



Newsletter

Issue: 80

July/August 2013

Chairperson's Report

Peter Adams

We took the opportunity of the quieter, winter months to review our current plans and to brainstorm new opportunities and directions for the group. Some great ideas came out of the meeting including doing a "bioblitz". This would involve looking at the various ecosystems in the Flora and making an inventory of all the flora and fauna in these areas. This idea came out of the great work done by Forest & Bird on the Denniston plateau. We hope this will give us an insight into any rare species or remnant populations in the area that might benefit from future management.

In addition, we are developing a community awareness strategy to communicate what we do in a better way. Ideas included better signage at the Flora carpark and other key locations, a FOF uniform and an education toolbox for children. We hope this will lead to a new generation of Foffers in the years to come.

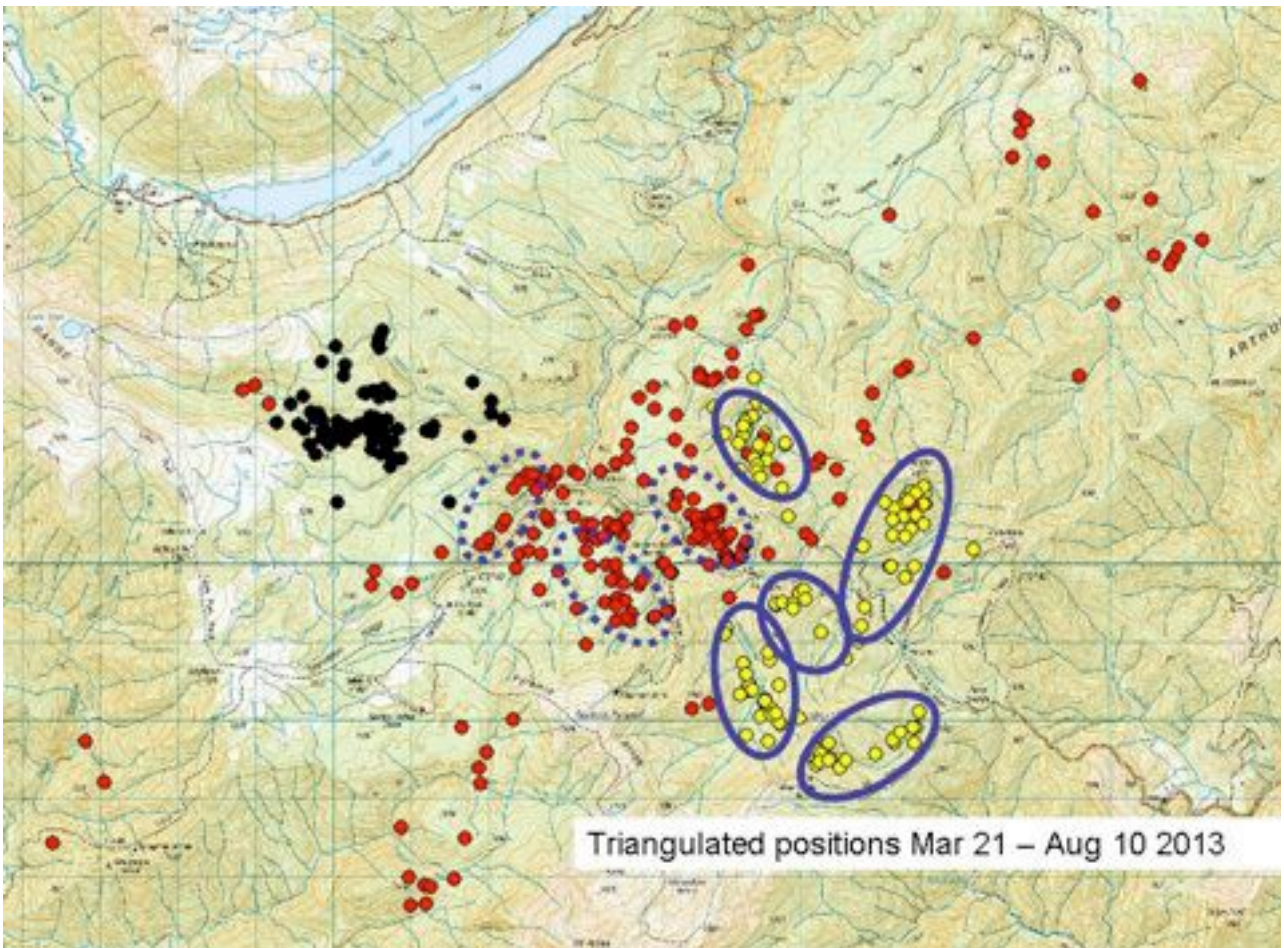
These ideas will be discussed and developed over the coming months and then incorporated into our 5 year operational plan. Thanks for everyone who took part and especially to Peter Gaze who gave us the benefit of his many years of experience in conservation.

