



TAWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.  
Newsletter No. 50 Sept. 2014



Australasian gannet models, along with a sound system playing the calls of a nesting colony, have been installed on a northern coastal cliff top to attract the gannets back to nest at Tawharanui.



NZ dotterel back on territories are; YR-WG West End, YO-YO Comet Rock and GO-KO Jones Bay. These three were given colour bands last season.

## Coming Events—Sunday in the Park

<u>Sat 4 Oct.</u>	1 pm. Takahe release. See invite bottom of page 3.
<u>Sun. 5 Oct.</u>	9.15 am. Sunday in the Park. BBQ provided. Bring drinks, morning tea and good footwear.
<u>Sun. 2 Nov.</u>	9.15 am. Sunday in the Park. BBQ provided.
<u>Sun. 7 Dec.</u>	9.15 am Sunday in the Park. BBQ provided.

### Acting Chair's Report



It's the last day of August and another ugly easterly storm is battering Tawharanui. Squally rain and tremendous blasts of wind have marked much of the past winter. Yet through that, volunteers have been able to plant over 20,000 trees, shrubs and sedges at the open sanctuary.

The August Planting Day was inspirational. A forecast of 50mm of rain and strong winds and the prospect of steep, muddy and exposed slopes at the M16 Bush planting site. It should have deterred all but the craziest, but you came anyway! Over eighty of you: from south Auckland, Titirangi and Whangarei, as well as the hardy locals. The 5,500 plants that had been placed out for the day were swiftly dealt with and the usual feast was served. What weather? You barely mentioned it.

That level of commitment to Tawharanui is typical of our members and supporters and indicates a shared belief that what we are doing is both worthwhile and effective. The rewards can be as simple as looking back at the planting sites from the past year, and the years before that, and seeing the new coastal forests and wetlands take form.

We often talk of our plantings as providing new habitat for birds. In July in just five minutes I recorded 15 bird species (11 of them native) within the planting area from last year. Amongst these were Banded Rail and Spotless Crake - both secretive wetland specialists. Later I found evidence that kiwi were also using this area that had been planted just 12 months ago. Similarly, those that helped install seabird nest boxes on the hard steep slopes of Takatu Point last year now know that the effort was worth it as, incredibly, three of these boxes have grey-faced petrel eggs in them this season.

In just a few weeks (all going to plan) takahe will arrive. This great step-up in the conservation significance of Tawharanui is further evidence of confidence in the Open Sanctuary concept. As a measure of our excitement at the prospect of takahe, the TOSSI committee decided to underwrite most of the costs of this project. Our enthusiasm has been shared and supported by substantial contributions from Mitre10 Mega Warkworth, the Tindall Foundation, JS Watson Trust, the Flight Centre Foundation and the Greenwood Trust. We have also received a number of extremely generous donations from members and supporters.

This newsletter is the 50<sup>th</sup> for the Society and is a notable milestone. The newsletter is always informative, beautifully illustrated and a delight to receive and I know that for many it is their major contact point with Tawharanui. I'm sure you will all join me in thanking and congratulating the current editor, Alison Stanes, on this achievement.

Finally, in the past few months I have been 'filling in' as TOSSI Chair after Steve and Penny Palmer moved to the South Island to escape our weather. I have been busy. Remarkably I have spoken to a number of TOSSI people who have all marvelled at the extra tasks they are now doing, "I've been flat-out since Steve and Penny left. I had no idea they did all this," is the common refrain. Their tireless, intelligent and often un-noticed contribution to TOSSI and Tawharanui was extraordinary indeed.

James Ross Acting Chair



#### At the TOSSI AGM -

Ngaire Wallen TOSSI Treasurer was elected to take up the Chair.  
James Ross returned from the position as Acting Chair to Vice Chair.  
Karyn Hoksbergen TOSSI member was elected as Treasurer.  
Committee  
David Stone - Secretary,  
Ray Blackburn - Flora Coordinator,  
James Ross - Fauna Coordinator and Web Site Manager,  
Patte Williams - Park Activities Coordinator including sending out the E Letter,  
Doreen Guest - Special Projects currently testing water quality, fresh water streams.  
Alison Stanes - Communication Coordinator and Newsletter Editor (and weed buster.)  
If you wish to contact any of the committee contact details are on page 11.  
Photo - Ngaire Wallen TOSSI Chair.

## Open Sanctuary Coordinator update



Understanding trends in visitor use and attitudes is important to guide ongoing management of our Regional Parks. Knowing who our customers are and what they value helps us to meet your needs and desires as visitors to the park.

