



# Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

## December 2018 Number 60

### Kia Ora and Seasons Greetings!

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

#### Waikato

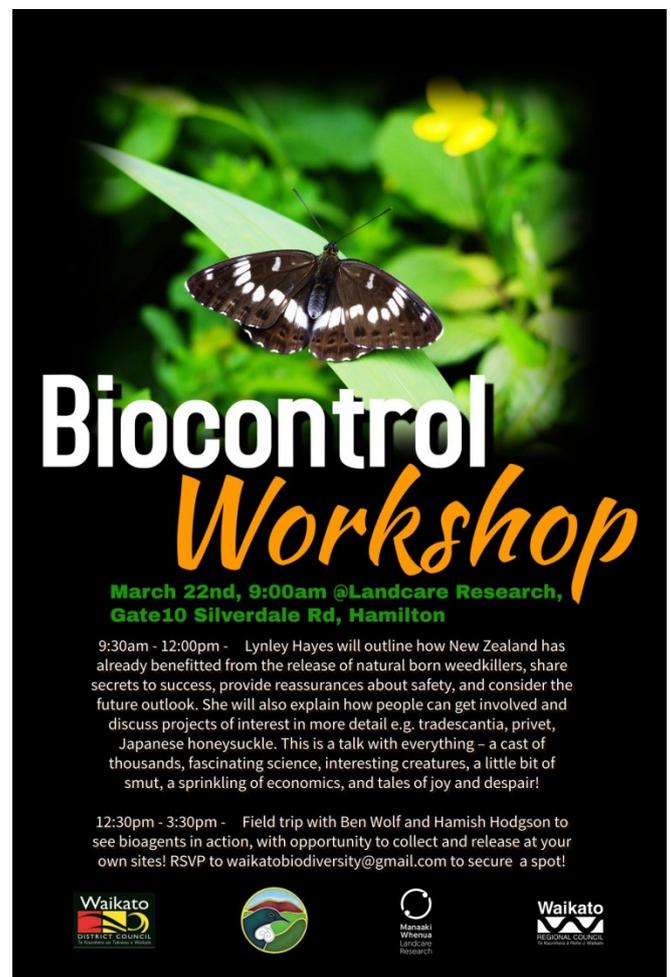
- Organisation and hosting of Biodiversity forum and Landcare Networking Day in Waipa.
- Organisation of bio-control workshop (March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019)
- Participated in workshop to develop National Biodiversity Strategy
- Participated in the “Connecting the Waitoa” Piako catchment forum workshop
- Participated and presented at the National Biodiversity Regional Coordinators hui in Taranaki
- Responded to enquiries from the email and 0800 BIO DIV service
- Chaired biodiversity focus group meetings
- Updated the bio-forum website and Facebook

#### Waikato Biodiversity Forum – Biocontrol Workshop 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2019

The following is our schedule for the day. RSVP to [waikatobiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:waikatobiodiversity@gmail.com) to secure a spot!

9:30am - 12:00pm - Lynley Hayes (Landcare Research) will outline how New Zealand has already benefitted from the release of natural born weedkillers, share secrets to success, provide reassurances about safety, and consider the future outlook. She will also explain how people can get involved and discuss projects of interest in more detail e.g. tradescantia, privet, Japanese honeysuckle. This is a talk with everything – a cast of thousands, fascinating science, interesting creatures, a little bit of smut, a sprinkling of economics, and tales of joy and despair!

12:30pm - 3:30pm - Field trip with Ben Wolf (Waikato District Council) and Hamish Hodgson (Waikato Regional Council) to see bioagents in



**Biocontrol  
Workshop**

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00am @Landcare Research,  
Gate10 Silverdale Rd, Hamilton**

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12:30pm - 3:30pm - Field trip with Ben Wolf and Hamish Hodgson to see bioagents in action, with opportunity to collect and release at your own sites! RSVP to [waikatobiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:waikatobiodiversity@gmail.com) to secure a spot!

Waikato DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Manaki Whenua Landcare Research  
Waikato REGIONAL COUNCIL

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### Friends of Wainui 25th anniversary

On 8 November 1993 Friends of Wainui Bush Park started turning 5.5ha of scrub, blackberry and gorse in Raglan's Wainui valley into a native bush reserve. Raglan County Council had wanted to convert the area into grazing and housing, but councillor Michael Hope helped save the Pilot Reserve, which is now the Wainui Reserve.

With some support from Waikato District Council, they had planted over 13,000 trees by 2001. Some planting is still being done to fill the few gaps, with trees from local nurseries, but the original Friends of Wainui propagated most of the early trees and also formed paths and built bridges.

The silver 25th Anniversary was celebrated and publicised in November by planting 25 silvery astelias. The main work now is maintenance and pest control, with morning work parties on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, mainly financed by sale of local calendars.



