

Please diary TOSSI's planting days  
April 5  
May 3  
May 30 and 31  
June 7  
July 5  
August 2  
20,000 trees to plant this year.  
More information on page 2.



Please recycle this newsletter,  
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## TAWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC. Newsletter No. 28 March. 2009



Photo Auckland Regional Council

### KIWI CHICKS AT TAWHARANUI



Photos Luis Ortiz-Catedral

### KAKARIKI RELEASED AT TAWHARANUI

Tawharanui Open Sanctuary is a joint project with Auckland Regional Council



## Coming Events

**Sun. April 5 Volunteer Workday. Meet at the Woolshed at 9.15 am.**

**Sun. May 3 Volunteer Workday. Meet at the Woolshed at 9.15 am. The first Big Plant day. Bring warm clothes sturdy clean footwear and a drink. We provide a sausage sizzle lunch.**

**Sat. May 30 and Sun May 31 Big Plant weekend. Follow signs in park. Meet 9.15 am.**

**Free camping for those planters who would like to work both days. Bring a clean spade, sturdy clean footwear, warm clothes and a drink. We provide a sausage sizzle lunch. Contact ARC on 09 366 2000 and book into the camping ground.**

**Sun. June 7 Volunteer Workday. Meet at the Woolshed at 9.15 for more planting. Bring lunch.**



## Chairman's Review

I hope you have all had a happy and relaxing Christmas period and that 2009 has started well for you. The park has been exceptionally busy, especially the campground, with thousands of holidaymakers taking advantage of a hot, dry summer. Many visitors have favorably commented on the improvements in the sanctuary, particularly the increasing bird life.

Summer has also been a busy time for your hard working Committee and our many active volunteers. TOSSI takes responsibility for a wide range of regular activities – weekly fence checks, native plant nursery, planning the Thompson track in the Mangatawhiri wetland, monitoring dotterel, oystercatcher, kiwi and pateke, arranging numerous publicity events and assisting the ARC with pest and weed control.

We hope you were able to take advantage of some of the recent events that we arranged for members and supporters. Sharon Kast organised Graeme Murdoch's history walk and Jo Ritchie's owl prowl and Matt Maitland, assisted by Jan Halliday, organised the inaugural research symposium at the Matakana Cinema complex – many thanks to all the event leaders and the researchers.

We will have four major planting days this winter and we're hoping to attract increased community support by generating more publicity. If you know of any business or community groups who may be interested in tree planting, please contact a TOSSI Committee member and we can arrange to make a presentation to the group.

Our membership is almost 400 singles and families (probably embracing over 800 people) and we are very grateful to have the financial, physical and moral support of such a large group of people. We are an active organization and we appreciate that you all contribute in different ways – your continued membership is very important to us.

**Paul Williams Chairman**

## Editorial

This newsletter is a little late as I have been in the South Island exploring with my twin sister in our loyal motor home. On two consecutive nights the impact of man on the environment was very obvious. We had a night parked by a river where farmland had reverted to pines, firs, willows, gorse, broom, lupins and ragwort in full yellow flower. The birds were blackbirds, chaffinch, spur winged plover two mynas and a flock of sparrows. Not a native to be seen.

The very next night we were parked by a river in Fiordland where beech forest reached down to the waters edge. A long tailed cuckoo flew randomly back and forth over the parking area giving a hearty shriek with each wing flap.

Many keas clowned around on the ground of the car park entertaining campers, while bell birds could be heard chiming near by. As we walked to the river a pair of tomtits greeted us. I felt a tinge of pride that at least at Tawharanui we were making a contribution towards restoring one small corner of the planet to something of its former glory, where native species can thrive.

**Alison Stanes Editor**





## Open Sanctuary Coordinator Update

What a glorious summer we've had! The park has been very busy and so have the staff and volunteers that make Tawharanui Open Sanctuary such a success. The wildlife has been very busy too.

Kiwi breeding has finished for the 08/09 season and we're pleased to announce that we've had at least six kiwi chicks hatch. Two males (Geo and Hercules) have each had two nests this season. In both cases a single chick was hatched in September and then in January they topped this by both successfully hatching two chicks each from their second nest. Breeding twice a year and two eggs per nest is not unusual for NI Brown kiwi once they hit maturity. Of course, not all our male kiwi are radio tagged, so it is reasonable to assume that there are further chicks out and about on the park that we don't know of. We're well on our way to establishing a self sustaining kiwi population at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary.

Pateke numbers have been boosted by an additional 40 birds arriving on February 12<sup>th</sup>. The 2008 pateke release was successful with sufficient birds establishing on the park and no known deaths inside our managed area, allowing us to proceed with stage two.

Like our first instalment these birds were all captive bred by a network of voluntary breeders around the country. One month down the track I'm pleased to say that these birds have established well and seem happy with their new home.

