

Habitat



NORTH SHORE BRANCH

DECEMBER 2009 - APRIL 2010

SEEKING SOLUTIONS FOR A WORLD UNDER THREAT

While I was compiling this newsletter, gazing over words, pondering meanings and contemplating intentions, I must have drunk several cups of coffee. Apart from wondering about coffee's dubious origin in terms of human rights abuses by some primary producers, I stumbled across its water footprint: 140 litres of water to produce one cup of coffee (www.waterfootprint.org). Staggering! However, one quickly realises how 'water-hungry' it is to produce many goods and services. Read on to find out more about the challenges we all face – conservationists and extortionists alike.



**FROM
THE EDITOR**

Case in point: "If this mountain [catchment] is not cared for, the entire world will get sick [eventually be at risk]."
– Ramón Gil, Wiwa leader, Sierra Nevada (rural)

CUCKOO CALLS AGAIN



I wrote the following letter to the *New Zealand Herald* in 2006:

"There is often debate about when spring should be considered to have arrived. For me it arrived Wednesday afternoon at 4pm when I heard the first call of the shining cuckoo, newly arrived from exotic tropical climes. I would venture that it is early this year, the first bird in 2005 at my place was on September 23rd."

The letter was published under the heading Cuckoo Heralds Spring, and a day or two later I received a lovely phone call from a man in his eighties who told me my letter had reminded him of his childhood when he used to hear cuckoos calling at Swanson. I subsequently met him, his name was Doug Vesey, and he was a very interesting man – a poet and one-time radio broadcaster with Barry Crump. I brought him to my place for lunch and he heard the cuckoo again. He let me have copies of his poetry and one about the shining cuckoo is included in this newsletter.

What a delightful outcome from my simple three-sentence letter. I phoned Doug a few days after I heard my first cuckoo this year and was saddened to hear he had passed away only a few weeks earlier. I hope you enjoy his lovely poem which is reprinted inside this newsletter.

– Alan Emmerson



Brainteaser: A water footprint is the total volume of freshwater needed to produce something. What is the water footprint of milk? (Answer on p. 4)

FIGHTING FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE

These are challenging times, particularly here in Auckland where we face an unprecedented shake-up to local government that will have far-reaching and unknown consequences for the conservation estate. The Parks Department of North Shore City Council has been our partner for the restoration of Tuff Crater, involved in every aspect of the work. They provided funding for the Restoration Plan, as well as everything from plants, advertising and refreshments for our big annual planting day to expertise and guidance at every step. The officers with whom we've been dealing with may be gone due to the restructuring of Auckland into a Supercity during 2010. The ARC has been a major source of funding but they too will be gone, not to mention the Community Boards. Birkenhead and Northcote recently approved in excess of \$20,000 to fund the upgrade of the

first section of the path at Tuff Crater to all-weather standard. Who will we be canvassing for the next section?

On another front, the Government has removed the Councils' right to protect trees in the region. There will no longer be a requirement to obtain consent before removing trees from private property. It is feared that developers will have a field day clear-felling areas scheduled for development with no requirement even for replacement planting. This legislation applies to the Auckland Region where development pressures are the greatest and there are widespread concerns that there will be a large net loss of vegetation as a result.

On a national level the RMA is under severe attack with threats that National Parks may be mined for minerals and coal, and pristine rivers, like the Mokihinui, are candidates for destructive hydro schemes in the name of 'sustainable'

energy provision. Grandiose plans for South Island's east-flowing rivers involve diversion and enormous storage areas to keep the water-intensive dairy industry going. Everywhere we look the conservation values we try to uphold are being threatened.

Actually, this is the way it has always been. David Bellamy was recently in New Zealand to celebrate the saving of Whirinaki Forest 25 years-ago and who can forget the stirring campaign to stop the destruction of Lake Manapouri in the 60s and 70s. We must maintain our vigilance and be prepared to contest every decision that threatens our natural heritage. Let your MP know what you think – letters addressed to 'Your MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington' do not even need a postage stamp. And emails are even easier!

– Alan Emmerson

PROGRESS AT TUFF CRATER MILLENNIUM FOREST



Tuff Crater, lying next to the motorway near the Warehouse head office, is the site of our branch's major restoration project. Being an old volcanic crater and coastal infill, this estuary is surrounded by a narrow rim or tuff of reserve land (hence the name). The other name for Tuff Crater is Tank Farm, named after the Americans' partially-built fuel tanks on the northern rim during World War II. Since 2000 the Branch has been planting and tending this land in an initiative dubbed the Millennium Forest. In 2008 it was decided that we would undertake the restoration of the entire reserve as our flagship project. This is a mammoth task, as some areas have up to 95% cover of invasive weeds.

