

HAUTURU

LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND SUPPORTERS TRUST

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NEWSLETTER
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FROM THE CHAIR

As you will have read in earlier editions, the Little Barrier Island/Hauturu Supporters' Trust has been fortunate this year to have received very significant support from several funding organisations to help with an item that's critically important on Hauturu/Little Barrier: the attack on pampas weed. Spring is the season for this work and there is great excitement and anticipation on the island as the weed programme swings into action. The ability, for the first time, to spray across a much wider part of the island is a major step towards breaking the seeding cycle of pampas, rather than just halting its spread.

Pampas is a serious threat to the ecosystem of the island. It is appropriate to acknowledge again that this potentially breakthrough programme has been made possible through the foresight and commitment of the Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund, The ASB Community Trust and the Chisholm Whitney Family Charitable Trust.

The challenge we now have is to ensure that a funding stream is maintained so that the programme can be continued in the next year or two, to the point where only minor control is required, using a much smaller amount of the scarce resources available.

The Trust is busy planning for the future on a number of fronts. Weeds are not our only focus, and we are currently considering several projects which will help restore and preserve the island's flora and fauna; more news on these, and how you may be able to help, soon.

We are currently searching for new trustees as part of our wish to round out the mix of experience, skills and networks we have available to us. We are also reviewing our processes to ensure we continue to follow good governance practice guidelines.

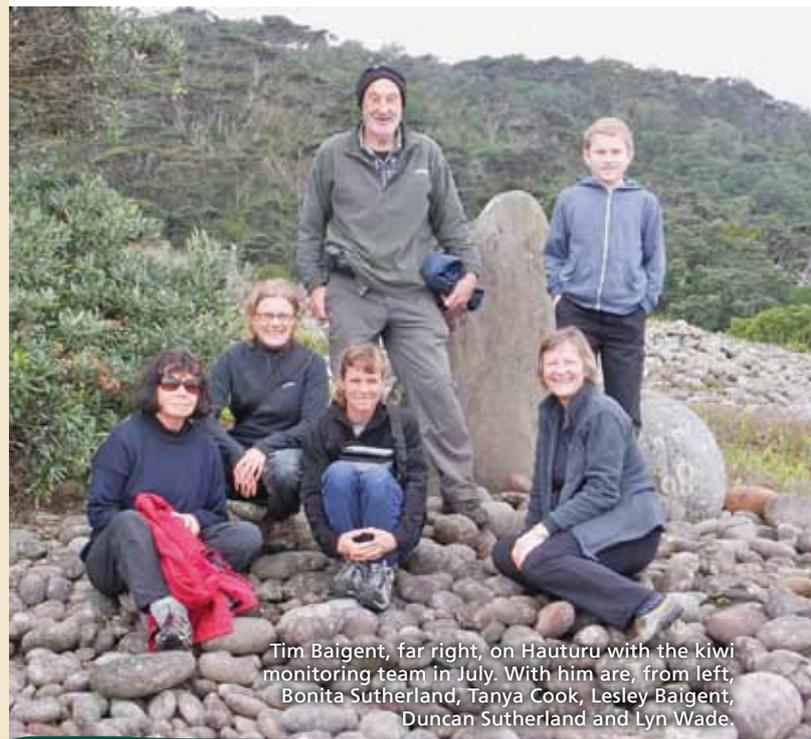
There are always applications on the table to DoC from organisations around the country for translocation of species, usually birds from Hauturu. The Trust is asked for its views on these requests and takes them very seriously. We have recently had input into the discussion about sending red-crowned kakariki to Aotea (GBI) and are currently considering a request for transfer of popokotea/whitehead to the Bay of Islands. These applications underline the almost unique role Hauturu has as an 'ark' for rare and endangered species and its importance as a source for the re-establishment in other island and mainland environments.

We appreciate the ongoing back up from you, the Supporters. We are always open to good ideas about our approach to the work we do and to information regarding potential funding sources.

Warren Gibb – Chairman

YOUNG SCIENTIST BASES PROJECT ON HAUTURU

A science project by Tim Baigent, aged 13 and who helped with kiwi monitoring on Hauturu this year, has got through to the regional finals. Tim's mother, Lesley, is a vet from Northland who has helped a number of times with kiwi monitoring on Hauturu and who is passionate about kiwi. She does a lot of work educating Northland dog owners on kiwi aversion training. Congratulations, Tim!



