



Forest & Bird

TE REO O TE TAIAO | *Giving Nature a Voice*

Napier Branch Newsletter November 2019 to October 2020



Thank You

I would like to thank our Chairman David Belcher for nominating me for the Old Blue Award and for the story that he wrote about my involvement with the Napier Branch over 35 years. Also, thank you to the committee for their support to go ahead with the nomination. I never thought I would ever receive an award like this, I feel very honoured.

I have loved being involved with Forest & Bird over the many years and enjoyed every moment of my role of doing things for our branch, especially the monthly field trips, being a committee member, regular working bees and our social weekends away along with all the other bits.

I have found it very rewarding and satisfying that I have been able to contribute what I have done over those years. Our members who support the Branch for trips, meetings and other activities that we are involved with are a wonderful team and they all enjoy getting out there and doing their bit for conservation, which is very important for our environment.

I would like to thank these members for their help, friendship and support to me over the years, which I have very much appreciated. Also thank you to all those members who came to my Old Blue presentation on November 5th. It was lovely to see so many of you there. Finally, I have Old Blue and she is up on the wall already. It really is a beautiful painting of her, a treasure to have.

Liz Carter

FROM THE CHAIR



Greetings everyone

I trust that you have all survived and avoided the serious Covid-19 pandemic over the past challenging months. Likewise, Covid certainly brought about a halting experience to all Branch meetings and activities as of last March.

Our Napier Branch was saddened in early March to say farewell to our honoured member, Isabel Morgan, who had just turned 98 years of age. Fortunately, many members were able to attend her memorial service just prior to the enforcement of level 4.

As you will all recall we were to host an evening forum with Kevin Hague, our CEO, and meet with the Forest & Bird Board last March, but Covid regulations placed an immediate halt upon this and all Branch activities, including pest control, with the introduction of level 4. However, your Branch Committee within its role has remained very active in continuing to further promote the Branch and Forest & Bird whenever and however possible.

It was most fortunate that by mid-July Covid restriction levels were brought back to level 1 which permitted a well-attended Branch meeting and a most successful tree and shrub planting morning at Waitangi Regional Park. Our Napier Branch owes tremendous gratitude to Rod Dickson and Stevie Smidt from the Open Spaces Division of Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) for their ongoing support and co-operation in engaging us within this much-admired project. Some 44 members and guests attended a most successful planting in a new area lying immediately inland of SH51 followed by further tree release and mulching of last year's plantings. Very many thanks to those who attended and we look forward to your future participation in such activities.

The majority of members are well aware of the 'Branch Highlight' of the 2020 year, that being Liz Carter winning an extremely well-deserved 'Old Blue' Award. To celebrate this honour, 42 members attended a most enjoyable evening and dinner at the Napier RSA at the end of July. As the 2020 Forest & Bird AGM was held via a Zoom meeting and the Sanderson Dinner cancelled, Liz was officially presented with her 'Old Blue' Award by the Forest & Bird Trust Board on 5th November.

Unfortunately, August placed us back under level 2 and we were unable to proceed with the Branch meeting. However, and very timely, in September we were back to level 1 where we proceeded with a most successful forum with the General Election candidates which was very well supported by members.

In September we were grateful to the Hastings/Havelock North Branch for hosting the Combined Branches' dinner/luncheon. A most enjoyable function was held at the Havelock North Club along with some support from Central Hawke's Bay and our thanks must be extended to Nick Sage for his organisation.

In recent months a good amount of work has taken place at Little Bush reserve. Again, and I simply cannot stress enough, our grateful thanks for the communications, actions and financial assistance from the Biodiversity/Biosecurity Departments of HBRC for their support in having our gem



David Belcher and Neil Eagles at Little Bush

reserve now fully fenced to exclude deer. Their support of our Napier Branch was expressed by a letter of thanks and appreciation to the HBRC CEO and Chairman. This was followed by an invitation extended to our Branch Committee to attend a council meeting and offer a presentation in mid-September. The presentation was apparently well received and we look forward to working together on future preservation and restoration projects.

Our thanks for ongoing pest control support must be extended to Beau Fahnle, HBRC Biosecurity/Biodiversity Officer and Central Districts Pest Control. There will be further information expressed in the Little Bush report along with the participation and assistance from our own members.

Our next highlight of the year for the Napier Branch was to have hosted the Forest & Bird North Island Gathering in early November. With much deliberation and consultation with Central Office this event was unfortunately postponed some weeks back when at level 2. Prior to this time, the Marlborough Branch had also postponed the South Island Gathering.