Kaka breeding near the park is also an exciting development. This is significant as we don't know when kaka last bred successfully on the Auckland mainland. From other studies we know that unless protected from predators <5% of kaka nests will succeed, and in 60% of cases the adult female will be killed on the nest. Hopefully this is the beginning of their return to Tawharanui.

We had a fantastic day celebrating the return of kakariki (red crowned parakeets) to Tawharanui on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March. This was undertaken as part of the PhD research of Luis Ortiz-Catedral who will study the establishment of two kakariki populations, one on an island (Motuihe) and one on the mainland (Tawharanui). Well done to Luis and his hardy catch team who have had some very trying weather and birds to deal with. Kakariki translocated to Motuihe in May of last year have established across the island and have bred successfully. I'm really looking forward to seeing the bright flash of green and iridescent blue underwing of kakariki and hearing their cheerful chuckle around the park.

Many members of TOSSI and also from SOSSI (Shakespeare Open Sanctuary Society) joined us for an evening at Matakana Cinema celebrating the depth and breadth of research activity at our wonderful open sanctuaries. Presentations covered a variety of topics ranging through archaeological investigations, reptile study, ecology of native birds, and research aspects of recent species reintroductions. Many thanks to the speakers who gave their time and prepared fantastic slideshows, it was wonderful to see the results of all your hard work. We aim to repeat this celebration next year.

A change of season is upon us and so the planting season looms. I look forward to seeing you at our planting days as we put the high quality TOSSI nursery plants in the ground and create further habitat for our flourishing wildlife.

**Matt Maitland**  
**Open Sanctuary Co-ordinator**

Matt can be contacted at [matt.maitland@arc.govt.nz](mailto:matt.maitland@arc.govt.nz) or 09 426 1200



## December 4 2007 Volunteer Workday

This was a splendid hot sunny day. A good strong team of stalwarts turned up. We headed down the peninsula in an ARC van and the mule to the trig and Takatu Point to clear tracks. It was rewarding work looking back down the cleared tracks to panoramic views of Little Barrier and gannets wheeling and diving into a pure blue ocean. We took picnic lunch and sat on top of the world under a cloudless sky and felt satisfied with our efforts. After lunch Matt Maitland explained where a kiwi was on it's second nest on a steep coastal cliff immediately beside of where we were sitting.

**Alison Stanes Workday Host.**



Clearing tracks at Takatu Point.



Lunch with a million dollar view!



Matt explains "there is a kiwi nest just down there somewhere!"

## January 4 Volunteer Workday

The first workday for the year saw over 30 volunteers swing into action. A stunning day, there were tasks to suit all, with ten people volunteering for nursery duties, while the remainder of the group headed for the beach. The sand ladders, which provide pathways down the sand dunes onto the beach, were dealt with enthusiastically and efficiently – re-aligned by those into heavy lifting, and then back-filled with sand transported in buckets. Happy campers and day-trippers showed their appreciation of the improved access to the beach as they passed by !

Most of the team then went on to weeding the dunes, looking for lupins and the dreaded, prickly apple of sodom, but with some fleabane also being pulled out on the way. It was satisfying to look back where we had been and see only wanted plants in that area.

The nursery group also had another successful session, with 10 people bagging 560 cordyline into PB6's.

Some of the volunteers headed for Anchor Bay for lunch and a swim at the end of the workday. The beach itself, though not the hinterland of course, looked more like Waikiki than Tawharanui – crowded and colourful - but the water was wonderful.

Thanks to Rhys Thompson and Alison Stanes for the leadership they provided in the nursery and at the beach respectively.

**Jan Halliday Workday Host**



## Unwanted And Wanted Plants At Tawharanui.



**UNWANTED**

Bone seed is an unwanted coastal shrub capable of growing twenty metres tall. It grows faster than pohutukawa and is taking over pohutukawa territory. At Tawharanui it grows on cliffs at Tokatu Point.



**UNWANTED**

Periwinkle is an unwanted ground cover that spreads and is difficult to eradicate. It grows at Blue Bell Point where historically there was a wood cutters cottage.



**UNWANTED**

Introduced pampas, have silvered green leaves, with only one mid rib. The dead leaves spiral into wood shavings, toetoe does not. Pampas flower heads are erect. Flowers are white or purple and appear in February to May.



**WANTED**

This photo was not taken at Tawharanui

At Tawharanui native toetoe grows at Takatu Point. Recent storms have damaged it so badly, it might not survive. Fortunately, we have seeds sown in the nursery. Native toetoe, have rich green leaves with veins each side of the mid rib. The dead leaves lie straight and the flower heads gracefully sway. Toetoe flower heads are golden and appear in spring September to January.



**MIGHT HAVE TO GO!**

Tasmanian ngaio was planted at Tawharanui before there was concern about planting locally sourced seeds. The new shoots are bright green and the leaves are firm and waxy.



**WANTED**

Native ngaio have very grainy leaves. The new shoots are always brown. See top left and bottom right of photo. The leaves are large.



