



TĀWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.
Newsletter No. 61. June 2017



This kereru in Ecology Bush happened to have the lighting right to show off its glorious colours.



Coming events

Sunday in the Park (wear sturdy shoes/gumboots; bring a bottle of water):

- * 2 July, 9.15am: Planting. BBQ provided.
- * 6 August, 9.15am: Planting. BBQ provided.
- * 3 September, 9.15am: Work day. BBQ provided. 1.00pm: AGM (all welcome)

Volunteer Days

Tuesdays 9am **The nursery team meets at the Tāwharanui nursery. If you would like to join this dedicated team**

Contact: Ray Blackburn 425 4995 magsandray@gmail.com

Thursdays 9am A small group of volunteers meet at the Vol Hole for interesting track and maintenance work.

Contact: Roger Williams 425 9127 port.williams@clear.net.nz

Volunteer checking (to be done in your own time) See inside of the back page.

Chair's Comments

Tāwharanui is indeed an amazing place, a spiritual investment for the future, that needs to be shared, and appreciated. There are wonderful volunteers who have to be acknowledged and appreciated too. They all give up their time to work alongside the Auckland Council to maintain and improve the sanctuary. There are many volunteers who stand out giving years of service but there is one whom I would like to mention at the moment and that is Roger Williams. When living in Cambridge, Patte and Roger Williams gave their time to Maungatautari Mountain Sanctuary. While they were making their transition to Warkworth, I visited their intriguing Cambridge home naturally designed and built by Roger, no doubt with Patte's help. Roger was at home on his own and of course we got talking about Tāwharanui and Maungatautari. Tāwharanui's pest proof fence had not long been constructed with the same material as was being used at Maungatautari. Somehow I got to mentioning that we were the guinea pigs with new electronic pedestrian gates driven by solar panels, which I thought were going to be troublesome and would probably need changing to the more simple mechanical style. When I got back to Auckland, the fairly new Sanctuary Manager Matt Maitland said to me, "Who were you talking to about the electronic pedestrian gates? I heard every bit of that conversation on my cell phone!" If there had been a hole in the ground I would have disappeared into it! It was in the days before touch screen cell phones and I had bumped the recall button which put a call through to the last person called! With gate problems and a ranger trapped for some hours in the boxed area between the gates, it was decided to replace them. Not long after the arrival of the Williams to Auckland, Roger worked with other volunteers converting the gates to mechanical ones. Since then, Roger has designed and, with a small Thursday team, built the lagoon board walk, the Mangatawhiri board walk, the bird hide, completely upgraded the Maori Bay Track, repaired the Fisherman's Track, upgraded Ecology Track, then rebuilt Maori Bay Track after a slip took his handy work out. Next was the upgrade of the Koru display near the entrance. Many days were spent repairing the pest proof fence with steel strips supporting the mesh, and then came a new generator shed attached to the Woolshed, followed by a fish pass under the pest proof fence. There is no stopping this man! Now new steps are being built across the front of the Sanctuary Information Hut which will make it more accessible and also be used as seating for talking to groups of children (see photos on page 5). Tāwharanui is indeed lucky to inherit Roger Williams - such a major asset from Maungatautari! Roger must gain some satisfaction seeing his handiwork as it is so evident all over Tāwharanui. We thank you Roger and Patte for coming to live at Warkworth.



Besides all the volunteer work around the sanctuary there are those who give hours behind the scenes who need to be thanked. They proof read newsletters and stuff them into envelopes, and send out the E-letter. They walk trap lines, regularly walk the pest proof fence checking its security, shop and cook for barbecues for the Sunday volunteers, write articles for news papers and the TOSSI newsletter, write letters for TOSSI and do the TOSSI accounts. There are those who organise phoning and setting up teams of volunteers for checking trap lines, takahē monitoring, kiwi call counts, pateke annual count, grey-faced petrel observation, and New Zealand dotterel monitoring. The list goes on! There are weed extractors and rabbit exterminators. Their work is indirectly evident. More evident is the nursery team. They collect seeds, pot up trees, organise teams to place out trees and plant them. This season they have reached a total of 200,000 trees — another major milestone. Hopefully there will be volunteers in the future equally dedicated to Tāwharanui. We will need to help them learn the skills and become aware of what is required.

