

# Habitat



NORTH SHORE BRANCH

APRIL – AUGUST 2009

## INVEST IN THE ENVIRONMENT



FROM  
THE EDITOR

This year we can expect to see booms in rodents and mustelids and we need to guard against invasion of these pests. I have seen an inexplicable increase in vermin already. According to the Department of Conservation, flowering of beech trees was unusually high. The prediction is that, in some areas, beech trees could produce thousands of seeds per square metre. This is actually bad news for our native birds, as the seeds are a significant food source for mice and rats (omnivorous animals). More mice and rats, in turn, are supplemental food for stoats higher up in the food chain, adding to the predatory pressure on bird populations.

Forest and Bird advocates for the preservation of biodiversity on land, in freshwater and our oceans, as well as addressing climate change and energy use through various endeavours. Regional initiatives include Auckland Naturally and NorthWest Wildlink. Each member plays a part. Thank you for your efforts!

PS: F&B events on the Shore are advertised well in advance in the What's On section of this newsletter. Make sure you don't miss out!

## OFF TO A FLYING START

Tuff Crater restoration is North Shore Forest and Bird's major conservation project.

For ten years we have been creating a Millennium Forest below the Warehouse head office. Now it is time to take on the whole Tuff Crater Reserve. This has been described as completely mad or visionary, depending on your point of view! It is a mammoth task which will need the involvement of the entire community.

The project is off to a flying start with an ARC Environmental Initiatives Fund grant, topped up by North Shore City Parks, funding a restoration plan. Weed control should also start soon with a \$13,000 + GST grant from the ARC Coastal Enhancement Fund for pampas and phoenix palm work. Phoenix is growing wild in the reserve and is now a listed plant pest in Auckland.

In addition, we need to notify and involve the neighbours, local businesses, schools and retirement village, and build capacity in terms of helpers, weeders, sprayers and donors. We need help with the following:

- Knocking on neighbours' doors explaining what the project is about (contact Claire: 419 1233, [claire.stevens@xtra.co.nz](mailto:claire.stevens@xtra.co.nz));
- People to go on our email list to help with Friday or weekend work days (contact Anne: 480 5570, [annedenny@xtra.co.nz](mailto:annedenny@xtra.co.nz));
- Someone with graphic art skills to design a brochure and some signs (contact Richard: 410 5339, [richard.hursthouse@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richard.hursthouse@xtra.co.nz));
- People to train as certified weed sprayers by doing a free, council-approved Growsafe course (contact Nicki: 486 8600 ext. 7185, 027 694 3223, [nicki.malone@northshorecity.govt.nz](mailto:nicki.malone@northshorecity.govt.nz)).

This is our flagship project and an opportunity for all members to get involved in some way. Our major planting event this year is Sunday, June 7 at the Millennium Forest. (See details inside your wrapper.)

– Richard Hursthouse



## OUT OF ORDER?

Some of the F&B magazines have pages out of order, etc. Affected members are able to request a replacement copy. Please contact Helen Bain (ph 04 801 2763; h.bain@forestandbird.org.nz).

# Habitat

APRIL – AUGUST 2009

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

## FROM THE CHAIR

# LUCKY COUNTRY?

They say Australia is the 'lucky country' but I wonder if this name is going to stick for much longer. I think we in New Zealand are much luckier with our more temperate climate and fewer calamities such as have been experienced by our neighbours across the Tasman.

The horrific devastation in Victoria has once again brought the subject of global warming to our attention with a fiery warning. A lot of attention has been focussed on the influence of arsonists, but the facts remain that Australia has warmed by 0.9°C in the last 60 years and the temperatures leading up to the fires were the hottest on record, plus the minor detail of the worst drought in over 100 years.

An Australian climatologist, David Karoly, told the ABC that 'The records were broken by a large amount and you cannot explain that just to natural variability.' Scientists have been warning us for years that the consequences of global warming will be higher temperatures and more frequent extreme events. Remember Katrina? And now this... We have to accept that these events will become the climatic norm as the CO<sub>2</sub> level in our atmosphere

continues to rise. Plan now on the basis that weather events will become worse! Do we really need a holiday bach on a low-lying coastal strip? Do we really want to buy a new home that has just been built on a flood plain? And should Australians, looking for an escape from city life, be building their lifestyle homes in eucalypt woodland?

The Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, has steered clear of making any links with climate change. His government reversed John Howard's scepticism with a much-fanfared joining of the Kyoto Agreement soon after he came to power, but his recent legislation setting extremely modest targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions has disappointed environmental groups. And what of New Zealand? Our new government has elected to put our Emissions Trading Scheme on hold, pending a root and branch review. It has put Rodney Hide, a vocal climate sceptic, on the committee to review the science of global warming. These are worrying times and certainly not the time to back off our commitments to fight climate change.

– Alan Emmerson

## ALONG THE OKURA BUSH WALKWAY

On Sunday, 15 February, a group went on a trip to Okura Scenic Reserve to explore flora and fauna of the catchment and coastline.

It is a moderate 1.5hr walk from Haigh Access Rd to Karepiro Bay (Dacre Cottage). Crossing the estuary, the tide was out and the mud was showing signs of abundant life. Dark coastal kohekohe, taraire, kahikatea and puriri forest envelopes the walker as one ascends slowly. We passed young tawa, pate, and huge native passionfruit vines with fruits covering the ground, as we ascended through kanuka trees to the kauri-dominated ridge.

Birds were not abundant but we saw fantail, rosella, tui, red-billed and black-backed gulls, pukeko and oystercatcher. We admired the significant kauri stands, hoping PTA disease does not get them! The emerald tide was in on our return providing a lovely contrast.

– Richard Hursthouse





## Welcome New Members!

A hearty welcome to Ines Hardy, Angela Fraser, Kelly Smith and Margaret Wilson who recently joined North Shore Forest & Bird. May you enjoy partnering with us in conservation initiatives on the Shore!

# Habitat

APRIL – AUGUST 2009

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

## TRIP TO CHELSEA RESERVE WITH MEL GALBRAITH

The very fine November weather experienced in 2008 continued as 15 F&B members moved from the car park towards the path that takes one up behind where the shags roost. Some of the shags' nests were visible quite close to the track, with a young one on the nest. Mel Galbraith took us onto Chelsea Park to look out at the fabulous view over Auckland.

Mel explained to us just how the large, flat area came into being. When the Sugar Company was first established – approx. 130 years ago – all the heating, etc. were supplied by wood and later coal burning boilers. The ash along with the alkaline substance used to whiten the sugar had to be dumped somewhere.

The valley under the park area was sacrificed: pipes were laid in the bottom of that valley so that the water could flow out. Evidently, when these materials were dumped, it was slurry and took some time to dry out and stabilise. Even today, because of its makeup, building is not allowed unless extensive piling was done! This is probably the main reason that a public park has been able to be established here. Mel also suggested that there could be a name change to 'Chelsea Heritage Park'. All of our group were appalled that the whole side of the park, leading down to the water, was completely covered with weeds (see picture).

We walked back down the road to the bridge, where we crossed the road to begin the walk alongside one of the three dams up to the Chatswood Reserve. As we left the road we came across a number of Queensland macadamia nut trees lining the lake edge. Flowering was over, but a number of small nuts were forming on the stalks of racemes that had had up to 200 flowers on them. By then our real walk began!

For most of the walk we were walking on the roots of the trees alongside the track. Some had grown nodules on their roots for protection, so it was a matter of watching where you strode to avoid tripping. In many places hand-cut steps had become quite sloping, but it was great to be able to hold



onto the small trees alongside the path for support. Many interesting trees, including NZ beech, growing along with kauri, were seen; the beech were there before the last ice age and the kauri are a much more recent arrival, coming after the ice age.

Once again, weed growth was evident in the form of loquat, palms, wattle, gorse, privet, tradescantia, and climbing asparagus. Some are well-established, quite large trees, but then we came to an area of re-growth of plants where Mel had assumed pigeons had been roosting. The seedlings included native karaka, but also loquat and palms, all of which have quite large seeds and the only birds capable of swallowing fruits that size are pigeons. These birds can swallow berries up to 2cm in diameter. Some of the members walked down and pulled the offending seedlings out, leaving the karaka to grow without restriction. The upper lake has very large native bull rushes, growing along its banks making it quite different from its neighbours. Soon we were out of the bush after quite a steep climb, and once we had all gathered together, it was on up the street before turning down a short 'no exit' street, before once again, entering the bush above the Chelsea Sugar Works. We were soon on another road in the area just above the sugar works, where the Sugar Company had carried out beautification of the area at the behest of the Australian owners back in the early 1900s. In their 'wisdom' they supplied many of the Australian trees that were planted in this area. These now are huge trees, including a large stand of blue gums that are at the last stages of their life being so tall.