Kiwi Update

Sandy and Robin Toy

Monitoring the post-translocation movements of the kiwi is proving fascinating. The map below shows how the kiwi from the three different source sites are spread across the project area. The yellow dots are the original kiwi brought in from the Clark, now occupying 5 distinct territories. The red dots are the kiwi from New Creek. Several of them are real wanderers, but three 'pairs' seem to be settling into territories. Two other New Creek males are starting to muscle in on Rakopi's territory in Ghost Creek. The black dots are kiwi from the Roaring Lion which are starting to move out into separate home ranges. The good news is that Iwa, the New Creek female that we brought back from the Peel in June, is still in her new home in Deep Creek (the red dots in the north west of the map).

Having focussed so much on these kiwi it was great to meet people working on other great spotted kiwi projects at a GSK practitioners' hui in mid-August. It was particularly interesting to learn about the nest monitoring work undertaken by the DOC team in the Hawdon and Hurunui. Over the past two years they have monitored 27 nests using infra-red trail cameras and put radio transmitters on juveniles arising from the nests. Their chick survival results will be very useful to us in planning how to monitor our kiwi population. They also generated some incredible video footage: kiwis fighting outside the nest, kea entering and predating nests, possum being evicted from a nest (go kiwi!), stoats entering nests both pre and post hatch. There's still a lot we don't know about these amazing birds but by sharing data and knowledge in this way we can short-cut the learning time.



Operations Report

Bill Rooke

Over the winter season there is usually very little activity up on our mountain due to snow. Monitoring is suspended for June and July as many boxes are under snow and it is always the low catch time. I line is always attempted though, to keep up our bird data, and was done in both months. Three stoats, 13 rats and 7 mice were caught. Snowfall this year has been very low which may not be good for birds as cold winters can lower predator numbers substantially. It will be interesting to see what we catch when all lines are done in August. The mild winter has enabled us to get a few other jobs done. The new S line has been set and baited and U line is almost ready to go. The tablelands line (K line) that starts around the pothole area has been surveyed and marked. It has 50 stations. We hope to have that up and running by November.



Looks like fun?



The kiwi in the Flora carry radio transmitters. Our kiwi monitoring team track them from a distance to learn where they are and how active they are at night, an indicator as to whether they are breeding. This information is essential to understand whether we are on track to achieve a sustainable kiwi population in the Flora. The monitoring involves long days in the bush, often off track, with long periods stationary, sometimes on freezing ridge tops, trying to pick up elusive ‘beeps’ from the transmitters. But if you enjoy a challenge the experience is very rewarding. You receive training in radio telemetry, and you don’t need to worry about gym fees! Contact us if you’re interested in joining the kiwi team or in finding out more about the monitoring.

Friends of Flora

P: PO Box 317,
Motueka 7143,
New Zealand
T: 03 528 9054
E: fof@fof.org.nz
W: www.fof.org.nz