



# Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

## June 2018 Number 58

### Kia Ora/Greetings

An update on some of the work undertaken over the past three months:

#### *Waikato*

- Organised and held biodiversity forum hui/fieldtrip in Raglan
- Held pest management workshop at Go Eco Hamilton
- Wrote article on the Raglan forum event for Raglan Chronicle
- Attended and spoke on Bat advocacy at Hamilton City Council hearing
- Responded to enquires from 0800 BIO DIV service
- Chaired biodiversity focus group meetings
- Made submission on behalf of the Forum to HCC long-term plan
- Engaged with public and promoted forum at Field Days DOC stand
- Chaired Project Echo Meeting

#### *Coromandel*

- Prepared a report on Otama Wetland Reserve for the Otama Reserve Group
- Held workshop for community groups at Kuaotunu - Animal and Weed Pest Management
- Assisted Otama Reserves Group with application to the EIF
- Providing on going assistance to the Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel Community Trust. Member of the interview panel for appointment of Project Manager and assisted with induction and on-going support on the ground
- Supported new Flaxmill Bay group with posters to advertise their predator control programme
- Prepared article for the Mercury Bay Informer on the Otama Wetlands Reserve

### Waipa peat lakes could support pateke

Recent work by Dr Jenn Sheppard for the National Wetland Trust has revealed the potential to release pateke into the Waipa peat lake complex.

Pateke have been locally extinct in the Waikato lowlands for many years. As part of their plans to create a Wetland Discovery Centre at Rotopiko, the National Wetland Trust has aspired to release pateke into predator-free East Lake, as a catalyst to return them to the wider Waipa district. Jenn's work over this summer investigated 15 peat lakes and scored

them on a wide number of “what pateke want” factors. Lakes Rotopiko East (the proposed release site) and Mangakaware had the highest suitability index, with lakes Maratoto, Rotopiko South, and Ngāroto on their heels.

The NWT is very grateful to Waipa District Council, Waikato Regional Council and the Department of Conservation for funding and supporting this feasibility work.

Karen Denyer, EO, National Wetland Trust



### Our Kauri Trees in the gully - Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

Kauri are not a species that are generally considered to have historically grown in Hamilton gullies. We therefore do not include kauri on our planting lists. However we do have several that have been planted some time prior to our Trust being involved with restoring the gully. Four of these are located at the top of the gully along Sexton Track. In 2014 when we were clearing the weeds in preparation for planting we discovered these four kauri covered and weighed down by vine. Four years later and look at them now. Four handsome specimens that actually have cones on!

With kauri die back devastating the northern kauri it may be time to rethink the policy of where we plant kauri. It's been suggested to council that the southern gully slope below Sovereign Isles, that Wildlands have been contracted to clear and plant, be considered for a kauri grove of 40 to 50 trees. This site has several advantages; It will have a good vista from the existing board walk that runs from Hukanui road, it is a well-drained site that suits kauri, it is isolated from foot traffic therefore would have a very low possibility of contracting the disease at some future date (the disease is spread through soil movement) and being on the south side of Sovereign Isles they would not shade the houses at the top of the gully. There was a very positive response from council to this idea with a



suggested planting date of 2020. Click here to view: <http://gullyrestoration.blogspot.com/>

### **Mai te Kakanoa ki te Pua Waitanga, “From the Seeds Up to its Fullness”**

My name is Shepherd Isaac, I am involved with a project as a volunteer with Hamilton Community Planting Program. The name of the project is called Transformation “From the Roots Up” in partnership with Hamilton City Council. This project inspired me to write stories and this led to the development of my own project called “From the seeds up to its fullness” – a story-telling, educational initiative specifically for schools.



My short stories are about the importance of restoring biodiversity and involve characters such as native trees, bird and fish species. My latest story focuses on pest eradication. I take my stories into schools to encourage and inspire our younger generation. I’m currently looking for funding to expand this initiative and to develop further resources including animations and books.