My sincere thanks must be expressed here to Lynne Anderson, our Branch Secretary; Liz Carter, organiser/communicator; Deborah Ives, our monthly newsletter editor/producer and Angie Denby, Branch Committee member and others who had gone to tremendous time and trouble in organising a venue, schedule of engaged speakers and field trips for this event. It was sad and very hard to implement postponement of this event following the final advice from Central Office, but a decision had to be made in good time especially for those making travel and accommodation arrangements. In spite of this postponement and now we (at time of writing) remain at level 1, our Branch Committee was invited to share time and thoughts at a Forest & Bird Trust Board Meeting in Napier on 5th November. At this meeting Liz Carter was presented with her long-awaited 'Old Blue' Award.

Following the passing of Isabel Morgan and in appreciation of Helen Morgan, a large collection of Branch records was handed to Neil Eagles. Some of you are well aware that Neil is currently writing the history of our Napier Branch dating from its beginning in May 1956. He actually holds the hand-written minutes of the very first Branch Meeting! It is absolutely marvelous that these records were preserved and we look forward to publishing Neil's written project, hopefully by the end of 2021. In spite of being awarded an 'Old Blue' two years ago, I simply cannot let this opportunity pass without offering further commendation to this gentleman for his ongoing commitment to our Napier Branch in all sorts of ways. He often repeats to myself, "Well I need something to do" as if he has not already made a lifetime commitment.



Certificate presentation

I often repeat that our Napier Branch is on a roll and I put this down to the ongoing lifetime commitment of guess who, yes, Liz Carter. On behalf of you all I offer a repeated thank you to Liz who extends a grand welcome as you enter our monthly meetings and organises supper to follow in recognition of good fellowship. Most importantly of course is the tremendous undertaking and responsibilities that Liz undertakes in her leadership of our monthly field trips. Within her stride she undertakes large responsibilities to meet the safety issues of everyone. Our sincere thanks Liz and I know you often repeat "I love doing it".

In conclusion, I must also make mention of our very able Branch Secretary who devotes many hours of voluntary work to the success of our branch. Her minute recordings and actions on our behalf are exemplary. At the October meeting I had great pleasure in presenting two certificates in appreciation of the work of two of our committee, Deborah Ives our newsletter editor, and Lynne Anderson our Secretary. Some two years ago Deborah stepped up from the branch meeting floor volunteering

to take the responsibility for producing our monthly newsletter. This comprehensive and most informative newsletter is well received by members and has kept the Branch well informed on environmental matters. Within this role she also became the editor of our well recognised six-monthly newsletter to assist Don Wilson, the producer.

Thank you also to the Branch Committee for sharing the highs and the lows which we have experienced over the past months as we look forward to 2021.

My thanks go to all members for your participation and we look forward to your continuing support in the coming year. May I wish everyone all the Blessings of a Very Happy Family Christmas and may the New Year be full of Peace and Joy.

David S Belcher

All of us could take a lesson from the weather.
It pays no attention to criticism.



N.Z. Falcon
Photo by Liz Carter

It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.

As we all know this has been a strange year, which hopefully will soon be a distant memory. With the setting of Covid-19 levels we were required to stay away from the nursery until we reached level 1. Accordingly for many weeks we had to hope the irrigation system was working and rabbits were also following the stay-away rules. Fortunately both hopes were realised. Alas though the weeds had had a field day and many of the plants, carex, tauhinau, toetoe and koromiko in particular had raced away and were rivalling Jack's beans.

On being allowed to return and following a comprehensive induction and health and safety reminder, we were able to begin getting the plants ready for sending out. We were very lucky, virtually all had survived. Extensive weeding and the dreaded short back and sides, avoided by me for decades, saw the plants taking on an air of respectability.

We were pleased Louise McNamara, from DoC, was able to find a new home for our hundreds of tauhinau plants and a couple of hundred flaxes. They had been destined for the Cape. An access issue meant they would miss out on being planted there this year, so they were given to Port of Napier for their planting programme.

Many of the plants, as they have in previous years, went to the Holt property off Seafield Road. The Estuary Group, along with the Holts, planted them out in early August. We were lucky with the weather. The following rain that occurred shortly after planting would have settled the plants in nicely. It's a most impressive planting area out there and is becoming a most valuable asset.



Swamp flax and tauhinau



Empty space at nursery

In July we mentioned to Alan Lee that the nursery needed some serious maintenance. DoC agreed and we asked Ted Angove to sort out what materials we needed, prices and then to do the work. In early August, Ted, Alan Lee, John Holschier and I spent a full day dismantling and replacing the seed raising areas, replacing the broken gates, extending the shade cloth so the whole potting up area is covered and building a watering platform. Ah! the difference it has made. That and replacing many of the sprinkler heads has almost made us bordering on being human. We failed though with the underfloor heating. It was suggested a critical pipe sprung an unfixable leak; a feeble excuse.

