



TĀWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter 66. September 2018.



Springtime is a reminder that Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary is also one of the Auckland region's 20 farm parks. As such, it is a fully operational farm, running sheep and beef cattle, with the usual range of farming tasks carried out by rangers, with assistance at times from volunteers. The sanctuary could not have been established without the land made available on the farm.



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:

- * 7 October
- * 4 November
- * 2 December

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

Spring is a busy and colourful time at the Sanctuary as birds prepare for nesting. New Zealand dotterel display rich chestnut red chests, ducks have coloured up and even pukeko colours are brighter. Mating rituals are well under way, while others are in territorial nesting battles. Bird song has increased to a glorious dawn celebration. Clematis is in full flower and puriri trees have carpets of deep pink flowers under them. To add to this, Auckland Council has once again chosen to have sheep producing lambs on the Park. It is a delight to see the lambs joyfully gambolling on the slopes.



Despite the wet winter season the nursery folk have been as busy as ever. Slip Gully planting is well under way. Two more seasons might see it completed. The nursery team have been busy with infill plants, neatly surrounded with rabbit-proof netting, in wasted corners. It is indeed a delight to come across these lovingly tended pockets of plants. Also, already established plant sites have been back-filled with the natives that like protection for their early stages of life. Well done to all those involved.

The Education Awareness and Appreciation Program initiated by the committee in 2017 is well under way. Since the Sanctuary is now such a wonderful conservation resource, the committee decided we need to do more about education. The four information brochures produced for last season were an enormous success so we are heading for a reprint. Two interpretation signs have been installed by the Anchor Bay car park with the help of the Council. The Tāwharanui Facebook page is up and running, and we are happy for you to add photos and make comments on it. There is a generic PowerPoint presentation available and we offer guided walks (day or night) for groups. If you are interested in becoming a guide to lead these walks, contact: secretary@tossi.org.nz

Two years ago David Stone, then a committee member, instigated the idea of a Mobile Information Trailer and got it into the *Education Awareness Program*. Funding has been provided from the Chisholm Whitney Trust, the Becroft Family Trust, the Lion Foundation, and the Auckland Council, so now the trailer is under construction. The trailer and cabin were built by Pinto Trailers, Penrose. Then it shifted to Bootleg Graphic Design, Mt. Eden, for internal woodwork. Next it went to Osmond Signs, Mt Eden, for photo print material and now it is back with Bootleg Design who will install the print material and build three bird dioramas: coastal, wetland and forest. They also will build four peep-holes showing burrow nests for kiwi, pateke, grey-faced petrel and little blue penguin.

If over the next 10 to 20 years this trailer helps awaken and educate thousands of young and old about conservation, then it will have made our efforts worthwhile. Naturally we will be seeking volunteers to give a few hours to manage the trailer and engage with the public during busy weekends on the Park or at off-Park events. It will also be utilised with school groups camping in the Sanctuary. If you can help, please contact me at: alison.purple@xtra.co.nz

When you see our Mobile Education Trailer on the Park, please come check it out.

Alison Stanes

Open Sanctuary Senior Ranger Update

Another winter behind us and almost 18,000 high quality TOSSI-produced plants in the ground. Another huge thank you to the TOSSI nursery crew, they really are the engine room for creating new habitat at Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary. Now that we've planted over 200,000 TOSSI-grown plants, that translates to over 20 hectares of new habitat for our increasing wildlife. Check out how joined-up all our plantings at the western end of the park are from the last six or so years. There has also been a significant number of plantings to plug gaps in planted areas, introduce secondary successional species and for amenity and park management purposes.



In preparation for planting days, laying out the plants ready for the planters is always a major task and we welcome any corporate or club groups who'd like a day out. The August planting was laid out by Rangers and TOSSI volunteers with a big contingent of national takahē sponsor Fulton Hogan crew from Whangarei. Others helped throughout the season including Mahurangi College students.

Mammalian pests, tricky as they are, are infinitely easier for me to get my head around than microscopic pests. Myrtle rust remains a significant biosecurity threat to our productive and native plant communities. With spring upon us now is the time to keep your eyes open in your own garden and in public areas for this fungal disease. There are good resources on the www.mpi.govt.nz website to assist detection and reporting of suspected infections. Search for myrtle rust on the site.

