

NEWSLETTER December 2019

Kapiti - Mana Forest & Bird



Photo This cassowary is, of course, a native of northern Australia. Without them, many of the trees with large seeds would not be spread around and would remain in isolated pockets of forest. New Zealand has lost all its large species - the moas. What does that mean for our forests or do we not have seeds too big for our wood pigeons?

With every one busy with there is no December meeting. Your committee wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Editor: Russell Bell, Email russelljamesbell@gmail.com. Phone 0212266047. Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome, as would a contribution or contributions to future newsletters.

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Chairman's Report

I remember when the protection of Lake Te Anau, and saving our native forests from being logged, became the most important issues on

F&B's plate. Quite suddenly, an infusion of younger people moved into our committees and Central Office. Gerry McSweeney became

Chief Conservation Officer. Many of the older F&Bers' remained but the organisation was revitalised by the urgency of the two issues and young people. Success followed. Forests were saved. DoC was set up, F&B broadened its horizons and moved into rivers, tussock grasslands, the preservation of our seas, and other areas of concern.

The twin threats of climate change and biodiversity collapse are similar, but so big and different from anything we have faced. No single, or even a collection of countries, can solve the problems on their own. They are global.

It may be that these big new issues have a similar effect on our institutions. Maybe we are seeing that swing in some of the local election results. Long term councillors have stood down. GWRC has experienced a green swing and younger people have been elected to local councils. The old and some remaining councillors of GWRC were timid in the face of climate change and, in my opinion, obstructive in the green space based on my experience with Queen Elizabeth and Belmont Regional Park. I have high expectations of the new council.

Conservation News - The Wainuiwhenua Project

Quite a few people have worked on the Wainuiwhenua project <https://paekakariki.nz/listings/wainuiwhenua/> This project, to get the NZTA Transmission Gully leftover land (Perkins Farm and other nearby land) retained in public ownership, is supported by F&B. The contention is that, because of global warming and past events, such as flooding of the northern part of Paekakariki;

- revegetating the majority of the farm and the stream,
 - improving the Paekakariki water supply,
 - creating an eco-corridor to join Mt Wainui and QEP,
 - creating a wetland to stop flooding in north Paekakariki,
 - setting aside some land for community or substitute housing (if some houses are lost to the sea),
 - providing sites and access to construct a small wind-farm,
 - and more;
- could all be seen as public works.

Being seen as public works is the key to retaining the land.

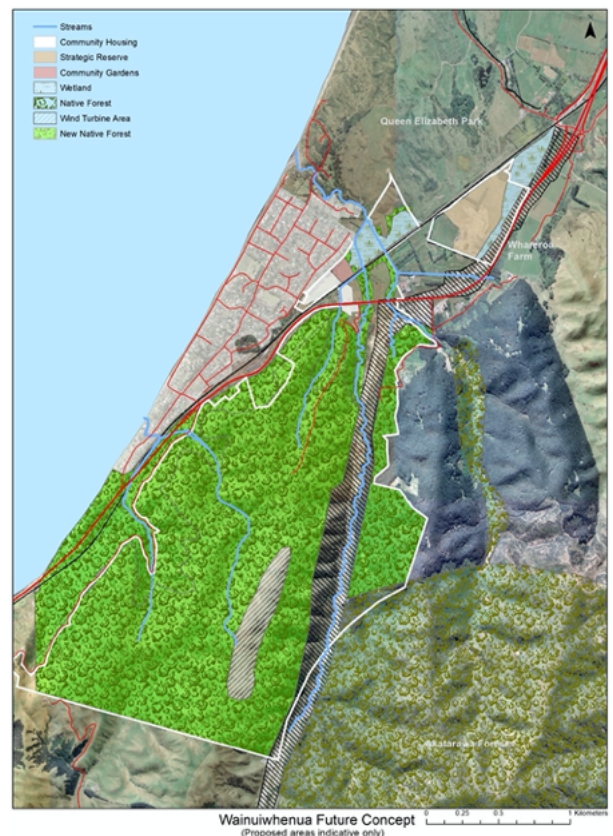
I saw youth at the recent Forest and Bird national gathering. They participated in the event that helps shape F&B's future. They want action especially with climate change. They will experience the worst of it.