One very pleasing result this year is having the Portland Island pingao seed actually germinate. Over the past years we have managed to get only one or two seedlings emerge. This year we have potted up nigh on 250 into large root trainers. Helen Jonas from DoC Wairoa is thrilled with this success. Helen also sent us *Pittosporum obcordatum* seed. This seed has come from plants we had supplied to her some

years back. That too has germinated in the hundreds. It appears we'll be able to supply Helen with these plants, described as being as endangered as kiwi in the Bay, for many years to come. They are such slow growers and their root systems are, to be frank, piddly.

This year we again hope to grow around another 5000 plants and we are well on the way to achieving that. Some of the seedlings are being a tad slow. No doubt some warmer weather will give them the incentive to germinate and relish the wonderful group of nursery volunteers.

Geoff Hulbert



Speakers' Corner

November 28th, 2019

Quentin Bennett NZOM,

Undersea photographer and conservationist



Quentin Bennett

Quentin showed many photos from his extensive underwater selection, which included a wide variety of many different sea species and also photos from diving amongst shipwrecks.

His photos included beautiful sea anemones, sponges and corals of an array of different colours – all here in New Zealand. Some of the coral trees were over 500 years old – there were black corals and cold water red corals which are different from the tropical corals. We saw photos of amazing jellyfish, sea slugs of many colours, lobsters and shrimps, moray eels, squid and many

brightly coloured fish. He heralded sharks and reiterated their beauty and what a necessary part of the ecosystem they are. We can all live without shark fin soup!

Quentin recalled how he used to go out to Pania Reef and catch good size Hapuka – now you have to go miles to get just a small one. He slammed how our waters are now overfished.

Quentin said how he would like to see more marine reserves and didn't understand why fisheries were against them as the reserves provided such great nurseries for fish. The big fishing companies are just too powerful. He then showed us some photos from the 1960s of enormous fish and one octopus much taller than a man – sadly nothing reaches those sizes now.

Bernie is the Hawke's Bay Regional Representative for Birds NZ. For the past 18 months he has worked for DoC full time and is the Head Ranger at Boundary Stream. Bernie has also been involved with the HB Canoe Club for over 30 years and told us how he recently took a canoe down the Ngaruroro River to do a bird count. He emphasized how important it is to have such recorded evidence on bird counts as that evidence will be crucial to the current court appeal where Forest & Bird are appealing the Water Conservation Order of the lower Ngaruroro River.

The main part of Bernie's talk was about the seabird site on the Maungaharuru Range. Translocating the chicks from Whenua Hou / Codfish Island (near Stewart island) to the Maungaharuru Range started in 2014 with Cooks Petrels and later Mottled Petrels. The chicks are carefully pre-selected from their burrows on Codfish Island preferring to take one chick from a burrow where there are two chicks. They are also selected on weight, maturity and general health. The burrows with suitable chicks are marked, then on the same day they are flown by helicopter to Invercargill, by Air NZ to Napier, then by helicopter again to the top of the Maungaharuru Range where there is a predator-proof fence around the site. Once there, they are hydrated by tube then volunteers transfer them to ready waiting burrows.

The chicks are tube fed every second day, weighed and wing measured. They are also banded for future identification. After about one month they fledge and go to sea for four years before hopefully returning to the same site to breed themselves. The chicks imprint from where they fledge. Some of the first birds have returned and Bernie related to us how he stayed the night up there recently and could hear the sound of seabirds – probably not heard by human ears from that place for about the last 200 years. There used to be millions of seabirds nesting throughout the NZ bush – they now are just on a few off-shore islands.



July 23rd

Denise Fastier, Senior Biodiversity Ranger, DoC

Denise told us about her trip to Campbell Island in 2008 as a DoC ranger. Campbell Island, one of New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands, is a World Heritage Site and had been declared rat free in 2003. The DoC team travelled down in a 15m boat "Tiama" in which there were eight people, two dogs and many crates and packs. They were there for six weeks doing monitoring of bird nests and bird numbers. Strict quarantine rules ensured that any foreign organisms were not introduced to the island. Campbell Island is rich in history of shipwrecks and attempted farming settlements. For years there was a met service weather station there, the buildings still standing.



Wonderful photos showed an array of scenery and birds such as various species of albatross, penguins, petrels, skua, terns and gulls – all of which are numerous on the island. The territorial sea lions posed many challenges for the group.