We've had one suspicious fungal infection checked and confirmed as not myrtle rust on some of the TOSSI nursery stock at Shakespear Open Sanctuary and also the disposal of many infected pohutukawa at Atiu Creek Regional Park. Myrtle rust has forced a few changes to our revegetation and nursery practices. A regular surveillance regime has been implemented in the nursery and a fungicide treatment process will follow. We have also made a decision across all our regional parks to discontinue pohutukawa as part of our revegetation stock. Pohutukawa (and other *Metrosideros*) have leapt up just behind ramarama in the infected native species occurrence records. Limiting potential hosts in the nursery reduces potential inoculum or infectable plant material. We're not blind to the risk that new growth on existing plants poses, but we've taken the approach to manage what we can control.

On the fauna front we had a truly impressive display of Australasian gannets dive-bombing schools of fish in the lagoon. Not just a few dives either, but hundreds of birds for hours on end over several days. The gannets didn't have it all to themselves, as numerous pied shags also helped themselves. This intense gannet activity is not a common phenomenon, Resident Ranger Maurice Puckett described only one other similar scenario in his 24 years at Tāwharanui Regional Park. There's a video on the TOSSI Facebook page if you want to check it out.

Matt Maitland

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

TOSSI AGM and new committee

After a productive morning of work by volunteers on Sunday 2 September, TOSSI held its AGM. Chairperson, Alison Stanes reported on another year of volunteer activity and achievements, acknowledging the huge efforts by many people. She also presented a detailed description of the Mobile Information Trailer project.

Senior Ranger, Matt Maitland, covered key highlights in pest management, native flora and fauna, research being carried out in the Sanctuary, and acknowledged the many crucial partnerships which support the work of TOSSI volunteers and Auckland Council.

New committee

In accordance with the TOSSI Constitution, a rotation of committee members has occurred resulting in one resignation, Gilbert Barruel, and the election of a new member, Justine Sanderson (right). She explains, "I fell in love with Tāwharanui many years ago. I've since enjoyed many trips walking, camping, swimming, and kayaking around the Park. I'm a keen outdoors person and conservationist. I first got involved with the yearly kiwi call monitoring, then helped a PhD student with their tui research over a couple of summers, which led to takahē and seabird monitoring. I'm looking forward to seeing how else I can help on the Park."



Giant kōkopu release



Peter Williams from NIWA (front right) with the monitoring antenna, on the ground in front of him, used to read the microchip implanted in each kōkopu.

Below left, the bucket brigade is briefed before transferring the 140 kōkopu from the tank to the stream.

Below, one of the volunteers, Maggie Cornish releases her bucketful of kōkopu into the stream.



Unfortunately, a storm washed out the crucial fish pass needed for the kōkopu to migrate between the water systems they live in. Roger Williams' Thursday workgroup has almost completed rebuilding the washed-out fish pass under the predator fence in the Mangatawhiri wetland. Below left, Roger created an ingenious pulley set-up to guide the pipe across the middle of the pre-made gabion baskets, with the help of Ranger Maurice Puckett, Ron Dyer and Don Minchin. Ongoing work is in progress to raise the water level to cover the concrete pipe to ensure that fish can traverse through it from the sea to the lagoon and ultimately to the upper reaches of the wetland outside the fence.



Fish..... with chips

140 giant kōkopu were released into Tāwharanui waterways on July 14th. 70 fish (mixed two- and five-year-olds) bred by NZ Premium Whitebait in Warkworth were released into each of the Mangatawhiri and Waikokowai (Ecology) Streams.

A bucket brigade of TOSSI members and representatives of project partners Ngāti Manuhiri, NWA, NZ Premium Whitebait, Tahu Whaoa Holdings and Auckland Council did the honours and transported the fish to their new home. It was really nice to have a wildlife introduction where everyone present could observe the animals up close and be directly involved in the release process.

As previously noted the fish all have microchips implanted to interact with monitoring antennae. NIWA scientist Cindy Baker gave the following update regarding the latest data transfer from the Waikokowai stream fixed antennae array: "Some bad news: since the power issue, we haven't got data on the USB stick as what you attached only had recent data for the lower site. Good news is that no fish have gone through the lower site so all are still in the stream/dam system. The data is on the Pi (logger) so it's still there, it's just a downloading issue."