## February 1 Volunteer Workday

"What a great day! 30 Adults, 4 children, 1 ARC Ranger and 2 Student Rangers energetically committed to several tasks under cloudy skies with threats of showers.

After a welcome and introduction by host David Stone, Committee Member and Secretary of TOSSI, Sharon Kast gave an update on developments that Tawharanui Open Sanctuary particularly the successful breeding of kiwi on the park and the up and coming release of Kakariki scheduled for March and a second release of Pateke that occurred in February.

Pulling out of fence posts at the western end on a steep hillside overgrown with kikuyu and the untangling of the wires and removal of both, was quickly despatched by energetic workers including new faces from Auckland. That group then descended to the sand dunes and with new arrivals tackled the never ending task of removing apple of sodom and lupin. New faces included Guy and Esther and their two lively daughters, and Olivia, Geoff, Daniella and Robert, and from the Rotary Club of St Johns, Patrick and Eddie. Meanwhile an equally enthusiastic group under the leadership of Paul, and new faces Katrina and Michelle and Matthew, industriously re-potted seedlings while enjoying a social chat around a trailer load of potting mix.

Luckily the rain never eventuated though, fortunately, the cloud cover provided respite from the strong sun which broke out about lunchtime. After a solid mornings work, a large group congregated at The Woolshed for lunch before dispersing, some to enjoy a well earned swim on what turned out to be a glorious Sunday afternoon."

**David Stone Workday Host**



Volunteers remove fence posts from a retired farm paddock and weeds from the dunes.

## March 1 Volunteer Workday

We concentrated our efforts on two ongoing activities, nursery work and weeding in the sand dunes. Unfortunately the bad weather on Friday and Saturday must have been off-putting and our volunteer turnout was low but we split into two groups and went about our tasks.

Many thanks to Sharon Kast, Sue Crawshay and Matt Maitland for leading the sand dune weeding team at West End, helped by Sue Hoyle (welcome home Sue) and Bradley Smith. Lupin and fleabane were the targets; there was little evidence of apple of sodom so we're having a positive effect.

The second team led by nursery regulars Steve Harrison, Elizabeth Clark, Jill Ronald and Paul Williams were helped by the Coulson family, the Puckett children and Neil Mayes. We bagged manuka and cordyline, uploaded data from the water pressure logger and refilled the bait stations around the nursery. Thank you to all who attended.

**Paul Williams Workday Host**

There is a book called, "Exploring the Hauraki Gulf", by Linda Bercusson and John Walsby. As I stood in the bookshop before Christmas inspecting it, I found page 135 was about Tawharanui. It read "the first Sunday of every month, a determined band of volunteers turns out to nurture the burgeoning ecological oasis." That's us, I thought when I read it! And that small band of volunteers is getting bigger! **Editor**



## Shore Skinks Trans-located From Tawharanui To Motuihe Island

A second batch of shore skinks have left Tawharanui destined for another island sanctuary. The first went to Tiri Matangi and now some have gone to Motuihe.

The lizards were trans-located from Tawharanui, and some from Massey University's captive reptile facility at the Albany campus. John Laurence, Chairman of the Motuihe Trust, said "these lizards will add to the biodiversity of this pest free haven, which already includes moko and copper skinks." The release is part of research by Massey University ecology Masters student, Ben Barr who commented that at least 30 of the skinks were pregnant females that were expected to give birth to between three and eight babies each in February. "This will more than double the population of new migrants within a month of their arrival," he said.

All the lizards have been in quarantine at Massey's reptile facility throughout January, so they could be tested for *salmonella* and *cryptosporidium* to ensure only disease-free skinks are moved on. To avoid NZ dotterel nests, Ben co-ordinated with Tawharanui dotterel monitors during the removal of the skinks from the dunes. He became known as 'Ben Skink the lizard hunter' since he referred to the dotterel monitors as Dotty Alison and Dotty Sharon!



Left. Hazel Speed and Marlene Baling.  
Right. Ben Barr with skinks in crates ready for the trip to Massey University.



Shore skinks are usually found on or near the shoreline around the coast of the upper North Island. They are diurnal (active during the day), and spend a lot of their time basking in the sun or looking for food (insects). They can be various shades of grey, brown, green or black, and sometimes have a dark stripe along the spine. Their back and sides are typically speckled, giving an overall impression of a speckled rather than striped lizard. They can be up to 8cm long, but are often much smaller.

**Editor**

### Guided Walks

Two walks were organised by TOSSI this season.

Jo Ritchie and Sharon Kast took a night walk in February with Helen Crosby and Jan Halliday at the rear for safety. They started around 7pm and were serenaded by an evening chorus of bellbirds, tui, pigeon, kaka and morepork. Colin Wards an ARC Ranger assisted with stories of Tawharanui. The last part of the walk was dark and challenging – off the track and into the bush on a mystery walk.