One of the birds being monitored was the Campbell Island teal, an endemic duck which had miraculously escaped extinction by existing on a small offshore island which had remained predator free during the over 100 years that rats and other introduced mammals had ravaged the mainland. The teal were rediscovered on Dent Island in 1975. In 1997, while looking for more teal on another offshore Island, another bird which had escaped extinction was found – the sub-Antarctic snipe.

September 24th

Meet the Candidates - Question time, Napier Electorate

Branch Chairman, David Belcher introduced the candidates and facilitated the session. Candidates attending were : James Crow – Green Party, Stuart Nash – Labour, Katie Nimon – National, Deborah Burnside - New Conservative and John Smith – Independent. Each candidate was given two minutes to answer five set questions about environmental issues, such as future economic sustainability, climate change, water quality, deer numbers in the Kaweka Forest. A further one minute answer was sought from the candidates and a short question and answer session followed.

October 22nd

Anna Madarasz-Smith, Marine and Coastal Scientist, HB Regional Council

Anna spoke about the Invasive Tube Worm in the Ahuriri Estuary. Ahuriri Estuary is one of the most significant bodies of water on the East Coast of the North Island, however, it is overloaded with sediments and nutrients.

Before the 1931 earthquake there were 3,806 hectares of lagoon – it was a valuable fish basket harbouring many species. The 1931 earthquake caused about one-third of the lagoon land to rise 1-2 metres. In subsequent years land was drained and reclaimed for farmland – now there are just 470 hectares of estuary left but it still has very significant values.

There is not a lot of inflow of fresh water which the Estuary really needs – mostly from the Taipo Stream and stormwater. 70% of Napier's stormwater goes into the Estuary. Sediment is a major stressor and also nitrogen run off from the land which can cause algal blooms. To help maintain the health of the Estuary 11,500 of mostly native trees and plants have been planted to help reduce the nutrient run-off.

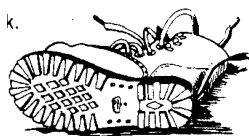


Anna Madarasz-Smith.
Tubeworm colonies shown in dinghy.

Another problem is the invasive tube worm, natural to Australia and would have come in on a ship's ballast in the 1990s. These worms form a reef-like substance of tubes made from calcium deposits. The worm itself is a tiny filter feeder but the structures it forms are huge. The structures cause problems with flushing and alters the natural habitat. Three years ago 300 tonnes of the worm structures were removed by digger and left on nearby land to dry out so the worms would die.

Unfortunately, the worm has also now been found at the Clive and Tukituki River mouths.

Note: Because of the Covid-19 lockdown, no meetings were held in March, April, May and June



Field Trip Reports

By Trip Coordinator, Liz Carter

Well, what a year we have had and how lucky we are to be here in our beautiful New Zealand. As you are aware not a lot has happened regarding our trips this year, so far we have had just the three field trips with another to come, plus we had two working bees at Waitangi Regional Park. Hopefully we can get back to normal for next year.

December Sunday 1st 2019

Leader John Stairmand.

Anawhenui Station and Balls Clearing, Puketitiri.

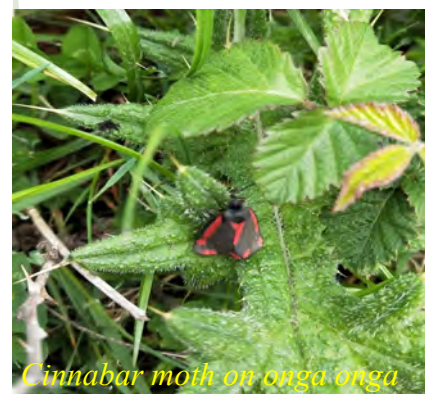
Team helpers John Wuts, Marilyn Lorimer and Liz Willis

A beautiful hot day of 29 degrees was on the radar for the day. A 50-seater bus and one car headed to Puketitiri and on arrival we thought it was going to rain as the temperature had also dropped to about 22, which was ideal for our up hill walk.

A quick morning tea and toilet stop at Balls Clearing, as we dropped the Treasures group off there for their walk. The hikers group then left and headed over to Anawhenui Station to start their day off.

A lovely walk over this beautiful farm, following farm tracks, up and up. The higher we got, the cooler the breeze and the better to see the grand scenery, from the Kawekas/Ruahines out to sea.

Our lunch stop had grand views and just out of the wind. After lunch we



Cinnabar moth on nga nga

made our way back down, but took a different track back part of the way. Unfortunately Sue had a little fall going down and sprained her ankle. Our host was called and he very kindly came in his ute and picked Sue up and took her back to the bus. Luckily we had a Doctor with us and some nurses.