Tim Baigent, far right, on Hauturu with the kiwi monitoring team in July. With him are, from left, Bonita Sutherland, Tanya Cook, Lesley Baigent, Duncan Sutherland and Lyn Wade.

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RANGER'S REPORT

The weed team has done a fantastic job of covering the main climbing asparagus plots up to date, finding, on average, fewer plants than last year. One smallish infestation was found (and dealt to) just up the valley. Due to bad weather only three days have been spent at Orau Cove to date, with a small number of plants found. The rope and ladder access was improved and new ropes installed. The weed team of five is lots of fun to have around and we have had some good potluck dinners and movie nights.

The Skywork crew has been out to do the first pampas spraying and managed to cover the west coast from the flats to Ngatamahine Point (almost half the coastline) in 18 hours' flying time with the spot boom.

Twenty three tuatara babies are about to return to the island from Victoria University, where their eggs were sent to hatch. Four from the same clutches hatched on the island, bringing the total number to 27 for 2013/2014 season. The young from the 2012/2013 season have been released to the same site as previously released tuatara, broadening the gene pool the best we can. Evidence of digging suggests we might get some eggs again this year.

The kakapo all seem happy in their usual home ranges. Maintenance and upkeep of assets has been ongoing with some work on the boat, the winch and the tractor.

Richard Walle
DoC Ranger

WELCOME BEQUEST

A longtime Little Barrier Island Supporters' Trust supporter, Eila Lawton, who died in May, has left a generous bequest of \$10,000 to the Trust.

Founding trustee Judy Hanbury has fond memories of Eila. 'We first met Eila and her husband Ken Pankhurst at the Miranda Naturalists Trust Centre in mid-2001 at a friend's 60th birthday. Eila was managing the centre that weekend, and was also planning a forthcoming conference. She and Ken were already keen, well-informed birders and committed conservationists, very involved with Forest & Bird in the Bay of Plenty as well.

'So it was no surprise that the subject of Hauturu came up, and they promptly became supporters. A few months later, they were on their way with me to be introduced to the island, on our second 'work and walk' visit. Several working weekends followed between 2001 and 2005 in which Eila participated. After Ken died Eila became the partner of Peter Maddison and was his lively supporter during his term as national president of Forest & Bird.'

The Trust is enormously grateful to Eila's generosity, and the funds will be put to very good use for conservation work on the island.

A NEW NAME FOR BABY KAKAPO

Heather 2, daughter of Heather and hatched on the island during Cyclone Lusi, finally has a new name. Now seven months old, she has been living on Whenua Hou/Codfish Island since her transfer from Auckland Zoo. Several names have been suggested for her, and local iwi Ngai Tahu have decided that the most appropriate of them is Mahli, named for Mahina and Liam, the children of the island's ranger Richard Walle and his wife Leigh Joyce, who was so instrumental in this young bird's rescue from life-threatening illness and for her subsequent care at the zoo. As those who have been to Hauturu since the Walle-Joyce family has been on the island know, Mahina and Liam are outstanding young naturalists and conservationists; the name is an inspired choice.

The DoC kakapo team reports this about Mahli's recent activities: 'She emerged from her underground nest for the first time on 17 May at the age of 63 days, as winter rapidly approached. In early September, Heather2 decided it was time to make her own way in the world and set off across the Island to find her own site to live. She is doing well, without the need of supplementary food and now weighs about 1.5kg, with beautiful plumage.'





COUNTING HAUTURU'S KIWI

In July 2013 a full team of 12 volunteers carried out kiwi monitoring on Hauturu using the six kiwi recording sites that have been used for a period of 20 years. Despite some rain and wind, six nights of monitoring were completed over the week. As always, there were some memorable encounters with kiwi and other interesting night noises from ruru, kaka, weta, Cook's petrel, grey-faced petrel and little blue penguin. Results show that Hauturu's kiwi numbers appear reasonably stable, the results being very similar to 2012. Lyn Wade gives a more detailed report, including a report of the 2014 monitoring survey, below.