### **The Friends of Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust. Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) Programme**

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual EMR Poor Knights competition trip took place on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> May. The trip was organised by Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) and made up of representative students from each school that participates in the programme from Northland, Auckland, Taranaki, Coromandel, Gisborne, Wellington, Nelson and Otago.

This EMR competition trip is sponsored by Dive! Tutukaka and the Bobby Stafford-Bush Foundation. Students were selected based on their action projects undertaken and enthusiasm they show when studying & experiencing the marine environment. The programme involves learning about marine biodiversity in the classroom, snorkelling in the pool, and investigating the local marine environment



before experiencing a marine reserve and taking action with regards to marine conservation in their communities.

This year the Hauraki region representatives were Chloe Burn and Lilly McEwen, both from Whenuakite School. The Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme in Hauraki is under the umbrella of The Friends of Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust.

### Mahakirau Forest Estate Society Inc Coromandel - An excellent partner for scientific study

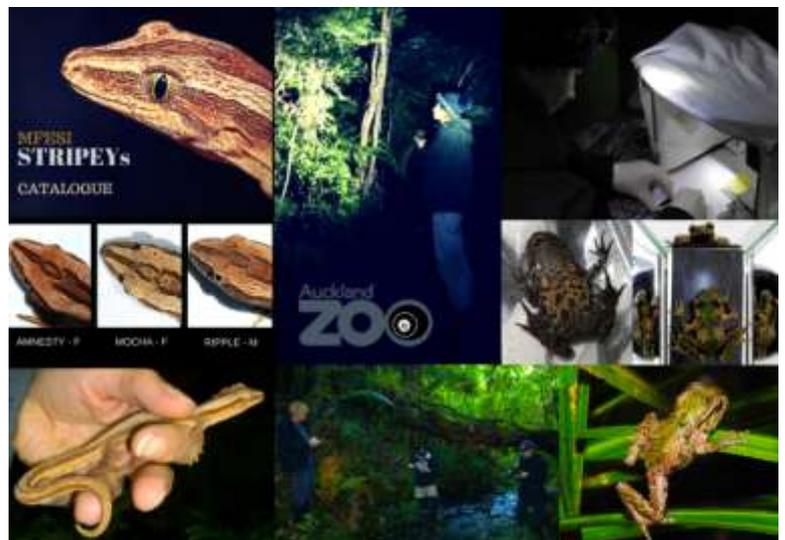
Since inception in 2001 much of Mahakirau Forest Estate Society Incorporated [MFESI] conservation effort centred around predator control. Whilst continuing to be essential, we are now at a stage in our development that we may focus on research and begin planning translocations. It's an exciting time for the project!

One partnership we are enormously thankful for, is the Auckland Zoo. The Zoo's Richard Gibson, Curator Ectotherms & Birds, explains:

*"MFESI members have long proven their commitment to the conservation of the estate and its biodiversity, and through pro-active development of collaborative relationships they have further demonstrated their aspiration to maximise the scientific, conservation and educational potential of this forest gem.*

*Of special note:*

*- Leiopelma archeyi : The Auckland Zoo is working with MFESI on an Archey's frog monitoring regime with*



*annual intensive grid surveying according to methods used by DOC.*

*- Toropuku 'Coromandel' : The Auckland Zoo is working with MFESI to develop a database of Coromandel Striped gecko individuals and study aspects of the ecology and behaviour; important research for an as yet undescribed species and potentially threatened Coromandel endemic."*

### **The growth of Kaitiakitanga Trust**

Kaitiakitanga Trust evolved out of Stace Hammond Lawyers wanting to continue its community and ecological work and to encourage young New Zealanders to get involved. For Stace Hammond's 100 year anniversary in 2012, 10 schools in the Waikato region were gifted 10 large native trees each to support and encourage schools in their biodiversity and environmental awareness. Then it facilitated development of a swamp into a beautiful wetland in Tauwhare with the aid of Kuaka, an environmental educational business.

