KAPITI-MANA

Branch of Forest & Bird

June issue 2019

Interim Editor: Alan Froggatt, Email <u>a.rfroggtt@xtra.co.nz</u>. Phone 04 2936366. Items of a non-political nature are most welcome but, if accepted, may be edited to fit available space

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 pm 26 June 2019 in the library meeting room, Iver Trask Place, Paraparaumu. Archaeologist Mary O'Keefe will be speaking on her work on the Kapiti Expressway. All members and non-members are welcome to attend our monthly meetings and should feel free to bring a friend.

Contents this month: Chair's report, Mega Mast Event, Global warming and biodiversity, Kaitawa Outdoor Classroom, First ever moa footprints found in the South Island, Kiwi Conservation Club, Young People Making a Stand for Nature; and 2019/2020 Committee.

Chairman's Report

Forest and Bird is an interesting organisation because it has a multitude of activities

John McLachlan of Paraparaumu and a Friend of Kaitawa, thought of the idea of establishing an outdoor classroom in the Kaitawa Reserve in Paraparaumu because we have got to influence the younger generations and cannot do that if they cannot learn about the natural world. This project is nearing completion and Kapiti Coast District Council intend to formally declare it open later in June. More follows in the item provided by Alan Froggatt.

Another side of Forest and Bird is advocacy. This is the area I have been most active in. Most recently, and mainly as a friend of Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP), I have been fighting for the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to stop farming in this park where the wetlands have been drained, peat has dried and is oxidizing to carbon dioxide.

More insidiously, as part of the GWRC plan to turn the land into productive pasture, the native reeds which form an integral part of the wetlands have been wiped with a herbicide to kill them off. I informed them this activity is illegal under the Reserve Act which says flora and fauna must be protected. GWRC are now seeking an internal legal opinion.

Given the impacts of global warming all this is not good. If farming ceases, the drains blocked, and the peatlands re-wetted they would quickly return to wetlands.

Forest & Bird have supported the Friends of QEP in their submission to GWRC planners to stop farming in QEP.

At the Whareroa Collaboration Meeting where I represented the Fiends of QEP, GWRC Parks Manager announced GWRC had decided to stop farming in the park. As the current farm license allows farming for a further six years the outcome could be interesting. When farming in the park ceases F&B will need to convince GWRC to re-wet the wetlands.

All these F&B activities provide opportunities for people to explore and practise their talents whether they be reasoning, writing, presenting, publicity or more creative activities. That is how I began in F&B and the rewards have been fantastic.

It is with regret that I must let you know that John McLauclan, Alan Froggatt, Graeme Joyce, Margaret Latimer and Lore Leseberg have stood down from the Committee after many years of dedicated

service to Forest & Bird and the wider community. This was recognised by presentations to these at our AGM held on 22 May.



Tony presenting John with his Certificate of Appreciation

In closing I want to especially thank Margaret for the wonderful job she has done in editing our Newsletter and Alan for 'stepping into the breach' as the interim editor until we can find a replacement. If you could help us put together only 10 issues a year, I would love to hear from you.

Russell

Mega Mast Even

Ed

In early 2019 the country experienced a mega mast event in the beech forests in the South Island. Even the normal fruiting and seeding of rimu and tussock grasslands were affected. This presents a serious threat to native birds and other wildlife as predator numbers build up to spring and summer. DOC is planning its largest ever predator control programme for 2019/2020 to eradicate rats, stoats and opossums. This will cost 38 million dollars but only cover the DOC estate.

Global warming and Biodiversity

Ed

Global warming will not only affect our economy, our climate, and the way we live. It will also have the following impacts on our biodiversity:

Warmer temperatures will alter the habitats that are critical to some species, increasing the risk of local extinctions. It will also favour conditions for many exotic species and favour conditions for the spread of disease and pests affecting both fauna and flora.

Increased summer draught will put stress onto lowland forests and earlier springs and longer frostfree seasons could affect the timing of bird egg-laying and the first flowering and health of leafing or flowering plants. It's time for all of us to do what we can, however trivial it may seem, to help offset this growing global disaster.

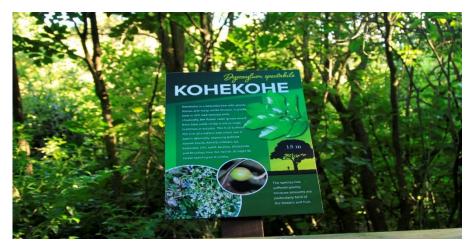
Kaitawa Reserve and Outdoor Classroom

Ed (Kapiti Mana Branch project leader)

Forest and Bird volunteers have been working at Kaitawa Reserve since 1995. In 2017 John McLachlan, Team Leader of the Friends of Kaitawa sought support from the Kapiti Mana Branch to establish an 'Outdoor Classroom' at the reserve. His idea was to install signs around the reserve describing the native flora, fauna, and aquatic life contained within the reserve and the Wharemauku stream so that all visitors and particularly children and visiting school groups could better appreciate and understand the ecosystems involved and how they should be preserved for future generations.

