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# Newsletter

Issue 88

June 2015

## Yellowheads heading our way?

Graeme Elliot, DOC scientist and also chair of the Mohua Charitable Trust, recently addressed the FoF committee on the prospect of re-establishing mohua (yellowheads) in the Flora. The trust considers the Flora an appropriate site - beech forest with predator control in place and, over recent years, relatively low rat numbers. Mohua are presumed extinct in Kahurangi, the last confirmed sighting being from Canaan in 1984. However, Fiordland NP still has a healthy population and this is a potential source of birds for the Flora. There is a lot of work to do to facilitate a possible transfer and this will be pursued with DOC through the Salisbury Ecological Management Unit plan.



## Kiwi update – June 2015

We've just pulled in the last of the kiwi nest cameras from the 2014/2015 season. Hopefully in another three months we'll be putting them out again for the 2015/2016 season.

We've changed transmitters on 20 kiwi, one other eluded us dropping his transmitter 10 days before we went to change it. The picture shows Ruedi in the latter stages of searching for this dropped transmitter, which we eventually found 30 cm from the entrance to a



wasp nest! This year we encountered some monster burrows with multiple chambers, entrances and even storeys, so it's a relief to have all the transmitter changes completed.

The kiwi continue to surprise us. One of the Deep Creek pairs split up despite having bred every year since they were translocated. Within 10 days Whakangangahu, the male, had moved 3.5 km and paired up with Te Kau, a single female. Interestingly, they're now residing adjacent to Te Kau's earlier territory, rather than in it. Meanwhile Toro-ngangara, Whakangangahu's previous mate, remains single. Let's hope there is another Cobb bachelor out there for her.

In the last newsletter we reported that two pairs were on their third breeding attempt for 2014/2015. We have not seen three breeding attempts in a season before, so we were really pleased when we changed transmitters to confirm that one of these third attempts was successful – there was a 6 week old chick in the back of the burrow with both adults.

We've also been delighted to confirm that there is a female kiwi in the bush beyond the Grecian on the way to Barron's Flat. We picked her up on acoustic recorders in March, but extra trials were needed to confirm the bird calling is not a translocated kiwi. It isn't. It is possible that this newly-discovered kiwi is Anaweka, the wanderer from our first translocation who dropped her transmitter way over in the Pearse, returned to the Flora to breed, but then disappeared again. Or, it could be an unknown bird. We plan on doing a more extensive acoustic survey of this area in the spring, but unless Tahī, the one male with a transmitter in the area starts to breed, we are unlikely to identify the new female.

## Gear Shed

We seem to be outgrowing the little gear shed that has served FoF faithfully for the past 12 or 13 years. Originally at Wayne and Judy's in Trewavas St it was moved to Tich's place opposite the Mouere Store a few years later and then to its present spot in the DOC yard a couple of years ago. However it is cramped and unpowered and much of our gear - publicity panels, uniforms etc is stored elsewhere. There may also be a need in the near future to store bait in a fridge/freezer so power will be needed, plus we currently have to charge radio batteries off-site. The FoF committee is looking at options, so if anyone reading this has a suggestion or maybe has an underused garage, sleepout or whatever in Motueka please contact Ivan on [rogers.johnstone@kinect.co.nz](mailto:rogers.johnstone@kinect.co.nz)

## Rats traps to go

Line Leaders are asked to make a start on removing rat traps from those lines that still have them. This decision is based on the following:

- Rat traps are responsible for unwanted by-catch of birds
- They are largely ineffective at catching rats , and
- Many of the corflute tunnels are deteriorating, allowing access for by-catch and looking unsightly.

## AGM.

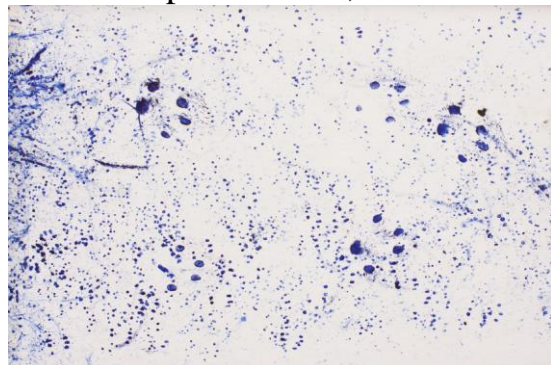
Our Annual General Meetings seem to keep on getting bigger and better. This year's AGM was held in a new venue - the Motueka Sports Pavilion and attracted perhaps our biggest attendance ever. After the committee reports, our keynote speaker was acclaimed filmmaker, actor and naturalist Peter Hayden, narrator of Owen Kilgour's Friends of Flora short movie. After a screening of the movie Peter spoke to his new book "An Extraordinary Land: Discoveries and Mysteries from Wild New Zealand". Several of those attending commented on the huge amount of work we are getting done in the Flora.

## New appointments

This year's AGM also confirmed committee appointments for the coming year. Marie Firth and Nettie Stow have stood down from committee duties but will both remain very much involved. Thank you both for your work over the past years. We welcome back Maryann Ewers in an advocacy role and welcome Mike Malone who with Lesley Hadley will focus on operations. Meanwhile Ivan moves from ops to Secretary and newsletter. Peter as chairman, Sandra as treasurer and Sandy (kiwi and more) retain their roles.

## Flora trapping lines

Since February 2011 FOF and DOC have been setting 12 lines of 10 footprint tracking tunnels to monitor the abundance of rodents throughout the Flora. The highest line runs down from the top of Hodder, the lowest up Deep Creek. The black plastic tunnels are baited with peanut butter and contain an ink pad with white card on either end. Rodents are attracted to the peanut butter, get ink on their paws and leave a record of their passing on the white card. Cards are left in place for one night.



The picture shows a card with heavy mouse tracking and some stoat prints. The technique is standardized so that pest abundance can be compared over time and across sites.

The chart shows how last year's beech mast led to a massive spike in rodent numbers, especially mice. The Flora is notable for its low rat numbers, so while 28% is not high compared to some other sites it is much higher than we normally see in the Flora. This information is valuable for determining when rodent control such as 1080 should be applied.

