



NEW ZEALAND
FAIRY TERN
CHARITABLE TRUST
TARA-ITI

No. 2: 2015

9th. June, 2015

P.O. Box 401072
Mangawhai Heads 0541

Our website: www.fairytern.org.nz
Email: info@fairytern.org.nz

Dear Members,

In this issue: Fairy tern news; Cameras and traps; Birds NZ Conference; Fairy tern defence; wardens' reports: Papakanui, Pakiri, Mangawhai, Waipu.

First, welcome to new members: Karyn Childs and Jane Ferguson both of Auckland and Leanne Radka of Mount Maunganui.

Fairy Tern News

David Wilson, DoC Ranger, Warkworth, reports that all six fledglings from the recent breeding season have been sighted since the end of January. If they are still around now, this would mean that the population would be around 40 individuals.

David has just received the sex testing results for these chicks from Massey University. These results show that one is male and the other five are female. The male was banded K-pGM (Black-pale Green Metal) and was raised at Papakanui from an egg transferred from Mangawhai.

Jane Vaughan writes about what happens in the banding process:

Recently, there was a slight misprint in the *Mangawhai Focus* newspaper describing banding of fairy terns as BRANDING. This is not the same procedure as seen in old Western movies of cowboys applying a hot iron to sizzle on the rump of cattle!

The only similarity is that both procedures give us a way of knowing where animal and bird came from.

Banding is done to young fairy terns just before they can fly, usually between 16 and 19 days. The tiny bird freezes as a DoC officer approaches and pops it into a soft material bag. It is weighed, wing span noted, beak length measured and a tiny feather removed from which the gender can be determined from the blood in the base. Small pliers are then used to put bands on the match stick sized legs, a metal one with a number, and two or three others of coloured plastic. This procedure is over very quickly and they are soon back with parents.

When this combination of colours and metal bands are seen by eagle eyed observers, migration, age of first breeding, parents and siblings are known. Also, this is a clear way of counting how many fairy terns there are.