



TĀWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter N^o. 65. June 2018



This nest of rosella chicks was encountered under a pohutukawa on the South Coast by Alison Stanes as she sheltered from a storm. They squawked loudly, making their presence known, as they shared a narrow dry spot. Their nest was in a rocky crevice at ground level.



Many kereru have made Tāwharanui their home.

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 is provided:

- * 1 July (Planting Day)
- * 5 August (Planting Day)
- * 2 September (and TOSSI AGM)

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 page 11.

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Chair's comments

Volunteers, Council staff and the birds know what is expected of them at Tāwharanui and they just get on with it! Planting, maintenance and monitoring just keep rolling on. Numerous teams of young Pacific Discovery International Volunteers and students from Mahurangi College, along with many others, have helped.

However, with the constant threat of incursions, there is always room for more volunteers to help with monitoring trap lines. Doing a trap line on your own or with a friend makes a good excuse to get out and visit the Sanctuary on a regular basis, weekly or monthly, but in your own time. There are various grades of trap lines so one can be matched to fitness levels. If you want to help as a volunteer on this roster, contact James Ross (jross801@gmail.com) or ranger, Maurice Puckett (maurice.puckett@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz).

The birds at Tāwharanui are lucky survivors as human populations encroach on habitats, making places unsustainable for winged creatures which evolved millions of years before we came along. As I lie on a bed on my deck while recovering from a small operation, I hear the few birds that have been able to adapt to an urban lifestyle. Three tui are calling from the oaks and a riroriro (grey warbler) warbles from the hedge. But the bird song is interrupted by a lawn mower and an occasional police siren! At night a ruru calls from a nearby reserve. Forty years ago when I first moved here there were piwakawaka. One friendly character regularly popped into my lounge. A flock of tauhou (silver-eyes) used to feed on aloe flowers, but not now. Neighbouring cats have removed the piwakawaka and tauhou.

I have been reading a book titled *Land of Two Halves* by Joe Bennett and he casually writes about New Zealand. "The place was an avian ark. Birds literally ruled the roost. They proliferated and evolved. And those that feed on the land became too lazy to fly because there was nothing to fly away from. Then man turned up. The Maori ate the moa. The white man dealt to many of the other species. He felled the bush to make way for grazing. He imported British birds to make himself feel at home. He enjoyed himself with a shot gun. And he let loose the rat, the cat, the dog, the weasel and the stoat." That's a reminder of what we have done.

David Attenborough, in the DVD *The State of the Planet*, tells us that, "one species, our own, has developed the unique ability of altering its surroundings so that it can destroy whole species and indeed whole environments. This is done by overharvesting, introduction of foreign species, habitat destruction, islandisation (cutting species off from one another) and pollution." Tāwharanui is an exception since we are redeeming and restoring some of those alterations.

As I recuperate at home I am cheered by the fact that Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary is an ecological investment for future generations of New Zealanders. It is a place where city folk can get back in touch with nature, biodiversity and the planet. (And I am suffering from withdrawal symptoms from temporarily not being able to visit!)

Alison Stanes



Open Sanctuary Senior Ranger Update

Fish surgery is a new 'first' for Tāwharanui. This is part of the preparation for Phase II of our giant kokopu reintroduction. The team at NZ Premium Whitebait implanted 100 two year old and 40 five year old of their farm raised giant kokopu with passive integrated transponders or PIT tags which are very similar to microchips placed in domestic pets. All fish are doing well in their recovery ward tanks awaiting translocation to Tāwharanui in July.



To make use of these implanted tags we then combine electricity and water. Yikes! Yet we've done so deliberately, fitting several antennae in and across the Waikokowai (Ecology) stream. Submerged and suspended cables carry a small electric current which will 'read' the implanted tags in the giant kokopu as they pass by up and down the stream. With paired antennae we can determine the time and direction any fish travel. This will answer questions about how the kokopu fare in the dam and its stream, and particularly how giant kokopu respond to the oxygen gradient that we observe.

The antennae got a thorough test this Queen's Birthday weekend. The deluge that washed out the public planting day rapidly engorged the Waikokowai stream, inundating the pump shed and overtopping the dam. It did show that our estimates of flood height were right and also that the deliberate 'weak link' breakaway features gave way, letting some parts go rather than try to withstand the full flood force and suffer damage. What a convenient test!

