



TAWHARANUI OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY INC.
Newsletter No. 58 Sept. 2016



One of the Grey-faced petrel that chose to use a nesting box this season. (Photo Kerry McGee)



Native clematis flowers and seed heads make a great display this season.

Coming Events

Sun 2 October 9.15am. Sunday in the Park. A range of tasks followed by a BBQ.

Sun 6 November 9.15am. Sunday in the Park. A range of tasks followed by a BBQ.

Sun 4 December 9.15 am. Sunday in the Park. A range of tasks followed by a BBQ.

Volunteer Days

Tuesdays 9am The nursery team meets at the Tawharanui 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 fence and trapline checking (to be done in your own time) See inside of the back page.



Chairman's Report from Papua New Guinea

I am feeling rather removed from TOSSI, indeed from New Zealand, having spent all of June and half of July in Papua New Guinea. Sorry to miss all the planting days this year, and a couple of meetings. Pleased to see that I am completely unnecessary.

Spending time in what these days are termed 'developing countries' is a bit of an eye opener. We had torrential rain that turned the harbour bright red as tonnes and tonnes of soil washed in. They don't know about settlement ponds, and even if they did, that amount of rain, not unlike the 170mm that fell over Takatu a few weeks ago, was never going to be 'settled' by a pond.

A couple of days after I had left the nearest town and headed out to a remote island, a policeman got fatally shot, just down the road from where the boat I was on had been moored. When news of this reached the island where I was, some 100 miles away from the mainland, we hastily called a meeting to formalise a plan of action in the event of an armed hold-up (highly likely to happen at some stage). This makes conversations about a health and safety policy of wearing hard hats on mules seem rather puerile.

I was not idle, however. We spent a morning labouring underneath the tropical sun cleaning a beach. This entails using plastic leaf rakes to pile up the usual detritus of a high tide line – shells, seaweed, wood, plastic – a bizarre number of jandals – and then digging big holes and burying it (not the plastic, that goes in the rubbish of course).

We walked around and decided where bench seats should go along the main paths. Constructed from split coconut palm trunks, and deemed necessary for the cruise-ship passengers booked to arrive by the thousands.

We talked about uniforms – t-shirts for the most part – and argued about which is the correct logo. I spoke at length, and with someone to help translate the 'big words', to one of the longest serving staff, who started working there when he was 11, in the 1960s.

The best thing of all, beyond any doubt, was working alongside the local staff, who have the most delightful sense of humour which makes any work seem much more like fun. I am in awe of their ability to make buildings out of what is called 'bush material' – cutting down what you need in the way of posts and framing, then weaving a roof out of coconut leaves – and an asymmetrically sharpened stick is far more effective than a spade when it comes to digging holes.

By publication of this newsletter, the new committee will be in place, with a new Chairperson filling in the empty Chair. It is heartening to see that TOSSI survives this annual process without missing a beat – plants grow, the fence and trap lines are checked.

The outgoing committee had a busy year attending to the 'day to day' business of the organisation, and also produced a document that looks to the future and how we aim to continue the development of the Open Sanctuary. My personal thanks, and on behalf of all TOSSI members, thanks to the committee for generously giving their time to keep TOSSI rolling along.

I never actually wanted to be on the committee, I only offered to be Treasurer because there was no one else. It turned out I wasn't actually a financial member at the time, much to my surprise. I morphed into Chairperson because again no-one else was keen, and I thought, rightly, it would be much less worry than being Treasurer (thanks Karyn, for stepping in). I'm really glad I did both these jobs, because, like working with the people in PNG, it has been hard work, lots of laughter, and we can stand back and look with great pride at the results and know that we did it together. See you at the Park. Ngaire Wallen retiring Chairperson

Open Sanctuary Senior Ranger update

It rained and it poured! Some 170mm of rain was recorded over the period 4-8 July and Resident Ranger, Maurice Puckett, is quite confident most of this fell in a 2 hour period in the early hours of Friday morning. As is standard practice, a quick once over of the park was undertaken in the morning. There was lots of standing water; many slips; the stream crossing section of the takahe anti-dispersal fence was gone and, of immediate concern, some 40m or so of pest proof fence was pushed over by floodwaters. The huge volume of water was too much for the raupo swamp of the upper Mangatawhiri wetland. Flood waters pressed vegetation against the pest proof fence, making it impermeable and the pressure was too much for one section to withstand and over she leant.