We do know that when Peter Williams from NIWA came up on the 13th of August, no fish had been detected on the middle antenna (although it had the power hiccups) and there were repeat detections for 30 fish on the upper antenna. When Peter did the walk with the portable system he detected three fish in the actual tail end of the dam, between the middle and upper antenna. He also detected 11 fish in the stream upstream of the upper antenna. So overall, fish look to have settled in well and are mostly using the stream but there is evidence of dam use. We will get another PIT walk done with the portable system before December before the summer anoxia (lack of oxygen) starts.

Matt Maitland

Join the Fence Team

Due to some members having to step down after many years of voluntarily monitoring the integrity of the Predator Fence, we are looking for replacement checkers.

You would be joining a team of twenty others who work in pairs, one each side of the fence, taking a turn every ten weeks and choosing a day from the week rostered, starting from Wednesday through to following Wednesday.

You will be walking approximately 3 kms over a 3 hour period, checking the fence which includes the buried skirt, cap and netting, checking that culverts are clear, posts erect, etc.

You will be introduced to the procedure of recording your time in the park, the gear you take on your check and recording your observations.

This offers a great opportunity to enjoy Tāwharanui Regional Park while ensuring the reintroduced species are protected to the best of our ability.

For more information contact:

Jenni McGlashan

Roster compiler

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09 422 3733

027 271 3714

Planting days



Left, Slip Gully was sprayed to kill the kikuyu grass, which is notorious for strangling and smothering young trees, before planting could be done.

Below, employees from the roading company Fulton Hogan, volunteer for a day to set out the thousands of plants in position for the volunteers to put in the ground on planting day.



An army of around 150 volunteers enjoyed the sunny day to put 5000 plants in the ground on Slip Gully.



Among the volunteers on the July 1st planting day were three local politicians.

From left: Scott da Silva, Auckland Council Principal Ranger, Northern Sector; Labour MP, Marja Lubeck; Greg Sayers and Beth Houlbrooke, both on the Auckland Council Rodney Ward Board; and Alison Stanes, TOSSI Chairperson.



People spread like ants over Slip Gully. It's clear to see how this gully got its name and what a challenge it is to plant.
Below, after a huge planting effort, a well-earned BBQ lunch is enjoyed by the volunteers.



After a typical planting day, the trays used to carry plants and the hundreds of pairs of gloves need to be cleaned.



What has happened to the Tāwharanui takahē?

Since their first arrival in October 2014 there have been a total 23 takahē which have resided at Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary. The arrival and departure of individual birds is planned by the DOC Takahē Recovery team to maximise the recovery potential of the species. Currently 14 takahē are present at Tāwharanui. What became of the other nine is as follows.

Peti, the serial wanderer, was transferred to Tāwharanui as part of the original release in October 2014, but proved difficult to keep inside the fence. She was transferred to Motutapu in February 2015 as she could not escape there (though she did cross onto Rangitoto for a few days post transfer!). Peti paired with a young male in early 2016 and situated herself around the nursery on Motutapu. In 2016/17 season she had two nesting attempts with the male, and while they hatched a chick this did not reach independence. In February 2017 she was found freshly dead. Sent away for necropsy but no cause of death was ascertained.

Whito was transferred to Tāwharanui in March 2015. She was paired with Kikorango, but by late 2016 had ended up in poor body condition. Transferred to Te Anau Bird Sanctuary in December 2016 where she remains with her new partner to this day.

Mohio was transferred to Tāwharanui in August 2015 from Tiritiri Matangi with his older brother Pukekohe and dad, Te Mingi. He was found to be injured and underweight in October 2015 so was sent to Auckland Zoo for treatment. He was then transferred to Burwood where he made a full recovery and was paired with a suitable female for the long term. They were sent to Orokonui where they have spent two seasons and attempted to breed both times (though being so young they have so far been unsuccessful).

Tuakana is the first juvenile produced by the Tāwharanui M16 group, hatched in the 2016/17 season. He was transferred to Motutapu Island and continues to live near Home Bay. We are currently trying to encourage him to pair with a young female of the same age who lives just up the hill from him.

Douglas was originally transferred to Tāwharanui in October 2014, when we believed that Douglas was a male. He became part of the M16 group until this year when we attempted to pair Douglas with another female, Joan, at Tāwharanui for use at another secure site. After the revised sexing test result came back (female) we decided to pair Douglas with a young male (Turama) at Burwood and keep them as future breeders. They have to date paired well at Burwood, and we are hopeful that they will produce some offspring during the 2018/19 season.

