a long-time member of Forest & Bird and was involved with many organisations. She was recently made a life member of the Labour Party. She served on the committee of Waitakere Ranges Protection Society for years and was involved with the West Auckland Historical Society. I was lucky enough to serve with her on the executive of Friends of Regional Parks, the committee of Friends of Whatipu as well as the committee of the Waitakere Conservation Network. In 2007 both Bruce and Trixie were awarded Queens Service medals for all their wide-ranging community work.

She will be sorely missed by her very wide network of relatives and friends. She combined a sharp scientific mind with great caring and compassion. This radiated outwards like a beacon of hope in a world not always willing to make that extra effort to improve our lot. She cared and she took action!

It was my privilege and honour to know Trixie and to be embraced by her and Bruce as a member of their family. I will greatly miss our very stimulating arguments and discussions on a multitude of subjects. Her funeral on 30th September drew over 240 people. The range and diversity of those present was amazing - all wanting to honour her and provide support to Bruce in his time of great need.

Rest in peace Trixie - your vibrant legacy will live on in the Natural World, both human and non-human!

Robert Woolf

North Island Gathering

Don't forget our North Island Gathering is on the weekend of the 28th of September! For all members and branches to network, learn and talk conservation, as well as enjoy some interesting field trips. The weekend will be based at the Aongatete Outdoor Education Lodge in the Kaimai Mamaku Conservation Park. There will be a marine theme to the weekend, with speakers discussing new developments in marine protection at Motiti and the Bay of Plenty, how the fisheries quota management system works, and what we have learnt from the Rena and marine reserves.

More info and booking here: www.forestandbird.org.nz/events/north-island-2018-gathering

Activities Forest & Bird Waitakere

All the activities are ours.

Tai Haruru Shared Christmas Lunch, Piha Saturday 24th November 12 noon, 92 Garden Rd, Piha

The Tai Haruru sub-committee invites you and partners to our pre-Christmas shared lunch... please bring something for the table to share. We will provide beverages. This annual get together gives us the chance to showcase our new heating systems, carpets and other upgrades the sub-committee did last year to keep this fabulous asset up to scratch and gives you a chance to see Tai Haruru if you've not stayed here before. We look forward to hosting you.

Sharon (secretary) & Tai Haruru sub-committee: Chris Bindon (convener), John White, Zena R, Annalily, Anko, Peter & Jean King (bookings) RSVP by 20 November to go4shaz@xtra.co.nz

Spring Beach Clean Harbourview 6th October

Come along for the annual Forest & Bird Motu Manawa Restoration Group beach spring clean at Harbourview! You'll be rewarded with a bbq afterwards. Contact Kent at motumanawa@gmail.com for details.

Third Thursday Talks

Third Thursday Talks are evening talks on conservation related topics hosted by our branch. All Talks start at 7.30 pm and are held in the Kelston Community Centre, corner of Awaroa Road and Great North Road. Non-members welcome, join us for supper afterwards. Koha appreciated to cover hall hire. For further information ph Liz 0274 762732 lizanstey@hotmail.com. All talks are also on our new website: www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/waitakere

Third Thursday Talk: Thursday 18th October – Art Polkanov

Post-pest eradication reptile recovery on Rangitoto-Motutapu



Professional wildlife biologist Dr Art Polkanov will be presenting the results of the tenth annual reptile survey, conducted on Rangitoto and Motutapu Island Reserves.

The survey resulted in detection/capture/processing of 1483 lizards of six species in 2017 alone. The trends we found, lizard population growth and range expansion, are related to positive effects of the multi-species pest eradication. Reptiles have become the best indicators of the ecosystem health.

Third Thursday Talk: Thursday 16th November – Grace Hall

Grace Hall – An introduction to New Zealand spiders

Come and see the real Avondale spider! Arachnologist (spider specialist) Grace Hall will bring some living spiders along for her talk on our native eight legged friends. Did you know we have over 2000 spiders in New Zealand, and we know so little of them, that over 1200 haven't been named yet? In her talk, with lots of pretty pictures and examples, Grace will explain the peculiarities of a number of spiders she is studying at Landcare Research.

Contact details Waitakere Branch Committee Members as at May 2018:

Annalily van den Broeke, chair	832 6408	info@artants.co.nz
Liz Anstey, PR	833 4145	lizanstey@hotmail.com
Chris Bindon, Tai Haruru and outreach	021 914799	chris.bindon@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
Michael Coote, Motu Manawa and Harbourview	021 622 122	marquisnz@clear.net.nz
John Staniland, Matuku Reserve	810 9516	bushridge@slingshot.co.nz
John Sumich, Ark in the Park and Habitat Te Henga	818 5267	cjnk@xtra.co.nz
Robert Woolf, external affairs coordinator	816 8899	robert.woolf@gmail.com
Dave Allen, Kaipara connection		dave.allen@outlook.co.nz

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