



Newsletter

Issue: 66

May 2011

Friends of Flora AGM

Our 9th AGM was held on May 25, in which we had a good attendance.

Here are some highlights from Peter Adam's Chairs report:

February 2nd marked a milestone for FoF as it marked the 10th anniversary of our incorporation as a society. Many who were involved with starting the group are still actively involved. In addition, we have had a fantastic influx of keen new volunteers.

He spoke of our delight that Helen Clark has agreed to become our patron as this helps enormously with our visibility and ability to raise funds.

Peter talked of FoF having been divided into two main areas – the GSK project and the general work. He also spoke of how lucky we are to have had Robin and Sandy Toy relocate to Motueka and to now be in charge of the kiwi monitoring.

Special thanks were given to our sponsors; Lottery Grants Board, Ewing Poultry and T-Gear Trust.

In summary, Peter doesn't think FOF has ever been in such a strong position. "We have an excellent team of volunteers who seem to be able to handle any task thrown at them. We also have a wide range of skills which will allow us to develop into new areas of conservation." Peter thanked all the volunteers, plus DOC's Gavin Udy and Chris Golding, and the continuing support from committee.

Robin Toy gave a brief overview of the kiwi over their first year in the Flora.

Bill gave a summary of Operational work over the past 12 months;

All pest catch numbers have been low. He talked of; the line extensions completed, eggs gone in favour of eraze 8 bait, bird data has remained stable, the who are doing fine with new fledglings this season, seed funnels showed we didn't have a mast, the FTT's didn't show any rats or stoats, the mistletoe project has been started with the first seeds planted in the Flora, thanks to TDC for trap funding, Ewings Poultry for egg baits, Deep Creek to finish, and an extension of F line to be completed, data base showing useful data after 9 years, pointless monitoring over June/July due to winter weather.

Election of Officers;

Four committee members stood down; Andy Woodall, Wayne Wootton, Chris Potter and Philip Lissaman. Our thanks to each and every one of these people for the time and effort they have put in to FoF in their respective time on committee.

The new committee is as follows;

Chair – Peter Adams

Vice Chair/Secretary – Maryann Ewers

Treasurer – Sandra Bishop

Welcomer/Community – Lesley Hadley

Operations – Michael Douglas

Operations – Pamela Jenkins

Kiwi – Sandy Toy

There was a special motion put forward by the committee. Peter talked at length on the reason behind the motion, and said "The committee felt that we need as a society to have a view on this subject, and we felt that we should publicly support DOC and AHB in their responsible use of poisons on a case by case basis. The motion was unanimously agreed on by voting members and read as follows:

"FOF publicly supports DOC and AHB on the strategic and responsible use of poisons, including aerial 1080, for pest control in the area of, and immediately surrounding the Upper Takaka catchment, provided that the benefits can be clearly demonstrated"

Friends of Flora AGM cont;

Sandy Toy was our guest speaker for the evening, giving us coverage of all aspects of the kiwi, from their transmitting in the Clark, through the translocation and follow up monitoring of the birds for the past 12 months.

Mistletoe project underway!

With 13 mistletoe seeds (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*) having been planted on 6 mountain beech trees earlier this month, our mistletoe project in the Flora. The head of Helen Lindsey. Helen is 'lucky finds'. Newly arrived arrives with an impressive volunteer work, for such Restoration Society and Tiri DOC and Massey around forest restoration Locally she is a volunteer and also a committee of Mangarakau.

The mistletoe seeds were Ridge a couple of days prior DOC Takaka for allowing us seed will be collected for planting, as they mature. Hopefully this is the beginning of a bright (red) future for mistletoe in the Flora!



Helen Lindsey 'planting' mistletoe seed

is once again underway our mistletoe project is another one of FOF's in Motueka, Helen resume of both paid and projects as; Motutapu Tiri Matangi and also for University – mostly and weed control work. for the Brook Sanctuary member for the Friends

collected from the Cobb to planting. Thanks to to take them. Further

Kiwi Update – Robin Toy

Kiwi Call Counting

Anyone visiting Mount Arthur hut stands a good chance of hearing Totaranui and Parapara dueting. Soon after dark one of them, often Parapara will call and Totaranui responds. Sitting on a hill under the stars listening for kiwi can be a heart-warming experience; it can also be beastly cold.