Phase I in June last year saw nearly 5,000 fingerling giant kokopu released into each of the Waikokowai and Mangatawhiri streams. Nine of these younger giant kokopu were detected in a very limited netting survey undertaken in early May. One of the aims of this reintroduction project, other than the primary goal of establishing this missing species back in the sanctuary, is to test what is the 'best' age and size of fish to start a new population. Partnering with commercial whitebait producers NZ Premium Whitebait allows us access to more of these threatened species than we could hope to source from the wild. Translocated giant kokopu that take up residence will release pheromones into the stream which flow out to sea attracting juvenile 'bait' back into the waterway. Obviously it is cheaper, faster and easier to make and use younger fish, so this could have significant implications for future native fish reintroduction projects.

A bit further upstream still, a new boardwalk along the muddiest sections of the Fisherman's Track has been taking shape over the last few months thanks to the midweek volunteers led by Roger Williams. Dry foot tracks are a key tool to help prevent the spread of soil-borne threats such as kauri dieback. It's a challenge to balance biosecurity and comfort with the rugged, remote appeal of Tāwharanui as it has always been. Please always take the time to clean and spray your boots when you pass a kauri dieback station.

Elsewhere in this newsletter Sally tells of the male takahē which turned out to be female after months of effort trying to catch 'him'. C'est la vie! Sometimes you just have to shrug your shoulders and have a giggle. 'Douglas' will still make a meaningful contribution to takahē recovery.

Matt Maitland

I can be contacted at matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or 09 427 3270

Kauri Dieback Survey

Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary was included in the Auckland Council's Kauri Dieback Survey carried out across the Auckland region in March. A TOSSI volunteer spent three hours per day over two days asking visitors to the Park if they wouldn't mind assisting with the survey by completing a brief questionnaire. It was reassuring to note that most visitors, either New Zealanders or from overseas, had heard about the dreadful disease which is killing our mighty kauri. But most people didn't know much about the disease itself. Some people had noticed the footwear cleaning stations in the park, but didn't really understand the importance of using them. It's clear from such surveys of public awareness that far more information and education is needed to increase people's understanding and change their behaviour. There is still no cure for this disease but the most effective prevention of its spreading, is controlling human foot-traffic around these trees. Sadly, there will be more restricted access in the future.

Bird Report

Takahē

We currently have 17 takahē on the Park. Because the latest pair to arrive have settled in comfortably, we have reduced our monitoring to every six days.

Our latest chick has been named **Tāmure** and is a male, which is good news for everyone, as there is a lack of males in the breeding programme. The name **Tāmure** comes from the **whakatauki** (proverb) pertaining to Tāwharanui which speaks of abundance and the life sustaining qualities of the site:

He whā tāwhara ki uta, He kiko tāmure ki tai.

The flowering bracts of the kiekie on the land; the flesh of the snapper in the sea.

Some of you may wonder about the snapper reference in the name. The chick was strong and indeed snappy when in hand so it seems to fit well. This is the proverb on the marine reserve sculpture, on the rock on the beach at Anchor Bay.

It was intended that we would send a pair off to Orokonui Eco-sanctuary (Otago) to add to their flock. Matt spent many hours patiently waiting to catch Douglas who was going to be one half of the breeding pair. Unfortunately, when finally caught and samples sent away, the results surprised us all. Douglas is actually **Douglassie!** We don't know how this misdiagnosis was initially made but now plans to send a pair away are on hold while the DoC takahē recovery team decide what the next step is.

Meanwhile our birds are looking healthy and seem to be enjoying our park. We hope you see some of them when you visit. Take care on the road — they could be anywhere.

Sally Richardson.



Paua and Nokomai grazing in the haybarn paddock.



Cali-fornicating Quail!

All sorts of bird activity goes on at the Park. And not just among the endemic species. These immigrants, Californian Quail, felt quite comfortable displaying their amorous activity in public.



Bird Records

Below is a bird count done by G. Schischka at Tāwharanui on 5.11.1977 and published in *Tara*, Edition 9.

Black Shag 14	Skylark 26
Pied Shag 70	Welcome Swallow 41
Little Shag 1	Dunnock 1
Reef Heron 2	Pukeko 2
White-faced Heron 7	Bittern 1
Spotless crane c.10	Rosella 4
Pheasant 9	Grey Duck 1
Caspian Tern 11	Mallard 4
Native Pigeon 16	White-fronted Tern 12
Morepork 2	Shining Cuckoo 4
Variable Oystercatcher 7	NZ Dotterel 4

There are some birds that might have been expected on the list that are not there, e.g. putangitangi (paradise duck), piwakawaka (fantail), riroriro (grey warbler) and kotare (kingfisher). It is interesting to note the pukeko numbers in 1977. Today's list would include: kiwi, toutouwai (North Island robin), tieke (saddle-back), kakariki, takahe, oi (grey-faced petrel), popokatea (whitehead), korimako (bellbird), kaka, etc. This list shows the importance of species and biodiversity counts being done as a base line so that comparisons can be made. At Tāwharanui many species are monitored and records kept. A special logbook with GPS records is underway but maybe some time in the future, a 'bio-blitz' would be a very good idea.

