

Dear Members,

In this issue: Fairy tern news; Christmas carols; Christmas cards; Fund raising raffle; Other events; Court actions; Dotterel workshop; Fish Study; AGM; Membership receipts and renewal.

First, welcome to new members: Sarah Busbridge of Hamilton, Barbara Adam of Waipu, Evan Davies of Auckland, Margaret Hicks of Ruakaka, Richard Fenner and family of Mangawhai, Sunny Riordan of Auckland, Bas and Val Cuthbert of Whangaparaoa, Rene Burton and family of Auckland.

Fairy Tern News

It's been a promising start to the breeding season with lots of nesting activity at Waipu, Mangawhai, Te Arai and Pakiri.

Waipu: The first nest of the season was laid at Waipu by the pair known as the reds in late October. Both eggs



Fish feeding 23 November

Photo: Darren Markin

were infertile, but an at risk egg has been transferred to them from Mangawhai. This egg has just been candled and is not live. Another pair, known as the greens are also frequenting the Waipu Wildlife Refuge and are being kept under observation by Ranger, Deane and volunteers.

Mangawhai: There are currently six active nests here, with the first chick hatching on 27th November and others expected soon. One of the early nests was lost, but that pair have since renested. Rangers, Kev and Finn and the Mangawhai volunteers have been kept busy watching all the activity.



Mangawhai Volunteers, Debbie, Dawne and Guy set off for the Spit. Photo: Jane Vaughan

Te Arai: Against all expectations, the two egg nest at Te Arai has turned out to be fertile and hatching is expected soon. The Mangawhai Rangers and volunteers, along with DOC staff from the Auckland office have been kept busy watching this nest.

View of the site; sandbags protecting nest. Taranga (Hen Island) in background

Photo: H. Rogan



Night work

Trapper Reg noticed worrying tracks near the nest and found that some dotterel eggs had been predated, His report on efforts to catch the offender:

“Left home 8pm on 22 November, 2019 with Jordy (DOC contractor – deer culler).

Jordy has an infra red night vision telescopic sight (worth over \$10,000) creates night into day, unbelievable. However, once it got dark enough we did two full sweeps of the area of back dune and the area around

the nest, the first sweep showed up 1 mouse and 1 rabbit, with time getting on we were about to depart when I decided to do one more sweep at approximately 1.30am. Just as we were finishing the last small area behind the nest Jordy informed me he had just sighted a large rat so I said to him we had better shoot it so at least we will have something for the night’s effort. On recovering the body I had to inform Jordy that it was a funny looking rat because it had prickles on it, yes we got the LITTLE BUGGER. Left the site and arrived home at 2.30am.”

Pakiri: There is also a fertile one-egg nest at Pakiri which is being watched over by Ranger, Eliane and volunteers. The chick hatched there on 27th November.

Papakanui: There is a pair at Papakanui but no nest. The female is a 2nd year so still young, but a little bit of time left.

DOC Community Funding: The Trust has been awarded \$20, 000 over three years, initially to support the wonderful volunteer trapping group at Waipu with traps, cameras and protective clothing and in the third year to employ a contracted trapper. Ria Kemp, Susan Steedman and Debs Edsall have been co-ordinating this group who maintain a trapping programme on the Waipu Wildlife Refuge during the winter, then in the summer, when DOC take over trapping the Refuge, this group maintains a trapping buffer zone.

Coming Events

CHOCOLATIER
Bennett's
MANGAWHAI | NEW ZEALAND

Christmas Carols at Bennetts

Fundraiser for The Fairy Terns

Tuesday 10 Dec 2019 7:30pm
Entry Fee is a note donation to
the trust

Complimentary Mulled wine & Mince tarts



Our patron, Mary Bennett has arranged an evening of Christmas carols as a fund raiser for the Trust. Please join us!

Christmas and all occasion cards

Also available at Bennetts are these beautiful cards, available as Christmas cards or plain cards All proceeds from card sales go to the Trust.

They are available at Bennetts Chocolate Factory in Mangawhai, online at:

<https://bom.co.nz/collections>

or at Smith and Caughey's Department Store in Auckland.

Smith and Caughey's have generously agreed to donate their commission to the Trust.



Fund- raising raffle



There are some great prizes in our fund-raising raffle, which goes on sale shortly and will be drawn in February.

First prize: Signed, numbered print of photo by Malcolm Pullman and stamp + book about NZ raptors + Bennetts chocolates.

