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Dear Members,

In this issue: Fairy tern news: Summary, Trapping, Chick rescue at Mangawhai, Te Arai chick; Necropsy Workshop; Fish Study; Please join us; How did our bird get its name? Thanks: Bennetts, “Fairy men”, Zoo volunteers, raffle, Law firm; Te Arai Stream dam.

First, welcome to new members: Adam Colley of Christchurch; Rowena West of Auckland; Pauline Wilson of Morrinsville; Sarah Smith of Mangawhai; Stephen Collins of Hikurangi.

Fairy Tern News

Summary of breeding results for 2019-20 season

(2018-19 season in brackets)

TOTALS: Eggs laid: 20 (16) Eggs hatched: 9 (4) Chicks fledged: 7 (2)

Waipu: Eggs laid: 4 (4) Eggs hatched: 0 (1) Chicks fledged: 0 (1)

(All 4 eggs infertile. 2 eggs transferred from Mangawhai; one did not develop; the other was predated.)

Mangawhai: Eggs laid: 12 (9) Eggs hatched: 6 (2) Chicks fledged: 5 (0)

(2 eggs transferred to Waipu. 1 egg was lost, 2 did not hatch, 1 did not develop; 1 chick died at 9 days old.)

Te Arai: Eggs laid: 2 (0) Eggs hatched: 2 (0) Chicks fledged: 1 (0)

(One chick died after the parents vanished; the other is being supplementary fed.)

Pakiri: Eggs laid: 2 (1) Eggs hatched: 1 (1) Chicks fledged: 1 (1)

(One egg did not hatch.)

Papakanui: Eggs laid: 0 (2) Eggs hatched: 0 (0) Chicks fledged: 0 (0)

As you can see this has been overall a better breeding season than last year. The highlights have been the much better season at Mangawhai and the first successful breeding at Te Arai since the 1970s.

The Rangers have mostly finished at the breeding sites and are busy writing their reports, extracts from which will be published as soon as they are available.



This glorious photo was taken by our newest member, Stephen Collins at Waipu on 26th January.

Trapping results for 2019

Waipu Wildlife Refuge - Volunteer trapping group (Feb- Sept. DOC takes over in the breeding season)

Predators: 25 rats, 22 mice, 3 weasels 1 cat, 1 rabbit.

Waipu Buffer Zone – Volunteer group all year – predators: 18 rats, 18 mice, 1 weasel, 1 rabbit.

Mangawhai Wildlife Refuge and boundaries - Trapping project managed by the Trust, trapper, Reg

Whale - predators: 100 rats, 19 hedgehogs, 7 stoats, 12 cats, 13 rabbits, 2 weasels, 5 possums.

Te Arai Stream mouth - Trapping project managed by Te Arai Dotterel Care Group, trappers, Sioux

Plowman/Reg Whale – predators: rats=5; stoats=6; possums=2; hedgehogs=15; cats=2; rabbits=2.

Chick Rescue at Mangawhai

On Christmas Eve, Ranger Keven Drew (Kev) noticed that one of the chicks from the newest nest at Mangawhai was not racing out to receive food when a parent came in with a fish.

Kev's story: "I found the chick barely alive so picked it up and put it in my chest pocket to give it warmth. It recovered somewhat, could not stand but could lift its head, so it was determined we would try and recover the chick and rear it until the Auckland Zoo could take custody after the Christmas Statutory Holidays.

The rest of the day was spent in sourcing equipment to try to get the chick stable and survive until Dec 27 or 28 when the Auckland Zoo would be in a position to take care of the chick.

Reg Whale's daughter offered her very good digital Incubator which also kept a pre-set humidity and warmth temperature. Other equipment - Ian Southey's fishing net, plastic containers for the gobies, Melanie's tweezers to feed the fish to the chick, Jane's eye dropper to offer .01 ml of water, portable battery-operated pump with a sand air stone to keep caught gobies alive, borrowed from Reg Whale."

Debbie Stone (Mangawhai volunteer) takes up the story:

"Melanie and I were "on duty" at South Sea Valley, Mangawhai Wildlife Refuge, when Ranger Kev was on the phone speaking with DOC and walking into the nesting site.