The committee is working towards an awareness and education strategy plan for park visitors. This will include children at school camps and a greater number of visitors now expected with the tar-sealing of Takatu Road. Conservation education by TOSSI relies heavily on volunteers who are available and lately we have discovered a few individuals who are under utilised! So a plan will get them into action. With conservation education efforts and a bit of luck we might pick up some volunteer recruits for future years.

Open Sanctuary Senior Ranger update

The last few months have been a period of things that have been brewing away for a while, getting near to bottling.

The planned giant Kokopu reintroduction is scheduled for Saturday June 10th. The first cohort of fish are 5000 juveniles going into each of Mangatawhiri and Waikokowai streams. These will be followed in a year by 120 adult fish into each stream. We want to know how the different age classes fare and which is the best age class to use to establish a new population. Obviously the longer fish are held in captivity prior to release into the wild, the greater the cost incurred by the fish farm. Thanks to **Manāki** (NZ Premium Whitebait) for the fish from their Warkworth fish farm (see article and photos on page 7). NIWA are also an important partner who will assist greatly with the adult fish monitoring.



Specialist kiwi detection dog handlers, James and Natasha, of 'With a Nose for Conservation' recently surveyed Tāwharanui for kiwi. This year is ten years since Northland Brown Kiwi were established at Tāwharanui and we want to see how they are doing. A previous dog survey at the five year mark for the population, yielded a dog kiwi detection every fifteen hours of surveying. Just five years later, that encounter rate was every second hour. James and Tash reported identifying 20 individual birds from one location in Ecology Bush alone! It seems our kiwi population is in good health and we may be ready to export birds to establish new sites soon. Thanks also to the kiwi call count team, led by Sally Richardson, who again sat in the dark and the cold, recording kiwi calls.

Our first takahē chick has a name! Tuakana was provided by Ngāti Manuhiri. The name means eldest sibling or first born or senior branch of the family, all of which are very appropriate for this first surviving Tāwharanui takahē chick. Chick names need to be checked against the national database to avoid duplication. The name is the key identifier for each bird and with just over 300 birds on the planet, management of the species still focuses on the individual. Another chick born around the same time but did not survive, has posthumously been named Maia, meaning 'brave'. Tuakana has been vaccinated, leg banded, health checked, sexed as male, and is now very hard to distinguish from his older family group members.

It will be fantastic to see the 200,000th TOSSI grown tree planted this month. The nursery's accelerated revegetation programme has now seen 20 hectares of new wildlife habitat planted. Even better is how quickly this new habitat gets colonised by our wildlife. Takahē and kiwi have well and truly made the M16 plantings home within just 1-4 years since planting. Thank you all for your part in making this happen.

Matt Maitland

I can be contacted at matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or 09 426 1200

Little Spotted Kiwi arrive at Shakespear Open Sanctuary

On Saturday 28 April, ten pairs of little spotted kiwi were released at Shakespear. (These must be cousins to the Northland little brown kiwi we have at Tāwharanui.) Ten males were from Kapiti Island and ten females from Tiritiri Matangi. This combination was organised to make sure there is a good spread of gene population. 200 guests turned out on a rainy day to welcome the birds. Matt Maitland was a very busy man because between the official powhiri and the release, the kiwi which had just arrived from Kapiti had to have the slow procedure of attaching transmitters.

