



Male miromiro/tomtit on Potaema walk

North Taranaki Forest & Bird + Kiwi Conservation Club news

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

June 2021 to September 2021

POTAEMA WALK, 21 MARCH

Potaema Bog is a wetland gem on the slopes of Mouna Taranaki. Like all wetlands, the bog holds and filters water before gradually releasing it to the streams and the surrounding wetland forest. It's home to a range of bird and invertebrate life, and is a beautiful, with rich plant colours and textures and an attractive boardwalk and viewing platform.

Our trip to the bog on 21 March was not well

attended, (only four of us, including two from the committee), but we had a lovely walk! It was overcast but didn't rain and botanist Barbara Hammond was with us to tell us about the plant life along the track. We also saw miromiro/tomtits, korimako/bellbird and kererū, and although the mountain was mostly behind cloud, we had an interesting and informative time. Thanks Barbara, for your expertise.



Looking towards the mountain from the viewing platform at Potaema. Inset: korimako/bellbird in the forest walk; waterdrops on a web.

ROBIN TALK & AGM, 14 APRIL

As usual, we had a speedy AGM, with the committee of recent years being re-elected (see p.4). After the business of the meeting was concluded, we were treated to a talk by Pat Murphy who spends a lot of time on the mountain observing and monitoring the

progress of robins. It's inspiring and exciting to see what an impact the trapping programme is having, with the successful reintroduction of these special little creatures.



Unless otherwise credited, Photos by Janet Hunt

MILLS WETLAND WALK, 18 APRIL

This was a return visit to Rob and Dawn Mill's place to see how their wetlands have changed since our last visit in 2018.

Again we walked through their mature orchard trees and across grazing fields to where the wetland

is being developed in the lowest part of the farm. It was very noticeable how the plantings had grown and the pond dam looks like it has been there for a long time. It was evident that a lot of planting, weeding and nurturing had been put into this development.



ARAHEKE RESERVE WALK, 16TH MAY

The day dawned wet but by 10 am it was not raining and a good group of 13 people of all ages met at The Meeting of the Waters for a walk around the DOC Araheke Scenic Reserve. Access is via an interesting walk over the tailrace stream for Lake Mangamahoe hydroelectric power station, then past the Topec grounds before crossing the Waiwhakaiho River into the reserve.

From here a wide loop track takes walkers through a mix of regenerating podocarp and broadleaf forest.

It was not long before we found some forest fungi to admire, even before we reached the loop walk. There were plenty along the trail to keep the enthusiasts happy.

The Araheke Stream runs along part of the track, and is perfect for photos.

It was disappointing to come across a number of dogs off-leash despite the 'No Dogs' sign but this seems to be normal everywhere. There was also a serious Tradescantia problem in half of the reserve.

Nonetheless, everybody enjoyed the walk, a pleasant way to spend Sunday morning.



Silvia, Ben, Marcella, Rose and Helen, at the beginning of the walk.



Gary and Marion lead the way.

PATEKE RELEASE

On May 13th, a number of committee members headed down to Rotokare Scenic Reserve to take part in the release of about 50 of the endangered brown teal, the pāteke. This was the second release of these appealing little ducks into the reserve. The ducks came from the Issac Conservation and Wildlife Trust based in Christchurch. The species has suffered an ongoing decline in numbers and range since the late nineteenth century.

After some formalities and a karakia, it was down to the boat ramp where the ducks were to be released. We all stood around as one unfortunate bird was held up by its legs while we were told about their predicament, and how the breeding program and translocations are helping to save the species.

The duck was only too happy when the big moment came for it to be set free. Two black swans decided this was the time to investigate the proceedings, and after a call for anyone with bread they were shooed away to watch from a respectable distance like everyone else.

The duck was then lowered down to the water and let go. It headed rapidly away into the safety of the



Pateke photographed on Rotoroa Island.

lake. This one and a number of others were wearing radio transmitters so that they can be tracked over the next few weeks. Pāteke like to fly around a bit, and some head outside the reserve.