Graeme Murdoch took a very informative walk to the ridge-top pa Oponui located above the park entrance. He spoke of the long history of human occupation. Until the 1870's the park was occupied by sub-tribes of Ngai Tahu and Kawerau descent. The environs provided the Maori with a rich variety of marine and forest resources. This is illustrated by the name Tawhara-nui, 'the abundant bracts of the kiekie vine.' Graeme has written a booklet on Tawharanui history which is available at the park. **Editor**





## February 40 Pateke Released



The pateke arrive from Christchurch in yellow crates.



Keith Edwards releases a pateke.



An up and coming conservationist holds



We were warned of heavy rain and instead got Auckland's hottest day ever!

40 new pateke were released on 12 February into the ecology stream at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary, joining those released in 2008.

A group of 40-60 people joined us to celebrate this second release. A lovely barbecue lunch with some Banrock Station wine was had, and then an unexpected swim or walk interlude while we filled an hour and a half waiting for the birds delayed by flight and freight complications. A few short words were said and kaitiakitanga of the birds transferred from Ngati Rehua (acknowledging the whakapapa of the birds from Aotearoa) to Ngati Manuhiri and then it was Ducks Away!

Thanks to all our partners that helped us make this happen: ARC, TOSSI, DOC, Banrock Station Wines and Wetland Care NZ

A special thanks to Kevin Evans for coordinating the captive breeding programme enabling us to release birds, and also for his lead role in selecting and preparing the birds for transfer (radio tagging, colour banding...). **Matt Maitland Open Sanctuary Co ordinator**



## Red Crowned Kakariki Released at Tawharanui



Luis Ortiz Catedral arrives from Little Barrier with 15 kakariki. These numbers will be topped up later.



Luis Ortiz Catedral and Matt Maitland load the kakariki on to the mule.



Marion Ransom releases a kakariki. Ransom Wines are sponsors with \$1 per bottle of 2007 K-Syrah sold going to Tawharanui.



Christine Brockes (middle) has just opened the box. A blur of kakariki on the move, can be seen in the circle. Below. A freshly released kakariki photographed feeding in the grasses later in the day.



Photos Alison Stanes



## New Zealand Dotterels

The 2008-09 season for NZ dotterels has been influenced by high sand cliffs created by storms along the dunes. The chicks were able to get down on to the beaches to feed but were unable to return to the dunes for shelter from black backed gulls patrolling the coastline, looking for food to feed their own hungry chicks. Only 4 dotterel chicks fledged this year. This is a short fall from previous years.

In 06-07 season, from 40 eggs 17 NZ dotterels fledged, 14 eggs lost and 9 chicks lost.

In 07-08 season, from 32 eggs 10 NZ dotterels fledged, 10 eggs lost and 12 chicks lost.

