

Habitat



NORTH SHORE BRANCH

APRIL – AUGUST 2010

WINDS OF CHANGE ARE BLOWING



FROM
THE EDITOR

Well, I was wondering how to approach this edition when it dawned on me that it was King George VI who said that 'wildlife is not ours to dispose of as we will. We have it in trust and must account for it to those who come after.' Instead of reporting the news about others, Radio New Zealand (RNZ) itself was recently featured in the news for getting its broadcasting budget cut by Government. A public outrage ensued. Our deputy chair, Richard Hursthouse, tweeted an RNZ podcast of outspoken scientist, environmentalist and science communicator David

Suzuki being interviewed about our changing world. He was not talking about societal change nor was he talking about natural change in order for species to survive from genes to landscapes. He was talking about rapid changes taking place in the biosphere as a result of adverse human activity. 'But for most people it may not seem so obvious, although you talk to anybody that spends time outside, talk to a fisherman, talk to a logger, talk to aboriginal people who are out in the real world and they will tell you funny things are happening...'

WEEDBUSTING AT TUFF CRATER

– welcome to a place where strange creatures lurk!



I ventured into Tuff Crater one Saturday morning (running late): not a soul in sight but arrows to guide me... Kept walking – still not a sound – but as I passed a huge clump of elaeagnus (guaranteed to get Richard going!) I heard a rustle and thought, 'A rat!' The rustle increased mightily and I thought, 'It's a dog!'; peered through the dense undergrowth and spied a member of Homo sapiens – one of our dedicated weedbuster volunteers sweating profusely, brandishing a saw and weedkiller and looking triumphant. This breed is hard to spot when in full flight; you can hear them from time to

time, but they are largely hidden, until suddenly you may hear a cry of 'I've found a baby puriri!' This weedbusting lark can become addictive: there's huge satisfaction in combating the enemy and finding hidden treasures, knowing that small native seedlings will now have a chance to thrive. Richard sets an example to all (I wish we could bottle his energy and enthusiasm); everyone heaves a sigh of relief when he says, 'Coffee time,' and we all compare notes while munching on various goodies. Then it's back to work. If you haven't been down to Tuff Crater, you'll be amazed by the transformation that's taking place. The



contractors have been in attacking pampas, etc. but so much of what is being achieved is due to the dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy. It's great feeling part of a common cause and you leave with a real sense of achievement. Give it a go!

– Liz Anstey

quote

“He prayeth well, who loveth well, both man and bird and beast.”

– The Ancient Mariner

LOCAL BRANCHES TO TAKE UP LOBBYING ROLE

Access to ministers in the Beehive in Wellington has become a lot more difficult for F&B staff, even to the ministers of Conservation and the Environment.

As a result, the branches are being asked to step up and carry the fight to local MPs to make sure that our voice is heard. So the Committee is preparing to meet with all three local MPs, all of whom hold ministerial posts: Murray McCully is Foreign Minister, Wayne Mapp is Minister of Defence, and Jonathan Coleman is Minister of Broadcasting and Immigration.

We have decided that our first priority will be to notify the Government of our opposition to plans to open up the conservation estate to mining. We hear a lot about how New Zealand should be trying to 'catch up' with

Australia. But we simply don't have the mineral resources that Australia has and we are only 1/30th of the size of our competitor. New Zealand's principal mineral is coal – the dirtiest fuel and main contributor worldwide to CO₂ emissions. Gerry Brownlee is telling us that we can mine 'surgically' but this is a myth. Nearly 70% of coal mined in New Zealand is by the open-cast method. Easily mined minerals have already been taken and extraction of lower concentration ores requires more rock to be removed with consequentially larger impacts on the environment.