### Lake Mangakaware

Lake Mangakaware is one of 42 peat lakes in the Waikato, each attached to the rim of one of the many peat domes in the centre and north of the Waikato province. The lake is situated at Te Rore, between Ngahinapouri and Pirongia, 10 kilometres west of Ohaupo.

Mangakaware is historically important as the location of three Swamp Pa's, the discovery of which was confirmed between 1967 and 1970. Maaori occupation dating back to at least 1500AD was revealed by archaeologists from the University of Auckland, including at least 200 artefacts and evidence of residences and fortifications.

Lake Mangakaware is administered by the Waipa District Council, with the support of the Hamilton Fish & Game Association Inc. who manage a Lake Hunter User Group (HUG) led by Murray Davies (photo attached).

The (HUG) is made up mainly of persons 'transferred' from Serpentine/Rotopiko together with several former adjacent landowners, and in order to maintain their balloted maimais these hunters undertake a minimum of 20 hours work per annum on organised working bees within the Reserve – planting; trapping; weeding; and pruning.

Mangakaware is very important in that it is one of only 5 of the remaining Waikato Peat Lakes left with any native macrophytic (submerged) plants (the 3 Serpentine/Rotopiko Lakes and Rotoroa are the others with Serpentine North clearly the most pristine). However Mangakaware has declined in condition in recent years, being infested with noxious weed plants and trees, together with poor quality incoming water flows.

A 'no shooting area' for at least 60 years, and suffering from lack of love, Mangakaware was fenced on the boundary, and the willows sprayed out before it was opened to hunting in 2013. The recovery of carexes, rushes and raupo supplemented by eco-sourced native planting, is gradually restoring the Lake's flora; however it will take 30 or more years for trees like kahikatea to really take shape.

State-of-the-Art silt-traps, and maimai's have been installed, and there are tentative plans to raise the minimum water level.

Ken Parker, Publicity, Hamilton Fish & Game Association Incorporated (07) 843 4659 or 027 365 7380



MurrayDavies

### The Kiwi Recovery Group

We have recently received a report that strongly implicates Goodnature A24 self-resetting traps in the bill injuries of five kiwi. The injuries all occurred following a change in trap placement, highlighting the need to follow the manufacturer's guidelines if using these traps.

#### Key messages

- Set A24 traps with the base of the tree mount no higher than 12cm above ground and with the trap in a vertical orientation as per Goodnature's guidelines.
- Although raising the traps to 1m or adding an excluder will reduce interaction, it is unclear how this might affect efficacy of the trap.

- A project has been proposed for next year to quantify this and develop further guidance.

#### Background

Five out of nine kiwi were found with bill injuries during routine health checks. The birds sustained minor to moderate injuries to their bills with associated fractures, bruising and keratin damage (Figures 1-3). The kiwi were all over 1kg. Three of the birds were hospitalised but all recovered and returned to the wild.



Figure 1:  
Credit DOC Franz Josef

Figure 2:

Figure 3:

At the time that the injuries occurred, at least some of A24s at the site had been placed at heights greater than 12cm but lower than 1 metre (Figure 4). The Goodnature guidelines states that A24s should be set with the base of the tree mount no higher than 12cm and with the trap in a vertical orientation. The guidelines can be seen here: <https://goodnature.co.nz>

The traps were baited with Goodnature rat ALP, Chocolate, and meat-based stoat lure.



Figure 4: Example of trap set at non-standard height at time of injuries.



Figure 5: Example of trap set at 12cm.

(Credit: DOC Franz Josef and Goodnature)

## Kiwi and A24s

This is the first case of kiwi injury from A24 traps that we are aware of and is likely to have been related to the height the traps were set at. There is limited information available of kiwi monitored in and around A24s. One study in Northland followed 37 chicks with A24s set following Goodnature's guidelines, and no such bill injuries were detected. We are aware of large A24 networks overlapping kiwi populations, and not all traps are set following Goodnature's guidelines. This increases the risk to kiwi.

We ask that anyone that have A24 traps in place, to ensure these traps are not within reach of kiwi; if required adjust any traps so that the bases of the tree mounts areas to 12 cm above ground and with the traps in a vertical orientation to minimise risk of non-target interactions. When traps are correctly set, kiwi chicks may still be able to access the trap, however our available evidence suggests this to be a rare event. We are working towards quantifying this risk and will have further guidelines as we improve our understanding.

