



TĀWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter No. 63. December 2017



A pair of Pied Stilts was back at Tāwharanui this season. This adult was spotted sheltering three recently hatched chicks from the rain by folding her legs forward at the knees and tucking the chicks under her wings. By November two chicks had fledged.



Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary is a joint project with Auckland Council.



Coming events

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

- * 4 February
- * 4 March
- * 1 April

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. ropeworth@gmail.com

Volunteer checking (to be done in your own time)

See inside of the back page.

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Chair's Comments

Tāwharanui is an Open Sanctuary filled with threatened species protected by an empowered community that cares for them. The latter has proven so in the last three months as thousands of volunteer hours have been given by not only the local community but by young people from all over the world as well. Besides the regular dealing to trap lines, checking the pest proof fence, poisoning rabbit burrows, removing sharp rush, purple groundsel, woollies, monitoring takahe and NZ dotterel, and the weekly nursery work, volunteers have taken on other tasks.

Over two separate weeks Pacific Discovery Conservation Volunteers teams of ten young people, mainly from North America, worked on a wide range of jobs. They removed woollies, lupin and gorse, and trimmed tracks. They deconstructed a takahe holding pen and with volunteers from Fulton Hogan (our takahe sponsors) and the Council, rebuilt a much larger hospital and holding pen for takahe.

The *Sunday in the Park* teams, aside from regular jobs, have built a fence around the workshop area to keep takahe out, and removed an unwanted farm fence.

At the last Tāwharanui Working Group meeting, held every second month, eleven TOSSI volunteers arrived outnumbering the council staff!

For Conservation Week TOSSI ran guided walks every hour on a Sunday which was very successful and we learned a lot from it.

One can't start too young with introducing children to nature. Educating our young people about conservation is a key towards the future saving of species.

So when I was playing with my two year old grandson in my garden, the learning started! A pair of grey warblers often dart about through the oak trees at the bottom of my city garden making an incredibly loud warble. "That is a grey warbler, can you hear it?" I have said numerous times. Grey warblers have adapted to city and urban gardens and have survived the onslaught of cats and rats, possibly because their nests are so small and generally hang on the end of fine branches which are not easy for cats and rats to get to. They have their own territories and normally a pair will travel the circumference of the area two or three times a day feeding as they go. Imagine my delight a few days later when in the Playcentre garden a grey warbler started up and my grandson looked at me with an innocent twinkle and a smile and said, "Grey warbler."

Thank you to each and every one of you who have given time to Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary helping make it a spiritual investment for the future. Maybe you too started an interest somewhere in the natural world early in your life.

Merry Christmas and welcome to 2018.

Alison Stanes



Open Sanctuary Senior Ranger Update

The end of another year is a good time for a spot of reflection. Often we get excited by the latest new arrival at Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary but in this newsletter I'd like to focus on some of our established and establishing species.

Northern NZ dotterels have done what we hope for each year – knuckling down and getting chicks hatched before the summer hordes of visitors arrive. Alison, Sharon and Cheri – the indomitable dotterel 'chicks' – report 16 pairs have nested and at time of writing 21 chicks were alive, five of which have already fledged. We remember the bad old days pre-fence when seven pairs would struggle to fledge a single chick between them.



A recent survey of tieke (North Island saddleback) reintroduced in 2012 was undertaken by Kevin Parker. We now have a minimum population of 281 birds well spread throughout the Park. This number is more likely closer to 300 as several single birds behaved as if they weren't alone and may have had mates on nests. This gives us confidence that with care we can provide small numbers of tieke to assist new reintroductions elsewhere.

Duvaucel's geckos have been in the sanctuary for a little over a year. A recent tracking tunnel survey led by Massey University's Manu Barry showed the distinctive 'hand prints' of both adult and juvenile geckos. Some of the females introduced last year were gravid (pregnant) and have obviously given birth to their live young. A key aspect of this project was to examine the impact of mice (which we still have) upon the geckos, especially juvenile survival. It's a small start but nice to know at least one baby has made it through the year. Just as pleasing is the fact that decent numbers of adult geckos have stayed near the release sites which means they're in contact with each other and may be able to mate and produce the next round of young.