According to Hamilton, 1961, an unknown number of kiwi were released on Hauturu before 1903. In 1913 a number of North Island brown kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*), which included one white specimen, were introduced from the Taupo region. Anecdotal information suggests a small number of kiwi that displayed white markings from the Northland region may have been transferred to Hauturu during the late 1960s or early 1970s. White kiwi, or kiwi with white markings, have still been recorded in recent times. Owing to the presence of an ectoparasite, unique to Hauturu kiwi, it is understood that kiwi must have always been present on the island.

Three call monitoring surveys of kiwi had been carried out on Hauturu in 1993, 1994 and 2002, using the 'Kiwi Call Scheme' developed for the Department of Conservation. As per the scheme, three listening sites were surveyed on Hauturu over at least four nights. Passive or unsolicited listening was carried out over two hours. Inclement weather prevented two further surveys in 2006 and 2007.

The survey results indicated a dense population, higher than monitored mainland sites, with estimates (based on extrapolation) of about 570 birds. The population appears to be evenly distributed over the area surveyed (Baird, 2002).

Hauturu's kiwi population is an important control for the rest of the country in the nationwide kiwi monitoring programme. Four further surveys have been carried out since 2002, organised by the Hauturu Supporters' Trust: in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The survey carried out in July 2009 was the first since the eradication of kiore in 2004.

The 2014 survey was initiated to compare late-autumn (May) call counts with the traditional mid-winter (July) monitoring time. Only three sites were monitored for this comparison: Waipawa, Valley and Tirikakawa. In May five nights of listening

were carried out at each of the three sites. In July only four nights could be monitored because of inclement weather. The average number of calls per hour for males and females combined for all sites for the May was 6.93, and for July was 13.66.

A crude estimation of the actual numbers of birds present at each site was made observing the time, distance and direction of the calls. No attempt was made this year to extrapolate bird numbers as not all sites were surveyed, the aim being to observe any substantial differences in call numbers between May and July.

During the 2013 kiwi monitoring on Hauturu the question was raised about the time of year the monitoring was carried out. The thought was that Northland birds can start calling and mating in the late autumn and that perhaps we were not getting a true record of bird numbers on Hauturu. Two weeks of monitoring were carried out: 4-10 May and 29 June to 6 July. It would have been helpful to have conducted a survey in early June also. Results showed that more calls were heard during the July week, some six more calls per hour, than the May week. Part of this may have been due to having some considerably younger ears listening in July. The results would seem to indicate that July is an ideal time to carry out kiwi monitoring on Hauturu. If the numbers are extrapolated, and the assumption is made that each male calling has a mate, this could put the adult population in the vicinity of 220 pairs.

It is recommended that monitoring of kiwi now be done five-yearly, making the next survey due in July 2019. Monitoring should be carried out at the same time of year (late June or early July) at the same six sites and by the same method as used in this and previous surveys to allow comparison between surveys. Two hours of passive/unsolicited listening should be continued.

Thanks to the Little Barrier Island/Hauturu Supporters' Trust for the organisation of the survey, to Dave Wade on *Sumo* for transporting us and to DoC Warkworth for its assistance and support. Special thanks to all the survey participants: Lesley Baigent, Tim Baigent, Max Wakelin, Steve Allen, Mere Roughan-Lee, David Stone, Duncan and Bonita Sutherland and Tanya Cook.

Lyn Wade
LBIST Trustee



From left to right: Shelley Hackett, Colin and Leanne Knight, Alan La Roche, Coralie Nelson, Judy Lamb, Jim Spehr and Lyn Wade in front.

WORKING WEEKEND REPORT

A very successful working weekend was held on the island in early November. Given that there was a five-strong strong weed team on the island, and therefore that bunk supply was limited, there were only eight participants. Supporter Alan La Roche's report follows.

After a week of stormy weather, Saturday was clear and remarkably flat-calm at the main landing. Our Department of Conservation rangers Richard Walle and Leigh Joyce welcomed the eight working volunteers under the guidance of trustee Lyn Wade. After the final quarantine check we were free to admire the wonderful scenery and listen to the 'ornithological orchestra' led by the gregarious tuis feasting on the first pohutukawa flowers of the season.

Once at the bunkhouse we met the weed-team students. Over cups of tea and their delicious just-cooked biscuits, we listened in awe to their successes in their attack on climbing asparagus and pampas grass. Hauturu-o-Toi is returning to close to its primeval state of native flora and fauna with their help.