Many of you may have been approached by a clipboard wielding surveyor gathering data during previous visits to the park. Results of last summer's survey show an incredibly pleasing 100% of visitors are either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit. It was also interesting to note that 'purpose of visit' to Tāwharanui was scored higher in four areas than for the regional park network as a whole. These were: to get close to nature; as part of an outing; for active sports pursuits; and for time out and relaxation. These results suggest that our aim for Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary of integrating conservation management with active recreation and farming must be working.

Some examples of this integration can be seen in various ways at Tāwharanui. Rangers and TOSSI volunteers are more and more regularly encountering park visitors venturing further afield. It is still true that most of our visitors still target the beach in summer, and who can really bypass Anchor Bay on a good day? Many though, take the time to soak up some quality information about the sanctuary in the Sanctuary Hut and go for either a short or long walk. With Ecology Bush bristling with bird song and the spectacular views and visible wildlife restoration activities such as gannet colonies and seabird areas you will be well rewarded for your effort.

We cater for different ways of exploring the park. A recent addition is the installation of mountain bike and baby buggy friendly ramps along the north coast trails, removing the need to negotiate the many fences required to run an efficient farming operation. One visitor commented that the old all too frequent gates and fence styles had cost him \$3500. How? After straining his shoulder lifting his old heavy bike over many gates he'd gone out and invested in a lightweight carbon fibre replacement! Another recent addition is an upgrade of the slippery steps accessing Maori Bay on the South Coast, thanks to TOSSI volunteers. If you've never explored the South Coast I can recommend it, it gives a very different park experience from the sandy north coast.

Any new addition or change to the park must consider many factors. In the case of the bike ramps we had to ensure that as well as meeting visitor and farming needs, they had to be safe for wildlife. Look closely and you will see exit ramps for young kiwi and other chicks that might find themselves falling through the bars. Where drain coil was installed to manage water we added a wire to halve the pipe diameter to prevent inquisitive young birds entering and potentially getting stuck or confused. Track and structure upgrades must be done sensitively to improve access and safety for visitors without detracting from the remote and wilderness feeling we know many visitors seek. And of course there is a wide variety of views about what constitutes each of safe, challenging, required and unnecessary with regard to tracks and infrastructure.

These integrations of park functions apply across a wide range of actions, both novel and well established. Some further examples include blocks placed in water troughs allowing safe exit for young lambs as well as kiwi or other wildlife that may tumble in while accessing water. Revegetation plantings that provide important habitat for recovering and reintroduced wildlife can often provide shade and shelter for visitors and farm animals, but must be located carefully so as not to impede our wonderful views and track network, or damage the rich cultural heritage and archaeology of the site. Mowing and weed eating of grass has to consider that rare lizards or kiwi might have made the rank or long grass their home. Although the list goes on we don't see these as problems rather as reflections of a multi-use environment used and valued by many critters, including kiwi, sheep and humans.

With kind regards, Matt Maitland. I can be contacted at [matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) or 09 426 1200

Auckland Council, TOSSI, Department of Conservation, Ngati Manuhiri, Ngai Tahu,  
Mitre 10 Takahe Rescue and Mitre 10 Warkworth

Invite you to welcome Takahe to Tawharanui Open Sanctuary.  
Saturday 4 October, afternoon.  
(See web site for time)

Assemble at Anchor Bay Car park and be prepared for a walk including a hill.  
Bring comfortable footwear, rain coat and maybe something to sit on.

See you there



Penny Palmer puts on a brave face as she says goodbye to her lovingly tendered *pomaderis hamiltonii* plants.



Steve and Penny Palmer are given a delightful painting by Ray Blackburn at the special farewell lunch given in their honour at the Whangateau Hall on 15 June 2014.



The volunteer team cheer with delight on finishing their efforts installing the gannet models, 29 June 2014



Oops! These nikau were discovered having been placed out for planting and never planted. They are happily growing through the bottom of their planter bags in Mangatawhiri Wetland. Don't tell Steve and Penny Palmer!



The Takahe Recovery Team visited Tawharanui on a stormy day and checked out the ends of the pest proof fence. They also visited the south coast gullies where the takahe will be released and are likely to take up residence.

## 'Gannets' arrive at Tawharanui

There's a new attraction at Tawharanui: a fake gannet colony has been established with the aim of attracting the real thing. A team of enthusiastic volunteers set up the new 'colony' of sixteen plastic decoys together with nest mounds and a sound system playing gannet calls.

The hope is that some passing young gannets will be encouraged by both the sight and sound of our colony and decide to adopt it as their own. While that might sound fanciful, the technique has already proved successful at Young Nicks Head near Gisborne and at Motuora Island near Kawau.