The petrel sniffers have been back. Joanna Sim and wildlife detection dog Rua of Dabchick NZ have undertaken the annual survey of the seabird areas. It seems a humble hole in the ground is hotly contested real estate. Jo reports that some burrows that have previously had kiwi present are now used by petrels and occasionally this is reversed. It must be an interesting 'conversation' about property rights between the larger strong legged kiwi and the sharp billed petrels who are probably already in residence as they start breeding earlier in the year than kiwi do. The excellent seabird restoration programme led by TOSSI's James Ross shows year on year growth across the three petrel species. As an accessible recovering seabird population it has also enabled some excellent research opportunities.

It's always pleasing to see new habitat created by volunteers being occupied rapidly by wildlife. Contract rabbit shooter 'Ditch' Keeling reported three kiwi in this winter's planting in Cactus paddock (next to Anchor Bay car Park), barely four months after planting! Ditch has been visiting the Park for the last eight years or so and commented on the growth in the kiwi population, with the first calls heard beyond the workshop in the evening, as he kits up for a night's shooting at dusk. When conditions are right he may see a couple of dozen birds as he does circuits of the paddocks. Not a bad reward for pulling the long night shift!

You too can experience the night shift at Tāwharanui. Arriving later in the day you miss some of the crowds and traffic (we are still part of Auckland and there's no escaping either completely) the afternoon water is still warm, there are lots of lovely picnic dinner sites and you can take yourself on a wee wander to look and listen for kiwi.

I'd like to close with a heartfelt 'thank you' to all TOSSI volunteers and members for your help making Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary the success that it is. I hope you all manage some form of holiday break to enjoy the summer. A special thanks to the ranger staff and volunteers who keep the Park and sanctuary ticking over while the rest of the world put their feet up.

Merry Christmas,
Matt Maitland.

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

TOSSI AGM and Committee

The AGM was held on 3 September. Three Committee members stood down after completing their respective terms and three new members (shown below) were voted in.



Karyn Hoksbergen: Tāwharanui has been a destination of choice for me since the late 1970's. Then I was attracted by the white sandy beaches. Now, although the beaches are still appealing, I'm much more interested in the opportunities that the Sanctuary offers endangered species. Looking to the near and medium-term future, this special place is a living example of what we can aspire to if we all get on board with rat, possum and mustelid control. And keeping the family moggie indoors at night!
After three years of being the TOSSI treasurer, I've now stepped into the secretary role. I love my TOSSI involvement and hope that I can continue to contribute to making a small positive difference to the ongoing survival of taonga species. After all, if we don't, who will?



Marguerite Vanderkolk: It was a spontaneous trip up from Auckland to check out Tāwharanui 14 years ago that resulted in my partner and me falling in love with the area, buying a block of bush near Matakana, building a house and soon after, becoming members of TOSSI. I recently became the editor of the TOSSI newsletter. My wider involvement with conservation includes being a guide on Tiritiri Matangi, volunteering on Rotoroa Island (restoration project) and as a guide in Te Wao Nui (the New Zealand section) at Auckland Zoo. I'm inspired by what can be achieved by groups of committed volunteers, both locally and as part of the 'big picture'.



Tony Enderby: My initial involvement with Tāwharanui was totally water related – I dived and spearfished around the peninsula. Once it became a Marine Park, I watched as the species and ecosystems changed, and I enjoyed it more. At some stage after moving to Leigh more than 20 years ago, we went to a planting day at Tawharanui and since then we have been involved in all the various activities on the Park. Although semi-retired, I still contract to DOC as a warranted marine reserve ranger, mainly at Goat Island but also at Tāwharanui. Hopefully I can add something to the committee and input ideas to help ensure the Park's and TOSSI's success into the future.



Christmas cheer!

Santa arrives at the volunteers' Christmas lunch on Sunday 3 December, with his takahe-drawn sleigh!
Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch celebrating another great year in the Park.



Bird News

Tuturiwhatu (New Zealand Dotterel): This season three pairs started nesting in September and all pairs had nests by October. This meant for the first time ever, on 19 November, 21 chicks were sighted on one day in the Park. A number of reasons may have contributed to this. Maybe they have finally realised that it gets too hot and busy in the Park to have chicks about in January. Maybe the climate is actually getting warmer. Also more pairs hunting for territories meant, to save your territory get back early and nest to claim it. New Zealand dotterel are very faithful to their territories and will guard them fiercely when they return from their March flocking site. The Tāwharanui flocking site is at Omaha. Whatever the reason for early nesting it looks like a good season for New Zealand dotterel at Tāwharanui. The pair numbers have increased from 13 last season to 16 this season. Although not all 21 chicks on the Park will fledge, it is a great season for keeping both dotterel parents and dotterel monitors very busy! (see photos on the back page)

A little help from monitors certainly assisted one nest in surviving. Cheri Crosbie, one of three monitors, observed soon after high tide, a nest had been washed away. She collected up the three eggs from the tide line, built a new nest in the sand and ten days later all three eggs hatched!