Joan was originally transferred to Tāwharanui in October 2014. She became part of the Mangatawhiri trio until this year when attempts to pair her with Douglas failed. Eventually we sent her to Motutapu Island to pair with a young male there. They were held within an enclosure for 5 weeks and appeared to have bonded well. Upon release they hung together at the release site for ~1 week. They have since split up and Joan remains single, however we have plans for pairing her with another suitable male when the opportunity arises.

Tāmure was the second juvenile of the Tāwharanui M16 group (hatched 2017/18 season). He was transferred to Burwood in August this year.

Additionally we have had two deaths at Tāwharanui. Minaret was an original transferred to Tāwharanui in October 2014. She became part of the Mangatawhiri trio until found in a weakened state and taken to hospital where she died. Cause of death was bacterial infection Erysipelas. Eddie arrived September 2016 as part of a newly made pair with Ruiha. He was found freshly dead in January 2017. Sent away for necropsy but no cause of death was ascertained.

Matt Maitland

Action in the Park



2000 pingao and spinifex were planted on the dunes at Anchor Bay on September 2nd workday.



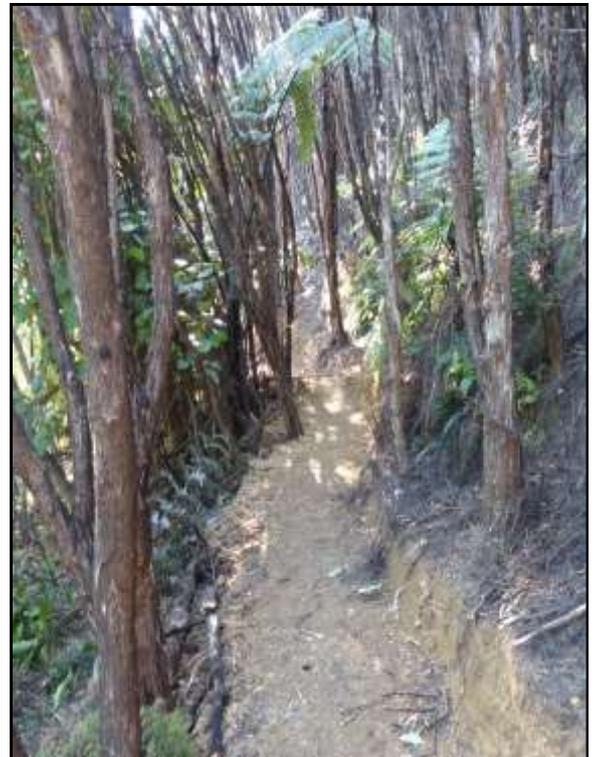
Irrigation lines were trenched and laid to water the new pohutukawa planted where the old macrocarpa trees had been felled at Anchor Bay.



Left, in-fill planting being done along the new path to the Information Hut.



A great mid-winter dinner was enjoyed by the sociable nursery team to celebrate another successful season.



A track had to be cut through the scrub to provide easy access to Slip Gully for the planting days.

Sanctuaries conference

The 15th Sanctuaries of New Zealand Conference was held on 14 —16 August at Hamilton Gardens. Five TOSSI committee members attended the three day event. There was a mix of science research presentations; 'soapbox' sessions from attendees representing specific sanctuaries; a field-trip to Waiwhakareke restoration project and Lake Rotopiko predator-fenced wetland system; and some thought-provoking addresses from national and local policy makers and private organisations.

Although every presentation was interesting, the highlight for me was the presentation by Dr. Rachelle Binny of Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research, who has begun the number crunching of accumulated data from many sanctuaries in NZ. While she has just scratched the surface of what can be gleaned from the raw figures, one graph she showed was of the value of long term data collection providing some fascinating insights into fence-protected sanctuaries' positive effects on native bird survival and strong growth. Her figures also showed that in these sanctuaries, introduced birds didn't get the same benefit. For me this gives legitimacy for all the work we contribute to at Tāwharanui . There will be more to come at next year's conference. Can't wait!

Karyn Hoksbergen



Roger Grove (left rear), Ranger Maurice Puckett, Alison Stanes, Senior Ranger Matt Maitland, Kim Grove, and Ranger Emma Whitton (front) represented Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary at the Conference.

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.

