



Barrett Lagoon wetland

North Taranaki Forest & Bird news, autumn 2025

P.O. Box 1029 New Plymouth 4340

Autumn 2025

COMING SOON

We had a great turnout for the World Wetland Day walk on 2 February (see below) — over 60 at a quick count! And although we had to cancel the planned trip to Ruapehu, we do hope to reschedule. Meanwhile, more good things are in the pipeline — here's our planned programme for the next few months. We will confirm each event via email closer to the time.

- **Wednesday 16 April, 7:30pm: AGM at Community House**
Our speaker will be Gabriel Lennon. Gabriel is a PhD Candidate in anthropology from Stockholm University who is researching the politics of governing environments in Taranaki, with a focus on goats. He will speak to us about his research, which has engaged a range of groups who have different understandings of these animals, from those who see them as valued resources, natural parts of the bush, or as pernicious pests, and whose methods of control differ. These all have consequences for the practice of conservation writ-large in Aotearoa, where contest over what's being conserved and for whom become more prevalent. This will be followed by a Q&A.
- **17 May: Rotokare Scenic Reserve. Meet in the carpark at 11:00.** The walk around the lake takes about 90 minutes. Bring lunch to eat beside the water afterwards. It's always a great trip.
- **June: A seed propagation workshop** run by Janica Amore at Woodleigh Nursery, 300 Mountain Road. Learn the best methods to raise native plants from seeds.

Barrett Lagoon weeding group

Are you interested in joining a small team of volunteers working with the New Plymouth District Council to remove invasive weeds from the Barrett Lagoon reserve?

The group usually meets on the first Sunday of the month (weather dependent) from 10 to 12. Meet just before 10 at the Roto Street entrance. If you want to know more or are keen to be involved please text Jennifer on 021 111 8623.

RECENT EVENT

Barrett Lagoon walk, World Wetland Day, 2 February

Our guides were Taranaki Regional Council Environment Officer Chauncy Ardell and Wetland Ecologist David Munro. We had a relaxed walk through this impressively large reserve up to the lagoon and beyond with stops along the way to describe the history, flora and fauna of the domain.



A DIFFERENT RUAPEHU TRIP

Summer Visit to Forest & Bird Lodge

I was not going to make the planned F&B branch trip to the Forest & Bird Lodge at Whakapapa that has unfortunately now been cancelled. However I had been thinking about options for an inexpensive family get-together and was inspired to investigate staying at the Lodge myself.

My extended whānau thought the F&B Lodge would be a great location to gather and hang out together so we booked for 4 days in January. We didn't have a set plan, but I did compile a long list of possible activities to keep everyone busy depending on the weather and people's energy levels.

As it turned out we didn't need the long list—there were ample walks around Whakapapa area which were perfect for us and proved magical with summer alpine flowers in abundance. We took 4 hours to walk the nominally 2.5 hour Silica Rapids track due to stopping so often to look closely at all the orchids and alpine plants. I showed everyone iNaturalist and we also had fun using the Aotearoa Species Classifier app on my phone. I found, embarrassingly, that many plants I would have casually called 'hebe' are in fact completely different plants!

There was heaps of space to spread out in the Lodge, with the youngsters in my group being particularly impressed with a choice of 3 lounges—one which has a great view of Ruapehu. We did our own cooking, played games, did yoga after our walking and had a fabulous relaxing few days. I am working on the photo book already and enjoying remembering the holiday.

The environment is very different and extraordinarily varied and beautiful. I am looking forward to our North Taranaki F&B branch visiting later this year or early next.

~Karen Hamer



A selection of the rare and beautiful plants that so distracted the group on the Silica Rapids walk.

RESERVES REPORTS

TOM & DON'S

As most of you will know, this reserve is 'farmlocked' – we have no independent access from the road and have always used the track across the enclosing farm, which, among other things, goes through the outer yards of the cowshed and relies on a reasonable condition of the track for our vehicles.

This is tricky for both parties and from time to time causes difficulties, especially when our need to carry out predator and weed control coincides with high levels of farm activity such as calving in early spring or harvesting in summer. We understand that there are currently feral cats in the area as well as the usual possums: TRC have committed to assist with controlling both.

The lease is up for renewal in July. We will clarify the situation with the owner and will seek a three-year term. The grazing land will be revalued as part of this process.

We discovered a patch of ivy whilst replenishing the A24s with lure and CO2 a couple of months ago. It had begun to climb one tree but was mostly crawling on the ground, no doubt searching for more trees to climb. Ivy is a menace because it will climb up and not be killed by the canopy closing as the trees grow. Long strands radiated out from each root and were able to be reeled in like fishing line, ending up with big tangled piles which were nestled into a tight fork of a tree, so that they are off the ground and will dry out – especially in the current fine weather.

It has been GPS located for future reference and monitoring.

The area in which it was found has many young saplings but also some very dead blackberry. It was sprayed by our contractor Mark Perham in 2023 and is now being replaced by saplings – although the stems are still spiky!

We will return for both the ivy and the blackberry.



ABOVE: A New Plymouth pohutukawa drowning in ivy;
INSET BELOW: The many seeds of ivy.



You might wonder how it got into a landlocked reserve but ivy *Hedera helix*, is unfortunately spread when people dump garden waste or birds eat the seed. It will also sprout vegetatively from the smallest stem. It was named by DOC as one of 386 environmental weeds in 2024. We also have it in Te Wairoa.

TE WAIROA DOROTHY BAKER RESERVE

Karen has recently been targetting the Golden Goddess in the wetland area, cutting and pasting the stems to kill the roots. If we help the natives grow the dense foliage will limit the impact of the lily, but there is also some incursion from the neighbouring property that will require continued control.

Tradescantia persists amongst the seedlings in areas that have been previously treated. We hand-weed to carefully lift the entire stem and roots. The entire weed is placed in plastic bags where it slowly dies and decays over time.

Some of the *Tradescantia* leaves look nibbled, which will either be the beetle released to help control the weed or the chooks from next door. We have seen some areas with the *Tradescantia* rust and these bio-controls all help — but removal is still the best action where possible.

Other news from Te Wairoa

- The vegetation along the boundary above the bluff along the main road is a constant issue because of its proximity to the power lines. It is also not a safe area for volunteers to work. Janica Amore on behalf of the committee has been in touch with Powerco and their agents, Asplundh, to manage this aspect of the site. It would be great if the lines could be buried below the bluff.
- It has been suggested that we need an annual working bee to catch up on all the little extras — such as:
 - ~ checking perimeter fences for soundness and to lop any overhanging vegetation
 - ~ cleaning out the shed
 - ~ checking tracks and removing plastic onsite — rubbish bags containing sprouting *Tradescantia* as well as obsolete tracking tunnels, old carpet around trees, white possum feed stations and old track markers
 - ~ continued weeding as well as identifying new incursions
 - ~ clearing new plantings
 - ~ identifying new planting and enrichment opportunities
 - ~ washing the signs

We will have a barbecue to follow!

We will send out a date for this in due course.

- We are keeping a log of volunteering hours (if you go out, please send yours to Peter).



ABOVE: the lily known as 'Green Goddess'. It's closely related to Arum lily.

LEFT: *Tradescantia* among the native seedlings.

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

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