So we could see young people taking up positions in our local committees, using Forest and Bird's mana to get the changes they want to see to save the world from this frightening future.

This is, in my opinion, a very good thing. I believe we need to be taken over by much younger people who feel more urgency with the issues of the modern world. They are likely to do things differently to us using different communication methods and styles.

From what I remember, the influx of younger people into F&B in the sixties, it made the organisation relevant. It invigorated the society. It became vibrant and dealt with the big issues.

I would welcome it.



Preliminary mapping indicates that all these uses could fit on the land. (See images)

A side opportunity that could flow from this is a large south Kapiti Park, managing land under different owners but for similar purposes. The land parcels include Whareroa Farm, QEP, some Wainuiwhenua land and the Paekakariki and Raumati escarpments. Such a semi integrated park could provide better and more diverse recreation opportunities, connected habitats and other advantages.

This project has flown below the radar, to some extent, while the possibilities and opportunities were worked out but now the public are being consulted.

A hui was held at Paekakariki on Sunday 17/11/19 to let the public see and comment on the proposal. After some robust discussion, the 75 meeting attendees agreed to support the following resolution. "Noting the purposes, proposals and issues presented by the Wainuiwhenua Working Group at the hui on 17

November 2019, and the working group's commitment to stay engaged with and responsive to Haumia ki Paekakariki and community, the members of the Paekakariki community attending the hui support the Wainuiwhenua proposals as presented."

If this becomes a reality, Queen Elizabeth Park will benefit. There will be a good reason to extend at least a finger of bush south east of the remnant to meet the eco-corridor to Mt Wainui. The Wainui Stream will be ecologically improved. The small wetland on the SE corner of QEP will likely be extended.

The proposal has gone before the Paekakariki community board and was supported. It can now be sent to KCDC. The Council will be asked to join the community group to investigate the feasibility of the proposal.

This project has a long way to go and I will keep you informed from time to time on its progress.



What's Happening

Climate Change

As we go to press, the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP25) will be meeting. The [UN reports](#) “the conference is designed to take the next crucial steps in the UN climate change process. Following agreement on the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement at COP 24 in Poland last year, a key objective is to complete several matters with respect to the full operationalisation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement”.

New Zealand, and other participating countries will be reporting on their actions taken to meet the Paris Agreement, and our report will reference the Carbon Zero Act, our agricultural research programmes, and funding we have committed for climate change both within New Zealand and in the Pacific region.

National Policy Statements

We got through the National Policy Statement for Fresh Water, now the Ministry for the Environment has released the [Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity](#). This sets out the objectives and policies to help councils identify, protect, manage and restore indigenous biodiversity under the Resource Management Act 1991

(RMA). They're inviting submissions, which close on 14 March 2020.

Sophie Handford

Sophie Handford, a Paekākāriki local, (pictured below at the Welly's award ceremony) is the joint winner of Wellingtonian of the Year 2019, and winner of the Youth Category, for her work in organising the School Strike for Climate (you may remember her picture on the cover of the 2019 Winter Issue of the magazine). Sophie has a long association with our branch having started as a member in the local Kiwi Conservation Club, and now involved with the Youth Hub. Sophie also recently won the seat of Councillor for the Paekākāriki -Raumati Ward in the local body elections.



Restoration Contribution To Kapiti and Mana

Friends of Taupo Swamp and Catchment

Bill McAulay at Taupo Swamp



FOTSC have a national treasure to take care of! The group formed in 2018 out of concern for the protection and enhancement of the Taupo Swamp and catchment and its functioning and vibrant native ecosystems. Their volunteers includes individuals & groups who are happy to assist or have an interest in weed clearance, tree planting, project planning, mapping, photography, ecology, walking, landscapes, history and geology.