He emerged with a very small, poorly FT chick in his top pocket and asked us for assistance.

So, we headed back to the boat and then to collect the net and a bit of gear from Jane's storeroom.

Melanie was quick to learn the fishing techniques I had picked up from helping Ian Southey on his Fish Study over the past year or so, and we netted around 20 Gobies, and met Kev at the Pub. Actually just at the water's edge below the pub, where he attempted to feed the exhausted little chick. But first, water had to be administered. Kev had been on the phone to the Zoo and DOC and had clear instructions that before

attempting to feed such a poorly chick it

would need hydrating. .01ml of

water.....we all agreed that sounded

like a drop, but not much more, or it could

drown. The water thing was difficult, but

luckily we had secured an eye dropper

from Jane. Eventually, when the chick was

simply unable to take a fish, Kev, who had

been on the phone to Reg, and secured an

incubator with room to walk around in

from Reg's daughter, drove home with all

the gear and the chick, back in his pocket,

and proceeded to feed the chick, while I

headed off to my family for Christmas. It

was with great joy I heard that Kev had

succeeded in feeding the chick about 3

fish that day, then more on Christmas

morning. 9 altogether, before he headed

out for more FT obs. The sad news came

after Christmas, but we had all done our

best."



Chick in incubator

Photo: Melanie Scott

Melanie Scott continues:

"I met Kev at the caravan with another eye dropper with a bulb end which allowed for smaller drops of water to be administered and a wedge ended pair of tweezers that made it easier to hold onto the fish. I also took some sand and shells from the estuary to put in the incubator to try and replicate the beach environment with which the chick would have been familiar. We managed to get several fish maybe 3 and a half into the chick with Keven holding the bird while I eased the fish into its beak and then waiting for its gullet to open so that it could take the fish down. The first one was the most difficult but it started to feed quite well after that. It looked perky and calm in its little incubator when I left on Christmas Eve."

Unfortunately, in spite of all their efforts, Kev found the chick dead on his return from the Spit after work the next day (Christmas Day).

Two days later, Kev (not an Aucklander) drove the chick to Auckland Zoo with Jane Vaughan giving directions and advising on the best routes to avoid the horrific traffic. They were met at the Zoo's Specialist Necropsy Unit where the cause of the chick's death will be diagnosed. We hope to get the results when available.

Te Arai Chick



The surviving Te Arai chick – now properly called a juvenile - 7th February, 2020 *Photo: Shelley Ogle*

The full story about what happened at Te Arai will be in the next newsletter.

Necropsy Workshop

Waipu volunteer, Ria Kemp reports:

As an *About Tern* volunteer I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend a Necropsy Day by the Department of Conservation which was presented by chief DOC vet Kate .

It was a very interesting day with about 12-14 people who attended and this was made up of Doc staff, volunteers, rehabilitators and community groups.

Before we started there was a karakia given by Steve Johnson from Patuharakeke .

Vet Kate was a great tutor and used easy talk language for each module.

Throughout the day we learnt basic bird handling and stress management.

We learnt how to do a head to toe assessment on a bird (our models were unfortunately deceased birds) but we took very good care of them and each bird was treated with the utmost respect.



A poorly penguin

Photo: Ria Kemp

We learnt how to feel for broken bones or dislocations, look for bruising or bites from predators. We practised bandaging and supporting an injured limb. We learnt how to give fluids to birds to hydrate them by correctly inserting tubing via the oesophagus and by doing our necropsies we could see how important the placement was.

For my necropsy I chose a juvenile Fairy Prion . Nothing untoward was wrong with it and its organs appeared fine; its stomach was empty. Through examination we could tell that it hadn't drowned or been hit by a passing vessel. It was so interesting to look at its little heart and take out the kidneys and liver. You could even see the testes in some of the bigger seabirds.

There was no smell by the way:)

To complete their examination one team removed the top of the skull on a Kereru to look at the brain and you could see that it had had a brain bleed from a probable crashing into a window. (poor thing)

We learnt so much over the day right down to taking samples for the lab and there is a follow up course online to complete our modules.

What I found really sad was seeing the kiwi laid out on the table and probably a lot of those deaths could have been preventable.