Alison Stanes



Left, this well-camouflaged tūturiwhatu (NZ Dotterel) is one of a pair which sat on their eggs for a record 51 days (instead of 30) before they gave up and decided the eggs were not going to hatch. We are not sure why they did so but they were close to a beach access walkway so perhaps there were too many interruptions?

Pollies will join the vollies

The TOSSI committee has invited all local politicians to join in with the planting day on Sunday 1 July. The following have accepted the invitation and will be rolling up their sleeves and digging in:

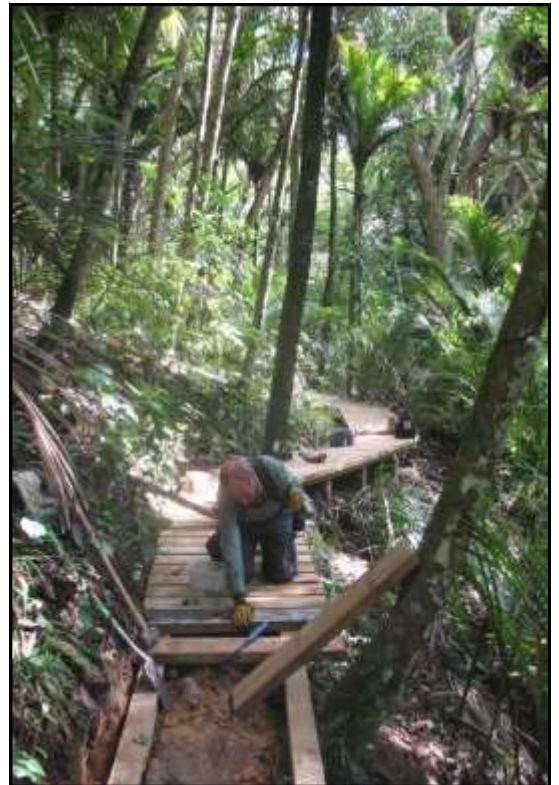
- * Beth Houlbrooke
- * Greg Sayers
- * Mark Mitchell
- * Marja Lubeck
- * Jenny Marcroft

Auckland City Mayor, Phil Goff declined our invitation due to prior commitments. Knowing how keen he is on planting trees in the Auckland region, we've extended the invitation for him to attend our August planting... (watch this space)

Action in the Park



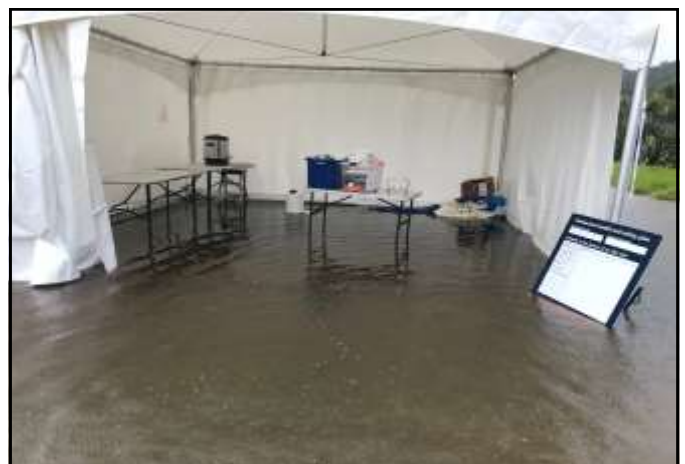
After Lyndale School campers helped deliver the pre-cut treads, great progress was made by the team of volunteers (above) on the Fisherman's Trail boardwalk.



Above, volunteer Ralph Kast helping to build the new boardwalk in Ecology Bush.



Left, volunteers building an extension to the shade cover at the Nursery.



The 3 June planting day was a wash-out due to the heavy rain. Volunteers who attended came with a great attitude and were keen to get the job done. Unfortunately, by late morning with only about a quarter of the 5,000 plants in the ground, we had to evacuate the gully as it became treacherous with very heavy rain, thunder and lightning, torrents of water running down the hillside and a risk of a slip! (it is called Slip Gully for a reason). The usual BBQ lunch was relocated to the woolshed after the marquee was flooded. Principal Ranger, Scott De Silva, was impressed by the way the event was organised. He said, "These days are a great way to demonstrate the great work we do and the strong relationship we have with the volunteers and park visitors."