As some of the birds were taken out to be displayed to the guests, I heard a member of the general public ask, "What is this bird's name?" and the handler answered, "Box 5"! He was so determined to have the kiwi comfortable in his arms, he had not picked up the name but instead the box the kiwi had to be returned to. Most of the birds were released during the afternoon but heavy rain slowed the process and three were released the next day, when all the transmitters' signals were received indicating the birds were settling into their new home.

Alison Stanes



Matt Maitland holds a little spotted kiwi to be released at Shakespear.

COSSI Day (Conservation Organisations Sharing Sausages and Information)

COSSI day was a small step towards sharing the treasures in the sanctuary. TOSSI committee members were kind enough to give up time to help on COSSI day, except for James Ross, our fauna coordinator, who was on the Poor Knights studying Buller's Shearwaters. And David Stone was in Australia. Lower numbers than expected enabled those participants who came to have a great day sharing and viewing Tāwharanui.

After morning tea and introductions we visited the intended gannet colony, the grey-face petrel nesting site at Ngaio Bay, the nursery and later Ecology Bush. Of course we had our surprises. While in the nursery germinating area, the sprinkler gave us a shower! We were warned it would come on again in five minutes in the prick out space so it gave us another dousing before we had finished answering questions! One might have thought the timing was deliberate but in fact was completely coincidental. It caused great hilarity.

At the gannet colony area, Matt Maitland left us to receive Sir Richard Branson and the Mayor of Auckland at Shakespear Open Sanctuary. James Ross fortunately had trained Maurice how to turn the speakers on at the GFP site. It is always interesting that the solar panels can provide enough energy every night for the shrieking raucous calls of the seabird nesting colony. The calls certainly bombarded the ear drums of our visitors. At the information hut, three takahē turned up on the lawn nearby right on cue, as if they were remote controlled.

Perhaps we might repeat an Open Day again next year.

Alison Stanes



Visitors inspecting the nursery.



Visitors inspecting the grey-faced petrel site at Ngaio Bay.



Three takahē arrive on cue for the COSSI day visitors.



The takahē plod off after their visit.

Update on the Toutouwai (North Island Robin) at **Tāwharanui**, 2016-17 season

The Tāwharanui toutouwai population is derived from releases during 2007 when 25 birds (15 males and 10 females) were introduced from Tiritiri Mātangi and Puhoi (see Newsletter No. 43, December 2012 for further details). Since the 2007 release, we have been monitoring the Tāwharanui toutouwai population to gather data on survival and breeding success to compare with populations elsewhere, and also as a measure of the health of the open sanctuary.

2016-17 is the 10th breeding season for the toutouwai at Tāwharanui. At the start of the season we found at least 36 pairs inside the open sanctuary. The number of toutouwai pairs has stabilised at around this figure for the past three seasons. For the 2016-17 season these included 27 pairs in Ecology Bush, five pairs in Takatu Bush and four pairs in Possum Gully. We did not monitor any toutouwai outside the open sanctuary.

During the 2016-17 season the 36 pairs at Tāwharanui fledged about 110 young, of which 102 were colour banded. This year's cohort colour is orange. This season's young birds are all banded orange over metal on the left or right leg, or have three colours on the right leg, of which the top colour of the three is orange. Last season a similar number of pairs bred and a similar number of young fledged. In the 10 seasons since release in 2007, nearly 800 young have fledged. With such high productivity one might expect the population to be a lot bigger than it currently is. However, there appears to be very high attrition of young after they fledge. Faline Drummond's radio-tagging study last year confirmed that mortality of young is high both before and after independence, with most mortality occurring within the first four months after fledging. Since young birds are inexperienced, we think that much of this mortality could be caused by starvation. This helps to explain why only a small proportion of the young that fledge each year are recruited into the population the following season. For example, of the 112 young that fledged during the 2015-16 season, we found only 14 of them (12.5%) at the start of the 2016-17 season. Despite only a small proportion of young being recruited, once they are established on territories, survival is good and our figures suggest that the population is currently stable. As a measure of the health of the open sanctuary, over 10 years of closely following the fate of hundreds of toutouwai nests, we have not found any evidence yet of a toutouwai nest failing as a result of mammalian predation. In unmanaged mainland forests, up to a third of toutouwai nests can fail as a result of predation, especially by rats. The causes of nest failures at Tāwharanui include ruru (morepork) predation, flooding by heavy rain, poorly built nests falling from trees, nests abandoned due to infertile clutches, and nest mite infestations.