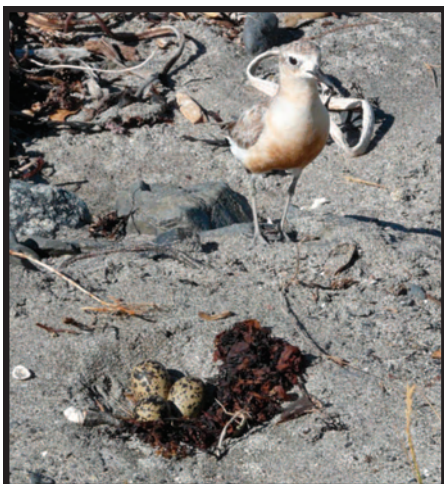
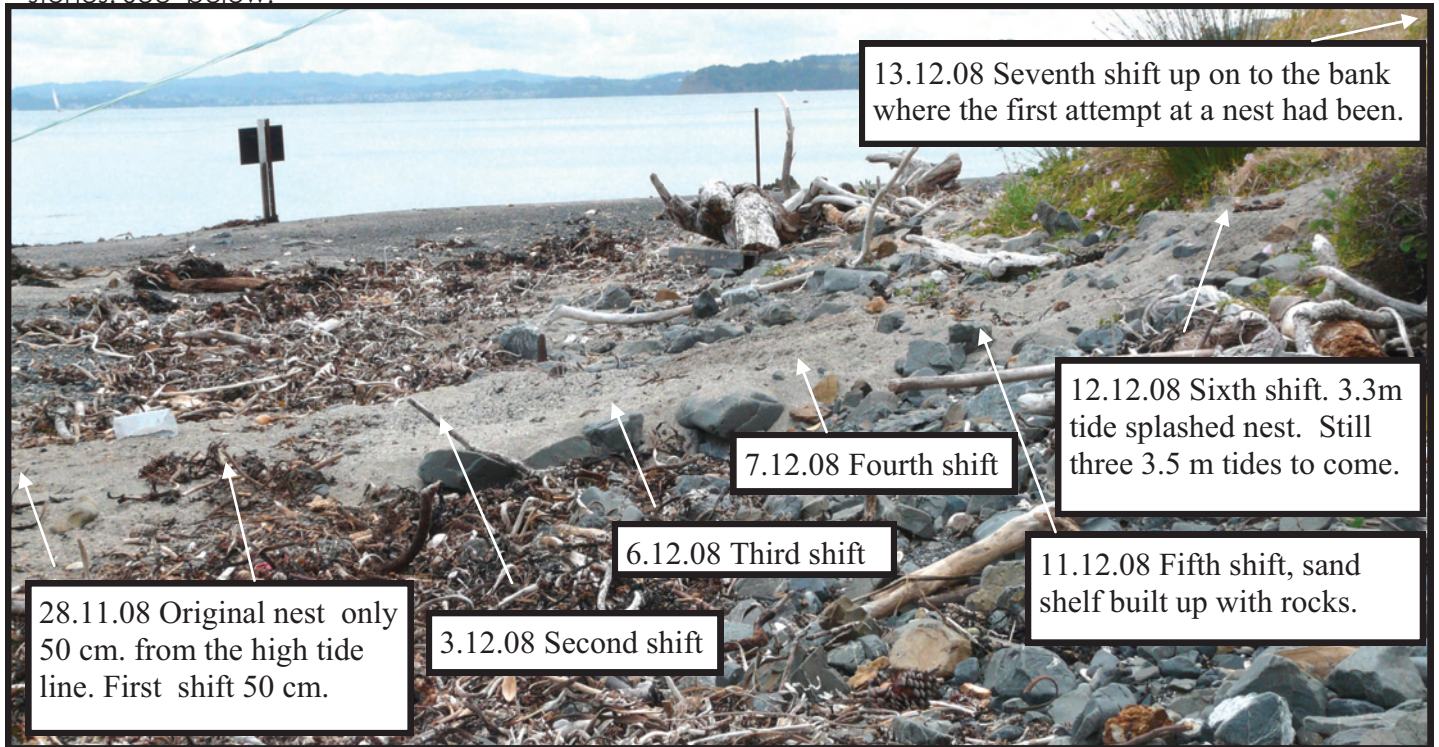
In 08-09 season, from 44 eggs 4 NZ dotterels fledged, 10 eggs lost and 30 freshly hatched chicks lost.

This means that the birds have spent 10,800 hours incubating. (or 15 nests x 30 days = 15 months!)

To achieve the 08-09 information it has taken monitors 207 hours.

### NZ Dotterels OW-BO And Un-banded At Bluebell Point Tawharanui

December 2008 the moon was closer to planet earth than it had been for 17 years. As a result we experienced some very high tides. Sometimes NZ dotterel nests are 'walked up the beach' by experienced trained monitors, to avoid being washed away. At Tawharanui this is generally not required because most nests are well up in the dunes. However, at Bluebell Point OW-BO and UB had already lost two nest attempts. The first nest on the grassy bank, the eggs disappeared, mostly likely to hedgehog. The second nest was down on the beach and it was lost to a spring tide. The third attempt was another nest on the sand just 50 cm from the high tide line. This pair produce three chicks most years so it seemed worth the effort to try to save their third attempt. The job grew much bigger than expected as high tides chased each nest move up the beach! A great deal of sand was shifted to cross the band of tidal drift wood and stones. See below.



The seaweed beside the nest travelled with the nest on each shift. Three chicks hatched but they were taken a day after hatching, most likely by the black backed gulls seen regularly cruising overhead.



## Pateke

With 40 new pateke having been released on ecology stream in February, now is the time to go and get a good look at these enigmatic little ducks before they disperse and head off into denser territories to (hopefully!) breed in July/August. True to their patterns of behaviour last year, this year's ducks have hit week 2 post-release and are starting to explore. So far members of the 2009 cohort have been found visiting the upper reaches of the ecology creek, Mangatawhiri wetland, and Hubbards' land at the west end of Ocean beach. Two birds which strayed outside of the fence onto Hubbards' property were rounded up and re-released back into the park with the help of CVNZ volunteers. Both birds stayed on ecology stream for another 4 or 5 days, but have since gone wandering again and are currently being elusive!

Overall however the birds seem to be staying put within the park at this stage. This may be due to the supplementary feeders available to them, however as of yet no visual evidence of feeder use has been collected to confirm this. The pateke have however been observed feeding from supplementary food (teal pellets designed by Massey University for captive breeding facilities) scattered on the banks. The presence of up to 4 of the 2008 cohort and 4 of their juveniles on ecology stream may also be helping to anchor the teal to this site.

The 2008 cohort;

Last years release was deemed a success, coming close to the recovery groups' aim for 80% survivorship of birds of known fate. At TOS survivorship of birds of known fate is 72.2% (13/18), minimum number of pateke alive is 54.2% (13/24), fate of birds known is 75% (18/24), and total number of birds known dead is 20.8% (5/24). In addition to this we had the unexpected outcome of at least three successful broods being reared, adding up to 14 ducklings to the parks population!