Hence one of the reasons for the Halo Project (see more, p.4) which involves many traps placed outside the fences in neighbouring farmland. All the pāteke were then released one by one, with anyone who wanted, getting to take part.

FROM THE RESERVES

It's quiet in the reserves as we head into winter. At Tom and Don's our contractor Mark Perham has completed a trapping run and reports that some of the A24 counters are missing (rat trophies), or possibly not working. Due to the expense and dubious benefit, these will not be replaced. The DOC200s are still catching pests. Thank you Mark for your help.

We have renewed our lease of grazing land to the King family for another three years.

Meanwhile, our trapping team report regular rat catches in the DOC200s at Te Wairoa, indicating a potentially high population. Tony Collins is going to take over the trapping roster and intends to double efforts to catch these pesky critters.

MUSTELIDS

On the subject of trapping . . . QEII publish a magazine called *Open Space* full of interesting and relevant information about conservation. They have recently run a series on trapping that may be of interest to members, including the most recent, on mustelids. Find it online at: <https://qeiiinternationaltrust.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/1289-QEII-May-2021-newsletter-ff2LR-FINAL.pdf>

RIP SIMON COLLINS

Like all who are involved in conservation in Taranaki, we were devastated on March 20 to learn of the sudden death of Simon Collins. We extend our love and condolences to his family, his friends and colleagues and the wider Rotokare community. Simon was a respected and outstanding leader and a true friend. He is deeply missed.



The kohanga kiwi project at Rotokare has been such a success that birds from the sanctuary are being used to repopulate other areas of the Taranaki countryside. Here, Simon releases a Rotokare kiwi to a new home on the adjacent Totara block in June 2020.

ROKOKARE HALO PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

The 'halo effect' occurs when native species naturally spread from protected areas such as Rotokare, whose pest-free environment has boosted the numbers of animals surrounding it, creating a 'halo' of greater biodiversity beyond its boundaries. There is a corresponding need for increased trapping and predator control beyond the protected area, especially around high-risk areas such as gates and culverts.

The Rotokare Halo Project commenced in 2011 and now, combined with a large area under the

watchful eyes of South Taranaki Forest & Bird, extends protection to thousands of hectares.

With the agreement of National Office, the committee of North Taranaki Forest & Bird have agreed to make a generous initial donation and to become monthly sponsors of the Rotokare Halo Project. We are using income from the lease of grazing land at Tom & Don's reserve.

We will review the arrangement annually.

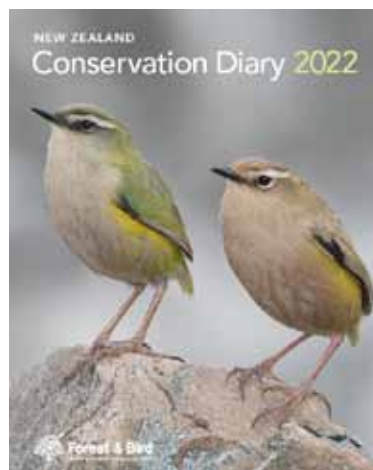
CALENDARS AND DIARIES

The 2022 Conservation Calendar and Conservation Diary from Pottin and Burton will soon be available.

Now is the time to think about your requirements — they are always perfect gifts for your friends, family or just for yourself!

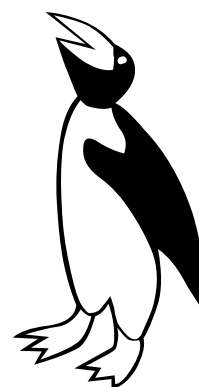
This year we have decided to take your orders before the Branch buys them in because we have been left with unsold items in previous years.

Contact Dawn with your order: rjmills58@gmail.com



**CALENDARS
\$18**

**DIARIES
\$25**



KCC NEWS

Sonya Bates has recently retired from the role of KCC coordinator. Our thanks Sonya, for all you have contributed to conservation and to our branch!

We are delighted to welcome a new coordinator, Lee McCracken. She is just settling into the position and already has activities planned. Watch this space for new developments!

Who's who at North Taranaki F&B & KCC

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