



Friends of Flora Newsletter

WINTER EDITION No 132, June 2025



Photo credit – Martin Howard

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From the Chair

Sandy Toy

Firstly, thanks to Chrissy Kaneen for taking up the mantle of newsletter editor. This comes on top of many other roles (shared with Warren Kaneen): inducting new volunteers, managing the kea nest monitoring project and leading several trap lines, to name a few.

The FOF AGM was a very pleasurable evening with a large attendance. It was a great opportunity to acknowledge the mahi of our volunteers (5,983 h - that's 150 weeks) and thank our generous supporters and donors. Our guest speaker, renowned author Annette Lees gave a captivating, multi-layered talk that left us with plenty to think about.

It reminded me to value the emotional connection with nature of every day spent in the Flora.

Times are tough, but the evidence shows the multiple benefits of investing in caring for places like Kahurangi. It's distressing to see the pressure on our DOC colleagues as they struggle with the re-structuring required to achieve the substantial job cuts demanded by budget constraints. We thank them all for their commitment.

Camera surveillance project update – Kiwi, kiwi, and more kiwi.

Lauren Catalano

Over the past five months, we've installed 8 additional surveillance cameras along some of our most active traplines as part of a new expanded camera monitoring project. The original goal was simple: to get a clearer picture of predator activity, particularly stoats, possums, and ferrets so we could better target our control efforts.

Three of the cameras have been placed around our new ferret traps, helping us monitor their effectiveness and understand how predators are moving through these areas. What's been an unexpected and delightful bonus is the number of kiwi we've spotted a promising sign that our ongoing efforts are making a difference. Of the currently 12 cameras installed kiwi have been spotted on 8 of them.

A small team of volunteers is currently helping to check the cameras, manage the footage, and log sightings. The data we're gathering is proving to be really valuable, both for understanding predator patterns and tracking the presence of native species.



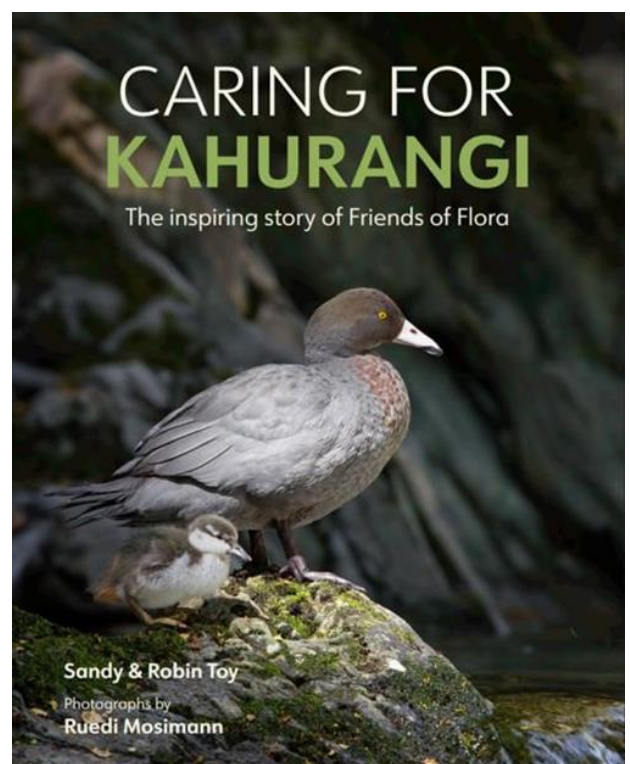
Coming soon!

The Flora is a stunning landscape with a special place in the hearts and minds of us all. It is the home of extraordinary and wonderful creatures, many of which are very rare.

Friends of Flora is an extraordinary organisation of wonderful people committed to the conservation of these amazing creatures.

Filled with astonishing and beautiful photographs taken by FOF volunteer Ruedi Mosimann, *Caring for Kahurangi, the inspiring story of Friends of Flora*, will be published by Potton & Burton in the spring. This book is a celebration of people and place.

Don't miss it!



Orchids Flora Saddle to Mount Arthur Hut

Trevor Lupton

Trevor is one of our newer volunteers and has a particular interest in orchids. While helping out with trapping he never misses a chance to check the surrounds for the amazing flora.

Along the Flora Saddle to Mt Arthur hut track during November and December there are a number of showy orchids in flower. These are some of the more commonly seen species.



Adenochilus gracilis, slender forest orchid. Found around the junction of the new and old tracks 10-15 minutes up from the saddle. A short distance down the old track, there are some scattered colonies with ten or more plants. Flowering plants are up to 20cm high with small showy flowers on slender stems above a single small leaf.



Chiloglottis cornuta, green bird orchid. Found long the side of the track in the dracophyllum forest, especially on the edge of trackside drains. Plants are typically around 10cm across with two leaves close to the ground. The flower is green with raised glossy green or reddish calli in two rows on the labellum, the lower petal.