We acknowledge that raising the traps to 1m and/or adding an excluder will reduce interaction, but it is unclear how this might affect the efficacy of the trap. If it does, kiwi chicks may be at more risk by catching fewer stoats. A project has been proposed for next year to quantify this to develop further guidance. Ngā mihi nui, Jess Scrimgeour, On behalf of the Kiwi Recovery Group

## Owhango Alive – Trapping programme sees the return of Whio to the Whakapapa

On the 1st of October Mark and I went for a walk along the Whakapapa River and spotted two adult Whio with 6, yes 6, ducklings! We of course, were very excited and let the rest of the team know, along with informing Alison Beath from DOC (she is Ms Whio). Since then, we have seen the 6 ducklings with the parent birds regularly, just upstream from the Whakapapa Bridge. This is very heartening for us and of course, the local Whio

population, as at this time of the year we often experience heavy rain and floods. The floods, along with predation by stoats etc, compromise the Whio ducklings' survival. So with our rigorous trap line programme, we certainly feel as if we're doing something constructive towards the protection of the local bird life.

Brenda and I check our Tawa and Boathole line weekly, ending up back at the Whakapapa Bridge. When we peered over the Bridge on Monday 5th November, after checking the Lines, we were thrilled to see a pair of Whio on the rocks just upstream of the bridge. Thinking we could see more movement, decided to walk upstream to "see what we could see". Joy of joy, we broke out onto a ledge on the river, and there they were..... 2 adults and 6 well grown ducklings. Much excitement and photos! Brenda reported back to her man, John Martin, who went out the next morning and took a load of photos and video. John then edited his photos/video and has now produced an amazing video that will blow ya socks off!! [Click her to check it out!!](#)



## Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

Monitoring of the translocated kokako to Mt Pirongia has been underway since October. 14 birds have been found out of 45, with only one being outside our pest control area. An unbanded, singing kokako was seen on the Mahaukura track, which is the chick that has survived from last year.

Four nests are currently being monitored and at least one egg is known to have hatched.

We were thrilled to win the Biodiversity Award, Community Category in November for our kokako project, and WWF have recently approved a \$15,000 grant for our pest control costs for 2019.

Over the summer, more dactylanthus monitoring is planned as this is when this rare native plant will be flowering. A number of small groups will take a few days each and cover a specific area near the summit. If you would like to help out with this, please contact our volunteer co-ordinator Dianne June on [djune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz)



Hatched Kokako on Pirongia Maunga

### Whakaupoko Landcare (Jafa Country and NW Waikato report).

A lot has been happening in the north. We have received funding for 2 years from WRC to help with pest control and wetland bird monitoring. Also DOC have helped us with looking at a coordinated approach across the NW Waikato and Franklin area (24% of Auckland's land area), to connect with other Landcare groups and start up local Hubs. Auckland Council and our Local Board are supporting the Franklin initiative.

1 Islands on the lower Waikato / Akaaka area Local dairy farmer and conservationists Stu & Kim Muir are coordinating the local community and working with duck hunters and white baiters to control pests. This is a great initiative and follows on from a network of traps and bait stations that were established several years ago from a TB Free programme. The habitat is ranked as a Nationally Significant Natural Area and contains many endangered species including bittern, spotless crakes and fernbirds. Birds NZ are helping us monitor these species along with revisiting a duck study of 60 years ago. It has turned in to a win/ win in an environment that is very challenging in terms of being able to service traps and bait stations in a swampy environment where boat access is required. The duck hunters and whitebaiters have really stepped up and have been extremely supportive. As well as an environment that supports more wetland bird species the positive result is that the often substantial maimais are not destroyed by rats. Also there will hopefully be much improved survival of game bird species. Initial results are promising with both possum and rat numbers way down from their historic past. This is exemplified by the many flowering kiekie that we noticed while bird surveying on the islands. The kiekie has separate male and female plants. They are a favourite food for both rats and possums being extremely sweet. Enclosed are photos of both a male and female flower. This environment is also popular with ferrets, stoats and weasels. There have been quite high numbers trapped. With the improved rat control it is hoped that this will also have an effect on mustelid numbers.





Female Kiekie above, Male previous page

2 Hubs The main initiative from the collaborative approach is in the first instance to get more local Hubs established to support enhancing biodiversity. This is starting to work really well with an initial focus on providing free traps, bait and bait stations to participating landowners combined with some education and tui and kereru bird surveying wrapped around this. In the Whiriwhiri area Andy Saunders is leading a new Hub with great success. There has been a huge knockdown of possums and rats and now we are into more of a phase of low pest numbers and targeting lower. The area has some awesome gullies of mature established bush with puriri and taraire dominating. In the understory close to the streams are massive king ferns. Andy is helping us set up with Trap NZ and we are hoping to use Trap NZ to not only track trap & bait station locations but also map bird and bat survey sites. We may be able to use Trap NZ to show a map of participating landowners in pest control as we are looking to use this as a way of reporting our success with a 20% target after 3 years.