It is good news that New Zealand dotterel at Tāwharanui are doing well since elsewhere the story is more grim for these little ground nesting endemic birds that are more rare than kiwi. With predation from cats and rats and hedgehogs they only do well at managed sites. As well as that, they are losing their dune and beach territories to human housing and holiday makers. In Auckland it appears they are moving to nest in farm paddocks and on any clear ground with suitable food sources of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates.

If you are interested in observing New Zealand dotterel in future seasons and becoming a monitor at Tāwharanui, there is a training course available at Pukorokoro Miranda Shore Bird Centre, phone 09 232 2781 or contact Alison Stanes 09 524 0291.

Tieke (Saddleback): Kevin Parker recently did a survey and found 281 birds, so some day soon there might be enough to translocate a few birds to other sanctuaries.

Matata (Fern Bird): Kevin Parker found two fern birds in one of the north coast gullies. He said "I was tramping up through the kikuyu-filled valleys off Ecology Bush lamenting, as I always do in these valleys, that there are no fern birds in otherwise good fern bird habitats, when a bird called right in front of me. I spent a bit of time calling and quickly found another bird within 10m of the first. They were not acting like a pair (no duetting) but at least they were in the same location."

The last fern bird known of, was one sighted in June 2005 near the lagoon car Park. This time let us hope they are here to stay.

Miromiro (Tomtit): There have been two sightings of a male tomtit in Ecology Bush which is very exciting. **If you see tomtit at Tāwharanui, please report it to the office.**

Pateke: Numerous groups of ducklings were spotted on the Park from June onwards. These little brown teal ducks have at last decided to flock on the lagoon. A flock of thirty was seen during October and November although they have now dispersed. It is said that juveniles and unpaired birds will continue to use the roosting sites through the breeding season.

Takahe: There were three pairs mating, laying eggs and hatching chicks this season, but sadly only one chick has survived (see photo on Page 10). New pairs of takahe will be arriving soon. The first pair will be one year olds Paua (male) and Nokomai (female), both from Burwood.

Alison Stanes.

Storm-water damage repaired in Ecology Bush



Gouging of the slopes caused by torrential rain.

It was discovered that cloudbursts which had occurred in recent years, dropping torrential rain, had caused water to rush off the grassy field above and gouge out numerous channels in the manuka forest. As a result, the Waikokowai Stream Dam was being heavily silted.

Discussions and planning took place with Auckland Council and a programme of extensive remedial work is being carried out, led by volunteer Roger Williams.



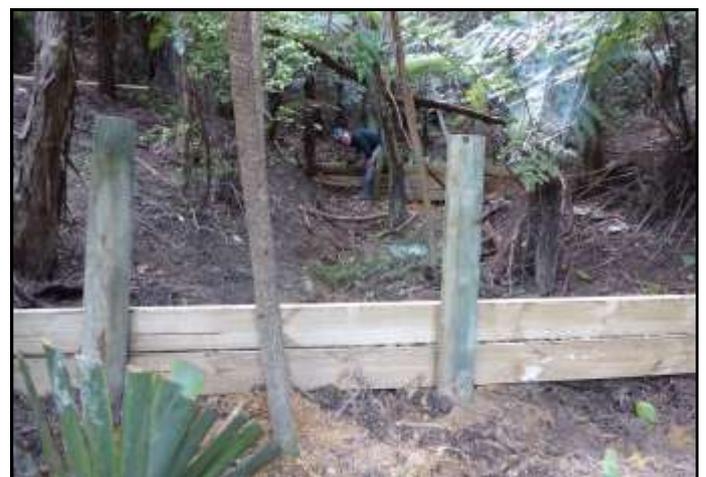
Hay bales and coconut matting were used to plug the deep gouges.



Flax bushes were boated across the dam and planted as filters.



Many planks were transported across the dam for the construction of retaining walls to hold back silt.



A series of retaining walls step up into the eroded gullies catching silt and other debris.



Sunday in the Park volunteers lay more coconut matting for filters.



Posts are cut for more retaining walls to catch silt.



