



# Newsletter

No.103

June 2018

Welcome to some winter reading, and more news on Friends of Flora's activities. Cyclone Gita's February destructive passage through our Tasman District continues to impact on the Cobb access road, having restrictions placed on usage and thereby on our trap checks along Cobb Ridge. On the kiwi front, it's been hands off them, but hands on the recent Kiwis for Kiwis awards. The Friends of Flora achieved a trifecta at the June 2018 Kiwis for Kiwi awards, being recognised for the great work undertaken by the kiwi team and the group's overall commitment to conservation, with three prizes. Congratulations to the recipients and the FOF volunteers who have contributed to the project – all worthy winners! A complimentary message from the Sunshine State reinforces that message.

## Kiwi News, from Robin Toy -

All the transmitters are removed from the kiwi. Thank you to all those who have contributed to the project over the last 8 years – both trackers and trappers. Sandy and I have kept a tally of volunteer days for the kiwi project excluding trapping and our own hours. The total: 998.5. I'm sure we missed a few along the way, so we must have exceeded 1000 volunteer days. This herculean project was recognised at the recent Kiwi Hui organised by Kiwis for Kiwi, in conjunction with the Kiwi Recovery Group and DOC.

The Friends of Flora took out the inaugural *Tohu Tiketike - Kiwi Project of the Year* award, received on the group's behalf by Ruedi, Paul and I.

Ruedi was awarded joint *Kiwi Conservation Image of the Year* first prize for his picture of Iwa's impressive feet, which the judges commented conjured up the feeling of kiwi work – not being all fluffy feathers and cute pictures!

Sandy and I won the roroa *Good Eggs - Volunteer of the year* award for our work with FOF, and on the distribution of kiwi through NW Nelson, plus our ongoing contribution to the roroa species plan.

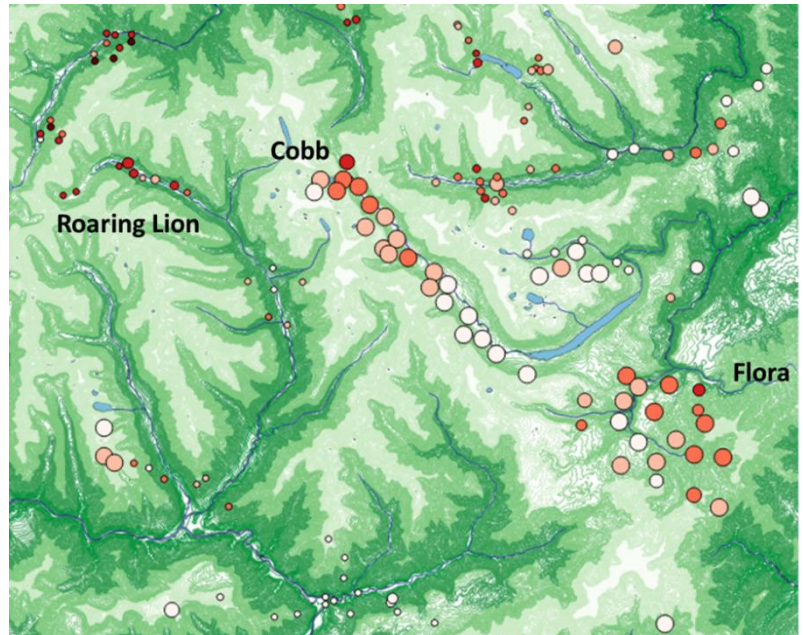


Robin, Ruedi and Paul with the *Tohu Tiketike* award



The award on display at DOC Motueka

We've completed the analysis of the first year's monitoring using acoustic recorders. The map shows the frequency of kiwi calls in the Flora and also the Cobb. The size of the spots represents the number of hours recording, the depth of colour the call rate. The recorders were positioned to have good acoustic coverage, but not to pick up specific kiwi. We were surprised that most recorders in the Flora picked up kiwi calls. One had a male call so close it was uncomfortable to listen to the recording. This recorder was outside all known kiwi territories, so who is this mystery caller? We learned a lot from this year's monitoring and will do it again with modifications next year.