Management of environmental impacts is governed by the RMA, a piece of legislation that this government has constantly attacked, and in fact campaigned on, in a promise to reduce its powers. The costs of mining damage

are borne by the taxpayer. The bill for clean-up of the toxic residues from the Tui mine at Mt Te Aroha was \$10 million. The consequences of decisions taken today will not be felt for many years, long after the politicians who took these decisions are gone from power. Interestingly, mining accounts for only 3% of NZ's wealth, compared to the 20% contribution made by the conservation estate.

While mining contributes just \$1.6 billion to the economy, tourism, over half of which is attributable to the conservation estate, contributes \$21 billion. Mining provides 5800 jobs compared to 108,000 jobs in tourism. We cannot stand by and watch the Government put our most valuable asset – the conservation estate – at risk of damage for what can only be a peripheral benefit to the economy at best.

Tuff progress

Since the last *Habitat* of December, weed control work has continued with volunteer work days once a month.

These have been well attended with up to 20 volunteers. Many hands really help! We have been cutting elaeagnus and privet and painting the stumps with gel. This seems to be working, but some stumps are resprouting so we will need to go over some of these again.

Contractors have been in and drilled self-sown phoenix palms, which are slowly dying as a result. In addition, climbing asparagus and pampas grass at tank sites 1-3 have been sprayed in November. There has been a good hit rate with this, but the contractor will be returning regularly to ensure the job is done properly.

Work days will continue once a month so if you would like to help, please phone or email us to be added to our working bee email list.

Our planting day is on June 13, when we will be aiming to plant more than 1000 plants!

– Richard Hursthouse

A gift from Tangaroa

Hobbs Beach, at Tiritiri Matangi Island, was deserted that summer's day. The tide was coming in, and would be high at about 06.20 – safe enough for a 20-minute swim. I checked the shallows. The water was a little murky, a little stirred up by the wind. It had been blowing from the west all day. I swam out to a distance of about 200m.

As I headed back to the beach, about 20m from the shore, I turned my head to the left to breathe, and a tall fin was slowly approaching... Then I saw a smaller one on its seaward side. Shark? No, orca. Sub-adult male and his mother? The taller fin looked massive! All I saw was the huge dorsal fin which came within three metres of me before veering away. It was such a thrill! I watched as the orcas travelled on.

Suddenly, rays were everywhere. 'Steve Irwin' sprang to mind. Adrenalin kicked in as I swam like mad for the beach. The orcas' fins were still visible, heading south towards the wharf, entering Little Hobbs Bay. I counted 12 eagle rays in the



shallows. The orcas had herded them in!

The days that followed were full of reflecting on my luck. People have asked if I was scared. The answer is, yes, but briefly. The sight of big fins made me stop swimming. There was very little time between when I first saw the fins approaching

and when I realised they were orcas, not sharks. My encounter had lasted about 10 seconds. Ingrid Visser says orca have never hurt humans in New Zealand. I am so grateful that I was in the right place at the right time, enabling me to have a one-in-a-million experience to treasure for the rest of my life.

– Margi Keys

Margi has led a group of 22 Forest & Birders to Tiri Island on 22 November 2009. The group was treated to the sight of a pair of kokako on the path to Tiritiri Matangi Pa, as well as a pair of brown quail at the top of Kawerau Track. Next time when you head out, remember Margi's story and keep those eyes peeled for the unexpected – Ed.



Welcome New Members!

A hearty welcome to Pat Hosking, Daniel Wilson, Kiwi Water NZ Ltd, Kate Jackson, Bruce Wood, Marie Brown, Jacqueline Taylor, Margaret Breakspear, Karen Rutherford, Glen Urquhart, Sarah Harper-Gibbs, Chris Wedding, Hilary Ann Barry, Tui Ellison, Barbara Brodie, Rick Mason and Takapuna Beach Holiday Park who recently joined North Shore Forest & Bird. May you enjoy partnering with us in conservation initiatives on the Shore!

The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful!