Tickets are \$5 each and the raffle is limited to 500 tickets.

We'll be selling tickets at the Carol Evening and at various events over the summer.



Second prize: Canvas print of Darren Markin photos + Tumbleweed tote bag + Bennetts chocolates

Third prize: Canvas print of Sioux Plowman photo + Tumbleweed tea towel + Bennetts chocolates



To buy tickets, contact Jenny Price at jcmprice.mangawhai@icloud.com or phone 09 431 5156 or 0210 563 113
Pay online to NZ Fairy Tern Charitable Trust A/c No:
12-3094-0197257-00
or post us a cheque.

Other events

Lactic Turkey Fun runs: Organised by Auckland Council, these events are held at various regional parks. The most recent event was held in the Te Arai Regional Park for the first time and the Trust, Te Arai Beach Preservation Society and Save Te Arai provided volunteers to act as marshals. Thanks to their efforts \$850 was donated to the Trust. We'll be doing this again on 8th December at the next event to be held in the Atiu Creek Regional Park. We really appreciate the support of our "sister" organisations.

If you would like to help at this event, please ring Heather at 09 431 5413 or 0210 520 622.

Waipu Games (1 January) and Mangawhai Gala (2 January): We'll have our display stall at these events and we'll be selling raffle tickets, so please come and say hello if you're there. We'd also love to have some help with these events, so please get in touch if you can help.

Court actions

Te Arai Stream dam: The New Zealand Fairy Tern Charitable Trust (actively supported by the Te Arai Beach Preservation Society and Save Te Arai) application to the Environment Court seeking an enforcement order against Auckland Council to remove the dam across Te Arai Stream was heard in early October and the interim judgement was released on 1 November. Although we did not succeed with the enforcement order, the Court, after visiting the dam, agreed with us that it did prevent fish passage. The Court also recognised the urgency of the situation, given the precarious situation of the NZ fairy tern. All the parties are to respond to the Court's findings by 29th November, after which the final decision will be made.

Our thanks to Ewan Price who co-ordinated the application and to **Terry McDell** a local solicitor, both of whom charged no fee and also to the law firm **Price Baker Berridge** who are doing the legal work at a very favourable rate.

Northern Regional Council proposed plan for Northland: The Trust is a party to the appeals re this plan, concentrating on the policies and rules that affect endangered species in coastal areas. The Trust has been represented in mediation meetings by Ian Southey, Sioux Plowman and Heather Rogan in what has been a mostly positive process. Further mediation meetings take place in early December. Some matters will be resolved in mediation, but it is likely that there will be some appeals to the Environment Court.

Northern NZ Dotterel course

DoC recently sponsored three Fairy tern volunteers to attend this course: Robyn Davies and Debs Edsall from Waipu and Dawne Sanson from Mangawhai. Dawne's report:

What a privilege to recently attend the NZ Dotterel course at the Pūkoro Mirānda Shorebird Trust! Around 20 people were present – DOC wardens, regional council staff, community groups and volunteers from Northland to the Bay of Plenty and south to the Kapiti coast, all working to manage and protect Dotterel nesting sites around the North Island. The course was spacious and allowed plenty of time to meet other participants, to chat and browse the extensive gift and bookshop in the Trust building, and enjoy the delicious meals we were treated to. It was a pleasure to share this time with Robyn and Deb from Waipu, and thanks to DOC for providing the opportunity.

John Dowding led the course, dressed in rugged outdoor shirt, shorts and bare feet! He shared his knowledge with wit and ease, fuelled by copious amounts of coffee (by his own admission) and seemingly without the need to take any breaks.



I was entranced with his PowerPoint images of NNZ Dotterel and other shorebirds, and his fascinating summary of more than thirty years of research and experience working with NNZ Dotterels. The course, which has been running since 2003, covered the biology and ecology of NZ Dotterels – their life history, habitat, eggs, chicks, juveniles and adults; numbers and distribution, breeding season, laying intervals, incubation period, fledging period and natal dispersal.

An overview of other shorebirds who share the shoreline with Dotterels was covered. Threat ranking systems, used to assess the extinction risk of species were explained (there are International and NZ systems). John showed graphs that shockingly suggest around 50% of shorebird species in NZ are at risk.