Gannets generally return to their birthplace to breed. So to get them to set up somewhere new requires a bit of effort. The pest-free status of Tawharanui provides a perfect location for them to establish a new colony. Apart from Muriwai, the other five gannet colonies in the Auckland region are all on offshore islands.

The Australasian Gannet is a very large bird - up to 90cm long and with a wingspan of 1.8 meters. It is found in New Zealand and south-eastern Australia with an estimated breeding population of 55,000 pairs. 87% of the adult population is in New Zealand with large colonies at the Three Kings, White Island, Gannet Island at Kawhia and Cape Kidnappers.

About this time of year gannets return to their colonies to breed. A single egg is laid from August onwards with the chicks hatching in late spring to early summer. Fledglings from New Zealand fly directly to Australia and return from their OE in their third year, although they won't start breeding until they are five to seven years old.

Australasian Gannets are not a threatened species but TOSSI is keen for them to breed at the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary. This is not just about returning another 'missing' species to the sanctuary: gannets play an important role in coastal ecosystems by bringing nutrients from the sea to the land, enriching the soil and providing food for invertebrates.

The presence of this iconic and spectacular bird at Tawharanui alongside our Marine Reserve may also encourage people to consider the relationship between the terrestrial and marine ecosystems and also New Zealand's crucial role in seabird conservation.

Surrounded by productive oceans, New Zealand is a World Hotspot for seabirds. More than a third of the world's seabird species (140) occur in our territory and thirty-six of these species are NZ endemics – breeding nowhere else.

Auckland's Hauraki Gulf is one of the most important places in NZ for seabirds. At any one time there are literally millions of seabirds out in the gulf. However, few people get to appreciate this richness as most of these birds breed on the outer islands like Little Barrier, Mokohinau Islands and the Poor Knights where they are safe from introduced pests such as cats, rats and stoats.

The project has been funded through the Environmental Initiatives Fund of Auckland Council and by TOSSI. James Ross Fauna Coordinator

### The Return of the Planters

TOSSI had a request to host some planters that had, 5 years ago, as a celebration of Helena Stretton's 70th birthday, planted 250 trees into the wetland area at the bottom of Twin Hills valley.

Ray and Maggie met them and a very enthusiastic group they were.

Friends for over 30 years and with obvious pleasure for the outdoors they were overwhelmed with the growth on the hillside.

Helena had a photo taken of her group of family and friends so that a comparison could be made with the original photo taken on the day of planting five years ago.

They were impressed by how much the plants had grown. Ray Blackburn



### Donation

TOSSI would like to acknowledge the recent donation made by E L Thompson, in memory of her late Father, Frank Burnhope Thompson. Frank and his family lived on the farm that is now the Tawharanui Regional Park in the early 1920's.

Ngairie Wallen Treasurer



Plant distributors take a morning tea break



Five thousand plants go out



In warm sunshine families help out with the plantings



Auckland Council staff have a day out of the office helping put out five and a half thousand plants



Oh no, not again!



Austin Puckett delivers apples to planters



Despite rain and the mud over eighty stalwarts turned up and all the plants were in the ground before lunch.

## Thank you to an amazing enthusiastic committed team of volunteers

For the 50th TOSSI newsletter a big thank you goes out to volunteers who over the years have given between eight and ten thousand hours annually to make Tawharanui what it is today; a sanctuary where visitors can experience the sound and sights of what New Zealand might once have been.

Volunteers are a determined enthusiastic breed who slip into an area they are passionate about and go for it - **sometimes referred to as 'community ownership' of a public area.** New Zealanders put more hours in as volunteers working towards reinstating the environment than most other places in the world. International visitors to New Zealand are frequently astounded by the work done by volunteers.

The list of volunteer names at Tawharanui would be so long that instead we are listing volunteer roles and achievements and you will know who you are:

TOSSI Management - volunteers set up the Incorporated Society and got the organisation registered as a charity. Chair, secretary and treasurer give endless hours to their duties. Beside leadership roles committee members each take turns at hosting Sunday in the Park and attend six meetings a year. The early committee raised funds for the pest-proof fence.

Fence checkers - organisers and volunteers walk the fence line weekly in all weathers up hill and down dale making sure the integrity of the sanctuary is maintained.

Planting - Prior to the TOSSI nursery being established on site, a family happily lent their own nursery for the TOSSI effort. Volunteers helped unload plants from Poremoremo Prison out of double trailer cattle trucks before delivering them to the plant site and getting them into the ground. One family over numerous years geminated seeds gathered locally, bagged them up and planted out a gully near M16.