Tim Lovegrove, Richard Chambers & Kevin Parker



Roger Williams checks out the plans as he and his Thursday team are about to build new steps across the front of the Sanctuary Information Hut.



Making great progress! The steps will run the full length of the building when completed.

Regular Volunteering

If you are interested in helping on a regular basis, please contact the people listed below:

Nursery:	Ray Blackburn	425 4995	(Tuesday mornings)
Mid-week Work Group:	Roger Williams	425 9127	(Thursday mornings)
Fence-line Monitoring:	Jenni McGlashan	422 3733	(rostered)
Trap-line Monitoring:	James Ross	422 6760	(rostered)
Takahe Monitoring:	Sally Richardson	425 0161	(rostered)

The **Takahē** chick is banded!

The first takahē chick at Tāwharanui, named Tuakana, now has colour bands of orange, metal, red and green. The chick has also had a vaccine booster and a good blood sample taken. This went to a lab for sexing, which identified it as male. He is now 2230g, up from 1900g on 21 March. Tuakana is colouring up nicely and is hard to tell apart at a glance from the adults in his cohort.

No transmitter will be fitted to this bird for the foreseeable future.

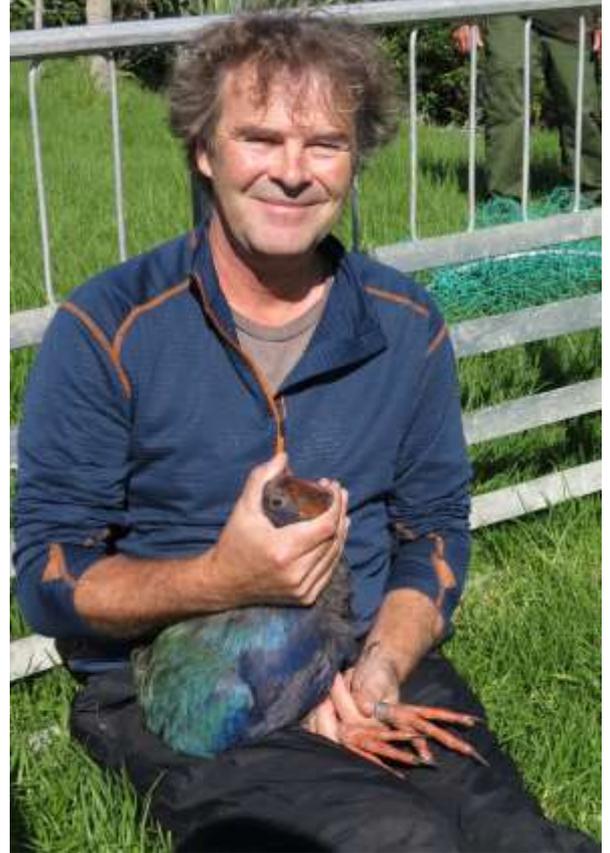
A big thank you to those who helped with catching him, as it has taken some doing to get the group comfortable enough to catch this second time.

Alison Stanes

Photos courtesy of Maggie Cornish



Up close and personal!



James Ross holds Tuakana ready for banding, showing the correct way to hold a takahē. Nice plumage — James or the chick?!



Just another day in the 'office'! It's a hard job, but someone's got to do it. Rangers Matt and Maurice with volunteers James and Myfanwy, working on Tuakana.