There are times when you feel blessed by the team around you and this was one. Rangers, with assistance from volunteers, made the fence pest proof again, working into the dark. Our relationships with local contractors saw us in good stead and Rhodes for Roads helped to clear a slip so we could access the damaged section and, the following day, to help stand the fence upright. An artisan digger operator is always a pleasure to watch and with heart in mouth, we directed the lifting, pushing and shoving of this key asset back into place, fully functional and with no lasting damage. Pest proof again!

On the bright side, some of the slips provide opportunities for revegetation. Two in particular exposed broad sweeps of bare clay either side of our relict *Pomaderris hamiltonii* (kumerahou) plants, providing optimal habitat for this pioneer species. Less heartening is the loss of the Maori Bay steps, recently upgraded by TOSSI volunteers led by Roger Williams, which will be rebuilt.

The morning of Saturday 30 July was still, starry and beautiful as about 25 of us gathered in the dark to welcome the pouwhenua Manuhiri back to Tāwharanui. Karanga, karakia and korero rang clear as the day dawned and Manuhiri was unveiled in all his glory by Kuia Claude and Jackie Dennis of Pakiri (in whose shed Manuhiri was restored). Ngāti Manuhiri, Council staff, TOSSI reps and a neighbour all joined in to welcome him, with the common themes being how glad we all were to have him back and to have tangible signs of our relationship with Tāwharanui and Ngāti Manuhiri.

Ngāti Manuhiri tohunga whakairo (master carver), Vern Rosieur, and helpers have done a beautiful job with the recarving and paintwork of their ancestor Manuhiri. There are new designs to be viewed and admired and the nearby U-Turn audio device, as part of the hikoi, helps interpret these.

Following the pouwhenua unveiling and rededication we then wandered up to the koru to launch the hikoi or heritage trail. Various Council staff, Iwi and TOSSI partners all spoke of their involvement with the land, park and project and the stories and voices the hikoi tells. The koru plantings have grown lushly and the whole koru looks fantastic and is a superb launch point for those who wish to explore the hikoi and the history of the site. I encourage you all to venture forth and explore these new old stories of Tāwharanui.

Looking seriously forward, a predator-free NZ by 2050? Only 33 years to go and we can all put our feet up and relax! It is fantastic to see this audacious concept adopted as a formal goal of government. Can it be done?

I genuinely believe so but we must embrace the role of new, yet to be discovered, technologies. Reflecting on the past, it is in the last 50 years that we have agreed that introduced predators are a threat to our biodiversity and that something can be done about these threats. 50 years ago it was considered impossible to rid islands of invasive rats. Now islands, tens of thousands of hectares large are rat free. As I started my conservation career, Dr John McLennan had just published his work identifying stoats as the main cause of loss of wild kiwi. In the late 90's, across the DOC led mainland islands, we collectively addressed whether this stoat threat could be mitigated to prevent loss. Nowadays, landscape scale stoat control is becoming more and more routine utilizing trapping, aerial poisoning and new technologies.

Sanctuaries such as Tāwharanui play an important role in the progression of a predator-free New Zealand. The battle for hearts and minds is always key to implementing major change. A site such as Tawharanui Open Sanctuary tangibly demonstrates what NZ will look like after the pests are gone. Importantly, it allows people to see this as a normal part of everyday life.

With kind regards, Matt Maitland I can be contacted at matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



Takahe have been given their two year replacement transmitters. In the photo Matt Maitland and Sharon Kast change the transmitter on Dampier.

July Storm and Flooding Undermines the Pest Proof Fence



Early in the morning after a night of rain, ranger Maurice Puckett discovered that the culvert under the pest proof fence in Mangatawhiri wetland had become blocked. This caused water to spill over the bund and a whirl pool of water which undermined the pest proof fence.



Two diggers arrived. One removed a slip so that the next one could get in and tend to the pest proof fence.



The new scruffy dome on the overflow hole on the dam blocked up with small debris and the water level rose behind the dam to flood the pump house. The pressure became so great it sucked the scruffy dome inside out down the over flow plug hole to the bottom. Eventually it was removed by a crane. (The photo on the left shows its remains.) But wait there is more! The boat used as a pateke roost got sucked down the overflow plug hole too! Lets hope the pateke were away sheltered up a bank somewhere.