We returned back to Balls Clearing to have our end-of-year Christmas break-up, with the treasures joining us. They had had a great day amongst this beautiful patch of bush. Cake and liquid refreshments were enjoyed and Raffle was drawn. Roz Jones won 1st prize of a \$100-00 voucher from Kathmandu, 2nd prize 'Bingo!', Roz's second ticket was drawn, but she very kindly made us have another draw and Lynne Anderson won the \$30 Mitre 10 voucher. A few other prizes were given out as well.

Thanks to Steve and Christine Tutbury who very kindly took Sue back in their car with them to get her to the medical centre for a check over, which was good news, with nothing broken.

A very good ending to the 2019 year.

January - Sunday 26th

Leader Liz Carter

The Valley of the Vanishing Streams, Maungaharuru Range.

Team helpers. Tony and Jenny des Landes and Marilyn Lorimer.

The day was going to be pretty hot, so sun cream and plenty of water to drink was advised to the 40 members. We made our way up the Napier-Taupo Road to the Titiokura Summit to the start of our walk to the Hidden Valley of the Vanishing Streams,.

The farm track we followed was an old four wheel drive track which took us about 5km to the reach basin of the streams and about 1-1 ½ to 2 hours walking.

There were lovely views over the Mohaka River, over to the Kaweka and Ahimanawa Ranges. Nearing the 5km distance we went left and descended down into a wondrous rock-filled basin.

Spectacular high cliffs on one side formed a lovely back drop with numerous springs feeding delightful streams which dart among the rocks, and at times go underground to re-appear further down.

Pockets of native trees were clustered about, with lacebark, some big matai, broadleaf, mahoe, kowhai, putaputaweta, and many dying cabbage trees were seen.

We all had lunch together under some big trees with shade. After lunch,



Copper butterfly



Spring at Valley of Vanishing Streams

many of the group scrambled over rocks and crossed streams up to the source of these delightful little streams. It was quite surprising where they pop out to start their journey, and care was needed around the rocks and tomos. The rest of the group just potted around exploring near our lunch stop.

We all gathered back together to do a head count before leaving the area at 1.30pm - all accounted for. On our return a pleasant breeze had appeared, just what we wanted. The bus left at 3.30 pm. Everyone enjoyed their day and were pleasantly surprised by this beautiful area.

March - Sunday 1st

Leader John Wuts

Kaweka Hut Site, Kaweka Range.

Team helpers Steve Tutbury, Marilyn Lorimer and Liz Carter

On arrival at the Lakes carpark the weather was a bit on the cool side, but great for walking.

John set off with 18 'toughies' and they made their way down to cross the Tutaekuri River. From there it was up, up, up and up to the old hut site, just as well it wasn't too hot.



Kaweka Hut Site

Lunch was enjoyed in some sunshine and at 12.30 pm the group set off to return, so it was down, down, down back to cross the river then back up again to the bus. All enjoying the little challenge.

The treasures (24 of them) outnumbered the toughies on this trip. They walked down the track to the Kuripaponga Lakes, a challenge for some as there was a steep drop down to the lakes and all made it safely. A quick walk over to the second lake, where we were horrified that campers had been there and had lit some fires, and left rubbish around, what were they thinking of!!

A nice spot for our lunch stop was found in the sunshine. When back on our feet again we headed back on a new track to the bus. This was much easier than returning on the track that we walked to the lakes.

All in all, everyone seemed to have enjoyed their day.

It was good to have twelve new people out on this trip, I hope they all keep coming back to join us on our future trips.

March, April and May

No trips due to Covid-19 restrictions

June - Saturday 27th

Leader Mike Hockey

Waitangi Regional Park.

This was to be our tree planting day but due to the dryness of the ground and no rain on the radar, it was decided that we change our plans and remove weeds etc. from a planting that we did in 2019.

It was a frosty start to our day, which meant a beautiful day followed.

A good number of members turned up and surprisingly we got a heck of a lot cleared and also added mulch around the trees to protect them from pests and keep them moist.

Great to escape and to get out and do some rewarding work.

July - Saturday 25th

Leader Mike Hockey

Tree planting at Waitangi Regional Park.

Finally we had some rain and we were able to plant trees. This planting was done on the upper side of the bridges at Awatoto in the new wetland area that is being developed.

A very good number of members and public certainly got the job done pretty quick, guess having the holes already dug for you makes it nice and easy. About 400 hundred trees were planted. Hawke's Bay Regional Council were spoiling us again with another lovely BBQ lunch when we had finished.