The Nursery - shed, shade house and plant out areas were built with fund raising and determination. TOSSI Nursery Leaders - have given hundreds of hours sorting the right species for the right places with the right timing as well as organising the nursery volunteers. TOSSI Nursery Volunteers - stand for hours around the extended trailer chattering as they prick out and pot up plants before indulging in an array of home-made tea break goodies. The seed collectors and germinators, watering system engineers and innovators all contribute to thousands of very healthy plants.

Trap line teams - assist the Council by trudging along their trap lines up steep slopes and down gullies, through bush, over farm paddocks or along the coast in all weathers baiting and setting traps, confirming and maintaining a pest free sanctuary.

Construction Projects - leaders and volunteers have built bridges in Mangatawhiri Wetland and Lagoon Wetland, constructed a Bird Watching Hide, up graded the Ecology Trail and the Track to Maori Bay. Others have painted inside the toilet blocks and re-hinged farm gates.

Innovative volunteers - have constructed pouches for carrying weeding equipment, built and designed a carrot crusher, built a dispenser for rabbit burrows, attached camera cases for surveillance cameras to metal posts and designed and made grubbers and more. Volunteers help control rabbits.

Weed Busters - locate and destroy moth plant and climbing asparagus, and GPS the sites while others spray the nasty sharp rush from water margins and marram grass from the dunes. They deal to pampas and comb the park for woolly nightshade, pulling out the small ones and cutting down and painting the stumps of the ones that manage to sneak through to being large specimens.

Sunday in the Park volunteers - over the years have taken out thousands of lupin from the dunes, annually removed purple groundsel, and removed the prickly yellow fruit from apple of sodom and destroyed the vicious shrubs. They have repaired sand ladders, removed old fences, removed debris from beaches and cleared tracks. Caterers and cooks somehow manage to purchase the right amount of sausages and have them cooked on time for the much appreciated barbecues.

Fund raisers - give dedicated time filling out funding application forms, while others gave time to volunteer at Art in the Woolshed.

Communicators - spread the news of Tawharanui with educational articles written for newspapers, regular articles for Matakana Local Matters, make power point presentations, keep up the web site, edit and proof-read the TOSSI newsletter and produce material for the information hut, including the diorama that displays the stuffed birds. Envelope stuffers send out the newsletters and an E newsletter editor sends out the monthly news. Others organise reprinting and updating of the brochure. A Tawharanui Bird list was produced by a volunteer.

Mid-week volunteers successfully take on numerous activities



Ray Blackburn has organised winter nursery volunteers with in fill planting on various sites.



At Anchor Bay spinafax and pinau grasses are planted to protect the dunes and foreshore.



Liz Clark and Christine Brocks install rabbit protectors around kowhia plants in the Hayter's Wetland.



Colin Sargent also installs rabbit protectors around kowhai plants in Hayters Wetland.



On Tokatu Point flaxes are planted to shade grey faced petrel nesting boxes.



The Maori Bay track is undergoing an upgrade supervised by Roger Williams.

The membership secretary - has the unenviable puzzle of matching internet banking forms with membership lists.

Educators - lead guided walks both during the day and at night and help out with Sea Week.

Camp Hosts - every summer volunteers take up residence in the camp ground to manage the camping issues.

Bird Monitors - have monitored kakariki, pateke and kiwi as well as helping with kiwi call counts. Others have participated in the five minute bird call counts. Saddleback shelters and nest boxes have been set up. NZ dotterel are carefully monitored through the nesting season and seabird nests are carefully checked. Takahe will soon join the list of species being closely watched.

Seabird Nest Site - installation of a sound system and nest boxes for grey-face petrels has been successful while decoys and sound systems have been set up to encourage Australasian gannet to build a colony within the park.

Planting re vegetation sites - are set up with the help of the Council. Plants are delivered to the sites and placed out, the marquee is set up and later collapsed and mules, spades and bread crates are washed.

Volunteer planters - over the years have passionately turned up in their hundreds to plant on steep slopes, and wetland bogs in all weathers. Dedication and commitment brought 80 loyal planters out on the August planting day this year in teeming rain. With determination five and a half thousand plants were in the ground before lunch. A Council Ranger was heard to say "TOSSI planting days run like a well oiled-machine."

Everyone of you has contributed to make Tawharanui what it is today. We can be proud of our efforts creating a very treasured sanctuary.

TOSSI and the Auckland Council extend a big thank you to everyone of you.