When Alan became chairman, he remembered that we had had a tradition of Native of the Month, ably presented by Linda Underhill at our public meetings, when he first joined the branch in 2002. A good couple of years passed before its absence became noticeable. So we started by asking Margi to resurrect this and soon realised that Richard could augment it with a weed! Richard's passion is weedbusting and he has an eagle eye for weeds wherever he goes. Adding a moth on the lines of the spaghetti western, 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,' inevitably became our regular feature dubbed 'The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful!' Let us now look back in a bid to find some of the highlights...

Native of the Year

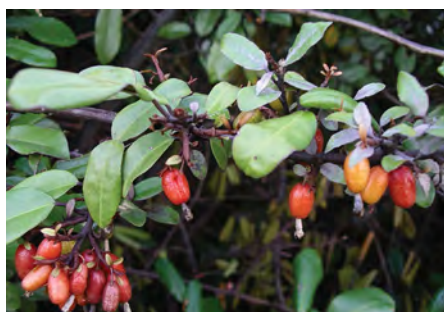
Actually, there is no such thing as 'native of the year'. But my favourite NZ native tree is the kauri, otherwise known as *Agathis australis* or king of the forest. 'Australis' means southern.



Kauri only grows naturally north of a rough line drawn between Raglan and Te Puke. However, it is growing perfectly well south of this line too, and in fact, there are decent-sized specimens in Dunedin and Queenstown. To propagate kauri is simple if you can climb trees just at the right time, which is in March or April before the host tree lets the seed cones go. It helps if you have a young child who likes climbing trees because the ripe seed cones, which contain about 70 winged seeds each, are usually at the end of very small branches. It is unusual to find an intact, ripe seed cone on the ground, as they tend to fall apart on impact. Sow the seeds immediately, as they don't hold their potency for long.

Kauri is controversial. Ask anyone their opinion on the ones that were planted along Glenfield Rd between Bentley Ave and Chivalry Rd. Personally, I like those specimens. They are doing fine up there on that ridge. It will be interesting to see how long they survive. I was recently told that the largest kauri on the North Shore is in Eskdale Bush. This is not true! The largest kauri on the North Shore stands in all its majesty in Leigh Scenic Reserve, Bayview. It is known as Glenfield's best-kept secret... It rivals the big one in Albany Scenic Reserve (which is actually in Rodney District).

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Weed of the Year

The award just has to go to *Elaeagnus x reflexa*. This native of Japan was once grown as a hedge. It has dark green leaves, brown and furry underneath. Stems have multiple spines making weed control difficult. It produces copious orange-red fruits which are eaten by birds and spread into remnant bush areas. The plant forms a dense, spiny, vigorously scrambling shrub. At Tuff Crater, it covers whole cliff sides spanning about 50m or so in diameter. It forms dense stands which can climb meters up into established bush, displacing native species up to mid canopy. Volunteers have made a big dent in the elaeagnus at Tuff Crater by cutting the stems and painting them with Vigilant gel.

Moth of the Year

When I presented my first 'Moth of the Month' in October 2008, it was almost tongue in cheek. My first beauty was *Declana atronivea* or the North Island lichen moth – a big, boldly marked insect that I was fairly sure hardly anyone in the audience would have seen or even been aware of. I was really pleased with the response; people seemed genuinely interested and there were many comments and questions during supper. I have since, predictably, brought along big, iconic species like the puriri moth and the convolvulus hawk moth, but also smaller, less striking

insects that have often been matched to Margi's native plant by associated host relationships. It has always been fun and, after waxing lyrical about some delicate wee creature, I am often challenged over tea with "It's not really orange, is it?" or "You're stretching it a bit when you describe those markings as 'delicate lime', aren't you?" Even better, I have received an email from a member with 'The Beautiful' in the subject line and a photograph of a truly gorgeous moth she photographed while on holiday in South Africa.