Winter planting at Wetlands

August Sunday 30th

Mohi Bush.

Cancelled

September Sunday 27th

Riverlands Te Pohue

Cancelled

After getting a bus load of very keen members looking forward to walking and talking with their mates, this had to be cancelled because of a the weather bomb on that day. On the early morning phone call to Garth McVicar, he advised us not to come as it was horrible and hazardous up there. Good call.

October Sunday 25th

Riverlands, Te Pohue

Leader Marilyn Lorimer.

Team helpers; Liz Carter, Virginia Moore & Tony des Landes

At last we were on our way to "the big day out". A beautiful sunny day welcomed us in the morning and 36 very keen members ready to get walking.



View from trig at Riverlands

On arrival at the Mohaka River Farm we were greeted by Jared. Seven families have brought the camp site and other facilities just recently. They are making many improvements in the area for the public to use. There is a delightful little gift shop with all sorts of things in it, the families make everything on site. We were able to use their toilets and have a quick morning tea. The McVicar family were owners of this area many years ago. They still own the farm.

After morning tea we all hopped back on the bus and made our way over to the cattle yards and the start of the walk. The walk is a circuit of up, around and back down approx 8.39kms. Garth met us there and introduced us to his new predator proof fencing which is a gem. The

hikers headed off first making their way to a track which took them up to the weather station. From the weather station they walked up and up the main access road, passing in between two beautiful reserves, on the left is a huge QE11 and on the right is the Mohaka Ridge QE11 and finally to the trig which is at 823m (2,700ft). Fantastic views while having lunch. Everyone left the area together at 1-30 and made their way back down a forestry road to the bus.

The treasures had a leisurely day following the same track that hikers had taken, but they went as far as they wished and then stopped for lunch and returned back to the bus. A great day for everyone.

We hope for better luck next year and the 2021 trip programme will have all the trips completed. Let us make sure that we all still take care out there.

This year our branch made a donation of \$250 to the HB Helicopter Trust

Happy Christmas and a Great 2021 to you all.

Liz Carter.

TRIP CO-ORDINATOR



New predator fencing demo at Riverlands

Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society

It has been a quiet, but busy year for the Society's committee.

The year began with a members' picnic at Pandora Pond in January, listening to speakers talking about the Society and the Tarapuka (Black-Billed Gull) that nested on the Pandora Spit over the summer.

Isabel Morgan, our previous and original chairperson, passed away in March, and many people attended her memorial service at St Paul's Church in Napier.

Angie Denby and Sue Macdonald continued advocacy for the Estuary and wildlife with submissions to local councils and DoC, on estuary issues like stormwater bylaws, water quality, whitebait management, and annual plans. Angie and Sue have been networking with staff at local councils, hearing about their work at the Estuary, and discussing issues. The new Society pamphlet has had the new email address and Facebook page information added. Sue has continued to convene the monthly 'Second Sunday of the Month' clean-ups at 1.30pm at Humber Street.

A small group of EIT Screen Production students have been working on a short video about the Society, and will present that soon. The EIT Diploma in Environmental Management students met with Angie, Lynne, and Jenny to hear what it is like to advocate for the estuary with local councils. Our AGM was held in October. All current committee members were returned, Angie, Sue, Barry, June and Rob and two new committee members, Lynne and Sarah, came on board. Good discussion was held, and ideas from members on issues that matter to them will be followed up by the committee.



Godwit talk at the Estuary

November has been busy. Committee member, June Graham, received a Civic Award from Napier CC for her work with the Estuary Society and Grey Power. Angie attended the Panpac Environmental Stakeholders Forum.

We held a successful public event, 'Meet the Godwits' in collaboration with BirdsNZ and DoC, with a talk by ornithologist Brent Stephenson about the journey from Alaska of the migrant bird, Kuaka (Bar-tailed Godwit) that spends the summer at Ahuriri Estuary. Over 60 people attended the talk and walked to The Scrapes area of the Estuary to view the Kuaka. We also supported a group of school pupils from Richmond School

Richmond School group with model Godwits



on an outing to see the Kuaka.

Beforehand they had been learning about this amazing bird and had painted wooden models for their school.

The next picnic will be on January 23rd and a Godwit talk/walk in March 2021 before the birds leave for their breeding grounds in Alaska.

Angie Denby



Richmond School pupils

Waitangi and Waikahu Wetlands

On Saturday 23rd November 2019, the Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) organised an early morning Karakia at the new Waikahu wetlands attended by the stakeholders of the wetlands and invited guests, and what a wonderful new wetland this has turned into with numerous varieties of wildfowl already in residence.



