

# Habitat



NORTH SHORE BRANCH

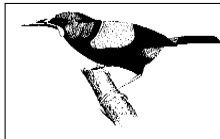
APRIL 2007 – AUGUST 2007

## OUR WILDERNESS in the hustle and bustle

This term's issue is brimming over with conservation news from The Shore. A mysterious bird visited a suburb of one of our members – read more further on. And remember our Tuff planting: The Big One!

I had recently gone along on a KCC trip with my family aboard the Rain Forest Express – a narrow gauge train which follows the pipeline from Jacobson Creek to the Upper Nihotupu Dam. This railway is situated within the Waitakere Ranges and its more than 5km of tracks are still being used for maintenance work by Watercare.

In this wilderness of climax forest we travelled over wooden bridges and passed through many tunnels, where glow worms and cave wetas were seen. Our knowledgeable interpreter was also the driver and pointed out many natural and man-made wonders in the region (e.g. Quinns Viaduct). The events which unfolded over half a century ago were explained when native bush was cleared for construction works and kauri-logging. Fortunately the bush is recovering and regenerating rimu were a sure sign of

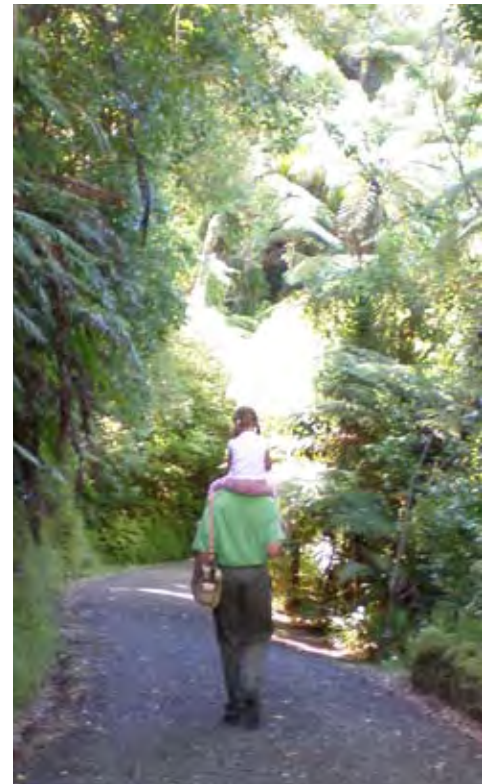


FROM  
THE EDITOR

ecological health returning to places of previous human impact.

The Upper Nihotupu Dam, completed in 1923, is Auckland's highest dam. The coastal suburbs of North Shore City get their water from the Hunua dams and Waikato River via Ardmore and Waikato treatment plants. The western North Shore gets its water from the Waitakeres of which the Nihotupu dams make up almost 40% of the catchment's storage; water is supplied via Huia and Waitakere treatment plants.

Spectacular views of the Nihotupu Valley, Lower Nihotupu Dam and Manukau Harbour are absolutely breath-taking. For more information go to [www.watercare.co.nz](http://www.watercare.co.nz) and book your adventure, if you haven't done so already!



### Forest & Bird Tuff Crater Project: The Big One

Our Tuff Crater planting this year is to be 'the big one'. This event is on Sunday, June 10th and we look forward to another successful dig and plant. Through the generosity of the ARC and the North Shore City Council we will be assisted by Te Ngahere who will organise, lay out and help plant the trees in the area down by the motorway and the estuary. We will also look to infill and extend the area from last year.

We are looking forward to the Council assisting again with mulch and weed killing to get rid of the long grass, pampas and moth plant in certain areas.

North Shore Forest and Bird members will continue to help maintain the area throughout the year, and we would love to have some members to help on an occasional basis to weed out as well as to replant smaller areas that have been mulched. If you can assist, please ring Anne (480 5570) or Romily (418 2236).