Members of the New Zealand Storm Petrel Project Team, trustees of the Northern New Zealand Seabird Trust, TOSSI volunteers and students from Massey University heading out to survey seabirds at Tokatu Point.

In July we had some seabird researchers extraordinaire at Tawharanui for a meeting to discuss the on-going project for the recovery of NZ storm petrels in the Hauraki Gulf. The project is administered by the Northern New Zealand Seabird Trust. The Tawharanui Bach is an excellent venue for small meetings like this with the added bonus of having 'field trips' right at your door.

The New Moon sessions to survey Grey-faced Petrels have continued with quite spectacular success. So far this year (up to August) we have caught a total of 134 individual Grey-faced Petrel at Tokatu Point. 91 of these are new birds and 43 have been re-captures. It is interesting that some of the re-captures have been caught more than once. The July session was a little quieter than most as many of the birds were away on their pre-lay exodus, however Graeme Taylor (the Petrel Whisperer from DoC) and Alan Tennyson from Te Papa, managed to find a juvenile diving petrel at one of the known diving petrel burrows. Nest box and burrow occupancy seems to have increased again this year but we will have a clearer picture of breeding success in September when the chicks hatch.

A student from Massey University, Kaya Cooper, is surveying the Tawharanui coastline to assess the population of little blue penguins. We know we have reasonable numbers of these feisty birds but it will be interesting to see how the population has changed since a previous survey ten years ago.

James Ross Committee

TOSSI Committee

The TOSSI AGM was held on 4 September at the Woolshed. Ngarie Wallen and Matt Maitland gave positive reports for the year. James Ross took over for the election of the committee. Ngarie Wallen stepped down from being Chairperson and retired from the Committee. Gilbert Barruel was elected on to the Committee. Alison Stanes moved from Deputy Chair to Chairperson and Roger Grove is taking on the role of Deputy Chairperson.

Alison thanked Ngarie Wallen for her time given first as treasurer and then as Chairperson. She commented on how her good humour will be missed. Alison said, "that joining TOSSI becomes an adventure not knowing where it will take you". For example - Paul Williams never realised he was going to manage building a nursery, James Ross knew little about Grey-faced Petrel, Ray Blackburn found himself calculating how many trees would fit in allocated blocks of land, Kerry McGee has been grovelling around the forest floor gathering dirt to be sent to researchers for study of micro snails, Roger Grove is on a learning curve with improving the TOSSI website, David Stone a lawyer, is now working with geckos, Sally Richardson moved from reptiles to managing a whole team monitoring takahe, and Karyn Hoksbergen stepped into a void, became treasurer and on it goes. Alison feels privileged to be working with passionate volunteers and looks forward to being their leader.

A corridor of regenerating bush is creeping across the sanctuary



July Planting



Plants leaving the nursery destined for the slopes.



Extra Council staff helped distribute the plants.



Council rangers delivered trays two at a time to the plant site.



Our special TOSSI plants were distributed by air downhill by experienced Council rangers.

More planting images



July planting day, a wave of volunteers sweep across the slopes planting trees near the West End Road.



On the August planting day, volunteers enjoy the barbecue. Never do sausages taste so good as after a morning's hard work planting trees.

Flora Report

Wahoo!!!! We've done it.

For the July public planting day Auckland Council again helped with plant distribution. This time it was the rangers who worked with great enthusiasm and skill. They sent plants airborne downhill with extreme accuracy. 120 volunteers showed up next day for planting under a blue sky day. 5000 plants started a new life in the ground.

The August planting was the last of the big public planting days. And what a day it was with 155 people showing up on a beautiful sunny winter's day. How the caterers coped I'm not sure but they did us proud. However the 'putting out' on Friday was almost the complete opposite. With very few people on the hill, it became a very trying day made more difficult by the terrain and unexpected equipment restrictions put upon us. Much of the work had to be left until Sunday. Special thanks to Kim, Roger and Keith. Without their energy, determination and good humour the outcome may have been quite different.