Two groups were detailed for work. Most worked close to the boulder beach digging out the curse of many home gardeners, onion weed – by the roots if possible. Once the big bags of onion weed were hauled away we could really enjoy our unique environment. Two beautiful kokako were hopping through the rangers' coprosma hedge, feeding on young leaves and berries. A group of hibi were busy in the old pohutukawa, gathering invertebrates in the bark. Several kakariki chattered nearby, but the real attention seekers were the screeching, noisy, acrobatic clowns, the kaka, swooping through and above the pohutukawa.

On the muehlenbeckia flats out to the boulder beach over 20 kereru were feeding, their heads bobbing up as they grazed. After feeding, they would rise squadron-like to a fresh pasture of muehlenbeckia. Fantails were busy over the pile of lawn clippings. I observed two tui nests on the outer branches of a mahoe, barely two metres from the ground. The nests were mainly of fine interwoven muehlenbeckia vines.

The barbecue dinner was soon sizzling as we cooked our sausages or steaks. Liam and Mahina, the rangers' children, and the weed team were playing lawn bowls until two brown teal tried to join in, one jumping and riding on top of the bowls. As dark descended the Cook's petrels were calling as they arrived from the sea, heading for their breeding colonies in the hills above.

At sunset, it was a real thrill to see short- and long-tailed bats foraging with their distinctive flight pattern above the forest. Moreporks were calling from their forest haunts. Ranger Richard led us on a kiwi hunt. Many kiwi were calling and replying, and eventually one was seen close to us on the mown trail. What an honour to see a brown kiwi feeding in its natural environment, thrusting its long beak into the grass and muehlenbeckia for worms and bugs. Several male kiwi, who have higher pitched calls, were signalling to their mates in the clear moonlight. By the Waipawa Stream we watched several little blue penguins coming ashore across the big boulders. During the night we could hear kiwi calling near the bunkhouse and little blue penguins scratching underneath the hut.

On Sunday, after a quick breakfast, Lyn Wade led us along the swampy flats where several colourful saddlebacks were walking up branches picking off insects, then bounding across to nearby branches. After boulder-hopping we tramped up the John Drew Memorial Track, where we saw more saddlebacks in the bush and North Island robins on the rocky stream edges.

In the afternoon we were eager to see the tuatara. Tuatara take about 14 months to hatch, but may live for over 100 years. We were honoured to release eight two-year-old tuatara on the high Waipawa Ridge. They have been blessed by Ngati Manuhiri, supported by Ngati Rehua and Ngati Wai iwi. My young tuatara, named Barney, was placed in a special tunnel dug by Liam. May they all thrive in this environmental heaven.

Thank you Lyn for your guidance, for sharing your inspirational knowledge and for your leadership. To all the staff and trustees, thank you for an outstanding, memorable weekend allowing us to share the wonders of Hauturu-o-Toi. We are all very grateful. Hauturu-o-Toi is a jewel in New Zealand's treasure chest, and we are so privileged to be able to experience it for a weekend.



The working weekend crew help release tuatara.



From left: Fiona McKenzie, Lyn Wade and Steve Pohe leaving Tirikakawa Stream.

WHAT'S IN HAUTURU'S STREAMS?

LBIST trustee Lyn Wade gives an overview of the research into Hauturu's freshwater streams that formed the basis of her recent Bachelor of Applied Science studies.

How would you feel if you were trapped on a wee desert island in the middle of the ocean and your little piece of terra firma was rapidly disappearing from under your feet into the ocean? This is similar to the situation faced by the freshwater animals trying to eke out a living in the streams of Hauturu/Little Barrier – only in reverse. Being a relatively small and steep-sided island, Hauturu's streams can turn from raging torrents to dried-up riverbeds with scattered pools in a matter of days. Which species can handle these conditions and how do they survive were two of the questions I attempted to answer.