A further two releases of pateke to Tawharanui are planned across the next two years, with the aim of creating a self sustaining population of at least 50 breeding pairs within the park. As wetland planting around the park increases and matures this is certainly a possibility, and will help to keep pateke in the secure phase of the species recovery plan. A big thank you to all those who have given their time to help monitor the Tawharanui pateke, as well as those who are involved in the protection and development of wetland areas, and keeping our park predator free.

**Jenny Rickett, MSc candidate, Massey University, [rickchik@hotmail.com](mailto:rickchik@hotmail.com)**



Jenny Rickett tracking pateke.

## North Island Kaka Nest Just Outside Tawharanui Open Sanctuary

The old creaking puriri is not the main character in this story but without it there would be no story. Years ago it missed the logger's axe and is still going strong, down a steep slope, beside the drive. It's a big tree with top canopy branches arching up and over the drive high above my studio roof. It marks the top edge of our bush up towards the high point of the Tawharanui Peninsula. We are not far from the Park connected by a backbone ridge that the birds use to fly above, lifted by the winds of the day, as they come and go from the Park.

In early November last year I was surprised to notice a couple of kaka noiselessly exploring the lower slope side branches of this Puriri. Usually they are high in the top canopy making all sorts of noise. They were there again the next day and, on climbing down the slope, I found a telltale hole in the trunk. My first impression was that the hole would be too small for kaka. Then I noticed some scuffing of the bark on one side of the hole which indicated repeated use. Any doubts about the hole size were dismissed soon after when I saw a kaka fly to the hole, cling onto the scuffed side and slip easily through. After a couple of further sightings the next day, I decided to ring Maurice Puckett, Head Ranger at the Park.

Maurice arrived the following day with four stoat traps and a couple of tracking tunnels and a day later reappeared with tin skirting for the puriri and a couple of connecting nikau. It was impossible to completely protect the hole as the puriri spreads into many regenerating trees. For my part I set five rat traps and put fresh bait in my permanent bait stations. Later, on the advice of Chris Smuts-Kennedy, Co-ordinator of the Kaka Recovery Programme at Maungatautari, I borrowed more stoat traps and 'ring fenced' the area at a wider distance. (Over the next 2½ months, four rats, four possums, one stoat and one ferret were caught.)





Nest and chicks photos by Keith Edwards

The puriri tree on Barry Lett's property with a small hole providing access for kaka's to nest. Two chicks appear at the entrance checking out the world. This is the first witnessed nest in the Auckland region in the last fifty years.



Kaka have returned to Tawharanui, and are regularly seen over Ecology Bush. It is not known if they are nesting there. North Island kaka can be seen in flocks of eighteen to thirty birds flying noisily overhead as they return to Little Barrier after feeding sprees on the mainland. Left. A kaka stripping bark to find grubs, photographed only metres from the road into Ecology Bush. Yes, this is the correct way for the photo! Sharp claws and powerful mandibles used to grip the branches give the kaka acrobatic manoeuvrability for acquiring food.



Photos Alison Stanes

South Island kaka photographed feeding on the deck of a residence on Stewart Island. Kaka have adapted to urban tit bits among the houses in Oban and up to seven can arrive at once, checking out which house has the best free hand outs! South Island kaka are a paler colour than the North Island kaka. **Editor**



I also rang Matt Maitland, Open Sanctuary Co-ordinator, Northern Parks who visited with his partner Genevieve, and is an expert tree climber. Genevieve's experience was gained while working for eight years at Rotoiti recovery project where she specialized in working with kaka. They arrived to examine the hole and determine whether it was really a nest or just some juvenile Kaka exploring possibilities. (A dry run). In this climb and another about eight weeks later Genevieve established that the hole was over two metres deep and the inside of the trunk was multi-chambered. Even with the help of lengths of wire, mirrors and keyhole torchlight it was impossible to see to the bottom and she was unable to confirm the presence of chicks. Matt said, "If they are breeding it's a first for the Auckland mainland for decades". Later he commented, "In the birds favour is the fact that stoats have no Kaka nest predation experience in this area".

Over the next three weeks, from a semi camouflaged site down the slope, I witnessed kaka behaviour consistent with a breeding pattern. The male bird would arrive in the tree and call to the female who always sat on the eggs. She would come out of the hole and they would meet on a nearby perching branch where they immediately clasped beaks and with much rocking of heads and her wings flapping he would regurgitate food for her. Sometimes they repeated this procedure a second time. Then he would fly off to find more food and she would return to the eggs. Sometimes after being fed she would fly around for a minute or two, I suppose to exercise her wings, before returning to the hole. It was good down there. Sitting quietly, watching and learning. I felt nicely secure on a sideways puriri trunk, and daubed in the slanting late afternoon light and surrounded by a tangled green mass I experienced a quiet sense of contentment and serenity. I had time to consider my floor companions of moss, fern, lichen and leaf mould while above in the puriri canopy I saw and heard bellbirds, whirring tui, rosellas, warblers and there, as always, munching away, were my good friends, the resident kereru.