*Chair's note: Council is using our project as a focus planting for Arbour Day. It is also Council's first NORTH-WEST WILDLINK planting project. Forest and Bird is the Wildlink initiator and a signatory. So put this event on your calendar now! (See What's On inside your wrapper for more details.)*

# Habitat



REEF HERON *EGRETTA SACRA* - (MATUKU)



TUI *PROTHEMADERA NOVAESEELANDIAE*

APRIL 2007 – AUGUST 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY *TIAKI TAIAO*, NORTH SHORE BRANCH

## LETTER FROM A MEMBER

### Going cuckoo over mystery attacker

One evening, a week ago, while working in my garden, I heard a frightful commotion in the trees nearby: birds screeching and squawking. I thought that the resident cat – which seems to belong to none of us nearby – was up the tree marauding, probably eating the fledgling babies. Unable to go to the rescue because of the state of my health, I said a wee prayer for the unfortunate parents (who take a keen interest in my activities in the garden) and encouraged them to lay another clutch: Not too late, I advised.

Next day, bemused by a cross-flight, a bigger bird, with a long fanned tail and soft brown plumage having few markings, became trapped on the inside of my garage window. I gently eased his or her way out to freedom. Then it dawned on my ageing brain that this was the culprit of the night before, coming back for another helping if there was one to be had.

Consulting my book I thought that this might be a cuckoo, perhaps an Australian migrant. When I was a small boy, 75 years ago, I studied the birds of my valley (West Coast, S.I.) and came to the conclusion that I had discovered the only two cuckoos in New Zealand: the Shining and the Long-tailed. Now I see I will have to update that knowledge!

Maybe one of your able ornithologists may like to comment on this event...

– John Bassett, 27/11/06

#### HELP YOUR CONSERVATION DREAM HAPPEN!

If you have enthusiasm, energy and a conservation dream for The Shore and New Zealand, then why not join our committee?

- The AGM is in May.
- The greatest attribute for committee work is enthusiasm for the natural environment.
- All positions are open for nominations each year.
- We welcome everyone and particularly want to encourage young people.

If you're interested, Neil is keen to hear from you at [sherylandneil@hyper.net.nz](mailto:sherylandneil@hyper.net.nz) (ph 480 2500).

#### RESPONSE FROM OUR BIRD EXPERT:

John is probably right in his thought that the bird was a cuckoo; most garden birds will make a fuss when they see one, as they recognise cuckoos as a threat. The commonest cuckoo in New Zealand is the shining cuckoo – a migrant that arrives from the Solomon Islands in September and spends the summer here, laying its eggs in the nests of grey warblers. However, John's bird is definitely not a shining cuckoo. His comments on size and colour traits do not correspond with shining cuckoos being small (about the size of a yellowhammer) and a glossy green, not brown. The other regular NZ cuckoo is the long-tailed cuckoo and its repertoire does match John's description of a bigger (than a blackbird), brown bird with a long tail. This species, too, is a migrant from the Pacific and lays its eggs in the nests of whiteheads, brown creepers and yellowheads. For this reason the bird is found only where its host species occur, which is the South Island for brown creeper and yellowhead and wherever whiteheads are to be found in the North Island. In our north-eastern area, the only place for whitehead is the offshore islands like Tiritiri Matangi and Little Barrier/Hauturu. However, during migration cuckoo may turn up anywhere and there is a record of a long-tailed cuckoo being found stunned in Auckland after crashing into a window in the spring of 2005. Long-tailed cuckoos are also renowned for their loud, harsh, shrieking call and maybe it was the cuckoo itself making the noise John heard. Nestlings are included in its diet, unlike the other species which come here. The problem with this hypothesis is the date: long-tails migrate in early October and John's encounter was late November when most self-respecting cuckoos would have been in their breeding areas. Furthermore, long-tails are big birds – 40cm in length, which makes them appear slightly bigger than kokako. John did not think the bird he had was that big when I asked him about it.

There is one other candidate: A few Asian and Australian cuckoos rarely turn up in NZ. The only one that would match John's description is a brown phase Oriental Cuckoo. While rare, they do turn up and a freshly dead brown phase specimen was picked up on the beach just north of Muriwai a couple of years ago. These birds match John's description in all respects – size, colour and tail. At 33cm in length they are a little larger than tui and about the same as rosella. Although orientals do not attack other birds' nests, the commotion could just have been mobbing by the blackbirds.

Whatever it was, John was fortunate indeed to see this bird in Auckland. A long-tailed cuckoo in November is a stunning record and an oriental cuckoo even more so. Well done!

– Alan Emmerson, 16/02/07.