So if anyone out there has thought about becoming a volunteer there are several courses you can attend via DOC to upskill and learn more.

Fish study

Ian Southey's fish study project in Mangawhai harbour has finally come to an end. The last sampling session was on 5th January and was celebrated with a barbecue and bubbly for all who had taken part.

It was the 28th month covering three breeding seasons and most of two years. Ian is now working on all the data collected to see if we have learned anything useful or not for our efforts. As Ian says there's plenty to look at. According to his records we have caught 49,107 fish, the stars being 47,903 gobies, 621 flounders, 175 soles and a bunch of interesting oddities and this was worth a small celebration.

Please join us

Would you like to be part of the NZ Fairy Tern Charitable Trust team?

We're a very committed, congenial committee and we love the work we do to protect the fairy tern, but we could really use some extra hands. Please get in touch if you would like to help. Contact Joy Wilson at wilsonjoy@xtra.co.nz or 027 677 8147 or Heather Rogan at heatherrogan2017@gmail.com or 0210 520 622.

How did our bird get its name?

(and the scientist and his lovers)

Bryan Clark found this intriguing article with all the elements of a good story – romance, detective work, and a taxonomic mystery solved:

Tom Iredale was a renowned Australasian naturalist, whose complex romantic life has only recently been uncovered – and how he named the NZ fairy tern

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/science/118416819/flashback-the-scientist-his-lovers-and-how-creatures-get-named?cid=app-iPhone>

Thanks.....

..... **to Bennetts of Mangawhai**, who hosted a most enjoyable carols concert just before Christmas. The concert along with sales of fairy tern eggs and Christmas cards raised over \$5000 for the Trust! A huge thank you for all their support.

.....**to the “Fairy men”**, a group of dedicated bird watchers who together donated over \$1,000 as a result of their big day out when they try to spot as many different bird species as they can.

..... **to the Zoo volunteers at Auckland Zoo**, who fundraise by donating their spare coins on their volunteer day and then choose a conservation project to donate to. They recently selected the NZ Fairy Tern Charitable Trust and have forwarded their donation of \$400.

.....**to all the raffle ticket buyers and sellers**. All but a few of our fund-raising raffle tickets have been sold, thanks to the valiant efforts of volunteers. The raffle will be drawn at 10am on 29th February under the supervision of a J.P. at the Mangawhai museum.

.....**to the volunteer marshals at the Lactic Turkey Fun Run**, held at the Atiu Creek Regional Park run by Auckland Council. Their efforts raised \$1,000 for the Trust.

..... **to Price Baker Berridge**, the law firm assisting us with legal attempts to have the illegal dam on Te Arai Stream removed. They have been extremely generous, but there are still costs involved; hence the emphasis on fund-raising

We have applied to the Environment Legal Assistance Fund for funding to help with costs and expect to hear the outcome in the next month or two.

Te Arai Stream dam

The good news is that, as a result of our Court action the illegal dam on Te Arai Stream has been partly demolished.



13th. January, 2020 The digger about to start work. Thelma Wilson (DOC) supervises *Photo: H. Rogan*

In consultation with the Department of Conservation (DOC), Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), Auckland Council and Te Arai North Limited (TANL), it was agreed that the top 500mm of the dam would be removed initially. The work started on 13th January and was undertaken by TANL, who built the illegal dam in the first place, supervised by Thelma Wilson from DOC and members of the Trust and our supporting organisations, Te Arai Beach Preservation Society, Save Te Arai and the Te Arai Drainage Board.

There was no sign of the Auckland Council ecologist when the work began.

To ensure no disturbance to the birds nesting at the stream mouth, 1.7 km downstream, partial removal was agreed at this point. This will allow for improved fish passage, but will still impede the salt water wedge in all but the highest of tides. Once the fairy tern breeding season is over, we hope to see the rest of the dam removed along with the rock walls to allow for whitebait (inanga) spawning and to restore the stream to its natural state.

Further Court action is also underway to ensure that the water taken from Te Arai Stream for golf course irrigation is taken from the right place and is properly monitored.



The boom downstream to trap sediment

Photo: H. Rogan



15th. January, 2020 Partial removal completed

Photo: H. Rogan