Over the past year, many hours have been spent on developing a management plan for the site (now available on the branch website). The reserve has been divided into eight management units, and these have been prioritised. Our main priority unit is the Millennium Forest area, which requires ongoing maintenance of weed control to be done by volunteers. The second priority unit is the impressive coastal forest remnant on the south side below McBreen Ave. Weed control here will be by contractor. Our third priority site is the first three tank sites west of the Millennium Forest. This area will be weed-controlled and planted up over a 3-year period. Already a big dent has been made in the invasive weeds by a keen band of people hell bent on taming the privet and elaeagnus! Once we are sure to have

these three units under long-term control, then we shall move into the other areas.

We have funding and contracts for controlling large privet, wattle, pampas and climbing asparagus over the summer months. In addition, all phoenix palms in the reserve (now a banned plant and spreading widely) will be controlled or removed. Other pampas grass in outlying areas will also be controlled as funds permit. In addition to \$45,000 of weed control funds, we have secured funding of \$26,000 for stage one of a 3-stage track upgrade to improve access in winter for weed control, planting and walking. The Branch gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the NSCC Parks Department, the ARC Coastal Enhancement Fund, the DOC Community Conservation Fund and the Birkenhead Northcote Community Board (discretionary fund). In addition, North Harbour Rotary members are assisting with resource consents and will be helping on the ground as well. Be warned that tank sites 1-3 will look quite different for some time until planting is done and native regeneration takes over. Patience is a necessary virtue in native forest restoration.

Our volunteer database continues to grow and our monthly work days have been well attended. As you can imagine, this has been a huge job for the committee, but the support we are receiving is making it all worthwhile. There is plenty of opportunity for volunteer input into the project so if you want to help in some way, please touch base with us.

– Richard Hursthouse





Welcome New Members!

A hearty welcome to Mr & Mrs N Etherton, Elizabeth Johnson, Bruce Gilkison, Grant Finlay, John Bannister, Neil Buckner, Elaine Conway, John and Brenda Foreman, Ray Lunn, August Ward-Macsehin, Reinold Disse, Derry and Judy McLachlan, John Sims, Greg Ellis, Penny Skyme & Ian Muirhead, Colin Pivac, Grant Oliver, Mr & Mrs JA & HE Gibson, Russell Black, Philip Jones, Albany Senior High School, Bob Stirk, Mr & Mrs David and Diane Taylor, Judith Machin, Toni Shepherd and family, Rosalind Howe, Bill, Carol and Georgia Andrewes, Melissa Gunn, James Burke, Ian Hunter, Bronwyn Coster, Tamas Decsi, Ines Hardy, Angela Fraser, Kelly Smith, Margaret Wilson, and John North who recently joined North Shore Forest & Bird. May you enjoy partnering with us in conservation initiatives on the Shore!



PHOTO OF GODWITS: Derry McLachlan

TRIP REPORT

MIRANDA SHOREBIRD CENTRE

The September outing for the Branch was to Miranda to welcome the return of the godwits from their breeding grounds in Siberia and Alaska. We kept our carbon footprint to a minimum by car-pooling and assembled at the Shorebird Centre at 10:30am. The weather was not particularly inspiring and there was rain about, but we (all 27 of us) were determined not to let it spoil our day.

The walk to the shell banks is about 2km and, despite the rain starting to fall, we were serenaded all the way with dozens of singing skylarks. On arrival at the shelter (a rather grand title for the dilapidated hut that serves as the bird hide) our first 'tick' for the day was a great white egret (kotuku), which is a fairly rare bird in New Zealand. It was close to the bank and provided us with good views before flying off.

There was a large group of godwits on the grass nearby and we were able to set up our telescopes and see the birds in amazing detail. In amongst them were many lesser knot and even a couple of sharp-tailed sandpipers, another rarity. A passing hawk sent them all into the air, giving us the postcard sight of clouds of birds wheeling about in the sky. With the early excitement subsiding we were able to focus our attention on the hundreds of birds on the mudflats in front of us, being pushed closer all the while with the rising tide. We soon added wrybill, NZ dotterel, banded dotterel and Caspian tern to our growing list.

The rain stopped and the sun came out as we ate our lunch, but looming clouds foretold more rain to come. We had time for a final scan and to add a few more species before heading back to the centre. We just beat the rain this time and headed back to Auckland. Our final list was 36 species – not bad for a rainy day at the beach!

– Alan Emerson

CIVIC AWARD

Conservation honours bestowed upon our Deputy Chair Richard Hursthouse was the recipient of a Civic Award by the North Shore City Council recently. This award recognised Richard's work for the environment, particularly at Campbells Bay Community Forest, Centennial Park in Campbells Bay, and lately Tuff Crater. 'I accepted this award,' Richard beamed with contentment, 'because I see it as recognition for the work many of us do to make a positive difference to the environment when it is under attack from so many influences.'