***Anaphe reticulata* or processionary moth as it is also known. The larval stage is often displayed as a column of caterpillars in procession (hence the name). [Photo by Fran Garside]**

This was from Fran Garside and I was really thrilled to have Robert Hoare from Landcare Research identify it as the reticulate bag moth, *Anaphe reticulata*. Many other members have brought specimens they have caught in their houses or gardens. I have even had a member recommend an historical novel she read in which the heroine was a pioneering lepidopterist (moth and/or butterfly collector). So the game will continue and I just know that now, when people see a moth at the window, they might pause and wonder...

– Margi Keys,
Richard Hursthouse
and Alan Emmerson

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 2010

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



KCC TRIP TO MOTUIHE ISLAND

KCC had a wonderful day on Motuihe Island on 24 January. There were 27 of us, 15 adults and 12 children. The oldest 'child' was thirteen, and the youngest was two. We were welcomed by a volunteer who explained the tracks and helped us plan our day.

We learned that the Outboard Boating Club plays a big part in the Trust that is restoring the island, and it will be managed with recreation as well as conservation in mind. Boaties understand how important it is to ensure no pests come ashore. In 2005, 27,000 rabbits were killed. Since then, natural regeneration has taken off in the native



bush patches, and many volunteers have planted thousands of trees.

The children were happy to get a lift to the plant nursery in the trailer behind the tractor. We saw volunteers work in the summer heat potting up trees and the smaller plants that will be planted out in winter. After a picnic lunch, we

followed the track that led to the coastal forest. To our great excitement, we saw saddlebacks (tieke) and heard their special call. And there in the background was Auckland City, so close. We also saw wetas living in a 'weta hotel'. We didn't see the kiwi, which live on the island, but we think we saw their droppings on the track. Connor, the two-year-old, proved to be a great little walker! After our big trek, the children were delighted that the information office sold ice-creams! (The freezer is solar-powered.) We hope to go back on a tree-planting trip and maybe even camp overnight so that we can see the kiwi next time.

– Christine Ball and Margi Keys

TUFF CRATER WORK DAYS

(Sat 9am start; Sun 10am start)

Tuff Crater is our key restoration project and we need your help! Work varies from light weeding to more energetic tasks. Draft dates are as follows:

April 3 (Sat) | May 8 (Sat) | June 13 (Sun) | July 10 (Sat) | August 7 (Sat)

These will be confirmed at

<http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/saving-our-environment/north-shore-calendar+>

Enquiries: northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

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.

Laptop sought

Our branch would dearly like to acquire its own laptop in order to facilitate PowerPoint/Keynote 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 2010

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

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 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 TAI*AO, NORTH SHORE BRANCH

WHAT'S ON

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 5th

Our special conservation message 'Home' is none other than that of Yann Arthus-Bertrand coming to you via our big screen! It is the acclaimed documentary film about our potential extinction or how to escape from it... Fifteen years in the making, impressive aerial cinematography was used to produce a powerful audio-visual experience which is highly recommended.

MAY – Monday 3rd

'Restoring dune ecosystems – lessons from the Auckland West Coast' by 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. It is also our AGM which will take place prior to the talk!

JUNE – Monday 7th

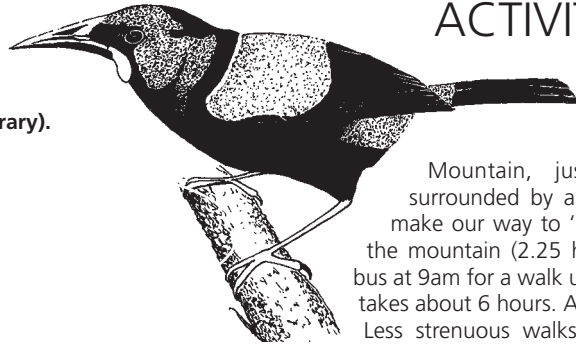
'Bush Walk and Talk' by Margi Keys. Come hear about this educational programme which has now been running for six years. It teaches members of the public how to identify NZ native plants and pest plants in the field. Margi is a long-time member of Forest & Bird and has a wealth of knowledge about native plants growing on the North Shore.

