



Sand Dune fold ephemeral wetland - whats left of them

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

Next Public Talk

The next public talk and our last for the year will be held at the Waikanae Presbyterian Church, 43 Ngaio Road, Waikanae on Wednesday 26 November. Max Lutz of the Friends of Otaki River will talk about the restoration of part of the Otaki River.

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Chair's Opinion Piece - Sand Dune Fold Wetlands

You must be sick of me banging on about Queen Elizabeth Park but at least this is a new subject.

If you had walked from the coast directly inland before europeans arrived, the coastal sand dunes would have had a thin skin of sandy soil covering the dunes. Further inland, the dunes would have a much thicker more stable coating of sandy soil covering sand. They are called the stable dunes. Further east, as you descend these major dunes onto what is now flat land, you would have been entering the large peat forming wetlands that we have now protected half of.

The public has been denied access to the stable dunes, as well as the peat forming wetlands, for the last ten years, so we have not been able to see what is there. Recently we have looked at some of the stable dunes. The forms are complex and have folds that trap water and would have formed small ephemeral wetlands. They would have been much easier to drain and in all those we looked at, old but still operative drains could be seen. Rushes were still growing where the wetlands had been. This type of wetland is now very rare. Why is that?

Early pastoralists would have found it much easier to drain these sand bottomed small

wetlands and graze them compared with the difficulty of draining the deep extensive peat wetlands. That would have happened on the sand dune country over the whole of the South Taranaki Bight from Paekakariki north. QEP may be one of the only places where they can be protected, but they have to be restored too.

So as well as wanting the rest of the peat wetlands of QEP, we want to see the retirement from grazing and restoration of the dune fold wetlands.

On the positive side, filling in the drains is easy. This could almost be done by hand and has no risk to anyone but, like everything with GW Parks, things are not as simple as you might think. GW Parks put a proposal to Council to graze the stable dunes. They did not wait for an assessment of what Park Network Plan submitters wanted for their regional parks. Neither they did not wait until

the public had a chance to see the areas that they have not been able to visit for the last ten years. While the farm was operating, no one was allowed to visit this land yet it is a recreation reserve for the public to recreate in.

Councillor Jenny Brash saw the conflict between the Parks Network Plan consultation and the grazing proposal and asked for the proposal to be delayed but this was not supported.

This will most probably mean that our submission's request to protect sand dune wetlands will have to fought for against a farmer who has a reasonable expectation that they can graze the dunes for the next three years. F&B's Amelia Geary wrote F&B's submission on all of the region's regional parks after input from all branches

Russell

Singing in Spring



Credit: Joy Glasson

We know that spring has sprung by a quick look around us in the natural world, but also by birdsong – at no other time of year does the Grey Warbler sing so sweetly or so often – something about become a new dad I expect.

Not long after their serenade starts, we expect to hear the distinctive call of the Shining Cuckoo (Pipiwharaua – *Chrysoccyx lucidus*). The pipiwharaua has its young raised by poor Grey Warblers - Riroriro, chucking their eggs out of the nest and replacing them with their own. Cuckoo chicks are easily twice the size of Grey Warblers before they leave 'home'. This might be why Grey Warblers lay their first clutch of eggs early – as this male and his mate had. Sadly, their nest was raided by a mouse the very day this photo was taken, so unsurprisingly he's stopped singing. Nature faces lots of challenges to success, including mice. Perhaps the Grey Warbler should be our next winner of [Bird of the Year](#) (Vote between 2- 15 November 2020).

Bird of the Year 2020

From 2-15 November you can vote for your top five incredible and unique native birds. It's easy, just visit the [Bird of the Year website](#), and you have five votes to choose which you think should win (in order). It's a great way to learn about the challenges they face too and to start a conversation with others.

Protecting the World's Birds

An international report says the world has failed to meet any of its 2020 biodiversity targets for birds. The targets were set in 2010 at the Convention on Biological Diversity in Japan. The [BirdLife International report](#) uses data about birds to report on 18 of the 20 targets, concluding that birds around the world continue to decline and face extinction.

Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet (GOPI)

Beautiful Pauatahanui Inlet is one of the jewels in the crown of our branch's natural assets. Since 1991, the Guardians have been defending the Pauatahanui Inlet and working to ensure the ecological, recreational and cultural values of the Inlet are recognised, and pressing local authorities to restore degraded habitats. They do 'hands-on' restoration work and ecological monitoring (such as cockle surveys), education and publicity programmes, make submissions on local developments and other issues that potentially affect the Inlet environment, and produce a newsletter to keep people informed. They also sponsored a series of 12 short documentary films celebrating the ecology of the Porirua Harbour.

These contain a host of great material and can be viewed online here: <http://www.livingwatersdoco.co.nz/>.

Volunteering opportunity :

GOPI is a registered charity – always keen to welcome new members, and have won several awards – including a Green Ribbon Award, and two Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards.

The Guardians Annual Cleanup is on 22 November 2020, so maybe that is a date you can put in your diary. More information here: <https://www.gopi.org.nz/>

Asking for Public Submissions

[Kapiti Coast Beach Bylaw](#) are currently up for review – submissions close on **13 November 2020**. These beach bylaws are important because they cover how beaches are protected and managed, and how people can use these beaches - including horse riding, motorised vehicles on beaches, and longline fishing off beaches.

[Porirua City Council Proposed District Plan](#) is available for consultation. This will affect the

shape of Porirua for many years to come, and will define the protection of natural areas, the treatment of waters, and land, as well as access to areas. If this interests you, you can [review the plan here](#). Submissions close on **20 November 2020**.

Porirua City Council is also currently seeking views on the [Porirua Proposed Climate Change Strategy](#). Now that's something we should all be interested in!

What Fish do we eat?

In September a team from the University of Queensland (UoQ) published research that

over 100 endangered species of fish were being widely caught and eaten around the

world. Researcher Carissa Klein noted that to know what we are eating, we need better food labelling: “If you were eating meat, you wouldn't just order 'meat', it would be beef or chicken...When it comes to fish, some are as endangered as the black rhino and you wouldn't expect to find that on a menu.” You can read the full article in [Nature Communications](#).

“Keeping Aotearoa New Zealand at the leading edge of global fisheries management” is a project initiated by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor to create a new vision for commercial fisheries.

View the [Terms of Reference here](#). The project has a focus on innovative approaches on “integrated management systems that combine the best of quota management with protection of ecosystems”. This process was supposed to be completed this year but was delayed due to Covid-19 and a new timetable is yet to be published.

Forest and Bird believe that it is important to have cameras on fishing boats. It seems that where they are installed, fishing wastage improve and records become more believable.

Campaigning from “Bird of the Year” parties

Online campaigns have already kicked off for the feathery candidates. The [Penguin Party](#) is making announcements, [variable oyster catcher](#) is circulating some questionable statistics, and [kākārīki karaka](#) has a bold new look. [Takahē](#) is even appealing to the youth vote by getting on TikTok (@tiktakeahe).

Our birds have been a great teams during Covid-19. The kororā refrained from surfing in Level 4, the piwakawaka was flitting around checking on all the neighbours, and the South Island kōkako continued social distancing (having not been seen since at least 2007).”

Last year was the first time a seabird had won Bird of the Year, with the iconic hoiho making a splash! Hoiho won't be able to host a serious challenge this year. They are in decline and could be extinct on mainland New Zealand in 20 years.

Voting begins at 9am on Monday 2 November and closes at 5pm on Sunday 15 November, with the winner announced at 9am Monday 16 November.

Learn more at www.birdoftheyear.org.nz and follow #birdoftheyear all over the internets.

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