At some point between now and next season we will need to get our heads together with the Council and work out a better strategy for this part of our operation. We can grow the plants okay, we seem to be able to attract the planters on the day but getting the plants laid out on the hillside is our choke point.

For the season to date we've planted about 18,000 plants. Add the dune grasses sent up by Botanic Gardens and it comes to around 20,000. A mighty effort me thinks. We still have a few hundred infill and special purpose plants to go in. This will happen during our regular Tuesday sessions and hopefully on Sundays in the Park. In the nursery we've been doing our Spring Cleaning, some maintenance and some early seed sowing.

Did I mention there is a rumour we may be getting a new roof on the shade house some day soon? The good times just keep on a rolling.

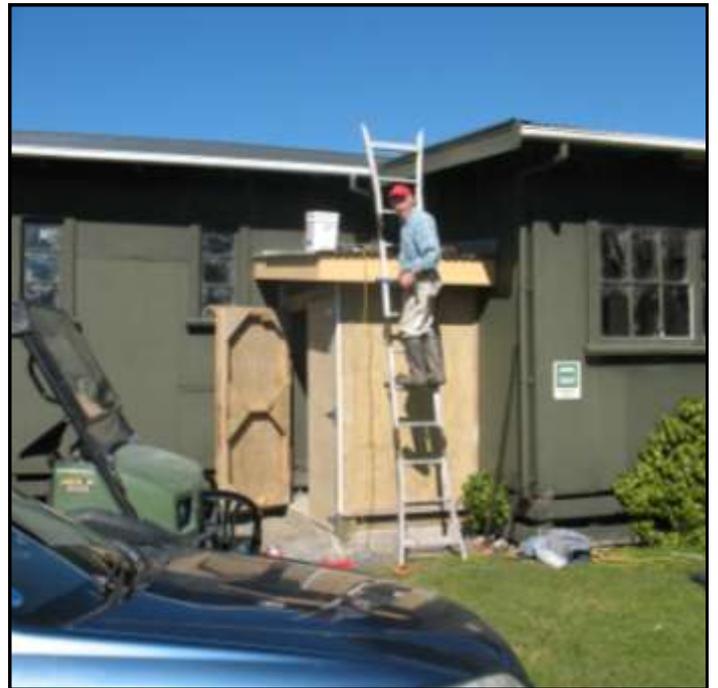
To end on a nice positive note, it looks like our mistletoe project is about to bear fruit. Keep an eye on the pump house totara. Ray Blackburn Committee

The BBQ cooks for plant days



Diana Chambers, Mike Bleasdale, Sally Richardson, and Mel Wilson capable volunteers who catered for 155 volunteers on the August planting day.

New generator storage



Roger Williams' Thursday volunteer team have helped Ranger Maurice build a new storage area for the emergency generator for the entrance gate.

Note from the Editor

During a month touring Queensland looking at dinosaur fossils, I became aware of two projects with birds being bred in captivity to be returned to the wild. The birds were returned to the areas they had originally come from, but in both cases it was very difficult to monitor the success of their survival. After all, Australia is vast! It made me very aware how lucky we are at Tawharanui where the birds that are re-introduced birds are monitored very carefully by researchers and volunteers so that we know the success of our efforts. Alison Stanes

The August planting day beside the West End Road



A big thank you to all those who were involved with planting trees this season.

Photos by David Stone

The Pou returns



Twenty five gathered at dawn to re dedicate, unveil and welcome back the pouwhenua Manuhiri.

This was followed by a walk to the koru to launch the hikoi, the heritage trail. This trail takes you around the lagoon and then up the South Coast Track to the Pahi Pa site.

People from Auckland Council, TOSSI and Iwi all spoke about the stories the hikoi tells.

Take time to stop and explore the koru and read the quotes that recognise what a special place Tawharanui is.

Letter to the editor

Having read the latest TOSSI newsletter, cover to cover, it is great to see the project going from strength to strength with exciting new happenings occurring on a regular basis. No longer is it necessary to visit an offshore island to enjoy our rare fauna.

The newsletter is the most-important communication medium for members and I appreciate your efforts in producing this excellent publication.

One thing that did particularly catch my attention, however, when reading the article on Kiwi Monitoring, was this line:

' please do not use a flash for photography as their eyes are very sensitive and can be easily damaged.'