Karakia at Waitangi

On Wednesday 4th December, Napier Forest and Bird members held a tree release day at Waitangi, releasing the trees and shrubs planted earlier in June that year. We used wool matting around the plants with many members using hand tools to clear around the new trees. It was a great turnout of 25 volunteers. Well done everyone. This year because of Covid-19 restrictions, a change to our annual tree planting days was required and, together



Planting in progress, Waikahu wetlands

with HBRC, a new schedule was organised due to plant availability. The proposed planting date of 27th June was postponed to Saturday 25th July. Because of the lockdown our volunteers were keen to get out and about so prior to the annual planting we held a tree release/mulching day at Waitangi around last year's plantings on Saturday 4th July. The annual tree planting day took place in the new area between the highway and the railway line on levelled ground which already had a deep layer of bark mulch laid over the area by the HBRC Open Spaces Team. It was a wonderful morning spent planting out in the new area and an enjoyable time was had by all. A BIG thanks to the crew from HBRC for their guidance and for supplying a BBQ lunch.

A further tree release day was to be held at Waitangi in November to give the new planting a clear start to this year's growing season but was postponed to December because of torrential rain.

The area is now protected with a trial trap line around the planted area with traps provided by the HBRC and set up by Rod Dickson HBRC, David Belcher and Mike Hockey.

The whole area of Waitangi and Waikahu wetlands is now looking fantastic and if you are looking for a walk for yourself or out-of-town visitors look no further than a walk in this area.



David Belcher and Mike Hockey setting traps at Waitangi



Panorama of Waikahu Wetlands

Special thanks must be noted to the HBRC Open Spaces team, especially Russell Engelke, Rod Dickson and Stevie Smidt for their continued support at this location, they do a fantastic job.

Mike Hockey

Richmond School

Funding from Napier Branch has made a major difference to Richmond School's conservation programme to support teacher Di Morgan. The financial support for the school is now complete and the school is able to continue the programme with funding from other sources. A group of enthusiastic pupils thoroughly enjoyed their trip in November 2019 to Blowhard Bush, with volunteers Theresa Hurst and Mike Hockey showing the group the glories of the bush environment.



Richmond School Group at Blowhard Bush



*Theresa Hurst and Richmond School Group,
Blowhard Bush*

Little Bush Scenic Reserve

History began when 'Little Bush' was the name conferred to this pocket of native forest to distinguish it from Ball's Clearing, formerly known as Big Bush. The surrounding countryside was originally owned by Colonel George Whitmore who then sold to Michael Groome and Murray Roberts & Co Ltd who farmed Hawkestone Station. There were many owners in succeeding decades and the land eventually passed to Robin Alfred Whittle in 1950. Ownership of the 11.55 hectare reserve, which lies just under 600 metres in altitude, was passed to the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of NZ when they purchased the area in November 1989 from Rob Whittle.

With the March onset of the Covid-19 pandemic all activities ceased at Little Bush until we reached level 1 in early June. At this point of time, I was contacted by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) Biodiversity Division stating that they wish to immediately proceed with Stage 2 of the deer fencing project. Fencing contractor Mat Cave and four men with chainsaws and slashers were in action almost immediately, taking four days to clear bush vegetation from this 700m length of fence line which was totally overgrown and impassable. The fifth day of clearance involved a large digger to clear a very large felled pine tree from the neighbouring property. This clearance then enabled resurrection of the existing boundary fence line with the additional top-up of deer fencing. The massive felled pine tree caused total destruction to some 70m of the original fence so deer fencing only was installed within this section. Our Napier Branch contributed \$8,000 towards Stage 2 of this project which amounted to a total cost of \$26,517 representing all labour, digger hire and fencing materials. Certainly not a cheap exercise but we are most grateful to the HBRC Biodiversity/Biosecurity Division for offering every assistance in having this project completed. For your added information the total cost of Stage 1 was \$38,000, included in this expense our Napier Branch contributed \$10,000 along with a very kind contribution of \$3,000 from Biodiversity Hawke's Bay.

Our appreciation of the HBRC Biosecurity Division did not cease at this point. With Stage 2 of the boundary fencing now complete, we were granted an additional six DoC 200 traps which have been placed at intervals along this section of the boundary. These now provide our boundary barrier with 18 DoC 200 traps to hopefully exclude predator entry. Our thanks also to this division of HBRC for granting 10 DoC 200 stainless steel trap mechanisms to replace our aged rusted-out traps which were installed in 2011 on the interior pest line.