Sandy and Robin - the K4K roroa *Good Eggs* winners - captured by Ruedi in their favoured Kahurangi environment



Ruedi's joint winning image of Iwa's claws



## At the recent AGM, the FOF Chairperson of eight years, Peter Adams, stood down.

He kindly reflects on this busy and productive period, for us –

I became Chair of FOF almost by accident - Maryann was looking to reduce her and Bill's involvement and I had made the mistake of suggesting some ideas for the future. We had just started the kiwi project back in 2010 when I took over and this has been one of the key FOF projects ever since then. As Chair, my role was to ensure that we had the right structures and people in place to manage and raise funding for the project right through to its conclusion. Finding Robin and Sandy to manage the project was obviously a key element in its overall success but the financial management role which Sandra took on was also crucial. In addition, there were many volunteers who helped with the translocations and ongoing monitoring with never ending enthusiasm.

Another key milestone was getting the Salisbury Ecological Management Unit (EMU) recognised as an important ecological area of national significance, worthy of long term management. This was achieved in partnership with DOC Motueka and now is the basis for all our future planning and budgeting. This has also formed the basis for the Community Agreement and MoU signed with DOC which will cement our relationship into the future.

Internally, we have managed to spread the management load over a wider number of number of people, both formal committee members plus other key volunteers who would never be seen in a meeting room. The Volunteer Management System developed largely for free by Wedowebites has been the backbone for this as it has allowed FOF to plan events, invite volunteers and record trap catches. It also has been an excellent tool for disseminating information to all our volunteers and supporters via newsletters, email and our website.

Finally, month after month, year after year, come rain or shine we have managed to carry on the key role of FOF; checking and maintaining our trap lines. This is a major undertaking for a small volunteer group, especially as over the last 8 years we have added many new traplines in the Deep Creek and Grecian valleys, all of which require long and difficult access. This has allowed the Flora and surrounding area to remain a haven for many of our threatened birds and fragile ecosystems.

The committee and members all share in thanking Peter for his contribution to FOF's achievements during that period, ensuring managed growth and positive outcomes. He continues to be on the FOF committee.

## Mike Malone reports on trap replacement work -

The new double traps replacement programme has got underway again for this year commencing on the C line - up the Cloustons Mine track. A dedicated team of 6 went up on a frosty Friday morning 22<sup>nd</sup> June and started unloading the new traps – I doubt whether it got above 0 degrees all day!!

Great work from Andy, Pat, Ruedi, Greg and Gerald who did all the carrying up of the new traps - and bringing back down the old traps - whilst Mike sorted them in situ. A hard uphill slog with everyone doing multiple trips, and we managed to replace 31 traps so well worth the effort. The remaining new C line traps will be dropped off by helicopter at the top end, so a much easier carry predominately downhill. This will be completed later in the year once the snow recedes.

There were another 30 traps off loaded and stockpiled ready for the next trap replacement event so this will be programmed in another few weeks depending on the weather.



## Ivan Rogers comments on an emailed surprise –

Several months ago I received an email out of the blue from Californian visitor – and former Richmond resident - David Price, who was thrilled to encounter two kakariki on the Mt Arthur Track.

David contacted DOC and FOF to say –

I'm on a short visit from California, where I now live. In May I hiked up to Mt Arthur Hut, and along the ridge with a predominance of *dracaena*, not far from the picnic bench, I flushed two Yellow-crowned Parakeet. I was astonished, never having seen them before. Is this usual now? Are they becoming common in the Park or in the predator-managed areas? Are they likely to be dispersed birds from the Abel Tasman National Park reintroduction? I was able to photograph them for about 10 minutes until some other trampers came along and scared them off. The photos are on my website at –

<https://www.laughingfrogphotography.com/Travel/NewZealand/i-bRWbCh/A> and

<https://www.laughingfrogphotography.com/Travel/NewZealand/i-qwrLH7N/A>

I took a GPS reading at the site, if the coordinates interest you. Apart from being a life bird for me, it was so incredible to see them, and all the other native birds which are now so abundant (I got almost 20 tomtits, quite a number of rifleman, and six weka). The only one of those species that I remember from my younger years, growing up in Richmond and often hiking up Mt Arthur or the Tablelands, was the rifleman. You folk, and DOC, are doing such important and amazing work, and the results are evident in the lush, alive-with-birds-and-their-songs beech forest that is so precious to me and others like me. Keep up the good work, and don't become discouraged by the 1080 protesters. We, the majority, are with you. Next time I'm back there in my homeland I want to go and see the whio. May your efforts and their results increase in every good sense of the word. David