PIPIWHARAUROA (SHINING CUCKOO)

By Doug Vesey, 28 October 1993

It's so nice to be in the country,
When winter gives way to spring,
When my garden bursts into life again,
And the birds feel they just have to sing.
To me there are three sure signs,
That tell me when spring is here,
And two of them have been here for weeks,
But the third is late this year.

The first is the beautiful Kowhai tree
That paints the river banks gold,
Then here and there on Manuka tops,
Snow white Clematis stars unfold.
Then usually about mid-September,
I wait for sign number three,
For as far back as I can remember,
It has meant something special to me.

As I work every day in my garden,
I never grow tired of the songs,
Of the Blackbirds and Thrushes and Tuis
As they sing to me all the day long.
But the sign number three I'm awaiting,
Is a song that means so much to me,
It's the call of the Pipi-wha-rau-roa,
Perched high on the old Puriri tree.

Oh I know they are real little rascals,
Laying their eggs in other birds' nests,
But I never argue with nature,
For I think Mother Nature knows best.
And full credit to the ancient Maori,
Who gave him a name so grand,
For they called him Pipi-wha-rau-roa,
Which means 'Bird from a far away land'.
He flies from the Solomon Islands,
And stays all the summer months long,
Then heads north again in the autumn,
And oh how I do miss his song.

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

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

KCC VISIT TO TAXIDERMIST

On a cold, damp Wednesday last July, five families went just past Kaukapakapa to visit a taxidermist, coordinated by Muriel Fanselow. We didn't know what to expect and were enthralled throughout the whole 'embalming' process.

Thelma and Brian Staines were extremely welcoming. Brian first showed us a rather large (and somewhat smelly) snapper that he was in the process of embalming. The snapper didn't have its 'new' eyes and Brian explained that he had glass eyes to go in and then passed one around for everyone to see!

To our complete surprise, Brian then brought out a dead kaka and proceeded to go through the whole process with us: taking off the skin, spreading with borax, making a paper pattern, and stuffing with a polystyrene body (made according to the pattern). This simple process took a lot of skill and would have been slow-going for most people, but Brian made it look quite easy. The completed kaka will go on display at the Auckland Zoo.

During this time the group split into two, so some could go into the house and see more of Brian's work in progress. These included boar heads, deer heads and a completed stuffed emu, possum, kookaburra, mouse



and numerous other birds and animals. He is even an accomplished wood carver – a man of many talents.

All the families thoroughly enjoyed their visit; it was something completely different and quite an experience. Brian and Thelma were excellent hosts and I'm sure they will be seeing another bunch of KCC members again.

– Jocelyn Sanders



Top: At home with Brian and Thelma Staines and (above) Brian at work.

Fundraising: Volunteers needed

Do you have a passion for the environment and the ingenuity to raise funds for North Shore Forest and Bird? If so, please contact Claire on 419 1233 or email claire.stevens@xtra.co.nz.

Answer to brain teaser (pg 1): 1000 litres of water are needed to produce 1 litre of milk. (CISRO)

Forest & Bird vacancy: North Shore RMA representative

For many years Jim Lewis has been working behind the scenes protecting the North Shore environment by keeping tabs on RMA applications. This role is now vacant and in dire need of one or more people to step up. If you are passionate about trying to stem the adverse effects of development and have quality time to put into this, please contact Alan Emmerson (emmo66@xtra.co.nz).

Sponsorship sought

The Branch is looking for a sponsor to cover the printing of Habitat – our flagship newsletter. In addition, there is an opportunity to sponsor a brochure for the Tuff Crater project. If you are interested please email northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz to discuss promotion in return.

Laptop sought

Our branch would dearly like to acquire its own laptop in order to facilitate PowerPoint presentations. If you have a laptop that you wish to donate or if you know of someone who does, please contact us, as we can put it to good use!

Send newsletter contributions to Victor Meyer, PO Box 33873, Takapuna or email 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 | northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

The Committee 2009/10

ALAN EMMERSON	–	Chairman	473 2216
RICHARD HURSTHOUSE	–	Deputy Chairman	410 5339
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LAUREN POWER	–	Treasurer	478 6103
LIZ ANSTEY	–	Committee	480 1545
ANNE DENNY	–	Committee	480 5570
CEDRIC HAY	–	Committee	410 5977
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SARAH NOBLE	–	Committee	475 6338
CLAIRE STEVENS	–	Committee	419 1233
HELENE WILLIS	–	Committee	480 8851
BRIAN GANNON	–	KCC	443 2479
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LINDA JOHNSON	–	Habitat deliveries	413 9851
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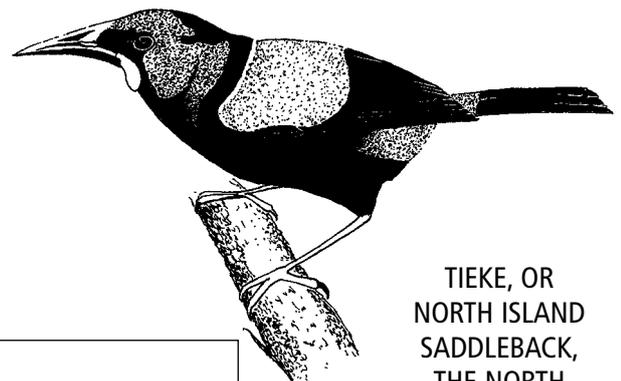
BIRD RESCUE