JULY – Monday 5th

Sarah Gibb will share on 'The Tongariro Natural History Society – Friends of Tongariro'. This is a group of people with an interest in the Tongariro National Park and a commitment to conservation. Sarah will introduce the society and then go into depth describing one of their restoration projects. This will be either Rotopounamu, a forest restoration project, or Waimarino, a wetland restoration in the South Taupo wetlands.

AUGUST – Monday 2nd

'A plan to extend marine protection around the Kermadec Islands' by Karen Baird (F&B Kermadec Campaigner/Advocate). Don't miss the promotion of a new concept in marine conservation, called BIG. Karen will explain how a campaign to increase marine protection boundaries around the Kermadecs is to be launched in partnership with Pew Environment Group (Pew Trusts) and WWF NZ. Come hear about this bold project for which Karen will be drumming up support!



ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS

April, Sat/Sun 24/25th.

**MAUNGATAUTARI
ECOLOGICAL ISLAND
TRAMP.**

Maungatautari Mountain, just south of Cambridge, is surrounded by a 42km predator fence. We will make our way to 'Out in the Styx' at the south of the mountain (2.25 hrs). Options include catching a bus at 9am for a walk up and over the mountain, which takes about 6 hours. A good level of fitness is required. Less strenuous walks are available at the southern enclosure and a visit to Jim Barnett Scenic Reserve and Lake Arapuni Walkway are other options. We plan to stay the night and return to Auckland on Sunday. Accommodation, ranging from bunks to double rooms, should be booked independently (www.styx.co.nz). Dinner, bed & breakfast is excellent value. If you'd like to register 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).

May, Saturday 22nd. AUCKLAND ZOO ENCOUNTER. Weather permitting a trip to the zoo will include a special encounter and in particular the Native Encounter at 2pm. This will give visitors a chance to get relatively close to a kiwi and a tuatara! Details to be finalised closer to the time with a negotiable entry rate for F&B trip-goers on the cards. For enquiries and registration, please contact Helene (ph 480 8851, willis24@extra.co.nz).

June, Sunday 13th. TUFF CRATER COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY, 10am (finishing midday). Come help restore this significant reserve – the Millennium Forest – under the auspices of F&B's Auckland Naturally programme and the NorthWest Wildlink (supported by NSCC). Bring a spade and gloves if you can, strong (watertight) footwear and join in our happy band of planters. Family, friends and neighbours welcome. For those driving, go to the end of Warehouse Way, through the Warehouse car park to the lower car park on the seaward side of the building. Hope to see you there! Ring Richard (410 5339) or Anne (480 5570) for further enquiries.

July, Saturday 24th. FERNGLEN NATIVE GARDEN WALK, 9am (2-3 hrs duration). Join caretaker Malcolm Fisher (son of Muriel Fisher) at 38 Kauri Rd, Birkenhead, for a walk around Fernglen gardens and the surrounding bush. See podocarps planted 90 years ago and NZ plants from all over the country. There is a lovely haven cottage for a cuppa and DVD for those who cannot go to the steeper parts of the property. For further information please phone Malcolm on 483 9421 or email raefisher@extra.co.nz.

August, Sunday 29th. MOTUORA ISLAND PLANTING/WEEEDING, 8am (afternoon return). This is Forest & Bird and KCC's annual planting and/or weeding trip to Motuora, an island sanctuary. Ferry departs Sandspit Wharf at 8 sharp and returns from the island between 4 and 4.30pm. The fare is \$20 for adults, \$10 for children 5-15 yrs (under 5 free). A sausage sizzle is provided for lunch. Parking in the Sandspit car park is \$5. Please contact Jocelyn Sanders to book (by 20 August) and for additional information contact: jocsanders@vodafone.co.nz, ph 479 2107.