We now have a total of 29 DoC 200 traps and two Timms traps which we service and maintain at Little Bush Reserve. I wish to thank John Stairmand, Neil Eagles and Mike Hockey for their assistance in maintaining our worthy pest control programme. This ongoing project will well serve the health and beauty of our wonderful gem. In servicing these traps over the past 12 months we have caught 54 rats, 16 hedgehogs, two rabbits, one opossum and one wild cat.

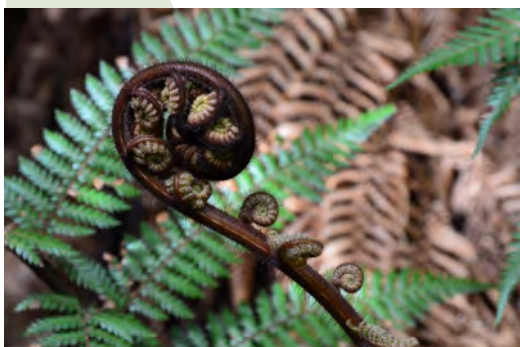
In addition to the pest control programme, I must offer sincere thanks to Beau Fahnle, HBRC Biosecurity/

Biodiversity Officer, who accompanied myself at Little Bush recently to GPS all the trap positions which will enable advantageous recording and monitoring. On the same visit we have established a number of permanent photographic points which will be photographed annually to record regeneration and restoration of the reserve. Five cameras have also been placed in various positions within the reserve to capture the suspicion that two young deer may possibly be enclosed. These cameras will also capture other wandering predators, so watch this space.

David Belcher



David Belcher and Neil Eagles admiring new deer fencing



Hawke's Bay Regional Council update

We've been busy working away through COVID-19 with biodiversity enhancement, predator control, and engaging with the community.

Community projects

We're working with the community along the Tukituki and Tūtaekurī rivers to protect native birds.

We've helped set up two new community predator control projects to protect birds like Banded dotterel as they nest along the rivers from predators like hedgehogs, rats, feral cats, and stoats.



Getting our hands dirty with predator control.

Whitebait habitat restoration

The whitebait season is in full swing, and we're seeing our work with the Department of Conservation paying off. For over 30 years we've been working to identify and restore whitebait spawning habitat, and help them getting up and down our waterways. From fencing, to planting lowland waterways, to building a 15 hectare wetland at Waitangi, we've been putting in the mahi and know Hawke's Bay has got healthy whitebait populations.



Fish passage, restored stream cover, inanga spawning ground.

QEI partnership

We have joined forces with QEI National Trust to provide incentives and on-farm support to protect native bush on farms in Hawke's Bay. We're jointly offering funding and on-farm support to establish covenants to enhance and support healthy ecosystems in Hawke's Bay.

Here's our Catchment Services Manager Mark Mitchell, and QEI rep Troy Duncan at a covenant in Rissington.



Head to hbrc.govt.nz for info about all the work we do.

Forest and Bird – Napier Branch Committee Contact Details

Chairman

David Belcher 06 877-2283
22 Fulford Place 021 145 8669
Havelock North
Email - davidbelcher@xtra.co.nz

Secretary

Lynne Anderson 06 844-0962
389 Church Road 027 241 8124
Greenmeadows, Napier 4112
Email - autumntrees8@gmail.com

Treasurer

Sue Lever 06 845-1586
21 McKeefrey Avenue, 027 223 9121
Napier
Email - dslever@nowmail.net.nz

Committee

Liz Carter 06 844-9358
6 Rutland Place,
Greenmeadows, Napier
Email - garthandliz@gmail.com

Neil Eagles 06 844-3904
30 Trigg Crescent, 027 276 2043
Taradale, Napier
Email - nandgeagles@outlook.com

Deborah Ives 06 844-4526
80 Freyberg Avenue, 021 188 0375
Tamatea, Napier
Email - debtony@orcon.net.nz

Cheryl Nicholls 06 845 1612
4 Knightsbridge Place, 027 644 1679
Taradale.
Email - cheryl1nnz@hotmail.com

Mike Hockey 06 650 1686
8 Rotoiti Way 021 145 9330
Napier
Email - mphockey@xtra.co.nz

Tony des Landes 06 843-8652
133 Harold Holt Avenue 027 543 4708
Napier
Email - tdeslandes@xtra.co.nz

Angie Denby 06 835-0173
17 Vigor Brown Street 027 368 6466
Napier South
Email - angelden908@gmail.com

A Note to Contributors

In the interest of accuracy and available space, the Editor and compiler reserve the right to alter contributions where necessary.

This Newsletter is edited by Deborah Ives and published by Don Wilson