



# Newsletter

Issue: 76

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## Chairperson's Report

*Peter Adams*



Christmas is here again and the southern rata (*Metrosideros umbellata*) is flowering beautifully around the Kahurangi.

The excitement is mounting within Friends of Flora as it appears that two of our kiwi pairs are currently incubating eggs. The egg of the first pair, Anatori and (we think) Anaweka, is due to hatch any day now. Sandy and Robin and their kiwi team have been monitoring the birds regularly and have installed a camera near

the nest. The egg of the second pair, Waiharekeke and Rameka, is due to hatch in early January.

At least the Graham Valley road has now reopened so that access up to the Flora is quicker and doesn't involve being ferried across landslips in a digger!

In addition to all this activity, Sandy and Robin have also been organising surveys of potential source sites for our next kiwi translocation which is planned for April/May 2013. This involves travelling to remote sites and listening for kiwi calls for several days to determine the number and makeup of the birds. In addition, they assess how difficult the terrain will make catching birds and the ease of access for getting the birds out.

In other news, Maryann and Bill led a team of US ecology students to start marking out the news lines in the Deep Creek area. This is their third trip to the Flora. We plan to get the new lines up and running before the kiwi release.

We have also had some more good news on the funding front. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have donated us \$6,000 plus we have had local contributions from Fernwood Holiday Park, Motueka Valley Association and the Lioness Club of Motueka. Sincere thanks for all of these.

Finally, I would like to wish season's greeting to everyone – let's all hope it is going to be a Merry Chickmas! (thanks to Sandra for that one...)

## Kiwi Update

*Sandy and Robin Toy*

First, an update on the breeding attempts described in the last newsletter. Anatori is still incubating and chick hatch is expected any day now.....

Waiharakeke and Rameka are also incubating.....

Unfortunately, Pakawau and Pikopiko abandoned their breeding attempt after 27 days incubation. The chart shows how their nightly activity dropped during the incubation period and subsequently increased to track the red line which is the number of hours between sunset and sunrise. We do not know the reason for this. It might have been an infertile egg.



Meanwhile plans are well under way for a second translocation of kiwi to the Flora. We have undertaken two intensive kiwi call surveys of potential source sites and have one more to do. A team of 8 people camped out for three nights at New Creek which is in the Orikaka Ecological Area to the east of Westport. The humans counted all kiwi calls for two hours from 45 minutes after sunset and did a second stint for a further two hours shortly before sunrise. Six acoustic listening devices were deployed at different locations and recorded all night. A total of 521 kiwi calls were recorded giving a call rate of about 3 calls/h, but there was significant variation between locations at the site (range 0 to 5.5 calls/h). Male/female duets amounted to 28% of the calls. This is encouraging because it means that there are established pairs in the area. This area is of relatively low altitude (200-400m), and comprises regenerating beech-podocarp forest. However, the terrain was surprisingly challenging in places with deep guts and dense scrubby re-growth. We were impressed with the range of birdlife and it was magical to hear kaka and kea as well as kiwi at night. The survey of the upper reaches of the Roaring Lion in the Kahurangi National Park required helicopter access, so only 3 people were involved and moved during the survey to cover a larger area.



A total of 208 kiwi calls were recorded giving a call rate of about 1.3 calls/h based on acoustic recorders, 2.3 calls/h based on people, but as at New Creek there was significant variation between locations at the site (range 0 to 4.0 calls/h). The smaller total number of calls partly reflects the smaller team and hence survey effort involved. Male/female duets amounted to 34% of the calls at this site. The valley of the upper Roaring Lion is at a higher altitude of about 700m.

We saw whio, but birdlife was generally very quiet. The photos show the valley, and Lesley chatting up the locals!

The third survey site is different again. It is on the Gunner Downs, a plateau at about 1100m to the south of the Heaphy River. There are a number of valleys around the periphery that appear to be good kiwi habitat and potentially practical for catching. So fingers crossed we hear good numbers.



Many thanks to all the volunteers involved for sitting out at very unsociable hours and to DOC staff in Motueka and Westport for facilitating the surveys.

### Operations Report

*Pamela Jenkins*

Operations are finally back to normal with the re-opening of the road to the Flora carpark. Great efforts from volunteers have meant that all line monitoring has been kept up to date. We have even managed to complete the surveying and marking of a new trapline through Deep Creek, which should be up and running early in the new year. The American Ecology students helped with this line by putting in markers, and this particular group saw a pair of unbanded whio in the lower reaches of Deep Creek near its



confluence with the Flora Stream. This is very good news indeed, as they are likely to be the offspring of birds introduced into the Flora Stream. Line maintenance this winter/spring has included calibration of all traps using a 110g weight for 200 traps (see photo), and a 100g weight for a 150. Some traps needed to be adjusted so they would go off at the required weight. Not a lot of pests have been caught during the winter, but possums, stoats and rats have all turned up in small numbers on different lines.

### Wayne's Corner

*Wayne Elia*



## American Ecology Students

*Maryann Ewers*

Once again we would like to thank Adam Dillon and Mike Fader, along with assistant Janice, from the Wildlands Studies group from the USA. With their group of 16 students, they spent a couple of days in the Cobb, doing conservation work for both FoF and Bush and Beyond. A great team of very enthusiastic students! Thanks also to Bill, Marie and Andy, for their help and supervision.

Thanks also to John Mason (DOC Golden Bay) for the use of the staff quarters in the Cobb, and to the Golden Bay Community Workers' Trust for the use of one of their houses.



## Enthusiatic Snail Lovers Needed!!

*Kate Steffens*

The Department of Conservation in Nelson plans to carry out a survey of our giant carnivorous land snails during the week of 18 February 2013. Eight Powelliphanta plots in the Flora will be surveyed. Six volunteers are needed, who will be divided into two teams of three, each with a DoC team leader. The work requires you to crawl through the bush on your hands and knees for hours on end, searching through the leaf litter. This may sound arduous, but in fact it is great fun and very interesting!

### For further information, please contact:

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## Sausage Sizzle

Another big 'thank you' goes to Judith and Tony Peters from the Fernwood Holiday Park in Motueka, for donating funds from their open day sausage sizzle to FoF, and also to Rankeilor and Peter, Marie, Helen and Nettie, for looking after the BBQ, and telling the visitors all about FoF at the same time!

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