



No. 1: 2019
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Dear Members,

In this issue: Fairy tern news; Thanks; Museum exhibition; Fish Study; Recent events; Newsroom stories.

First welcome to new members: Estelle Cook and Danny Sutcliffe, both of Wellington.

Fairy Tern News

Summary of breeding results for 2018-19 season

(2017-18 season in brackets)

TOTALS: Eggs laid: 16 (30) Eggs hatched: 4 (13) Chicks fledged: 2 (6)

Waipu: Eggs laid: 4 (6) Eggs hatched: 1 (5) Chicks fledged: 1 (1)
(All 4 eggs infertile. Egg transferred from Mangawhai hatched and fledged)

Mangawhai: Eggs laid: 9 (9) Eggs hatched: 2 (5) Chicks fledged: 0 (4)
(1 egg transferred to Waipu hatched and fledged. 2 1-egg nests were lost. The other 4 eggs did not hatch.)

Te Arai: Eggs laid: 0 (0) Eggs hatched: 0 (0) Chicks fledged: 0 (0)

Pakiri: Eggs laid: 1 (6) Eggs hatched: 1 (1) Chicks fledged: 1 (1)

Papakanui: Eggs laid: 2 (9) Eggs hatched: 0 (2) Chicks fledged: 0 (0)
(Eggs transferred to Zoo. 1 egg died, the other transferred to Mangawhai, but did not hatch.)

There will be more detail about each site when extracts from the Ranger's reports are available in the next newsletter.

Moving the egg from Mangawhai to Waipu

Just before Christmas, Mangawhai volunteer, Dawne Sanson was asked to help Mangawhai Ranger, Keven Drew with the delicate task of removing one of the Mangawhai eggs from the nest so it could be transferred to Waipu. This was done to spread the risk and turned out to be a sound decision, as the Mangawhai chick was lost, but the Waipu chick survived to fledging.



Dawne's report:

23 December, 2018

I had a wonderful few hours with Kev this morning, not least of which was an opportunity to see inside Tara Iti! (Golf Course)

I met Kev at 8am and followed him in my car as we drove through Tara Iti to the utility area and parked there. We then climbed aboard his quad bike and set off on what turned out to be quite an adventurous ride in places. I was pleased to have a crash helmet on and be held in with the seat belt!

The Mangawhai chick at 5 days old

Photo: Keven Drew

But once we were out on the beach it was plain sailing. So beautiful out there today, very still and mild with soft muted colours.

We arrived at SSV and easily spotted birds sitting on both M414 and 412. Changeovers happened for both nests. We chatted and observed until Ayla arrived with the volunteer from Waipu. Kev had a thermos warming with boiling water which then needed cooling a little to body temperature before filling it with cotton wool balls. We donned plastic gloves, Kev warning me I would get covered in bird shit!! However, when we slowly walked in, with me following him, the parents flew off and didn't attempt to dive bomb us. The egg was carefully removed by Kev, marked with the nest name and placed in the thermos (me holding it, somewhat nervously). The dummy egg was placed in exactly the same position to avoid suspicion. We slowly walked out on a different path and the birds quickly returned to the nesting site, one settling back on the eggs. Whew!

We drove up to the white-fronted and caspian terns and Kev extended the fenced in area to the south when more white-fronted terns have settled. On driving back to SSV we had another quick check but all was well and Kev returned me to Tara Iti around 12 noon.

Foster parents with 1 week old chick at Waipu *Photo: Ria Kemp*

What a wonderful experience!
Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Both of these chicks hatched on New Year's Day and the Waipu chick survived, but the Mangawhai chick was lost at about 13 days old.





The Waipu chick grown up. It was banded YM-YR (yellow, metal-yellow, red) *Photo: Darren Markin*

Thanks

..... for another generous donation of \$2,000 from a very supportive Trust member!

.....to all those who helped with our calendars: the designers, the photographers and the volunteers who promoted and sold them. The Trust made nearly \$3000 from sales and they generated a great deal of positive publicity.

Museum Exhibition

The fairy tern exhibition at the Mangawhai museum has also generated much positive publicity, as well as a generous donation to the Trust from a visitor, Lisa Sinclair and a card made by a little girl after visiting the exhibition. It depicts 3 chicks in a shelter and the mum on the lookout.

Also she has drawn a group of people building a sand castle explaining why there are not enough chicks!

The exhibition will be in place until the middle of the year and is well worth a visit!



Evie's card *Photo: Joy Wilson*

Fish Study

Ian Southey's fish study in the Mangawhai Harbour continued in January and February.

Results with last year's for comparison:

	20/1/19	14/1/18		17/2/19	18/2/18
Goby	1437	1802	Gobies	3776	6056
Flounder	19	111	Flounder	10	23
Sole	2	13	Sole	2	13
Clingfish	1		Yellow-eyed Mullet	3	2
Gurnard	1		Snapper	1	
Triplefin	2		Grey Mullet	21	55
Snapper	2	3	Smelt	2	
Grey Mullet	4		Gurnard?	3	
Black Pipefish	1		UID tiny larva	1	
Smelt	2		Oyster Blenny		2
Estuarine Stargazer		9			
Parore		5			
Yellow-eyed Mullet		1			

Ian writes:

"At this point we have finished the stated aim of two breeding seasons and the time in between. I would like to keep fishing however. I am interested in the big drop off in goby numbers over last winter and want to see if that happens again and also to catch through the next breeding season to see if breeding seems related to fish numbers. The plan is to skip March, catch again on April 6th meeting at 1.45 pm (note this is a Saturday), skip May to continue on June 16th at 11.00 am and every month thereafter. I will be in touch.

I'd like to thank everyone for their help so far, as well as on Sunday. It is good to have made through the first part of the study."

New helpers are always welcome. The next fishing session is April 6th. at 1.45 p.m.

Meet at the bottom of North Avenue, Mangawhai Heads.

Enquiries to iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz

Recent Events

Our display stalls at the **Highland Games in Waipu on 1 January**, and at the **Mangawhai Gala, Mangawhai Domain on 2 January** were again well patronised and this year we sold a good number of calendars at both events as well as talking to members of the public and telling them about our bird. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with these stalls at a very busy time of year.

Kayaking Course

Earlier this month, three Mangawhai *About Tern* volunteers, Georgina O'Connor, Gayle Forster and Pauline Hodson took part in DOC's kayaking course at Pataua South, north of Whangarei Harbour.

Gayle's report:

A great day with some parts more challenging than others and parts of this more challenging to some especially moi. However conquer I did. Both Pauline and I did not know what we were in for and were apprehensive at the beginning. Skills for paddling (we went right out to the ocean edge), then skills for safety. Hmm a lot of flipping over and jumping back on to kayak etc etc etc. I was reluctant until Steve took me slowly through each stage while the others practised assistant rescue. Then it was a long gentle paddle up the estuary returning with the turn of the tide. Finalizing all about 4.

Pauline and I met at the depot 8.00 a.m.

and Georgina at Pataua South at 9. A very supportive group to be with. Skills learnt were invaluable.



Photo: yellow double kayak at the back is Pauline, Georgina in front on the orange and myself on the right on blue with the instructor

Newsroom stories

David Williams, an investigative reporter with *Newsroom* has written two very good stories about NZ fairy terns. In case you missed them, here are the links to these stories:

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2019/01/15/400649/nzs-rarest-bird-on-the-brink> and

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2019/02/07/432117/tara-it-is-ironic-eponymous-bogey>