As well as being emotionally uplifting, counting calls can be a valuable means of collecting information about kiwi numbers. Call counting can be used either to survey for kiwi (are they there or not) and to estimate changes in relative abundance. There are well established methods for kiwi call count surveys and they have been used, sometimes over large areas using huge teams of people. Robin recently attended a meeting of kiwi practitioners in Havelock North, the annual, BNZ /DOC national kiwi Hui, at which there were several presentations on developments in call counting techniques, including the use of acoustic devices.

When kiwis are abundant, call counting can be a thrilling experience, when they are scarce counters tend to get tired, bored and cold and they make mistakes. This has led to the development of electronic acoustic devices that record sound as a sonogram. This can be rapidly scanned and the distinctive patterns made by different calls can be counted. Hours of recording can be scanned in minutes and sections of the **sonogram** can be played to confirm that the pattern recorded actually is a kiwi. What's more the record is permanent. One of the main advantages of acoustic devices is that they can be left out for night after night after night before the batteries go flat. Compare that to a human count which typically covers a couple of hours, three times in a season. This is the main reason they are so useful when kiwi are scarce. Are they as good as human ears? Well, it depends. On a still night human ears hear more kiwi, but on a windy night, the devices are better at distinguishing kiwi calls above the wind noise. In a recent survey in

Kiwi Update cont:

the Karori Sanctuary, Wellington a device picked up 75% of the calls picked up by human listeners, 6% not picked up by the human listeners and determined that the humans had a 5% error rate. The device was at ground level, the humans up a tower, if they'd been at the same level, the 75% would presumably have been greater. To quote Stu Cockburn, an electronic engineer at DOC, counters 'Don't get tired, don't get bored, don't get cold, don't make mistakes.....they're just a little bit deaf'.

Could we use acoustic devices in the Flora? We think so, since they are ideal for areas where kiwi are scarce. We are exploring options to borrow or rent some devices for surveying Deep Creek next summer.

Farewell Gavin!

It is with sadness we are about to farewell Motueka DOC's Gavin Udy after 8 years. Gavin finishes here on June 10th, after having accepted a position with DOC in Alexander, where he will begin working later the same month. He will hold the same position there, as he has here – that of Programme Manager for Biodiversity, which he has held since Tim Shaw left us in 2007.



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Gavin has been deeply involved with FOF ever since his arrival here, and we thank him for the time and effort he has put in to help us with our project – always with a great deal of patience and willingness to listen.

Under his liaison; FOF are well on the way to having a sustainable population of Whio in the Flora, we have begun our GSK project, and has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DOC, and a 5-year Operation Plan which we update annually (This has been a wonderful tool to keep FOF on track with the work we are doing now and into the future).

We wish Gavin, his partner Rebecca, and son Lucas, the very best, and hope to see them back here visiting the Flora from time to time!

Thanks to Donors!

We have had a number of donations recently, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you.

A number of these have been donated from hikers who have been in our trapping area, and have been pleased with the work being done by FOF volunteers.

Each dollar ensures the continuation of Friends of Flora, and our conservation work.

...another farewell

One of our early 'FoFers' passed away earlier this month, at the age of 83. We would like to pay tribute to Clyde Smith for his years as a FoF trapper, and for all the times he ferried volunteers backwards and forwards along the Flora road in his 4X4. He was a mind of information, and enjoyed passing on stories, and the knowledge he gained from his worldly travels.

Thanks Clyde!

April's Catch Results

Stoats – 10

Rats – 32

Mice - 1

Possums - 6

A reminder to all Volunteers

This is for all volunteers on our FoF list to remind you, if you haven't been called up for a monitoring weekend for some time, and you feel you have been missing out, please contact your line leader and remind them.

FoF leaders will sometimes stop ringing people on their list if they have tried to get them a few times, and they haven't been available to make it up to the mountain on those particular weekends. Remember, the FoF leaders are also only volunteers, and if they know a particular person/s will always be available, they may be more likely to contact them first.

So please... if you feel you would like to help, each team goes up on either of the last two weekends of the month, so give your team leader a call. If you can't remember who your team leader is, send an email to fof@fof.org.nz and we can find out for you and send his/her contact information to you.

Until next time...

**Maryann on behalf of the
Friends of Flora Team**

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