Andy has also been active at the local Otaua school combined with the newly formed NW Waikato Community Group. Rats are now an endangered species thanks to the 'Rat Rangers' team that has been established at the school using an array of traps and chew cards to monitor progress

3 Bats We have good numbers of long tailed bats across some of our area. We have acquired 9 bat boxes and are looking to buy some more of the new version that can also be used to monitor the likes of bittern. With the bat boxes the

intention is to not only monitor presence / absence but also trend lines of activity over time by going back to the same place, same time every 1 – 2 years. We are thinking that this may be a really useful way of outcome monitoring for pest control along with using our tui and kereru 5 minute bird counts. The trend line data we are collecting information on is: **a** - the average number of bat visits recorded per night and **b** - the % of nights bats are recorded.

Interestingly all sights so far surveyed have picked up bats being present. Even more interesting was that one site of around 2ha of windswept older pines had a massive 1200 visits over a 42 night period. This was surprising especially as there was not a lot of mature established native vegetation close by.

### The Te Pahu Landcare Group

The Te Pahu landcare group consists of volunteers who hold annual planting days along the Kaniwhaniwha stream, and monthly weeding sessions along the Nikau walkway, among other things.

During Conservation Week 2018, we planted some native plants in a wet area at the beginning of the Nikau Walkway.

Unfortunately, with the spring weather, convolvulus had grown up and smothered all of the recently planted native plants. Our group have cleared them just in time (see photo), but we know the bind weed will grow back quickly.

Our hope is that members of the public who go for a walk along the Kaniwhaniwha stream up to the bush and back may like to help us and the plants out, by stopping for five minutes and untangling the bind weed from around a native plant as you go past. The spot is easy to find, just at the start of the track by the track signs. The native plants have all been staked, so they are easy to find, and if everyone who walked by helped out by gently releasing a native plant from the bind weed, it would make a great difference. The plants have grown quite a bit since we planted them in September, so if we can keep the weeds at bay they will have a chance to flourish even more. Many thanks, Nardene



Convolvulus covering plantings at Kaniwhaniwha

### **\$8 million available for community conservation projects**

Biodiversity protection will be the focus of the 2019 funding round for the Department of Conservation's Community Fund. "With 4,000 indigenous plants and wildlife threatened or at risk of extinction, community action for conservation is essential if we are to reverse the decline of our biodiversity," Eugenie Sage said.

Feedback from community groups, iwi and councils has led to changes in the Fund's operation. "Application forms and guidance are now live on the Department of Conservation (DOC) website to give potential applicants three months lead in time to plan and prepare their applications, substantially more than in previous years. "The time between making an application and getting a decision is likely to be shorter as a result of changes in the decision making process. "The intention is that

groups will be able to get stuck in, start their projects sooner, and focus on what's important – doing the mahi to restore indigenous biodiversity in their communities," Eugenie Sage said.

The funding round goes from **25 February to 22 March 2019**, with funding decisions announced mid-year. Examples of projects awarded funding in 2017 include:

Russell Kiwi Protection (Northern North Island) – A project designed to reinstate and sustain comprehensive control of predators and other pests that threaten wildlife and their bush and wetland habitats on the 3,400 ha Russell Peninsula.

Te Matapuna Restoration Project (Central North Island) – Driven by Project Tongariro, this project is focused on continuing ecological restoration involving willow control and restoring kahikatea, matai, ribbonwood forest next to the Waitotaka and Waimarino rivers.

Mitchells to Poerua Predator Control Programme (Western South Island) – A Lake Brunner Community Catchment Care Group project to establish an easily accessible trap line between Mitchells and Poerua (approximately 600 ha) to achieve reduced predator density levels and safer breeding areas for threatened native birds such as kiwi, kākā and kea.

Re-establishing kōkako on Mt Pirongia (Waikato) – The Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society are re-establishing kōkako on Mount Pirongia over a three year time-frame, transferring a total of 40 birds from Pureora and Tiritiri Matangi Island. These include birds descended from kōkako that were removed from Pirongia in the 1990s.

### **Community Waikato Professional Learning Workshops & Advisory Service**

Professional Learning workshops are one of the services Community Waikato makes available to and on behalf of the tangata

whenua, community and voluntary social service sector in the Waikato region. This is an important capacity building component of our service and of significant benefit to organisations within the sector. Along with training we also support many other forums, workshops and events. [Click here](#) to see our calendar for items of interest to you and your organisation.

<http://www.communitywaikato.org.nz>

[Our Advisory team](#) also provides one-to-one advice, support and information on governance, management, strategic and operational planning, employment, resource development, legal structures, policy development, financial systems and funding, planning new services, projects and events and the myriad of other issues that come up for community groups. We tailor support and training to fit the needs of the organisations. We work with management and staff, volunteers and/or the board.



View from Kakepuka Maunga summit Photo: Tom Davies