Three gabion baskets are installed to catch and filter water on the lower side of the road.



Passing down boulders from the mule above to fill the gabion baskets.



Roger Williams over-seeing the planting of flax ...



... and inspecting the new drainage alongside the road to the north coast.

Regular water quality checks already indicate improvement.

Nursery Report

This is my first nursery report, having taken on the task from Ray Blackburn.

A regular crew of 12 to 20 people has turned up this spring to help at the nursery. The main task of the group has been the pricking out of manuka and kanuka seedlings. We have now reached our goal of at least 6000 of each, as well as 500 Karamu and 500 Mahoe.

One of the advantages of belonging to the nursery group is that we have the chance to get out and about in the Park in often stunning weather. We visited the Marine Triangle where the seabirds nest, to plant the last of the prostrate manuka and collected more seeds from our main source near Tokatu Point.

We made a special expedition to locate some *Alseuosmia* plants in the upper Ecology Bush and were able to take a number of cuttings which are thriving. We have collected seeds and cuttings from the sole Kirk's daisy on the Park as well. Both these under-storey shrubs are useful sources of either nectar or fruit for our birds.

At the nursery itself, part of the rabbit-proof fence around the outdoor area has been replaced by Len and Ken over a number of weeks. Roger and his assistants have been busy working on a major upgrade and extension of the shade area involving large poles, shade cloth and an extended watering system.

While we have been about our work we have been mindful of the potential threat to our programme in the future posed by myrtle rust. In September Mel and I attended a meeting in the woolshed about the identification of myrtle rust particularly on pohutukawa. Since manuka, kanuka, pohutukawa and rata are all myrtles, if they are affected, it will have implications for our planting plans in the future. Ray and I also attended a meeting in Auckland with rangers from all over the city to share our knowledge. We discussed the alternative plants we could use instead of manuka and kanuka if it became necessary. But at the moment it is 'wait and see'. In the meantime we are taking the precaution of collecting more seed than usual.

Thanks Ray, for introducing me to these diverse tasks. Your local knowledge is inspiring!

Susan Gibbings.

The pre-Christmas summer volunteers have arrived.

Dan Peters from Britain is at Tāwharanui for four months before he starts on a PhD. Jessie Tearle from Shropshire, UK, has done country management in Wales and is on a big O.E. She is now heading on to Fiji after five weeks at Tāwharanui. Sophie Bennet is at Tāwharanui for five weeks as part of a Seabird Internship with Bird Life International, Cambridge, Britain. Stella Gianina is from Indonesia, studying an Agri-commerce degree in Palmerston North and is working with Colin Ward, the Tāwharanui Farm manager. And Laura Barraelough from Scotland arrived at Tāwharanui for a week while volunteering with Mags Ramsey in the southern Parks.

It is great to have many young people being involved in conservation as they are our future flag bearers.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

If you would like to write a brief article about any activities you've been involved in, or an experience you've had in the Park which you'd like to share, please email it to me: mbvkgg@gmail.com

And if you have any good photos of interest, please supply a brief caption and email them to me.

Marguerite Vanderkolk
Editor.

Action at the Sanctuary

Building a fence around the nursery and the workshop to keep takahe out.



Ray Blackburn on the tractor clearing a drain.



James Ross and Gilbert Barruel add tension to the wire.



Pacific Discovery volunteers remove woolly nightshade and lupin from the plantings in M16.



Contractors remove unstable macrocarpa from the Anchor Bay Picnic Area.



James Ross and Pacific Discovery volunteers build a holding pen for takahe.



Representative volunteers from our takahe sponsors, Fulton Hogan, chat to Matt Maitland while working on the takahe holding pen.



A new takahe chick being fed by two adults, Te Mingi and Douglas.

Park visitors and dogs.

It was very disappointing that over the course of Labour Weekend, Rangers had to turn away seven different visitors who had brought dogs into the Sanctuary. It is strange that some dog owners do not seem to get the message despite all the signs on the way into Tāwharanui .

Apparently over the years there have been cats in motor homes, puppies in tents, a lamb, a goat, birds caged and shoulder perching, a hedgehog and a rabbit (specifically brought camping with the family because she was pregnant!). Maurice, the Park Ranger, recalls visitors who brought in two guinea pigs the day after the Park had been closed for three months for pest eradication. And even a ferret was brought to the beach for a swim!

A positive aspect these days is that visitors often correct others especially breaches of rules within the Marine Reserve. Families with pets need to make appropriate plans before visits to Tāwharanui .