Back down alongside the second lake, oxygen weed was flowering: small, quite distinctive, white flowers. So our walk came to an end at about 11.30. Thank you Mel and Richard for a great day!

– Nola Ovens

# Habitat



The Forest and Bird Library Collection is now at Awataha Marae, 58 Akoranga Drive. Open Mon - Fri 10am to 3pm. Phone 486 5467

APRIL – AUGUST 2009

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

## Queen of the night

OPEN LETTER FROM A BUSH RESERVE VOLUNTEER



"As a volunteer worker in a local native bush reserve, I am really disappointed to see that Kings Plant Barn is yet again advertising the Queen of the Night (*Cestrum nocturnum*) shrub for sale in the *New Zealand Herald* (February 12, page A6).

It is described as a 'Hardy easy to grow shrub with powerful fragrance that pervades the summer evenings.' The group I work for has spent hours pulling over a hundred of these plants out of our local bush reserve.

A more appropriate description could be a 'Lady of the Night – a hardy rapidly spreading weed plant with a pungent scent that invades native bush reserves.' The directors of Kings have been contacted about this pest plant, but decline to respond to letters.

If the directors have a sense of social responsibility, maybe they would like to spend a few weekends helping volunteers protect our natural heritage. At the very least they could tag the plant with a warning to unsuspecting customers."

### NIKAU CAVES KCC TRIP

– February 2009

KCC had a great trip on Sunday 22nd. The Nikau Caves were awesome, even though we had to crawl on our stomachs for a short distance! – **Jocelyn Sanders**

## The Birds of my garden fence

Pukeko is in fact a world-wide species, belonging to the Rallidae or rail family. In Europe, where I saw my first specimen in a Sardinian wetland, it is extremely rare and shy. They call it the purple gallinule and in Australia it is known as the purple swamp-hen. Here in New Zealand it is definitely not shy, but I was still amazed when one of the birds foraging in my paddocks started coming to the bird tray on my garden fence to have a drink of sugar water, which we put out for the tuis and silvereyes. The photo (see insert) caused a minor sensation among my bird-watching friends in the UK when I sent it to them!

The California quail is also fairly common on my property. The last two years they have brought their families to feed in our garden, and the young, the size of ping pong balls, are the cutest things imaginable. I managed to take a snap-shot of the male on our fence, also investigating the bowl of sugar water – or maybe some of the insects around it.

We managed to buy one of the special bird feeders on Tiri before they were discontinued; a real shame that. The feeders keep the ants and wasps away, but we haven't seen the pukeko on the fence again. He can't get that huge, red bill into the tiny holes on the feeder. However, I was thrilled to have a yellow admiral butterfly visit and drink sugar water on several consecutive days, showing that they not only can sense the nectar, but also remember where it is and return for more.

The principal user of the nectar, however, is the tui – king of our garden fence! They come in turn, only rarely do we see two at once. The excellent photo was taken by my friend, Alistair Duncan, who was visiting from Scotland and delighted to see our beautiful native so closely. Just recently, a visiting Tui was accompanied by two newly fledged young. They have no throat feather and their beaks still have the bright yellow lining of the gape – used for attracting the parent's attention when she visits the nest to feed them. They didn't attempt to drink from the feeder; they just squabbled with each other and tried to get the attention of the parent.

This fence is just outside our kitchen window and provides us with endless hours of pleasure. If you want to try the nectar formula just mix one part brown sugar with three parts water. Put some boiling water in first to help dissolve the sugar, then top up with cooler. We used to use an open bowl and it worked well, but the feeder is definitely better. You can probably find them somewhere, but sadly, no longer on Tiri.

– Alan Emmerson



## BIRD-WATCHING AT MIRANDA, OCTOBER 2008

Miranda, on the Firth of Thames, is regarded as the finest example in the world of an active shell chenier plain, and it is home to about 130 bird species including 43 waders. Some stay there all year and others return to Alaska and Siberia and other parts of the northern hemisphere in autumn.

North Shore Branch offered a trip to Miranda on October 19. Being out on the viewing area was an absolute delight, as it was a lovely sunny spring day, perfect for watching birds. There were thousands of godwits and hundreds of lesser knots around. I was utterly spellbound by the sight! Wrybills and oystercatchers (both pied and variable) were also present, plus the odd Caspian tern and a few spur-winged plovers.

A number of telescopes were out and plenty of ornithologists from Miranda Naturalists Trust to explain what we were looking at. Luckily, our chairman, Alan Emmerson, was also there with his telescope and he was very willing to share his knowledge. He showed us a few golden plovers – a first for me.