**Editor's note:** John later confirmed that the nest under attack was a blackbird nest and he also clarified that the mystery bird (cuckoo) that came back the next day had done so in the evening and crashed into the garage window, having entered through the large garage doors which were open; it could see the target tree through the door and the window. John had only a few moments to examine the bird, when it was half stunned by the impact!



NORTH ISLAND ROBIN - TIRITIRI MATANGI



CHATHAM ISLANDS BLACK ROBIN

# Habitat

APRIL 2007 – AUGUST 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY *TIAKI TAIAO*, NORTH SHORE BRANCH

## FROM THE CHAIR

### 2007! Some changes for North Shore Forest and Bird

- Branch member Margie Keys is offering trips around The Shore. To quote from reports of her first walk in January: 'A good quality outing. Margi is a very knowledgeable guide....' These trips are really enjoyable and a great way to learn more about the Shore's wonderful natural places.
- A new venture with the North Shore Tramping Club. We had a good response from members to our February Ruapehu trip to clear out wilding pines
- Linda Johnson has taken over the big job of *Habitat* folding and distribution. This is a complex organisation where a large group of members come together three times a year to fold and bundle the *Habitat* newsletters. This saves a lot of postage money that we can put towards other



environmental projects. Tremendous thanks to Linda for taking on this job.

This will be a year when Forest and Bird is going to make a renewed effort to reduce the threat of extinction on Maui's and Hector's Dolphins. Maui's dolphins live in a very restricted habitat close to our Auckland West Coast, and are still being caught in nets. Being mammals, they can't surface to breathe when caught, and so drown. Should F&B call for support when submitting on this critical issue, please do respond. Your voice might just be that extra voice needed!

Your committee puts huge energy into providing a programme of speakers and trips and practical environmental work. We look forward to this year being a time when we'll see an even more active membership on the Shore.

– Neil Sutherland

## F&B Council meeting, November 2006

### Long-serving members enhance our depth of knowledge

Neil Sutherland and I attended the Council Meeting at Silverstream, Wellington, late last year. This was my first meeting, and I was fortunate to be travelling with our chairperson and to already know some people representing other branches. One of my strongest impressions is how fortunate we are to have so many long-serving members – people who have devoted years to looking after and acting as advocates for their areas around the country. The atmosphere was fresh, positive and uplifting, with a great sense of anticipation.

Soon the serious work started, and we welcomed Jim Anderton in his role as Minister of Fisheries to address the delegates. Hot on the trail of our Save the Sealions campaign, I was impressed with the challenging but respectful style of questioning from Forest and Bird members, and our demonstration of tenacity on the important issue of sustainable fishing and reduced by-catch of endangered marine species. More informative sessions on marine life continued.

A highlight for me was the book launch of the inspirational story of 'Whio, saving New Zealand's Blue Duck' by David

Young, officiated by the Governor General, the Honourable Anand Satyanand – a long-term supporter of Forest and Bird.

Another prominent issue was the High Country Campaign, and our colleagues from the areas affected by high country tenure review and privatisation gave us first-hand accounts of their concerns and actions!

The Auckland region was well-represented, and I was pleased to take part in a shared presentation with Suzi Phillips (Kaipara) and Anne Fenn (Auckland Central), sharing our successes and strategies for fundraising and increasing membership.

All the presentations and discussions were engaging and filled us with knowledge. Of greatest value to me, was the opportunity to learn about the structure of Forest and Bird as an organisation, and to talk to people in similar positions, to share ideas and find inspiration in others' actions. I left the meeting knowing we are a strong organisation with very real influence, and that our strength comes from our members.

– Fleur Schultz





## DOROTHY WERNHAM: A TIRELESS FOREST & BIRDER

On behalf of every branch member, the committee sincerely thanks Dorothy Wernham for her massive contribution to our branch. While Dorothy has been involved in many aspects of Branch and KCC work over the years, it is particularly for her work as coordinator of Habitat folding and distribution that this comment is directed. Dorothy has worked quietly away at this job for years, and gathered a great team of people to help

her 'on the day'. We acknowledge the work Dorothy does on folding day, but also the system that she has developed which starts weeks in advance of that day and continues for some time after.

Sincere thanks, Dorothy. You've done a superb job for North Shore Forest and Bird!

## RUAPEHU CONSERVATION REPORT

# Clearing out wilding pines

*Pinus contorta* (lodgepole pine, introduced to NZ in the 1920s) is an aggressive coloniser in alpine and sub-alpine areas. The Department of Conservation (DoC) covers the travel expenses of groups travelling together to carry out this work.