Aporostylis bifolia, odd leafed orchid. Found along the track beyond the dracophyllum forest. Plants are scattered growing in damp ground. Two leaves are close to the ground and unequal in size. The leaves have fine hairs and brown/purple spots. Flowers are showy, predominantly white and yellow with red spots.



Caladenia lyalli, mountain caps. This showy orchid has one sometimes two white to pink flowers 1.5-2cm across. It is common flowering in the tussock along the track above the hut.



Pterostylis oliveri, Oliver's greenhood. Found growing in colonies in limestone and marble areas. It is common amongst low alpine shrubs around the rock outcrops in the alpine zone above the hut. Plants are typically 10-20cm high with a rosette of broad basal leaves. Flowers are green and white striped with curled sepals.



Pterostylis venosa, a greenhood growing in colonies in the alpine section of the track down to Flora hut. Plants are 5-10cm high with an erect rosette of leaves and a flower sitting just above the leaves. Flowering is slightly earlier than other orchids mentioned and is generally complete by early December.

AGM Guest speaker – Annette Lees

Lesley Hadley

Without the need of any complementary photos but including a few specific readings from her book "After Dark", Annette held the AGM audience spellbound with her telling of scientific findings, personal experiences, observations, and ideas regarding nature and the "natural environment".

Annette's interest in the interdependence of ecosystems and species leads to many levels and depths.

She treated us to some insights and ideas that will be pursued in a book she is presently writing.

One theme is the sense of belonging - a very complicated, contentious, and contemporary topic. Annette related how various bird species arrived in Aotearoa from Australia after the break-up of Gondwanaland and the varying ways they adapted to a new environment.

If you missed her talk, make sure you look out for her new book (no title yet) which will be published by Pott & Burton.



Photo Supplied by Lesley Hadley

Volunteer in the spotlight

Most of our volunteers are the head down do the work people, but they all deserve to be recognised. We will be introducing one of our volunteers in each newsletter so you can see who the amazing people are behind Friends of Flora. Where best to start than with our wonderful Chairperson – **Sandy Toy**

Sandy has had a lifetime love of the outdoors and wildlife. A childhood in Kenya (leopard in the garden), led to ecology and resource management degrees, and a career in conservation. Throughout she has been a committed conservation volunteer.

Sandy's FOF journey began in 2010. A chance meeting with FOF volunteers Lesley Hadley and Sarah Bradshaw, selling gingerbread kiwi in the Motueka market hooked her.

Sandy & (husband) Robin led the roroa re-establishment project, building FOF's team of kiwi monitors and leading the fieldwork.

From the start Sandy became involved in FOF's Committee, initially as the kiwi project go-to person, but she soon took the lead on biodiversity, scientific and strategic matters. Understanding the biodiversity treasures of the Flora and monitoring the effect of all FOF's trapping is Sandy's passion.

Over the years she has driven many new projects including giant wētā and lizards in the alpine, forest ringlet butterflies and most recently, moths. In 2020 Sandy became Chair of FOF and continues in this role today.

The best thing about volunteering with FOF? The other volunteers! And the opportunity to become intimately familiar with a very special part of Kahurangi.

To echo volunteer Paul Ewers 'Every day on the hill is a good day.'



Sandy holds Rameka the kiwi while Lesley fits a new transmitter. Photo Credit Ruedi Mosimann

Youthful Interest

Lesley Hadley

FOF was pleasantly surprised to receive a donation from Steiner School and even more pleased to learn that the students themselves initiated the donation.

I got to appreciate the enthusiasm, interest, and knowledge of some of those pupils when I visited the school and then accompanied them on a class trip up to the Flora.

Their pepeha was very enjoyable and moving to witness when they greeted me at the school and also before they entered the National Park. Their pepeha (sung/told with actions) beautifully illustrated their connection to and respect for our area.

The field trip included looking at footprint tracking tunnels and identifying a range of footprints, conducting a 5-minute bird count, observing how a trap functions, cooking damper on a stick (with teacher's homemade plum jam) with time to play and slide/roll down the hill behind Flora hut.

An educational experience for all involved. Thanks to the Steiner School.

Some of the wonderful cards we received from our supporters at Steiner School

Photo credit Chrissy Kaneen



A Friends of Flora Thank you.

Chrissy Kaneen

On behalf of FOF, I would like to pass on a huge thank you to all our sponsors, supporters and volunteers who enable us to work in & for the flora and fauna in an amazing part of New Zealand.

If you have ideas, tips, questions, stories, or photos to share for our next newsletter please feel free to email me @ chrissy2410@gmail.com

Photos from the front line



Adam's helper on F line, checking the trap and inspecting the two dead rats inside. Photo credit Adam Eldieb



Part of the P line Party – Maurice, Yelah & Dale

Photo credit Chrissy Kaneen



Kea cameras are now in place at our known kea nest for this season's action. Fingers, toes & wings are crossed.

Photo credit: Robin Toy



It's been a little frosty out there. Take care & keep warm Photo credit: Chrissy Kaneen