Members of the Kapiti Mana branch eagerly supported the plan and provided seed funding. The Friends of Kaitawa, Tangata Whenua, Kapiti Coast District Council were keen to support the project as was GWRC, but none could assist with funding.

Visitors will be greeted by an explanatory panel showing the locations of 22 informative panels telling the story of the native birds, endemic birds, introduced birds, self-introduced birds that nest or visit the reserve, the plants that cling and creep, the tiny but mighty insects that make it home, the many species of native fish that swim in the stream, the importance of wetlands, the pests that are trapped, the weeds that threaten everything and the glory of the native ferns and trees.



This project has been achieved through the support of KCDC staff, F&B volunteers and the Friends of Kaitawa Reserve. All this would not have been possible without the encouragement of Enviro – Schools, the Kapiti Sustainability Trust, the help of Dr Jean Fleming and two of her colleagues, and generous funding from the:

Wellington Community TrustValder Conservation TrustLion FoundationThe Kapiti Environmental and Restoration TrustRon and Edwa Greenwood TrustKapiti LionsValder Conservation TrustCouncil intends to formally open the "Classroom" at 11.30 am on 14 June.

An Amazing Discovery of international significance

Ed

History was made on 10 May 2019 when Michael Jackson accidently found the footprints of a moa in the bed of the Kyeburn River about 15 kms from Ranfurly. These million-year-old fossilised footprints were the first footprints of any moa seen in the South Island and aroused international attention.

It is generally accepted New Zealand had nine distinct family groups of moa consisting of Little Bush Moa, Heavy-footed moa, Mantell's moa, Crested moa, Stout-legged moa, Upland moa, North Island Giant moa, Eastern Moa and South Island Moa. All of these originated from ratites.

A ratite is any of a diverse group of large, flightless birds of Gondwanaland origin. While there are other flightless birds, ratites are unique in that they have no keel or other sternum. Ratites include Kiwi, Ostrich, Emu, Rheas, Cassowary and Moa.

It is thought the prints may have been made by an Upland or Little Bush Moa. Both these were the midgets of the moa kingdom. While the Upland moa was about a metre tall and weighed around 30 Kgs the Bush moa was the smallest at 50 centimetres and weighing around 15 kgs.



Skeleton of Upland moa. Image courtesy Te Papa Birds online.

Kiwi Conservation Club

Ed

The Forest & Bird Kiwi Conservation Club 'Wild Things' magazine is a treasure trove for the budding conservationist and indeed for anyone. Anyone who has read it could not help but be impressed, learn a lot and be motivated by its range, content, illustrations and many conservation messages.

Full marks to editor Rebecca Browne of the National Office.

Young People are actively making a Stand for Nature

Item by Margaret Latimer

Some define modern society by our disconnect with the natural world. This is particularly prominent in the younger generation due to their over-whelming interest in TV, smart phone, computer or tablet - anything with a screen. However, many young people are making an active stand for the natural world. Individuals and groups are defying stereotypes and consistently surpassing the pessimistic expectations of the 'older' generation.

Social media such as blogging are the new communication norm for them. They are using these to come together, to plan ways for conservation in their neighbourhoods.

Hands-on, informal, self-initiated exploration and discovery in local familiar environments are often described as the best ways to engage and inspire children and cultivate a ' sense of wonder.' It is the combination of multiple experiences and influences of nature, rather than one single life-changing experience that helps produce environmentally informed and active citizens.

The Kaitawa Reserve in association with its Outdoor Classroom and the F&B Kiwi Conservation Club effectively engage young people with nature.

Ed: The Kaitawa Reserve and Outdoor Classroom are open for to visit, learn, watch birds, enjoy, relax, meditate, use their camera, picnic, feel good- but please, dogs on a lead (and a 'poo' bag in your pocket).

2019/2020 Kapiti Mana Branch Committee

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Other Conservation and Restoration Organisations on the Kapiti Coast

Waikane Estuary Care Group-Contact Pam Stapleton. Telephone 04 9046845. I

Friends of the Waikanae river. Contact Ferial Falconer Telephone 04 904 3579

Nga Manu Nature Reserve. Contact Matu Booth. Telephone 04 293 4131. Email admin@ngamanu.co.nz

Nga Urora Escarpment Project Group, Contact Peter Kentish. Telephone 04 298 1255 Email <u>PK2003_595@hotmail.co</u>

Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park. Contact Russel Bell. Telephone04 972 5081

Kapiti Environment Restoration and Maintenance Trust. Contact , Tony Ward. Telephone 04 293 7203. Email kotareg@ xtra.co.nz

Kaitawa Reserve and Outdoor Classroom. Telephone KCDC O4 296 4700 for bookings. To offer help with restoration or to guide visitors contact Tony Ward. Telephone 04 293 7203. Email kotareg@ xtra.co.nz

Waimanu Lagoons Care Group. Contact Dennis Thomas. Telephone 04 293 6490