Kiwi call monitoring

Four nights of kiwi call monitoring were recently completed with interesting results. Some sites were down on previous years while others were well up. Some volunteers saw kiwi during their monitoring, as well as ruru, kaka and lots of grey-faced petrel. It's a worthwhile 'citizen science' activity to be involved in.

"This data is very useful to us and to DOC. The call count index acts as a proxy measure of kiwi density. Importantly, because it follows a national protocol, it allows us to make comparisons (within reason) between sites and over time," says Senior Ranger, Matt Maitland.

We were very lucky with the weather — although very cold, we only had to cancel one night — being much better than in previous years. Thanks to those who this year braved the cold. The stars and noises of the night were worth any discomfort!

Sally Richardson (Kiwi call monitoring coordinator)

Eye-balling the Giant Kokopu.

Now that we're getting closer to an approval for the giant Kokopu reintroduction to Tāwharanui, the committee visited the captive farming facility of Manāki (NZ Premium Whitebait) in Woodcocks Rd, Warkworth.

Paul Decker – a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable head farmer at Manāki – led the tour.

Below, committee members and Matt Maitland looking at Kokopu with Paul Decker.



Information on Myrtle Rust From the Auckland Council Biosecurity team.

What does myrtle rust look like? The rust will generally appear as bright yellow spots on the new growth, flower or even on the fruit of some plants. It could kill the new growth completely, cause brown spots on the upper leaves and holes in the leaves. The rust can appear red when the sexual types of spore are being produced.

Where might you see it? You might find it on native plants such as pohutukawa, rata, ramarama, rohu, manuka and kanuka, and the introduced eucalyptus, guava and feijoa.

Where did it come from? Myrtle rust is a native of South America that jumped from native species there to planted eucalypt forests. It is now established in Australia's east coast, New Caledonia, South Africa, Hawaii and is also considered established in parts of Indonesia, China and Japan.

There are three predominate strains. The strain in Australia is most likely the one we now have in New Zealand because of the large number of flights to and from Australia, the westerly winds and the movement of migratory birds, insects and butterflies.

What can you do if you see something that you think may be myrtle rust at Tāwharanui?

Do not touch or collect samples as this may spread the disease.

Report it immediately to the Auckland Council: Matt Maitland 09 426 1200; or the biosecurity team: 09 301 0101; email: biosecurity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Auckland Council's Technical Advisor for Myrtle Rust

Dr Nick Waipara: 021 222 9067, nick.waipara@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



Myrtle Rust on pohutukawa.



Myrtle Rust on Australian myrtle.



More examples of Myrtle Rust.

Nursery Report

In case you hadn't already figured it out, it's planting time again. With some 15,000 healthy young plants hanging out in the nursery waiting for a new home, it's going to be a busy few months ahead.

Many, many thanks to the good people of the nursery team who have spent the last year raising the crop. You really are a fantastic group and a pleasure to be a part of.

We already have about 1,300 trees planted thanks to a damp autumn. 800 went into the top of Keith's Bush on the April work day and an educational morning spent with a group of 80 Mahurangi College students saw another 500 go into the Cactus site. It's a very good start.

By the time this newsletter is published, we will have completed our first public planting day and have celebrated the placement of our 200,000th nursery raised tree. What an incredible achievement, something that everyone who has ever taken part can be very proud of. If you can find the time, it's well worth revisiting one of our old sites just to see how they have matured and how they are already very much a part of the Park ecosystem.

Future planting days will be:

Sunday July 2nd and Sunday August 6th. The preceding 'putting out' days will be Thursday June 29th and Friday August 4th.

See you on a hillside soon.

Ray Blackburn.