We are undertaking another restoration project at the Okete Esplanade, Raglan. Like Tauwhare, it is continually evolving and has attracted the passion of local youth from the Melville community, in particular by a young boy named Layton Gardner. It has involved removal of blackberry, pampas, gorse, convolvulus, privet and ragwort which has been replaced by manuka, flax, cabbage trees, ake ake, kahikatea, karamu, kowhai, totara and puriri. The work is completed in the weekend with food and drink provided by a partner of Stace Hammond.

From these beginnings two youths have gained fulltime work, with 11 others attending a mixture of paid and volunteer work. Biodiversity is being enhanced. Due to a clear need to assist these youths, a Trust is being set up to enable further business input and contribution.

Murray Grant, Partner – Stace Hammond



## Pirongia Kokako to Return Home

Kokako that are descendants of the original Pirongia population are coming back to Mt Pirongia in July. A number of kokako were transferred from the Pirongia area in the 1990's with some ending up on Tiritiri Matangi Island. Now fourteen descendants of these birds will be returned to the maunga. This will bring the total of captured and released birds closer to the society's target of 40 birds by 2019; the minimum for a founder population.

A LEARNZ video is soon to be released about our kokako story - a virtual field trip and webinar which is expected to engage over 3000 school children.

The society's AGM is coming up in July and the public are invited to attend. Monique Hall of Waikato University will be presenting the findings of her recent research on the rare parasitic plant woodrose (*Dactylanthus taylorii*). See our facebook page for details. By Susan Emmitt.



## Funding for the Kiwibank Predator Free Communities

The next round of funding for the Kiwibank Predator Free Communities programme is opening for submissions soon. The Predator Free New Zealand Trust and Kiwibank are looking for enthusiastic communities that want to make their backyards predator free and help native species thrive.

To be eligible to apply for funding a community should be a cluster of urban or rural households wanting to target rats, stoats, ferrets, weasels and possums. The programme doesn't cover lifestyle blocks, farms, council or government land and excludes the use of toxins.

Kiwibank funding will provide successful applicants with a subsidy on humane traps and pre-made tunnels and will help fund and provide support materials for the community



programme. The funding round opens Monday 2nd July 2018 and closes Sunday 15 July 2018.

## Arbor Day 2018 - A great time had at Hamilton's Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park

On the 1st of June 2018 over one thousand people descended on Hamilton's Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park for an Arbor Day celebration. The air was a-buzz with excitement as children from local schools and members of Hamilton City Council, the University of Waikato, Tui 2000 Ltd., Wintec, local businesses and more, gathered to plant native trees, shrubs and sedges.

The Waiwhakareke Arbor Day event is organised by Hamilton City Council and this year's celebration saw 18,000 plants find a new home in only 3 hours of planting. Over half of the 60 hectare park has been planted since 2004 - largely thanks to the collaboration and hard work of the project partners (Hamilton City Council, University of Waikato, Tui 2000 Ltd. and Wintec, Waikato Regional Council, the wider community and funding agencies. Arbor Day at Waiwhakareke is an important opportunity for people, especially children, to experience and connect with nature in their own backyard; the project partners thank all those who contribute to the planning of this special day. Catherine Kirby - UOW



## Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park Arbor Day 2018

Did you realise that before any Arbor Day event at Waiwhakareke a team of project partners, volunteers and Hamilton City Council staff collect plants from the various supply nurseries and spend 3 days placing them out ready for the big influx of happy planters?



June 1st, 2018 was no different. It was a beautiful but frosty start to the day. 1000 children with their caregivers and other volunteers turned up at 10am to make their contribution to this amazing project. By noon 18,000 eco-sourced plants were in the ground; on their way to provide future citizens with a place to relax and wonder.

We are delighted that the opening of the Park to the public has been funded in the long term plan for Hamilton. So watch this space!

For further information about events associated with the Park and how to help us get the planting completed go to

<https://www.facebook.com/waiwhakarekenaturalheritagepark/>

Catherine Smith for Tui 2000