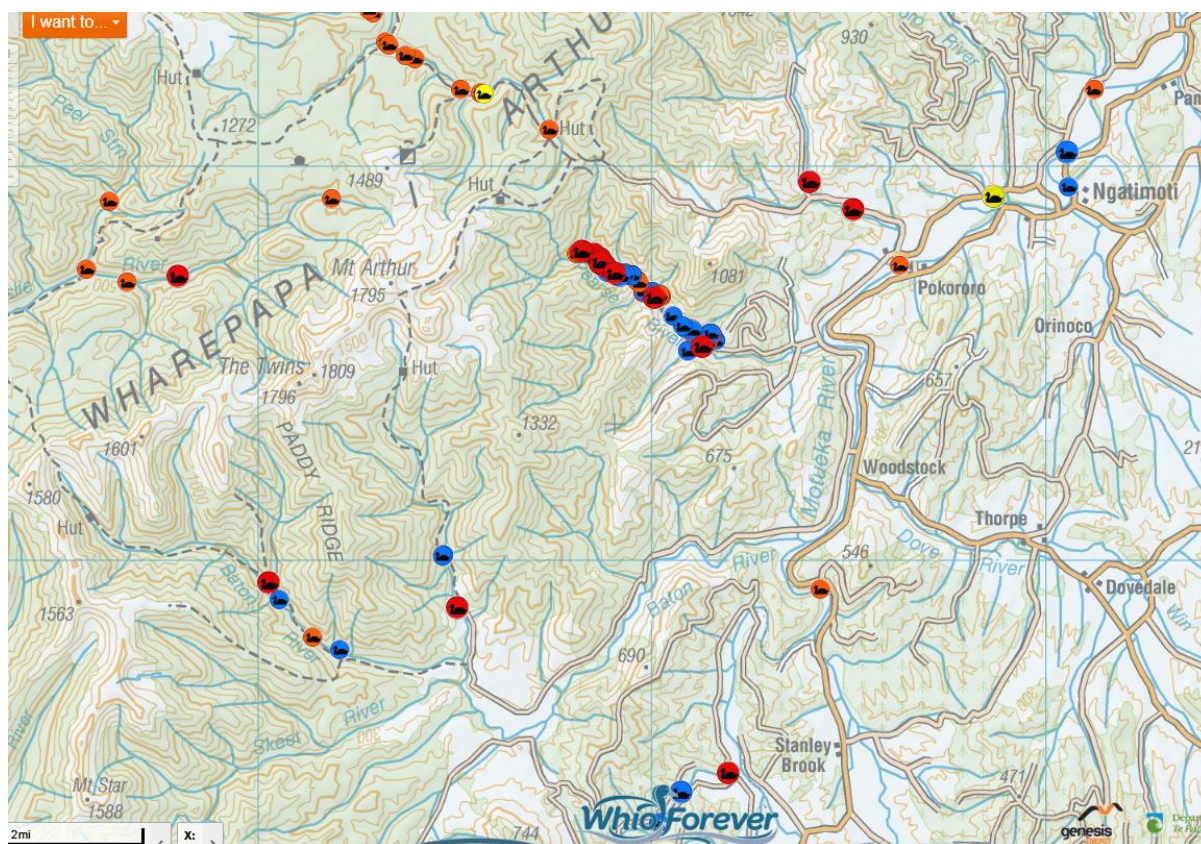


*Keep taking images like this, David, and you're welcome anytime - Ed*



## Ivan, with a note from our neighbours – Farmers for Whio

Trapping over the past 16 years has allowed the successful re-establishment of whio in the Flora with a steady population of around five pairs producing ducklings most seasons. The adjacent Pearse River has been trapped for a similar period and is also a good source of ducklings. These ducklings grow up and disperse into nearby waterways – particularly the Graham and Motueka Rivers. Graham Valley residents Sky Davies and James Griffiths, together with Steve Palmer from the Baton, are the core of a new community conservation group “Farmers for Whio” who aim to suppress predators to provide protection for whio on waterways flowing out of Kahurangi and into farmland. Starting with renovated DOC 200s donated by FOF as their Flora trap network is renewed, FFW’s traps are now marching up the Graham Valley Rd, up to the Baton swingbridge, and into the Skeet - and catching lots of stoats. New traps have been purchased by the group with funding from Predator-Free 2050. The group has a lofty aim – to trap the entirety of the Motueka catchment to allow whio to breed freely there. And why not? FOF started small!



Motueka catchment whio from Whio Manager database

### A note from the Editor –

We all love praise, particularly when it is justly warranted, and this Newsletter has again highlighted significant progress on a number of conservation and biodiversity enhancement fronts. Equally worthy of praise are our donors, who have contributed enormously to fund these achievements, and have expressed on-going commitments of support. Thank you for your confidence in our endeavours, and enjoy the journey!

Gerald Bruce-Smith