Alison Stanes

Martin Allardice 1955-2017

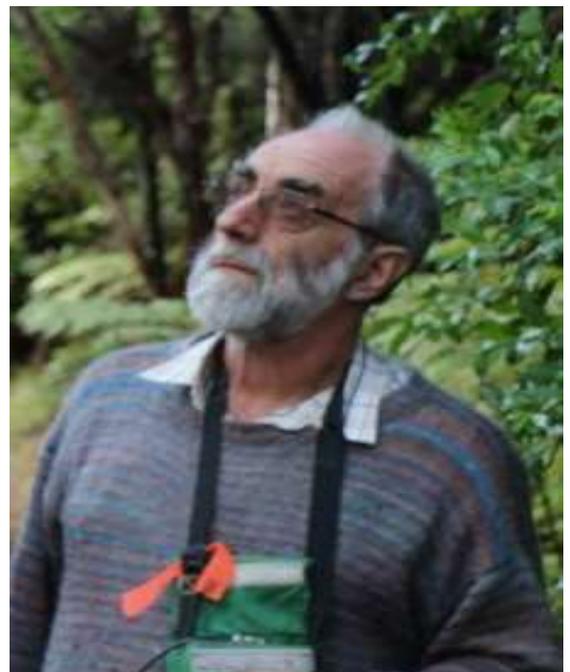
A longtime local resident of Tāwharanui Peninsula passed away recently.

For many years, Martin worked on and then took over his parents' farm on Takatu Road.

He became involved with TOSSI in 2004 and worked in several different areas including *Sunday in the Park* workdays, plant layout, planting days and at the nursery. With the introduction of takahe, he became a member of the Friday monitoring team and was also a regular at the annual kiwi call monitoring sessions.

His rural background and general knowledge were appreciated, as was his attention to detail.

His quiet presence will be sorely missed.



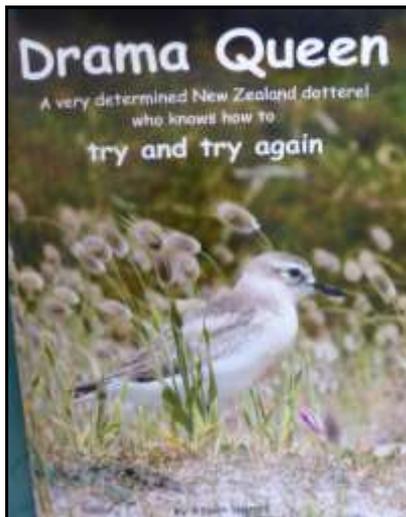
Trapline Volunteers Needed

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: \$15
Contact: 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.
Cost: \$20
Contact: Alison 09 524 0291

TOSSI Committee

Chair	Alison Stanes	09 524 0291
Vice Chair	Roger Grove	09 422 3459
Secretary	Karyn Hoksbergen	09 585 1315
Treasurer	Kim Grove	09 422 3459
Committee	Sally Richardson	09 425 0161
	Gilbert Barruel	09 425 7081
	Tony Enderby	09 422 6127
	Marguerite Vanderkolk	09 422 7747

Newsletter Editor Marguerite Vanderkolk
09 422 7747

Membership Secretary Janet Barruel
E letter Janet Barruel 021 054 0600
Email secretary@tossi.org.nz
Website www.TOSSI.org.nz
Correspondence Chair or
Membership Secretary
PO Box 112
Matakana 0948

Application form for NEW MEMBERS

Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary Soc. Inc.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone No. _____

Email _____

Membership fee:
\$20 single membership \$ _____
\$30 Family membership \$ _____
Additional contribution (optional) \$ _____
(Donations over \$5 are tax deductible)
Total amount enclosed \$ _____

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, e.g:

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

If making a donation with membership, please reference clearly.

NZ Dotterel have been busy breeding this season



At Jones Bay on the south coast a NZ dotterel chick hides among the coastal plants.

When it rained the parent gave the chick shelter under her wings.



Photos by Alison Stanes



On Ocean Beach on the north coast this NZ dotterel nest got swept away by a high tide. Cheri Crosby, a qualified monitor, rebuilt the nest, gathered the eggs up from the tide line and put them in it. Ten days later the eggs hatched. When the photo on the right was taken a day later, one chick was hiding under a small plant nearby. Egg shells had been removed by the adults to avoid the attention of overhead predators.

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