



Newsletter

Issue 101

December 2017

You'll note that this Newsletter has hit a new century, and thanks must go to Ivan and his predecessors for maintaining the flow of FOF information to all our volunteers and partners.

In issue 100 Ivan illustrated the steady expansion in our trapping network, also including some eye watering statistics. FOF were credited for introducing R, X and Y lines in 2011, however they were in fact funded, laid out, checked and maintained by Maryann and Bill's Bush and Beyond, as a natural addition to their line up the Cobb Valley. In 2014, when their business was sold, they generously gifted these lines, and records, to merge with the adjacent FOF network.

Conservation Week - October 2017

Michelle wore both DOC and FOF caps during the late October DOC Conservation Week display at Bradford Park, East Nelson, which hosted DOC and other like-minded conservation and predator control parties - providing good interaction with interested members of the public. To maximise FOF specific volunteer signup interest, hopefully such events could be periodically held at a Motueka/Tasman location.

Michelle and daughter Maddie, all set up at Bradford Park.



Double trap replacement layouts - A and G lines - November 2017

A further (100+) delivery of double traps was prioritised by Menshed, and two student groups - locally based **Whenua Iti** and USA based **Wildlands Studies** - generously provided their time and labour to assist in their layout along A and G lines.

Despite some poor weather, good progress was made - and, undoubtedly, additional fitness gained. Well done to both teams for their support to this upgrade project.

The Wildlands students were on their 9th annual Kahurangi NP study visit under Mikey Fader's watch, and have consistently provided invaluable assistance to our work under the watchful eyes of Maryann, Bill and Ivan, who have enjoyed their interaction with these enthusiastic visitors. Times are a changing, though, with Maryann and Bill relinquishing their liaison role, and welcoming other similarly keen FOF members to take up the challenge for future WS visits.



The well laden Whenua Iti students loaded up for A line (top), and some of the Wildlands Studies students working on the G line trap replacements (bottom).



Nelson/Tasman trapping Workshop - December 2017

Friends of Flora had a good presence at this Workshop held 3rd December, addressed by a selection of keynote pest control speakers, followed by practical workshops, including Ivan and Nick's trap maintenance quiz, and regional issue discussion. View the various keynote speakers at <http://nelson.govt.nz/environment/biodiversity-2/nelson-nature/pest-trapping-workshop>

Predator Free 2050 was the stimulus for this collective knowledge - protection tools, techniques and technology - focus, brought together by the Nelson and Tasman District Councils and DOC, supported by the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary.



Nicola Toki, DOC's Threatened Species Ambassador, with Michelle and Ivan, at the Workshop

Kiwi update December 2017 - Hope in the Flora - from Sandy and Robin Toy

Hot on the heels of the discovery of Te Hapu's friend 'Hebe' reported in the last newsletter, we've made another exciting discovery. A little kiwi has been seen repeatedly on the video clips taken at Hoire and Poai's nest. From its' size and playful behaviour we believe it is their chick from last year. Last season we nicknamed it Yoyo because when it was little, it was often seen bouncing in and out of the nest. Its' indecisive nature is still evident: it will leave the nest and then come back a few seconds later. It also appears to give its' Mum, Poai a hard time. There is one video clip of it chasing her out of the nest, pecking her bum and another of it pouncing on her! Check out the clip of it foraging, on -

FOF's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofflora/videos/1815436225133143/>

This season we've renamed the little fella 'Hope'. It is now a year old and should be able to fend off stoats and be secure in the Flora for decades to come. This is the third chick that this pair has successfully raised to stoat proof weight in 5 years. It really does give hope that despite the very low reproductive rate of roroa, they are breeding successfully in the Flora and this iconic species will continue to thrive so long as we can maintain intensive predator control.

In case you're wondering, roroa chicks will hang out with their parents for months or years and attendance at subsequent nests is not uncommon.

It's a bumper kiwi breeding season, but the exceptionally dry conditions are making things tough for parents and chicks. Fingers crossed for rain soon.

An exciting new Alpine Project - *from Lesley Hadley*

The alpine zone is an important component of the Greater Flora. However despite its significance, relatively little is known about the introduced species and their impacts on the many threatened alpine species. The alpine zone also has very easy access for Friends of Flora volunteers. During the last two summers FOF did some preliminary surveys for weta and reptiles using footprint-tracking lines sited in the Arthur ridge environ. It was exciting to find a presence of the alpine weta, *Deinacrida tibiospina* and the *Woodworthia* gecko and incredibly exciting to find some prints of the elusive black-eyed gecko.

Friends of Flora is now setting up a more comprehensive monitoring project which draws on experience and protocol from DOC research programmes that are presently underway in Kahurangi and throughout the South Island. In the first phase we'd like to understand if there's a direct relationship in weta and gecko abundance in relation to predator and tussock masting dynamics. Any data gained from FOF's project would be contributed to the development of an effective management strategy for the alpine zone.

We've already put in an extra Forest (rodent) FTT in the bush/alpine transition zone and in early January we'll install weta and gecko FTTs. These cards will be changed weekly from mid-January to mid-March. A February trip will also be planned to do some invertebrate night wandering, pellet counting and plant phenology - so there are plenty of opportunities for learning and sharing of information! This project also aims to raise the awareness of the alpine environment and involve FOF volunteers, *so keep your eye out for any invites that arrive on your computer*



Lesley and Ruedi placing new FTT on the Arthur ridge

All the best for an enjoyable and safe festive season.

Gerald Bruce-Smith
Editor