The classification for NNZ Dotterel is Recovering as numbers have grown from about 1200 in the 1960s to around 2,500 currently. However, they remain dependent on being managed by volunteers, as they remain susceptible to degradation of habitat, natural threats such as flooding and disturbance by humans,

vehicles, horses, dogs, boats, windsurfers and so on. Emerging threats include drones and climate change.

The other serious issue, as we all know, is predation and this was well covered in the course. Even if the goal of NZ Pest Free 2050 is achieved, numerous potential predators remain such as cats, dogs, hedgehogs and other avian predators (harriers, BG Gulls, red Billed gulls, pukeko, VOC, spur-winged plover) that threaten all shorebirds. A DOC warden, Chris Annandale gave us a comprehensive demonstration of various traps.

An outdoor workshop occurred on the final day, when John set up 15 dummy birds on the shoreline for a band-reading exercise. I must confess to finding this challenging, not helped by the 10 minutes exam-like time he gave us to complete the exercise!

Finally, the importance of monitoring, recording and reporting were emphasised to assess breeding success (productivity is measured by the number of chicks fledged divided by the number of breeding pairs at the start of the season). A good season would result in 0.5 chicks per pair. Useful information about flock sizes, movement patterns, band combinations can also be gathered outside the nesting season.

John completed each day with a pre-dinner short story. Firstly, a case history of Southern NZ Dotterels which are now found only on Stewart Island and, unlike NNZ Dotterels, nest on bleak mountain tops well away from the shoreline. The second short story was about NNZ Dotterels and the *Rena* oil spill in 2011 near Tauranga.

Both stories were testament to John's knowledge, experience and passion.

Fish study

Ian Southey's fish study in Mangawhai Harbour has continued for the last three months. September was notable for the number of flounder caught – 132 our biggest catch ever! It will be interesting to see if this helps the Fairy Terns as they seem happy to eat flounder while they are small enough to swallow so this might give them better food early in the breeding season.

Summary of results October and November 2019, 2018 and 2017

Species	2019 Oct	2019 Nov	2018 Oct	2018 Nov	2017 Oct	2017 Nov
Gobies	1138	811	1347	883	672	1197
Flounder	35	53	6	7	12	34
Sole	15	21		2	29	23
Whitebait	7		1	1	1	6
Triplefin	6					
Yellow-eyed Mullet	4		1			
Glass Goby?	1					
Unidentified larva	1				2	
Black Pipefish			1	1		
Sand Diver			1			
Estuarine Stargazer					1	9
Smelt				1		
Spotty						1
Clingfish						1
Gurnard						1

New helpers are always welcome. The next fishing session is Saturday, December 7th. at 8.30 a.m.

Meet at the bottom of North Avenue, Mangawhai Heads.

Enquiries to iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz

Annual General Meeting

A lively audience of about 40 at our AGM heard interesting talks from guest speakers, Georgina Garon and Caroline Lees. Georgina spoke about her new role with the Northland Conservation Board. It was interesting to hear that two of their particular interests this year are the NZ fairy tern and the dangers posed by the sunken wreck *Niagara*, which lies off the Northland coast, near the Hen and Chickens Islands. This ship was sunk by German mines in World War II and the worry is that it is breaking up and leaking oil. Caroline Lees, a Threatened Species expert working with Auckland Zoo, gave an interesting talk covering various threatened species around the world and projects she has been involved with.

The convenor's and financial reports were presented and Haley Wilson was appointed auditor.

Please reply to this newsletter if you would like copies of the reports.

Election of Officers and Committee: Convenor - Heather Rogan, Treasurer – Jenny Price, Secretary – Joy Wilson. Committee: Ria Kemp, Jane Vaughan, Paulette Whitford, Sioux Plowman, Debbie Stone, Georgina Garon, Abby Meagher (new member, who has since resigned due to other commitments).

Membership and donations

At the AGM membership fees were confirmed as remaining the same, but in response to an enquiry, a new category of **Life membership** was established. The fees for this are \$200. Sunny Riordan is our first life member.

Donation Receipts: We are very grateful for the generous donations many of you make in addition to membership fees. Donations, (but not membership fees) are tax deductible as we are a registered charity. Our new receipts show all the details that IRD require, so you can forward them directly to IRD to claim your tax rebate.

Thanks to all those members who have renewed their memberships and a gentle reminder to those who haven't. Please see the form at the end of this newsletter. The Trust is reliant on our members for its ongoing existence and we are very grateful for your interest and support. Please note that if you have joined the Trust since 1 April this year, you don't need to renew until next year.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from your Trust committee.