By the second week of December a new behaviour pattern had begun and I assumed it commenced with the hatching of the eggs. Now, both birds were coming and going from the hole feeding the new born chicks. I recorded considerable variation in the times between visits and in the duration of their stay. Often the parents would be in and out in a minute or two but on occasions they stayed longer. 10 minutes, 20 minutes were not unusual and once I recorded a stay of 42 minutes. (Perhaps that parent was catching up on some sleep?).

As the weeks passed by and fledging time approached I became increasingly anxious about the chicks chances of survival after they left the hole. It's a dangerous time. To start with they cannot fly and spend a few days on the ground flapping about and gaining wing strength. I was worried about stoats smart enough to avoid the barrage of traps but more worried by a feral cat I had recently seen lurking around my studio.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> January while sitting patiently in my usual hideaway I noticed extra activity in the dark of the hole. With a sense of excitement I raised my binoculars, and there, in full focus I saw not one, but two young Kaka heads, looking out at the green world. I was surprised at how big and alert they were. It seemed to me, no doubt wishfully, they were ready to take on the world – cat, rat or stoat. They continued to examine the world from their hole for the next few days and Keith Edwards took some terrific photographs and movie clips. Between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> February both chicks fledged and made their way into the lower branches and then to the relative safety of the higher canopy. I watched them there for the next few days. Sometimes they were sitting quietly by themselves or when the parents returned I saw them being fed or

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February, just on nightfall, a loud shrieking erupted from the tree. I rushed out fearing the worst. To my amazement, there on the ground, trying to find cover in an *Astelia* plant, was another chick. This one was much smaller than the first two and seemed fragile and vulnerable. A parent was close by, attracted by the chicks shrieking, so I hastily retreated, not giving this one much chance of making it through the night. But I was wrong – there it was the next morning not two metres away – now on an old stump it had climbed. Over the next week I followed this chick through the lower branches of four different interconnecting trees. It was easy to find for every so often it called for food and revealed its hiding place.

I learned to readily identify the young birds by their less than fully developed tail feathers (wispy and semi transparent – without 'body') and followed their development as they returned to home base from time to time. They will be around their parents for six months and then make their own way in the world.

If the parents breed again next year they might return to this hole. But I would be equally happy – after this three month saga – if they find another hole, down the road behind that predator proof fence within the sanctuary of the Park.



## Native Plant Nursery Copes With Another Busy Summer

Our friendly team of nursery volunteers has been very busy over the last quarter. We have coped better this summer - our skills have improved, the team has grown bigger and we've received more community support. We've set and then broken world production records (for open sanctuaries) and enjoyed good company and some very nice catering.

Many thanks go to Steve Harrison, Penny & Steve Palmer, Gill & Colin Sargent, Christine Brookes, Bill Meyer, John Lowe, Elizabeth Clark, Dorothy Cooper, Sheila & Rhys Thompson, John Millett, Jenni & Jim McGlashan, Penny & Garth Allen, Susan & Kate Beer, Peter Griffiths, Tony Keane, Rachel Frost, Maggie Cornish & Ray Blackburn, Barbara Deroles, Maureen Briggs, Ngaire & Ray Woolford, Alison Stanes, Jennifer & Basil Kirker, Barry Fergusson, Jill Ronald, Helen Crosby, Gera Verheul & Bevan Woodward, Paul Duffy, Steve Rigby, Open Sanctuary Co-ordinator Matt, Ranger Maurice, Ranger Colin, Ranger Sam, Geoff Ledbrook and the Rural Sustainability students, Ranger Naomi and the Long Bay volunteers, Ranger Phil and the Shakespear Tuesday volunteers, CVNZ volunteers and eighty Tawharanui campers for helping out in the nursery during the last three months.

Special thanks to Big Steve for wrestling with our irrigation system over a very hot, dry summer and for investigating the park's water supply system. Our facilities upgrade has continued - a new shade fence built in the overflow stand-out area, a water meter fitted by the ARC, Colin's Trailer Extension Mk 2 fitted, improved rabbit and pukeko fences built. We have also obtained more reject bread crates thanks to Tip Top Bakeries.

We are well on the way to achieving our production target of 19,500 plants. Thank you to everyone who has helped. **Paul Williams**



Rural Sustainability Course students from North Tec. visit our nursery on Wed 03.12.08 under the leadership of Geoff Ledbrook. This is a course run through Northland Polytec and caters to adult students who generally have an interest in small rural blocks of land. This was the second group to visit Tawharanui Nursery. The first group pricked out mahoe, this second group bagged the same mahoe. "The next lot might like to plant them out," says Paul Williams the Nursery manager. Geoff Ledbrook has since been signed up as a TOSSI member, "of course" says Paul Williams!