On our walk from the Shorebird Centre to the shell banks, trip leader Sarah Noble pointed out many skylarks, identifiable by their head crest. They were on the ground and rising vertically, singing non-stop. Early European settlers introduced them in the 1860s. Now they are more common here than in the UK.

After lunch there was a presentation on the reclamation of much of Korea's west coast mudflats, which is a critical area for migratory birds. It left me feeling very sad and wondering if we can expect the demise of these species...

Go to [www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz](http://www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz) for more information.

– Margi Keys

Send newsletter contributions to Victor Meyer, PO Box 33873, Takapuna or email [victoranddebbie@paradise.net.nz](mailto:victoranddebbie@paradise.net.nz)

## 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) | [northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz)

The Committee 2009

<b>ALAN EMMERSON</b>	–	Chairman	473 2216
<b>RICHARD HURSTHOUSE</b>	–	Deputy Chairman	410 5339
<b>JOCELYN SANDERS</b>	–	Secretary	479 2107
<b>LAUREN POWER</b>	–	Treasurer	478 6103
<b>LIZ ANSTEY</b>	–	Committee	480 1545
<b>ANNE DENNY</b>	–	Committee	480 5570
<b>CEDRIC HAY</b>	–	Committee	410 5977
<b>VICTOR MEYER</b>	–	Committee	427 5774
<b>SARAH NOBLE</b>	–	Committee	475 6338
<b>CLAIRE STEVENS</b>	–	Committee	419 1233
<b>HELENE WILLIS</b>	–	Committee	480 8851
<b>BRIAN GANNON</b>	–	KCC	443 2479
<b>KAREN WEALLEANS</b>	–	Guest speakers	410 1995
<b>LINDA JOHNSON</b>	–	Habitat deliveries	413 9851
<b>NICK KEENLEYSIDE</b>	–	Electronic distribution	<a href="mailto:info@fragileworld.org.nz">info@fragileworld.org.nz</a>

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

VICTOR MEYER, email: [victoranddebbie@paradise.net.nz](mailto:victoranddebbie@paradise.net.nz)

### BIRD RESCUE

SYLVIA 478 8819

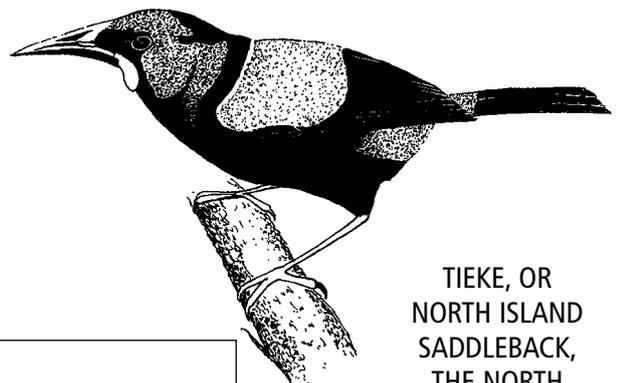
Remember if you are concerned about any conservation problems in your area, get in touch with Alan or Richard.

# 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 – AUGUST 2009

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

## WHAT'S ON

## ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS

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

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

**TIME:** 7.45pm.

**ADMISSION:** Donation / koha (please give generously).  
We'd like to see you there!

### APRIL Monday 6th

'Ways to increase urban biodiversity in our cities.' Robyn Simcock from Landcare Research will talk about Low Impact Urban Design and Development (LIUDD) as a sustainable living concept. Urban sustainability and health are achieved through effective management of storm water, waste, energy, transport and ecosystem services.

### MAY Monday 4th

'The highs and lows of restoration of Centennial Park, Campbells Bay' by Richard Hursthouse (Deputy Chair; leader of Centennial Park Bush Society). Come hear about the controversy they have had regarding some of the weed tree removals. The Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary is an initiative of the Bush Society, involving the entire catchment. This evening is also our AGM which will take place prior to the talk!

### JUNE Monday 1st

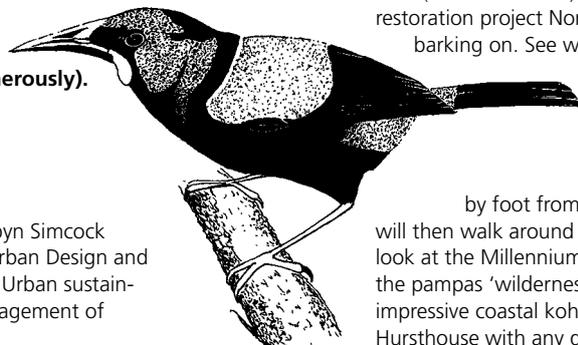
'Ark in the Park – restoring the natural glory of an important forest area' by John Sumich (Management Committee Chair, Ark in the Park). Waitakere Forest and Bird has a partnership with the ARC to create this open sanctuary in Cascades Kauri Park, Waitakere Ranges. John will be talking about this successful project.