A celebration of 200,000 plants from the TOSSI nursery

Celebrating the planting of 200,000 plants from the TOSSI nursery provided us with the easiest planting day ever. The weather was perfect with a clear blue winter sky. It had rained previously, making the ground soft for planting and 189 people turned up to plant 5000 trees! (Thank you to Ranger Maurice for pushing out a few cars that got stuck!) The birds also shared the celebration. As people signed in, I excitedly pointed out that a shining cuckoo was calling nearby in quite the wrong season. Shining cuckoos do not get back from their winter migration to the Solomon Islands until November. The day progressed well and all the trees were in the ground by 11.45am. During the barbecue, lucky draw prizes, donated by generous local businesses and TOSSI volunteers, were shared. By 2 pm when there was less noise from excited planters, we were clearing up and the shining cuckoo started up again. Ray Blackburn corrected my identification. It was a song thrush doing a very good imitation of a shining cuckoo. Song thrushes are good mimics. There has been one recently at the nursery giving a very good rendition of a tieke (saddleback). The thrush seemed to be giving an appreciative celebration song to planters and nursery workers. A big thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a success.

This planting links three previous plantings making a corridor of forest creeping across the park. For the next planting on July 2 we move across a planted wetland to what is known as Cactus paddock which lies between Anchor Bay Road and the beach. See you there.

Alison Stanes



Having been unloaded, the plants are laid out, ready for planting, including the 200,000th.



Overseers for the day, Roger Grove (left) and Ray Blackburn (right), happy with the day's proceedings.

Grey-faced Petrel surveys

Luckily, we did not get rained on for the first survey night of the year in April and we had many of these beautiful birds turn up! We ended up catching 45 grey-faced petrels in two hours including 28 birds that were un-banded and 17 that had been banded previously at Tāwharanui. Already there are a number of birds taking up residence in both nest-boxes and in natural burrows at several locations around Takatu Point.

This is the seventh year that we have been conducting night-time seabird surveys at Tāwharanui. In that time we have banded over 350 grey-faced petrel with numbers increasing dramatically each year. On our second survey night in May, we had the extra-ordinary spectacle of 30 birds on the ground clustered around our speaker with many more flying over-head!

James Ross



The team heading out for an evening with the petrels.



Alison Stanes and James Ross checking out a nesting box that has a grey-faced petrel resting in it.



Megan holding a grey-faced petrel for processing.



A sunset treat off the back of the mule was organised to farewell Megan Friesen who is returning to the US after completing her PhD on sensory ecology of seabirds.



A grey-faced petrel being weighed.

Mahurangi College Y9 planting day

The planting effort on 15 May was a great success: 500 trees in the ground in about an hour and a half! The nursery group were great, as usual, and everyone seemed to have fun.

Sally Richardson, TOSSI Educator.



Students hard at work ...



... and surveying the result at the end of the day.

Planting Day on Queen's Birthday weekend.



Start them young! Yes, even this young! These young volunteers also enjoyed the BBQ.



Plants being unloaded and laid out on the planting day.

CAUTION! Road works!



Concrete being poured for the two new gates at TOSSI. There will be a gate for in-going traffic and one for out-going.



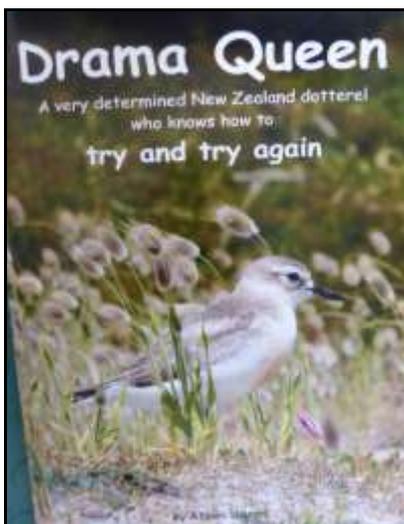
The last section of Takatu Road being prepared for sealing. The road will be closed to the public on weekdays from 7am to 5pm from June 12 to July 7.