The main focus was on such creatures as mayflies, stoneflies and caddisflies, the so-called macroinvertebrates. These are the engineers of the ecosystem and are good indicators of the conditions in any freshwater system. With the assistance of freshwater expert Steve Pohe, who is currently working towards his PhD at the University of Canterbury, Fiona McKenzie from Ngati Manuhiri and Dr Olly Ball, senior science tutor from Northtec in Whangarei I surveyed five of the streams on the south west of the ►

► island for adult and larval stream invertebrates. This was carried out in January 2014. Prior to that Leigh Joyce and I (with some expert help from Leigh's children Mahina and Liam) had surveyed several streams from around the island for fish presence.

Our aim was to generate a current inventory of the species present in the surveyed streams and to compare the invertebrate species found in 2014 with a survey done 50 years earlier by Mike Winterbourn (now Emeritus Professor at the University of Canterbury). We also planned to examine community and catchment differences by measuring a number of environmental variables, such as vegetation composition and water temperature. The fish survey was carried out using Gee's minnow traps placed in pools and baited with Marmite™. The invertebrate survey was conducted in two parts; 1) benthic sampling of the stream beds using a D-net to capture the larval stages and 2) a light-trapping technique developed by Steve to capture the adult stages of the stream invertebrates.

It was often difficult to concentrate on the task at hand as the distractions were relentless. Dark shore skinks scurried amongst the boulders as we rock-hopped around the coast. The mournful cry of the kokako, the teasing laugh of the tieke and the piercing call of the hihi were almost constant companions. The lush, varied vegetation hanging over the stream, the clear pools amongst the boulders and the whirr of kereru wings were all a reminder of what has been lost on the mainland.

As a result of the survey, 16 new records of aquatic invertebrates have been added to the island inventory and 17 other records have been reconfirmed. Mayfly and caddisfly species were the most abundant. One mayfly species was notable as it is rare on the mainland (*Isothraulus abditus*). The presence of longfin eel and banded kokopu has also been confirmed. Carrying out this survey in the same streams as Winterbourn some 50 years on showed little change in the aquatic communities, indicating that they have survival strategies that allow them to survive in a disturbed ecosystem.

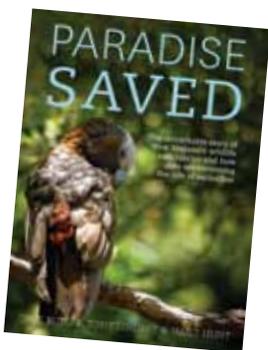
For more information about this survey please feel free to email ddlc.wade@xtra.co.nz

BOOK CELEBRATES CONSERVATION SANCTUARIES

Paradise Saved, a handsome and informative new book by Dr David Butler, Tony Lindsay and Janet Hunt, includes coverage of Hauturu along with almost all of the nation's mainland and offshore sanctuaries, big and small, long-established and new.

It celebrates the science breakthroughs that are helping not only DoC and regional councils, but also passionate and dedicated private trusts and community groups, to stem the extinction tide. It's a book that records conservation, vision, commitment and hope.

Published by Random House, you can find it in good bookstores everywhere, or, better still, you can buy it via www.paradisesaved.org.nz for \$49 (normally \$55), with a portion of that being a donation to the Trust.



WORKING WEEKENDS SUMMER/AUTUMN 2015

Two working weekends are planned for summer/autumn 2015.

The target dates (weather permitting) are:

February 21/22 (back-up date 1/2 March)

March 28/29 (back-up date 11/12 April).

All participants need to be reasonably fit and agile and prepared to cope, if necessary, with a wet and difficult landing over large and slippery boulders. We will do a variety of jobs for the rangers plus there will be time for walking, bird-watching and botanising.

For further details and to register your interest in either of these weekends, please ring Sandra Jones, ph **09 817 2788**, or email info@littlebarrierisland.org.nz

The closing date for enquiries is Sunday 25 January 2015.

Little Barrier Island/Hauturu Supporters Trust

The Trust was established in 1997 to help support conservation and research activities on Te Hauturu-o-Toi / Little Barrier Island. Membership of the Trust is by subscription and donations are also welcome. All donations and subscriptions are directed towards activities of benefit to Hauturu.

Your subscription ensures that you receive *Hauturu*, the Trust newsletter, twice a year, bringing you up-to-date news from and about the island. Copies of past issues are available on request.

If you wish to become a supporter, make a donation or offer help in some other way, please contact the Trust secretary Sandra Jones, phone: 09 817 2788.

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THE TRUST

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