Unfortunately, I have to take issue with this comment. Whilst it is a not-uncommon assumption that photographing nocturnal species using flash may be damaging, I do not believe there is any evidence to justify this.

In fact, kiwi are atypical of nocturnal species in that their eyes are small and lacking in sensitivity (Kiwi: A Natural History, Isabel Castro). Because of this, they rely more on their other senses, particularly smell and sound. Other nocturnal species, such as owls, have much larger and more sensitive eyes yet, once again, there does not appear to be evidence that electronic flash is damaging to them either.

Whilst certainly bright, a camera flash lasts a fraction of a second (it can be as short a 1/20,000th of a second) so is of little consequence. However, sustained white light, be it at much lower levels than a flash, can be disturbing to kiwis. For this reason, I would certainly not advocate using a 'high-power' spotlight when observing kiwi and, even if using a standard head-torch, it is best to either cover the lens with a red filter (cellophane) or to not shine the light directly on the bird.

My own experience is that kiwi do not react to electronic flash but readily react to any sound. One encounter on Hauturu / Little Barrier Island comes to mind where I took a series of photos whilst the kiwi kept foraging a short distance away. At no time did the kiwi appear to respond to the flash. However, when I felt I had enough images, I lowered the camera and said 'thank you'. That was enough to spook the kiwi and it ran off.

It should also be noted that Geoff Moon, who was a vet as well as a wonderful photographer, always put the welfare of his subjects ahead of everything else (as all serious wildlife photographers should do). Yet, he was content to photograph kiwi using flash, something he would surely not have done if it was going to harm the subject.

Simon Fordham Long standing committee member and newsletter editor of Tiritiri Matangi.

Keeping our threatened species safe

Fence Monitors Wanted

The fence monitoring team would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the fence checking team. We work in teams of two, one walking each side the length of the fence, a distance of approximately 6 kms. The purpose is to check the integrity of the fence for the safekeeping of our endangered introduced birds. Full training is offered and initially new volunteers will be on standby to fill in for teams unable to do their turn. Teams are on an 11 week roster and have a week, Wednesday to Wednesday to complete the fence check and to enjoy a walk in the park. For more information

Contact: Jenni McGlashan 09 422 3733

Trap line Volunteers Needed

Trap line 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! If you are interested please contact:

James Ross jamesross@paradise.net.nz.
Full training and advice will be provided.

Education

TOSSI is a simple body with a simple objective to support and enhance the running of an open sanctuary. However, we could be doing more with education about the sanctuary.

Volunteers are sought for the following roles:

1. Organising public walks and sharing information.
2. Giving talks to schools and public groups using power point presentation already available.
3. Promoting TOSSI at festivals with display materials.

The role is open to anyone with the necessary skills, availability and enthusiasm to share their delight in the open sanctuary.

If you are interested in all or any part of this job description, please contact:
Alison Stanes 095240291

TOSSI Committee

Chair	Alison Stane	09 5240291
Vice Chair	Roger Grove	09 422 3459
Secretary	James Ross	09 422 6760
Treasurer	Karyn Hoksbergen	09 5851315

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

Newsletter Editor Alison Stanes 09 524 0291

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 Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Soc. Inc.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No. _____

E-Mail _____

Please tick how you would like to help:

Planting/workdays Kiwi monitoring
 Fund raising Takahe monitoring
 Trap line monitoring --- Nursery
 Predator fence monitoring
 Education
 Publicity/promotion
 Other _____

Membership fee:

\$20 single membership \$ _____

\$30 Family membership \$ _____

Additional contribution (optional) \$ _____

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible

Gift Membership:

Please send membership to

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount of Gift membership (as above) \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc. and return the completed form to: TOSSI Membership Secretary
P.O.Box 112 Matakana 0948

Payments can be made to TOSSI bank account
06 0483 0072 390 00



Nursery volunteers take a serious look at a deceased spotless crane that turned up near the nursery.



Bellbirds on the flowering prostrate manuka at Tokatu Point.



Look carefully at these photos. There are very good reasons why the editor has not photographed this silvereye and pukeko at Tawharanui. If you can't work it out you will have to rotate the newsletter for the answer.

Because lantana and gum trees do not grow at Tawharanui. They were photographed just outside Brisbane.