Trapline Volunteers Needed

Trapline volunteers help maintain the network of traps and bait stations throughout the park. They serve a crucial role in detecting and eliminating pest predators that have somehow managed to get into the sanctuary. Volunteers adopt a line which they usually service once a month. You can do this alone or with a friend to help share the load. The lines vary in length and difficulty: some are physically demanding, others are literally a walk in the park! Full training and advice will be provided. If you are interested please contact: James Ross jamesross@paradise.net.nz



TOSSI monogram patches are available for sale with black or white surrounds, to sew on garments — hats, shirts, fleeces etc.
Cost \$10 to \$13
Phone Sally 09 425 0161



Children's Book: *Drama Queen*

At last a reprint is available!
A delightful story about a New Zealand dotterel that lives at Tāwharanui. Excellent birthday or Christmas gift.
For sale: \$20
Phone Alison 09 524 0291

TOSSI Committee

Chair	Alison Stanes	09 524 0291
Vice Chair	Roger Grove	09 422 3459
Secretary	James Ross	09 422 6760
Treasurer	Karyn Hoksbergen	09 585 1315

Committee	Ray Blackburn	09 425 4995
	David Stone	09 422 9415
	Sally Richardson	09 425 0161
	Gilbert Barruel	09 425 7081

Newsletter Editor Marguerite Vanderkolk
09 422 7747

Membership Secretary Janet Barruel
E letter Janet Barruel 09 425 7081

Email: secretary@tossi.org.nz

Website: www.TOSSI.org.nz

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

Application form for NEW MEMBERS Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary Soc. Inc.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone No. _____

E-Mail _____

Membership fee:

\$20 single membership \$ _____

\$30 Family membership \$ _____

Additional contribution (optional) \$ _____

(Donations over \$5 are tax deductible)

Membership as a gift to family or friends:

A gift membership will be sent to you.

Recipient's name:

Recipient's address:

_____ \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to Tāwharanui
Open Sanctuary Society Inc. and return to:

TOSSI Membership Secretary

PO Box 112

Matakana 0948

You can also pay by bank transfer to:

ANZ 06-0483-0072390-00

The membership name should be clearly referenced if the payee name is different to the membership name.

Payee	Payment details	Membership
Bloggs, J.	\$20/\$30	Bloggs Family

If making a donation with membership, please reference clearly.

Praying for our mantises

I have noticed invasive South African praying mantises all over Tāwharanui, but not at Takatu Point where I find beautiful native New Zealand praying mantises. The easiest way to tell the two species apart is by the shape of the head. The thorax (the bit that connects their heads to their abdomens) is much wider on a New Zealand mantis so by comparison, the South Africans look like hammerheads. Unlike the South Africans they are always green but I have found one rare yellow one at Takatu Point (pictured). If only the New Zealand males would avoid the seductive African females. It's not just an unproductive affair but a very dangerous one that often ends in the death of the New Zealand male. The invasive mantises arrived in Auckland in 1978. They have since spread throughout the country but seem to have stalled around Christchurch (probably because it's too cold further south).

I don't know how much longer Tāwharanui will have native New Zealand praying mantises, but I plan to appreciate them while I can.

Shaun Lee



Native



South African

Introducing the new TOSSI Newsletter Editor

It is said, "If you want to get a job done ask someone who is busy." After ten years of editing the TOSSI newsletter I was looking for a replacement. TOSSI member, Marguerite Vanderkolk, volunteered for the job. The more I get to know her, the more I realize she is busy. Marguerite is either narrating and recording books for the blind, working on a nearby beef farm, doing landscape gardening, or volunteering at Auckland Zoo, which led her to Sumatra to an Orangutan refuge centre for a couple of weeks last year.

Amongst all this busy-ness, here is the newsletter!

If you have any good photos taken at Tāwharanui or want to write any interesting articles, please send them to Marguerite: mbvkgg@gmail.com

Alison Stanes

We acknowledge with thanks Warkworth Digital Design and Print for their assistance with the printing of this newsletter. Phone: 09 425 7188. Email: messaging.service@post.xero.com