..... and more action!



No, they're not looking for a hidden meth lab! Or for a part in a sci-fi movie.

They are in fact Department of Conservation staff involved in a national surveillance programme targeting a few key species (swamp maire and ramarama) looking for Myrtle Rust. Fortunately they gave the 'all-clear'.

Right, volunteer David Kingston is working on a trap line. He is one of the Kingston family who holidayed at his uncle's farm at Tāwharanui when he was a child. He loves doing a trap line and returning some energy to the Sanctuary.



Below, students from Mahurangi College and their visitors from the USA planted manuka and harakeke. Everyone knew what they were doing and it all went like clockwork.



Recently, volunteers removed 50 cages from trees planted three years ago in an area called Bull Siding. An 85% success rate has been estimated and the trees are doing well.
Left, volunteer Maggie Cornish stands next to a puriri (a slow-growing tree) she planted there three years ago.

Flora Report

At the beginning of the month the nursery was full to the brim with over 20,000 plants waiting for the winter planting season. Some of the manuka and kanuka plants had grown so vigorously they needed a haircut before planting. The May Sunday workers had prepared a track to Slip Gully and on June 3 our first major planting of the season began.

We made an early start to planting in May because the ground was already wet. A group of Mahurangi College students and some from the University of Alabama helped plant manuka and harakeke (400 in total) at the base of Cactus Gully and 100 harakeke in the sprayed area near the Information Hut at Anchor Bay. Several of the Americans commented that they didn't do anything like this at home but should! We have also done some infill planting of kohekohe, puriri, tawapou, whauwhaupaku (five-finger) and nikau in M16. At Ngaire's Knoll on the other side of the lagoon 77 trees were planted and at Bull's Siding 100 nikau, whauwhaupaku, totara, puriri and karaka were planted into light wells. At Anchor Bay some dug up harakeke were cut up, divided and planted with the previous ones. In all, 844 plants have already been planted out this month.

Meanwhile there has been regular searching for seed sources. We had an expedition to Home Bush which is outside the predator fence and collected kohekohe, taraire and nikau seeds. Another trip took us to Possum Gully. It was great to see such wonderful specimens of kahikatea and puketea. We found puriri, taraire and nikau seeds amongst the thriving bush.

Some further potting up of special plants such as Alseuosmia and Kirk's daisy and repotting of kauri in bigger bags has been done in the Nursery by volunteers who stay longer on Tuesdays. Special thanks to Cecil for his work repairing things that needed some T.L.C. And thanks to the 20 or so volunteers who come each Tuesday in the bagging season.
Susan Gibbings

An award-winning Park

Tāwharanui Regional Park has won the coveted international Green Flag Award for the fifth year in a row. The Green Flag Award is given to parks exhibiting the highest standards of horticulture, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. In addition to New Zealand, the award operates in the UK, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, the United Arab Emirates and Australia.

Judge Kate Krawczyk, a parks manager from Nelson, says Tāwharanui scored highly across all the judging criteria. In particular, she drew attention to the Park's excellent record of environmental management, its promotion of biodiversity and its protection of natural features such as the dunes at the beach. She says another point in Tāwharanui's favour was the high level of volunteer community involvement in maintaining the park, notably through the Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc. (TOSSI).

TOSSI projects include forest and wetland restoration, re-introduction of threatened species, monitoring of animals and plants, pest control, maintaining a nursery and development of walking tracks. Kate says another key part of the judging involved assessing the Park's management plan. "The management plan is a big part of the assessment. We want to know what kind of plans are in place for looking after the Park over time," she says.

The Green Flag programme is administered in New Zealand by the New Zealand Recreation Association. Association programme manager for open spaces Karl Nesbitt says public parks make a significant contribution to healthy lifestyles. "If we want livable cities and thriving communities, then we need to invest in these public spaces and ensure that everyone, no matter where they live, has access to quality parks and green spaces," he says.

Source: *Mahurangi Matters*

17-23 June is National Volunteers' Week

Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary wouldn't be what it is today without the passionate dedication and tireless work of volunteers. A huge 'thank you' to all our volunteers. (See: nationalvolunteerweek.nz)

Action in the Nursery



In April, volunteer Roger Grove (standing right) showed the Warkworth Garden Club through the Nursery.

Interested groups are always welcome to visit the Park, and guided tours can be arranged on request.