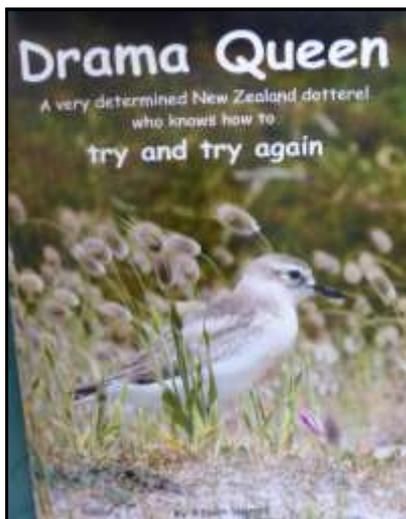
If you are interested please contact James Ross: jjross801@gmail.com



TOSSI 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
	Tony Enderby	09 422 6127
	Justine Sanderson	021 654 554
	Marguerite Vanderkolk	09 422 7747

Newsletter Editor Marguerite Vanderkolk
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Membership Secretary Janet Poole
Email secretary@tossi.org.nz
E-letter Janet Poole 021 054 0600
Website www.TOSSI.org.nz
Correspondence Chairperson 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

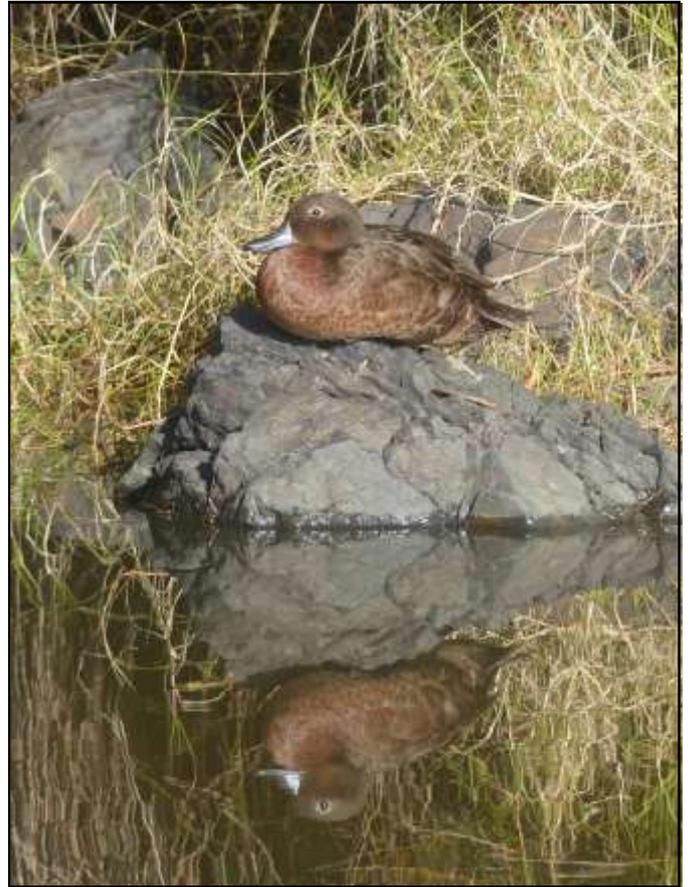
The membership name should be clearly referenced if the payee name is different to the membership name, e.g:

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

If making a donation with membership, please reference clearly.



Phil Marsh (DOC Takahē Recovery Manager, Te Anau) gives Matt Maitland advice while replacing Ruiha's transmitter in August. Ruiha is being held by Chris Steele from Auckland Zoo.



A handsome pateke sunbathing on a warm rock (and possibly admiring its own reflection?)



The grey-faced petrel volunteers with Hauraki Gulf seabird expert, Chris Gaskin (right), wait expectantly to see what is in the burrow.



Chris Gaskin holds the first grey-faced petrel chick of the season.

At present 14 nest boxes are occupied by grey-faced petrel possibly sitting on eggs. Some of these birds arrived quite late for laying so it is not clear how many of these are sitting on viable eggs. Of the 24 'old' grey-faced petrel nest boxes, 21 have been used in some manner by grey-faced petrel this season. 15 new boxes have been built and six of these installed to date.



Left, this little blue penguin, presumably the same bird that ousted a grey-faced petrel from its nesting burrow two years ago, is back in the same nesting box sitting on eggs.