Right now, apart from trapping,

site preparation and planting on Porirua City Council land, the group is working hard to ensure that development of the surrounding catchment is not going to deteriorate the quality of the swamp, and to try and save the remnants currently under threat of

development in the surrounding catchment. It is proving quite challenging, and more support would be appreciated. To find out more visit <https://www.tauposwamp.org/>

NOVEMBER MEETING REVIEW

Our speaker at the November meeting was Peter Cooper of the [Remutaka Conservation Trust](#) who expanded our views on what can be achieved by a dedicated army of volunteers! Since 1988, the Trust has been pursuing its objective to protect and restore the natural vegetation and wildlife of the Remutaka Forest

Park and to promote community understanding and appreciation of the Park. This has included restoring the Catchpool valley, monitoring, trapping, bringing back the birdsong – and that's included the reintroduction of kiwi (now over 150 pairs) - and all this without a fence!

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Wednesday 23 February at 7.30 pm in the Paraparaumu Library room. Our speakers will be Rob Wilson and Serena Cox of [Ghostfishing NZ](#). Officially established in 2015, Ghost Fishing New Zealand aims to actively promote environmental awareness and

conservation by the pro-active removal of rubbish and debris from the sea floor and coastline. They use local divers to make a difference to the dirty underwater secrets we cannot see, and will be telling us about highlights and lowlights of their journey since inception.

New Zealand 2019 Bird of the Year

Yellow eyed penguin or Hoiho

Image and item by Alan Froggatt

Endangered. Total population thought to be 1600-1800 birds. It's only found in New Zealand and may be extinct on the mainland within 20 years.

This, the rarest and most ancient of all living penguins, spends most of its time on land rather than in the water. It's curious and social and is designed for diving swiftly through the water. It has marvellous agility at hopping over boulders, crossing rough rocky beaches, clambering over fallen trees and climbing coastal slopes. Then it has to trudge to its own secret nesting site which can be in all sorts of odd places.

Its main breeding grounds on the cool coast of Otago and some coastal areas in Southland where dense vegetation is available, but most of these are under the serious



threat from coastal erosion and disturbance by tourists.

Each bird will display strange rituals gestures and different behaviours, but it obviously communicates with other birds. While 18% will 'divorce' and 'remarry' to form a lifetime bond,. When an illicit affair happens, the guilty partner is usually beaten up by the outraged other.

Nests are well concealed under dense vegetation so as to be visually isolated from other penguins. Human disturbance upsets breeding, and chicks can be predated by feral cats, stoats, ferrets and rats. Mustelids may also take eggs.

Breeding birds will make two trips per day. A day trip ranges between 12 and 20 kms and night trips of less than 7kms. On coming ashore, the male or female will often wait for the other. While they often display affection for their chicks, when irate they will snap at other penguins.

By 20 days the chicks have their secondary down and will be curious about anything that moves and will peck at it. When it tires it will

flop down with its feet stretched out to let the heat escape through its soles.

At about six and a half months it will have obtained its full plumage and undertake its first 500-kilometre journey to its feeding grounds in the north occasionally coming ashore at remote or secluded bays or sandy beaches to rest. During this three to four-month journey it will forage in the mid shelf region between 2 and 25 kms offshore, diving to depths of 40-120m for species such as blue and red cod and arrow squid but it will eat any fish up to 25 cms in length.

During this time, even though it's white front provides good camouflage from below, as does its black back from above, it can be taken by sharks, fur seals and sea lions or attacked by barracuda which usually injure them around the feet and abdomen. It is also at risk from plastic debris, fishing nets, oil pollution, overfishing of squid and other fish, and ocean warming. On average only 50% will make it home. At some time between June and August it will begin looking for a mate but only 15% will survive to breed.

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