Contact the TOSSI Secretary:
secretary@tossi.org.nz

Every Tuesday morning from 9am, volunteers gather to work in the Nursery.

Right, a group bag up seedlings using a special potting mix.

More 'hands on deck' are always welcome. If you'd like to join this merry band, contact

Ray Blackburn: 425 4995;
magsandray@gmail.com



There's no age restriction on volunteers at Tāwharanui! Young people from Pacific Discovery International work with some Tuesday regulars in the Nursery.



A very satisfying sight! 20,000 plants, all grown on site by volunteers, are ready to be planted on our planting day events on Sunday 1 July and Sunday 5 August. Come and join the fun!

NEW SPONSOR FOR TOSSI

TOSSI is a non-profit society which depends on funding from donations, grants and charitable trust funds. Another important source of funds comes from sponsors. TOSSI is very pleased to have its latest sponsorship relationship with a local business, Chatterbox PR. Owner of the business, Jackie Russell, is a member of TOSSI and a regular volunteer on workdays at the park. Her personal commitment to Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary has now extended to promoting the Park, as well as the work of volunteers, on her business website and Facebook page, and directly to her clients.

It costs \$4,800 per year to print and post out the TOSSI members newsletter. Chatterbox PR's sponsorship will contribute to the cost for one year.

If you personally or your business would like to discuss the possibility of sponsoring TOSSI, please email: secretary@tossi.org.nz

Predator-free project in Taranaki

A large-scale predator project, the biggest of its kind in New Zealand, was launched in Taranaki in May, supported by more than \$11 million from the Government.

Taranaki aims to be the first predator free region in the country under the project, called *Taranaki Taku Tūrangā – Our Place, Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki* and is led by the Taranaki Regional Council.

It is the first large-scale project to receive funding from Predator Free 2050 Ltd, the company set up by the Government in 2016 to help New Zealand achieve its predator-free 2050 goal. The \$11.7 million of funding support over five years was announced by Conservation Minister, Hon. Eugenie Sage.

Towards a Predator Free Taranaki will cost \$47 million in the first five years with the ultimate aim of removing stoats, rats, and possums from all land types across the region – farmland, urban land, public parks, reserves and Mt Taranaki – by 2050. It is the first time this has been attempted in New Zealand, and the latest technology and trapping techniques will be used, with lessons shared, helping New Zealand achieve its predator-free aspiration.

Predator Free 2050 Ltd Chief Executive Ed Chignell is excited about the opportunities to advance the rest of the country's predator work using lessons learnt from *Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki*. "I'm thrilled to support *Towards a Predator Free Taranaki*. A project of this size has never been attempted before," Mr Chignell says.

Source: predatorfreenz.org.nz

TOSSI on Facebook

TOSSI is back up and running on Facebook. You can find us by searching 'Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary Society Incorporated' or using the URL <https://www.facebook.com/TOSSI.NZ/>

Please feel free to post photos and other updates that you feel followers will be interested in. Follow the page to get notifications of upcoming events.

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.

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: jjross801@gmail.com

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

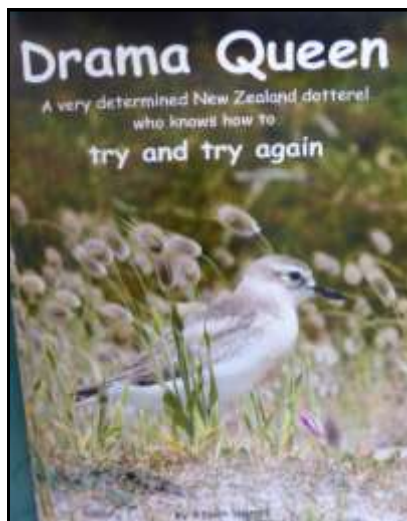
Membership Secretary Janet Poole
Email secretary@tossi.org.nz
E letter Janet Poole 021 054 0600
Website www.TOSSI.org.nz
Correspondence Chair or
Membership Secretary
PO Box 112
Matakana 0948



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

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.

Education in the Park



In April, students from Snell's Beach School visited Tāwharanui.

The new steps built in front of the Information Hut are well utilised and proving to be a beneficial addition for gathering and addressing groups.



Auckland Zoo has begun running its education programme at Tāwharanui. School groups camp overnight in the camp ground.

Daytime activities include bush walks to identify flora and fauna, monitoring pest control, map reading and using GPS. At night, students are very excited to hear (and sometimes see) kiwi and ruru.

Right, keen budding conservationists listen intently to their guide.



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