SYLVIA 478 8819

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

Habitat

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



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



Habitat

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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!

DECEMBER Monday 7th

'Long Time for Long Bay' presented by Jim Lewis of Forest & Bird, Great Park Society and Okura Environment Group. A story about the delivery of urban landscape with coastal views from beginning to end – 15 years of talking sessions, expert surveys, model presentations and court deliberations. Come hear about the participants, the problems, the predictions, the plan. Tonight's also our Christmas festivity so please bring a plate to share!

FEBRUARY Monday 1st

'Birds of New Zealand' by Alan Emmerson. Come hear how the Branch Chair of Forest & Bird on the North Shore speaks with eloquence and confidence about our avian fauna – a topic which he loves and knows so much about. Not to be missed!

MARCH Monday 1st

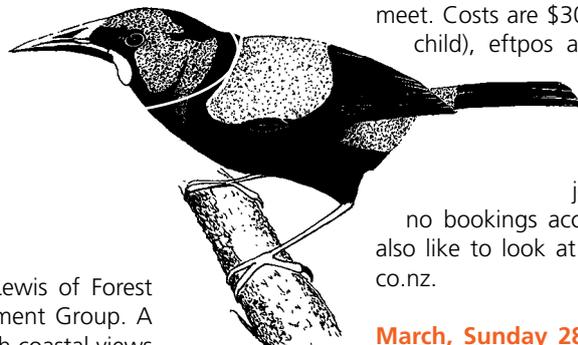
'Gambusia – friend or foe?' by Dr Kit Hustler. Kit is a teacher at Northcote College and has been coordinating students' work at Little Shoal Bay. He will bring some students along, both those with field experience and those who will be doing analysis. Come hear about Gambusia (mosquito fish) and its potential impacts on NZ fish species.

APRIL Monday 5th

Watch this space: We are going to have a special speaker come share a conservation message not to be missed! (This talk will be confirmed in the next edition of *Habitat*.)

TUFF CRATER WORK DAYS

Tuff Crater is our key restoration project and we'd love your help! Work varies from light weeding to more energetic tasks. Full training and some equipment may be provided. Let us know if you're interested by ringing Anne (480 5570) or Richard (410 5339), or email northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz. Draft work days are set for Dec 5, Feb 13, Mar 13, Apr 3 (to be confirmed).



February, Saturday 27th. NIKAU CAVE WALK AND CRAWL, 10.45am.

This cave is located 90 minutes south of Auckland in a beautiful sheep and cattle farming area. The cave is 1km long, with a short stretch that has to be crawled through; it has a wide variety of stalactites, stalagmites, glow worms and a huge cavern. There is a cafe nearby, where we meet. Costs are \$30 (adult) and \$15 (school-aged child), eftpos available. Entry fee includes a very knowledgeable guide, helmet and waterproof torch. Please book with Jocelyn (ph 479 2107, jocsanders@vodafone.co.nz) – no bookings accepted after 20 Feb. You may also like to look at the website: www.nikaucave.co.nz.

March, Sunday 28th. TAWHARANUI OUTING, 10am arrival.

The plan for this trip is for a full day. We will organise car-pooling before leaving the Shore and assemble once there. There will be a guided walk and people should bring lunch. Binoculars will be useful and small containers for insects if anyone is interested. Books for the identification of birds, reptiles, insects, spiders and plants will be available. For more information and to register, please contact Alan (ph 473 2216, emmo66@xtra.co.nz).

April, Saturday 24th. MAUNGATAUTARI ECOLOGICAL ISLAND TRAMP.

This is a walk up and over the mountain, which takes about 6 hours. A good level of fitness is required. Accommodation can be booked independently at 'Out in the Styx' for those who wish to stay over with guesthouse amenities. If you'd like to book for the trip, or require further information, please contact Sarah (ph 475 6338, sarah.noble@aucklandcity.govt.nz) or Jocelyn (ph 479 2107, jocsanders@vodafone.co.nz).

For further trip suggestions please speak to Richard or Sarah.



Remember to buy a F&B Gift Membership for a special person this Christmas!