North Shore Forest and Bird combined with North Shore Tramping Club in mid-February to pull out lodgepole pine in Tongariro National Park above Karioi Forest, on the south-eastern slopes of Ruapehu and west of the Wahianoa River.

Plants up to 1m high are easy to pull out. Equipped with pruning saws for larger specimens, we spread out and moved across the slope together, about 10m apart, with our leader (DoC ranger) placing pink ribbons on plants to denote the top edge of our terrain, and the tail person taking off the ones at the bottom edge. The leader and tail carried radios and managed to keep us under control!

To begin with, we worked in an area previously weeded by another tramping club in November. We found 170 specimens in two sweeps. Some were 2m high.

Day Two was splendid with perfect weather; a great view of Girdlestone and Tahurangi and the Wahianoa Glacier. The thousands of flowering hebes we walked among were a glorious sight. I saw a few little Spaniards, some orihou and hundreds of tiny alpine flowers. The many female mountain totara (mostly prostrate) were fruiting. Mountain toatoa and flowering tussock were everywhere. The work was easy, and we had lots of rests. There were quite a few hares.

Our group of 14 weeders found and destroyed a total of 589 *Pinus contorta* in just five sweeps of the territory we were assigned. The whole area was covered in rotting *P. contorta* logs and stumps up to 400cm in diameter, as well as smaller dead specimens. I was impressed with the mammoth efforts undertaken over the years!

Apart from a blowout on the way down, an ambulance trip to Wanganui Hospital for one of the group on Day One, and a puncture on the way back, it was a great trip! I recommend it to those who are fit and well.

– Margi Keys



## Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society *Tiaki Taiao*, North Shore Branch

PO Box 33-873, Takapuna, New Zealand | [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)

The Committee 2007

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<b>CEDRIC HAY</b>	–	Treasurer	410 5977
<b>LIZ ANSTEY</b>	–	Committee	480 1545
<b>ANNE DENNY</b>	–	Committee	480 5570
<b>ALAN EMMERSON</b>	–	Committee	473 2216
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### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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### BIRD RESCUE

SYLVIA 478 8819

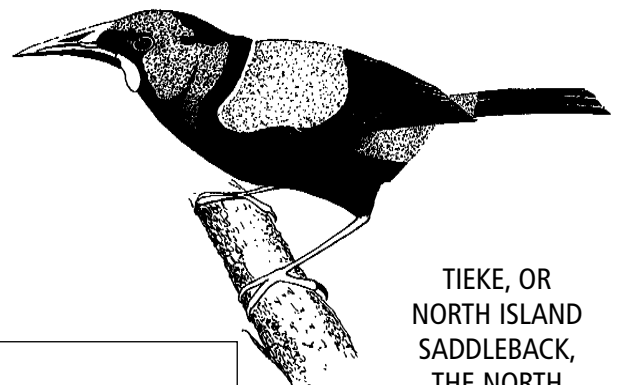
Remember if you are concerned about any conservation problems in your area, get in touch with Jim or Claire.

# Habitat

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH SHORE BRANCH  
ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY



FOREST  
& BIRD



TIEKE, OR  
NORTH ISLAND  
SADDLEBACK,  
THE NORTH  
SHORE BRANCH  
EMBLEM



# Habitat

APRIL 2007 – AUGUST 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY *TIAKI TAI AO*, NORTH SHORE BRANCH

## WHAT'S ON

Public meetings take place on the first Monday of every month.

**VENUE:** Takapuna Senior Citizens' Hall,  
The Strand (behind Takapuna Library).

**TIME:** 7.45pm.

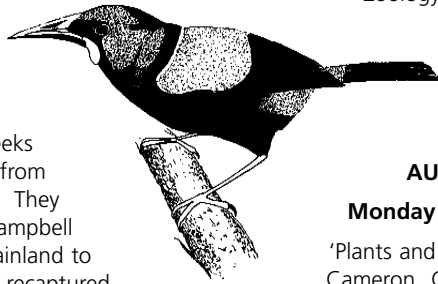
**ADMISSION:** Gold coin cover costs.

We'd like to see you there!