## Talent Among The Puriri's.

New Years Eve 2008 will be remembered by the 150 or so people who gathered under the Puriri trees at Tawharanui to listen to a talented group of young people perform with their violins and a guitar. Annette Evans danced and Bernice Austin sang to the hushed audience, mesmerizing them with her beautifully clear voice. It was magic! The sprinkling of intermittent rain did not hamper the musicians and the show "went on". It was a splendid evening. ARC resident ranger, Maurice Puckett, organized the evening with the support and participation of the Loveridge and Evans families. **Sharon Kast**



David Evans, Helen Evans, Jessie Loveridge and Sam Loveridge.  
Not pictured: Annette Evans (danced) and Bernice Austin (sang).



## Pest Busters – Volunteers Needed for Trap Lines

A crucial component of maintaining the Open Sanctuary is to detect and intercept pest animals before they become a problem. To achieve this a series of trap and bait lines have been established in key areas within the park and adjoining areas. We are looking for a team of volunteers to be responsible for maintaining these lines on a monthly basis.

This is an opportunity for everyone: the trap lines are of various lengths from about two hours to several hours, and while some are through challenging terrain others are a "walk in the park". Some lines involve handling chemical baits but most are based on traps loaded with fresh eggs. Lines would suit either individuals or pairs. Training will be provided.

If you are interested in being a part of this important program please contact James Ross on [jamesross@paradise.net.nz](mailto:jamesross@paradise.net.nz) or 09) 422 6760.

## Don't let it be you that ruins our efforts

Please remember to keep our pest free status in mind by checking your bags, shoes & clothing for any hitchhiking rodents, insects or weed seeds. We all enjoy the unique open sanctuary at Tawharanui. We can all help to preserve our conservation efforts by maintaining our vigilance regarding invasive plants or animals.

## Fresh water streams

A freshwater monitoring report for Tawharanui undertaken by the ARC environmental team. The Tawharanui site was chosen as a fully forested catchment to serve as one of several reference sites for the region. With scores of 122 and 123 this waterway is in the Excellent class (>119) and ranks 15th of 67 streams monitored across the region. This waterway will now be monitored annually.

**Matt Maitland**

## Did you know? From Jenny Rickett.

New Zealand has 6 endemic ducks:- paradise, blue, pateke, Auckland Island teal, Campbell Island teal, and NZ scaup.

3 native: - greyduck, grey teal and NZ shoveler  
1 introduced:- mallard.

All other ducks are vagrants (though two of my books disagreed with each other as to whether the Chestnut breasted shelduck was vagrant or native... I'm going with vagrant!).

## TOSSI COMMITTEE

<b>Chair</b>	Paul Williams	09 425 9877
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Helen Crosby	09 422 9936
<b>Secretary</b>	David Stone	09 528 5712
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	Sharon Kast	09 422 9990
	Jan Halliday	09 422 2356
	Steve Palmer	09 368 7074
	James Ross	09 422 6760

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Matakana 0948, New Zealand  
**Email** [secretary@tossi.org.co.nz](mailto:secretary@tossi.org.co.nz)  
**Website:** [www.TOSSI.org.nz](http://www.TOSSI.org.nz)

## Application form for NEW MEMBERS Tawharanui Open Sanctuary

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about TOSSI?

### Please tick how you would like to help:

- |                                                    |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planting/workdays         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Counts    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising              | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Pests          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predator fence monitoring |                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental educational |                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity/promotion       |                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art in the Woolshed       |                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |                                         |

### Membership fee:

\$20 single membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$30 Family membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional contribution (optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible

### Gift Membership:

Please send membership to

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Gift membership(as above)\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc. and return the completed form to:

**TOSSI Membership Secretary**  
**P.O.Box 112**  
**Matakana 0948**



## Tawapou Returning to Tawharanui

**Tawapou** is a tall handsome coastal tree growing on islands and headlands from North Cape to Tolaga Bay. It grows on the South Coast at Tawharanui. Its shiny black seeds were used for necklaces by the Maoris.



Jo Ritchie collecting Tawapou berries in 2003 from the south coast when she was Sanctuary Project Manager.



The berries ripen in shades of orange through to deep red. Last year storms took the flowers so little seed was available, except this one tree, which was behind a bluff and sheltered.



Sue Crawshay stands next to a tawapou planted in the 2004 plantings on the Bull Sidling. The seeds for this planting were germinated at Paremoremo nursery.



An understory of tawapou on the south coast much the same height as the ones planted in 2004. This indicates that tawapou flourished as soon as rats and possums were removed from Tawharanui.

Below left. Each June volunteers sift through the grasses under the tawapou trees in search of the long black seeds. Below right. A lush green tawapou stands on the right of the more silvered pohutukawa.



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