### Bird news

Grey-faced petrel. I can report with some pleasure that three of the nest boxes at Ngaio Bay are active. One has an egg and each of the other two have a chick. While we had birds using the boxes last season, these are the first eggs and chicks. Megan Friesen has also located four birds sitting on eggs in natural burrows at Ngaio Bay. Thank you to everyone who advised, encouraged, built, transported, dug, installed and monitored the seabird nest boxes! James Ross

Saddleback. It is exciting that saddleback can be heard chortling away happily, calling partners all over the park. But when one was heard outside the Pest proof fence just near the nursery I went to investigate only to find a thrush accurately mimicking a saddleback and then proceeding on with its own song. Ray Blackburn

Spotless Crake. While acting as host on one of the plant days I sat quietly at the table waiting for late comers. First I heard the rolling purrrrr of the spotless crake and then the rasp of a banded rail. Later up to the north of where I had been sitting holes in the soft dirt indicated a feeding patch for kiwi. James Ross

Pateke Ducklings. After the farewell to Steve and Penny Palmer, Heather my twin sister and I headed to Tawharanui for a walk with no work. In the Ecology bush we heard and saw kakariki, robins, saddleback and whiteheads. To top the journey off as we returned by the stream late in the afternoon, there was a pair of pateke with five tiny fluffy ducklings. There could not have been a better way of cheering us after saying goodbye to Steve and Penny.

Just two and a half months later on a rainy wet stormy day, five juveniles fed confidently with two adults in the shallow grasses on the stream edge quite close to my camera. These no doubt are the ducklings seen previously (see photos next page). Alison Stanes



Grey-face petrel chick in nest box

### Seaward Observations

Chris Floyd, at a Forest and Bird meeting reported that while kayaking around the end of the Tokatu Peninsular, recently he saw NZ Fur Seals jumping in and out of the water and also sunning themselves on the rocks at Tokatu Peninsular Point. From a rough guess he said about 20.

Kerry Mc Gee and Megan Friesen spotted five orca while out checking grey-faced Petrel.

Any interesting sightings and photos at Tawharanui please send to Alison Stanes; [alison.purple@xtra.co.nz](mailto:alison.purple@xtra.co.nz)

## Help TOSSI by making a gift.

The committee recently discussed ways of encouraging people to include a gift to TOSSI as part of their will.

Many supporters may feel they have done their bit while they are alive – surely you have earned the right to rest in peace, particularly after a planting day in pouring rain! A family group recently returned after five years to see how 'their' planting, done collectively five years ago as a memorial act, was coming along, and were very grateful that TOSSI supported them to do so. As a Grade 1 park, there is no provision for memorial plaques or permanent signage, but people can easily plant a tree that has special meaning, in most cases known only to them.

The gifting of funds to TOSSI in your will is something you might like to consider. In our family, we only get to charity in the "What if we are all dead?" option. It is easy to be a bit less dramatic and include a cash bequest to TOSSI, because the Tawharanui Regional Park is a place that has been very special to you or a loved one.

### Food for thought.

If you would like some advice on how to effect such gifting, please contact David Stone, our secretary, on 09 627 1526.

## Wanted.

Someone with a passion for Tawharanui who is prepared to manage and update social network pages maybe on Face book or Twitter for the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary. Contact Alison alison.purple@xtra.co.nz

## Snap

One of the Takahe Recovery team politely asked me how much time I gave to TOSSI. I hesitated and then said "too much!" She laughed out loud and said, "I have just asked James Ross the same question and he gave exactly the same answer!" Alison Stanes Editor

## TOSSI Committee

Chair	Ngaire Wallen	09 627 1526
Vice Chair	James Ross	09 422 6760
Secretary	David Stone	09 528 5712
Treasurer	Karyn Hoksbergen	09 5851315
Editor	Alison Stanes	09 524 0291
	Doreen Guest	09 422 7974
	Patte Williams	09 425 9127
	Ray Blackburn	09 425 4995

Correspondence Chair or Membership Secretary  
P.O Box 112 Matakana 0948

Email: secretary@tossi.org.nz  
Website: www.TOSSI.org.nz



Five pateke ducklings  
photographed in Ecology  
stream 15/06/14



Five juvenile pateke  
photographed with two adults in  
Ecology Stream 31/08/14

## 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



This is the last season for spring lambs at Tawharanui as Auckland Council have chosen to graze adult sheep and not rear lambs.



Hereford cows, calves and the large bulls have already been removed. Only yearlings for fattening remain.



Shaun Lee a member of TOSSI took this photo while standing on Flat Rock Tawharanui

We acknowledge with grateful thanks Warkworth Printing Ltd. for their assistance with the printing of this newsletter.  
Warkworth Printing Phone: 425 7188. Email: [sales@warkworthprinting.co.nz](mailto:sales@warkworthprinting.co.nz)