### JULY Monday 6th

'Attracting birds and other wildlife to your NZ garden' by writer, photographer and publisher Gordon Ell. Wild birds, lizards, and native insects can be encouraged to live in the domestic garden. The secret is providing the right kind of water, food and shelter. This F&B veteran will be talking about the subject of his latest book!

### AUGUST Monday 3rd

'Restoring biodiversity to our coastal dunelands – lessons from the Auckland West Coast' by Dr Mark Bellingham (F&B North Island Conservation Manager). Mark is a coastal planner and ecologist who established the Te Henga/Bethells Beachcare group in 1993 and is the current coordinator. They manage dune vegetation, shore and seabirds, people and dogs at the beach.



**April, Saturday 25th. ESKDALE PARK INTERPRETIVE WALK**, 1pm (2hrs duration). Meet near the top of Domain Rd in Glenfield. The upper section of the reserve will be explored under guidance. Cost: \$2 each for members; \$5 non-members. Phone Margi Keys (443 6919) or email [makeys@nettel.net.nz](mailto:makeys@nettel.net.nz) to book.

**May, Saturday 23rd. TUFF CRATER EXPLORATION**, 9am (2-3hrs duration). Come and learn about the major restoration project North Shore Forest and Bird is embarking on. See what is there now and what needs to be done, and perhaps what you can do to assist. Meet at the Canon car park at the end of Warehouse Way, off Akoranga Drive; accessible

by foot from Akoranga bus way station. We will then walk around the reserve anticlockwise. We will look at the Millennium Forest 10 years down the track, the pampas 'wilderness' that is the tank farm, and some impressive coastal kohekohe forest. Contact Richard Hursthouse with any queries: 410 5339, 021 216 1296, [richard.hursthouse@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richard.hursthouse@xtra.co.nz).

**June, Sunday 7th. TUFF CRATER COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY**, 10am (finishing midday). Forest & Bird and NorthWest Wildlink event. Come help restore this significant reserve – the Millennium Forest – to its pristine past. Bring your spade and gumboots if you have. Family, friends and neighbours welcome. Follow the signs at the end of Warehouse Way, off Akoranga Drive. Ring Anne (480 5570) / Richard (410 5339) or just come! Look forward to meeting up again.

**July, Saturday 25th. KAURI PARK TUTUKIWI HUNT**, 9.30am (approx. 2hrs). Searching for two species of *Pterostylis* (green-hooded orchids). Meet between 34 and 36 Rangatira Rd, Birkdale. Cost: donations to Forest and Bird North Shore Branch will be collected. Led by Margi Keys (ph 443 6919, [makeys@nettel.net.nz](mailto:makeys@nettel.net.nz)).

**August, Sunday 30th. MOTUORA ISLAND PLANTING DAY**, 8am sharp (afternoon return). Join the North Shore contingent and be part of ecological restoration in the Gulf, coordinated by Motuora Restoration Society. Ferry departs from Sandspit. Moderate fitness required. Sausage sizzle provided! Contact Jocelyn Sanders on 479 2107 or [jocsanders@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:jocsanders@vodafone.co.nz) for costs and bookings (carpooling arrangements possible).

Other NSCC planting days (10am-noon):

- 17 May Sun Piripiri Park (Long Bay Park), entrance from Vaughans Rd
- 28 Jun Sun Philomel Reserve, entrance between 46 and 48 Egremont St
- 19 Jul Sun Chelsea Park, entrance from Colonial Road
- 9 Aug Sun Pinehill Reserve, entrance from Lough Derg Way
- 30 Aug Sun Standish Reserve, entrance from Pemberton Ave

Contact NSCC Citywide Parks Officer (ph 486 8600) for more details (normal safety procedures apply).

**STOP PRESS:** Le Roy's Bush/Little Shoal Bay planting bees are arranged for 23 May, 20 June & 11 July (9.30-11.30am). Contact Keith Salmon ([kwsalmon@gmail.com](mailto:kwsalmon@gmail.com)) for more details.