



Newsletter

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Book Promotion: Protecting Paradise

Use 1080 or watch more of our wildlife disappear says Dave Hansford.



...withering under a relentless assault from rats, stoats, possums and other introduced pests. If we are to realise the vision of a predator-free New Zealand, we must defend our biodiversity more doggedly, across a broader front than we do now.

1080 poison remains one of the crucial tools in this fight, yet it is condemned by vocal and passionate opponents. This book examines their arguments, and finds conclusively that the many claims made by 1080 opponents are plain wrong. After more than 60 years of research into 1080, there remains no evidence that it persists in the human food chain, or causes cancer, or harms our waterways. In *Protecting Paradise*, Dave Hansford argues that it is time for New Zealanders to take a stand no matter how unpalatable you find the idea. For more on Dave's book see:

www.protectingparadise.co.nz

Kiwi update April 2017

Robin and Sandy's regular roroa report

Despite the impact of the tail end of Cyclone Debbie, Kiwis for Kiwi and DOC pulled off an excellent kiwi hui in Taranaki. It's an exciting time with lots of new developments. Helen Blackie of Boffa Miskell explained a digital animal detection tool called PAWS (Print Acquisition for Wildlife Surveillance). It allows users to detect, identify and

monitor wildlife remotely based on their unique body, footprint and weight characteristics collected by the unit. PAWS units also photograph interacting species and record the time and date of all interactions. Developed for an offshore island in Aussie, they have huge potential here to replace footprint tracking tunnels and monitoring of kiwi nests. Hopefully they will get the resources needed to complete the development for use in New Zealand.

Landcare Research have received a grant from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment for a package of kiwi research including taxonomic work. They will integrate morphological and biological data with recent genetic research to firm up thinking on kiwi taxonomy. Current evidence suggests there may be four sub-species of great spotted kiwi (GSK) –NW Nelson, Westport, Paparoas and Arthurs Pass.

Robin and I presented the results of our GSK distribution study for NW Nelson. To date we have records from around 450 locations with nearly 5000 hours of recordings/human listening. This has only been possible through the help and collaboration of around 60 people, including many from both FOF and Friends of Cobb. DOC's Battle for our Birds monitoring team have been fantastic in deploying acoustic recorders and their Tier 1 monitoring results have helped fill many gaps. Results are shown on the map below. Red dots are kiwi present, black are no kiwi calls, pink dots are FOF's translocated kiwis and the DOC study population at Saxon. Of particular interest in the light of emerging taxonomic thinking is the gap in distribution between the Karamea and Mokihiui Rivers. We hope this information will inform the GSK management strategy that DOC are currently developing to turn around the current 2% annual decline in numbers.



Feisty Iwa. Pic by Ruedi

Meanwhile this year's transmitter change programme is now well advanced. Iwa looks very cute in this lovely photo of Ruedi's but looks are deceptive – she is one feisty madam! Probably all to the good, as she and Mr. Cobb successfully hatched chick number 3 – we are hopeful that all three have survived, making them the most successful breeding pair in the Flora. A big thanks to all FOFers for ongoing trapping and work on the kiwi project.

Wasp Wipeout

Vespex makes for a wasp-free walk.

Thanks to funding from the Tasman Environmental Trust, FoF was able to apply Vespex bait stations along 11 km of well-used walking tracks in March. Although there was no problem getting the required "trigger" density of wasps to allow the use of the toxin, getting sufficient consecutive fine days this summer was. Consequently about half of the length of walking track we intended to treat got done. What was achieved was a wasp-free corridor between Horseshoe Ck and Lower Junction and up to the Salisbury Open enabling FOF volunteers and all park users to walk unmolested by wasps. Said FoF's Paul Ewers *"Within minutes the wasps find the bait and in a short time some stations had a swarm of wasps going in and out. There was a real hum from the wasps on the day off the poison going out. When next visited, five days later, there was no sound of wasps with just the odd wasp flying around."* For more on the Wasp Wipeout see <http://www.facebook.com/friendsofflora>



Happy wasp wallopers Gerald, Paul, Pam and Alan. Pic by Ivan

Ol' Black Eyes is Back.

Elusive alpinist found

Continuing his work on the new field guide to New Zealand reptiles (see last newsletter) Dylan van Winkel returned this month and, reinforced by herpetologists Chris Wedding and Graham Ussher and FOF's Ivan Rogers, went in search of the Black-eyed gecko that had eluded him in January. A night search in the Mt Arthur alpine zone revealed one animal, but too inaccessible to be photographed. The next day - success as a smallish male was located and photographed. Remarkably, this appears to be the only record of this animal so far this century. Distribution seems to be sparse with just two sets of prints and two definite sightings over the past two summers. *Mokopirirakau kahuteræ* is a true alpine species, having been recorded at heights of 2200m in the Seaward Kaikouras, the only other location from which they are known.



Flat out like a lizard drinking. Pic by Ivan

AGM Reminder

A date for your diary

The Friends of Flora Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday 16 May at 7.00pm at the Motueka Sports Pavilion, Pah St, Motueka. Guest speaker will be Dr Rob Ewers, Reader in Ecology at Imperial College London. As usual, light refreshments follow. All Welcome!