



Newsletter

Issue: 63

February 2011

This issue marks the 10th anniversary for the Friends of Flora becoming an Incorporated Society – February 2nd to be exact!

However, first and foremost on our minds, is the horrific earthquake which struck Christchurch at 12:51 pm on the 22nd of February. I would like to take this opportunity to pass on to all FoF volunteers and supporters, well wishes to each and everyone of you who is, or has family involved in the aftermath of this tragic disaster. Our thoughts are with you all at this time. Ed.

Kiwi Update — Sandy and Robin Toy

A big milestone has been reached in the kiwi re-introduction project. The batteries in the transmitters are nearing the end of their lives. Catching the birds to change their transmitters has given us the opportunity to see how well they're doing in the Flora. Some birds have put on weight compared to when they were captured in the Clarke Basin; others are about the same weight and condition. So, they're doing fine.

We've had a few surprises. Rakopi dropped his transmitter at the end of January. The resulting mortality signal got our pulses going until the transmitter was recovered. Luckily we located him snuggled up in a burrow with Aorere a few days later and were able to put a new transmitter on him. It appears that all our birds, except Patoto, who is a lone male, may spend quite a bit of time sharing a burrow with their mates. Interestingly Totaranui and Parapara were in a burrow that was well used and from close triangulation done in December we think they may have been there for a couple of months. No sign of any eggs or chicks though.

Here are a few pictures from the TX changing season.

A: Parapara wondering how he can get back into his burrow without flying!

B: Robin & Sandy with Totaranui suffering the indignity of having her ribs and bum squeezed to assess her condition. Hanging upside down isn't as stressful for kiwi as it would be for us and this is the standard way to assess condition. (Photo Sandra Bishop)

C: Robin and FoF volunteer Paul banding Anatori. The red arrow shows the entrance to the burrow. This is a very big entrance- fortunately, since Robin had to wriggle inside to get Anatori!

a)



b)



c)



Kiwi update cont.

Cobb Kiwi call count survey:

February 12th was a calm, mild, albeit fairly moonlit night. An amazing 27 volunteers (Friends of Cobb and a few FoFers) undertook a synchronised kiwi call count over 2 hours at 14 listening stations along the Cobb Valley.

The results are very exciting. Two definite pairs and a single male were recorded, plus several 'maybes'. Later in the week Maryann reported a pair of GSK heard from the DOC hostel near the Cobb dam. This is the same location where a pair of kiwi were heard and sighted in the summer of 2010. The count has demonstrated the practicality of the counts and that there are kiwi in the valley. Repeated counts may give a better indication of baseline distribution of birds and over time, indicate whether the population is stable, increasing or declining.

Another count is scheduled for Saturday 12 March. Please contact Sandy & Robin (03 528 8843) or Friends of Cobb, if you would like to be involved.

FoF volunteer Chris wrote this about the Cobb Valley kiwi survey:

A team of four from FoF travelled to the Cobb on Saturday 12 February to assist Friends of Cobb (FoC) with the first survey of GSK in the area. After a briefing from Sandy and Robin Toy at the Cobb Reservoir, 14 teams spread out along the valley all the way up to near Fenella Hut.

Their task was to listen for kiwi calls for 2 hours starting after sunset, noting all relevant details on a standard form. While the full results of the survey are covered above, it can be reported that the two FoF teams enjoyed a beautiful clear night but sadly heard no kiwi calls. Now that the FoF and FoC trap networks are linked we can look forward to more friendly co-operation between our groups.

FTT's – Footprint Tracking Tunnels – 0% tracked!!

February is the month for the annual DOC/FOF FTT deployment, to keep an eye on the stoat and rodent index throughout our trapping project.

For those of you who don't know how we do this; we have a series of 10 lines running adjacent to trap lines throughout our trapping project. Each line has 10 tunnels placed at 50 metre intervals. To track the rodents, an ink pad is placed in all 10 tunnels and baited with peanut butter. These are left out for one night only, and then retrieved. The stoat ink pads are put in only 5 of the tunnels, every 100 metres, and left out for 3-nights and baited with fresh meat.

NB: We are tracking rodents twice a year – November and February. Stoat tracking is now done once a year only.

We are pleased to say – no stoats or rodents were detected. 0%! Thanks to Bill for the mammoth job of organising these 3 days on the mountain, and all FOF volunteers and DOC staff who took part in this.



FOF's 10th anniversary

As mentioned earlier, 2011 is FOF's 10th anniversary, and we think worthy of celebrating! We haven't any details for exactly what we will be doing at this stage... but watch this space! We can say it will be in August. And we can also say our Patron Helen Clark has kindly accepted our invitation to visit us over this celebration period. We want to be doing something for the wider community to also be involved in. As more details come to hand, they will be reported in future newsletters.

What's that plant?

Filmy fern (*Hymenophyllum malingii*)

You probably won't have noticed this special plant because it almost only grows in moist grooves on the trunks or stumps of mountain cedar and it doesn't even have a common name. Look out for it on the cedars on A line as you head up to Mt Arthur hut. This is not a typical fern; the colours are quite beautiful but discrete so you'll have to look quite carefully! Once you get your eye in you'll wonder how you ever missed it.

Although many conspicuous vegetation, the richly endowed in other places. NZ species and 35 become wild. This is a tiny known species worldwide, but is fairly typical of temperate floras.



ferns are a feature of NZ's country is not as species as many has 194 native introduced and have established in the fraction of the 12,000

However, with 27 species, filmy ferns are the largest family of ferns in NZ. They thrive in humid forests – their translucent fronds, just one or two cells thick, lose water easily and curl up in dry conditions. As with so many NZ plants, this little fern occurs only in NZ, nowhere else in the world. (Photos Melanie Newfield)

January's catch results

January's catch results are unavailable at this time. We hope to have them in next month's newsletter. Ed.

Until next time...

Maryann
On behalf of the Friends of Flora Team

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