### APRIL

#### Monday 2nd

'Return of the Teal to Campbell Island' by John Potter. Come hear how the speaker had spent three weeks on Campbell Island with five people from DOC at the onset of Spring 2005! They took along the second group of 55 Campbell Island teal to be returned from the mainland to the island, and while John was there, recaptured a number of teals from the first 'return' of the previous year. At the same time he did some disease screening on yellow-eyed penguins, albatross and mollymawks. John is Associate Veterinarian at Auckland Zoo and previously had a veterinary practice in Takapuna.



### MAY

#### Monday 7th

'Bellbird Song: something very special' by Prof. Dianne Brunton. This talk will be about the role of song in the life of this endemic honeyeater. Dianne is a behavioural ecologist and conservation biologist currently running a postgraduate lab at Massey University, Albany. For most temperate Northern Hemisphere species, song has been considered as an exclusively male activity. However, the phenomenon of female song appears to be more widespread than first thought. The acoustic structure and social context of song for both sexes of bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*) have been examined on Tiritiri Matangi island. Come hear about this fascinating research! (Tonight is also our AGM event.)

### JUNE

#### Monday 4th

'Bird-Plant Mutualisms in New Zealand: a health check' by Dr Alastair Robertson, Senior Lecturer in Ecology, Massey University (Palmerston North). Research interests include plant-animal interactions: fruit dispersal, pollination and herbivory. This seminar will concentrate on assessing the health of bird-plant mutualisms and will draw upon long-standing research between the University of Canterbury, University of Auckland, Massey University and Landcare Research. The talk will be about the consequences of decline in NZ bird pollinators and dispersers, and the failure of introduced birds to replace them. Ecosystem restoration will be addressed as well as the development of health indicators that can be used by managers to assess the status of mutualism in ecosystems.

### JULY

#### Monday 2nd

'Designing a marine protected area network for New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone' by Clinton Duffy. The talk will be about the use of new marine classifications and reserve site selection software to design a network of marine protected areas. It will illustrate how these approaches can provide systematic, transparent planning to achieve marine protection goals whilst minimising impacts on existing users. Clinton has a Masters in Zoology from the University of Canterbury. Since joining the Department of Conservation in 1989, he has worked on a wide range of marine conservation projects throughout the country. He is currently employed in DOC's Marine Conservation Unit, Auckland.

### AUGUST

#### Monday 6th

'Plants and Animals of some small northern NZ islands' by Ewen Cameron, Curator of Botany at Auckland Museum, lover of all natural history, professional botanist, and strong conservationist. This presentation will be about exploring and documenting the plants on small northern islands and islets. The unknown factor adds intrigue. Excitement and difficulty of access are all part of the challenge. Unusual natives and surprising exotics help to indicate the wider picture. A range of different islands and their biota will be presented.

## ACTIVITIES and TRIPS

**April, Saturday 14th.** Chelsea Park excursion, 1.30pm. Central Auckland F&B has arranged a walk in the new Chelsea Park area with Mel Galbraith. Come along with other branches and join the expedition! Meet in the car park at the Chelsea Sugar Refinery (end of Colonial Rd, Birkenhead). Mel will have a number of options depending on the physical ability of those who turn up. Any queries please ring Sally (528 7506).

**April, Sunday 22nd.** Kauri Pt Centennial Park walk, 9.30-11.30am. Interpretive walk with Margi Keys. Meet at the car park on Onetaunga Rd (at the intersection with Chelsea View Dr, Birkenhead). We will walk down to Kendall Bay via a lookout on its western side. This reserve includes neinei (grass tree), toro, tangle fern and common tree daisy. Bookings are essential. Please phone Margi on 443 6919.

**June, Sunday 10th.** TUFF CRATER PLANTING: THE BIG ONE, 10am (finishing midday). Forest and Bird and NorthWest Wildlink planting day. Bring your spade, friends and neighbours! Follow the signs at the end of Warehouse Way, off Akoranga Drive.

**June, Sunday 24th.** Le Roy's Bush planting, 10am (finishing midday). We will be planting flax and karamu beside the bridge at the bottom of Glade Place. Please bring gloves, spades and gumboots. For further details phone Keith Salmon on 480 9233 or 021 069 0676; email: kwsalmon@gmail.com.

**Please remember, you are encouraged to bring along non-members to these events. Help us to widen public awareness of our conservation work!**