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In this issue: Fairy tern news; Mangawhai teacher; Pukorokoro- Miranda; Updates: Bennetts, NRC, Sandmining; Advocacy on the Run; Mangroves.

First welcome to new member: Anne Brady of Auckland

Dear Members and supporters,

What a difficult time it's been for everyone recently. Our thoughts and sympathies are with all those who have suffered losses in the storm events. One who lost everything is Jackie Fanning, a teacher at Mangawhai Beach School. In our last newsletter we reported on the conservation work she was doing at the school. Read her story on page 4 of this newsletter.

Fairy Tern News

It's been an extremely difficult time for birds too. The constant easterlies and persistent rain have been particularly tough for Fairy terns this breeding season. The only fledgling to survive in the wild is the Papakanui chick from the first nest of the season on the west coast.

There were two chicks at Waipu, one from a Waipu egg which was rescued from a storm and then returned, the other from an egg rescued from Mangawhai.

**The Waipu chicks
before the cyclone**

*Photo: Charlotte
Donald*



They survived some of the storms and constant bad weather but were found dead after Cyclone Gabrielle.

Also at Waipu, one egg was laid on 5th December, taken to the Zoo during adverse weather, then returned to the nest once the parents were consistently sitting on dummy eggs. The egg hatched on 30th December in the wild but the chick was abandoned during a storm on 4th January. It was rescued, taken to the Zoo and then to the aviary where it was banded LY-LM (Lime, Yellow - Lime, Metal) on 16th January.

The rescued chick is the offspring of WM-KW, who hatched at Pakiri in 2020 and fledged in January 2021 under the vigilant care of DOC Ranger, Amanda Hunt. Olivia Haddon is one of the local whānau who provide access for DOC staff and volunteers across their land to the nesting site. They named her **Waimarie** meaning peaceful waters and also lucky. It has been suggested by the local whānau that the chick be offered the name **Tumanako**, meaning Hope. Let's hope this chick lives up to its name and survives! He is the youngest of the juveniles in the aviary.



The chicks safe and sound back in the aviary after the cyclone

Photo: Alex Wilson

Some eggs were taken for the captive rearing programme and these eggs along with eggs rescued from storm events were hatched at the Zoo, then taken to a purpose built aviary. The seven fairy tern juveniles in the aviary are thriving and ready for release shortly. In preparation for Cyclone Gabrielle, the captive chicks were taken into shelter and then returned to the aviary once the cyclone had passed.

Over the last two weeks Fairy tern volunteers have been given the opportunity to visit the aviary to see the captive birds and ask questions of DOC staff. One volunteer remarked how calm and well fed the birds were. The much bigger aviary allows for some flight and practice hovering to catch fish, while a most impressive predator fence keeps intruders at bay. An invisible array of underground plumbing brings fresh water from the nearby stream to the tanks where fish are kept and the trays from which the birds catch fish.



Susan Steedman and Phillip Knowles using the Trust's net to catch fish for the aviary birds. This is the net that has been used for fish studies at Mangawhai and Waipu over the last five years.
Photo: Shelley Ogle

Fishing: Keeping the aviary stocked with enough fish to feed these hungry young birds has meant a lot of work for a lot of people. DOC has also received donations of salmon and trout fingerlings which are very much to the birds' liking!

Summary of breeding results for 2022-23 season (2021-22 season in brackets)

TOTALS: Eggs laid: 22 (25) Eggs hatched: 13 (19) Chicks fledged: 1 (8)

Waipu: Eggs laid: 6 (2) Eggs hatched: 3 (2) Chicks fledged: 0 (0)

(2 eggs predated, 1 egg died, 1 to Zoo/ Aviary; 1 hatched and chick rescued to Zoo/Aviary. 2 eggs hatched on site; 1 was an egg transferred from Mangawhai. Both chicks survived nearly to fledging but died in the cyclone.)

Mangawhai: Eggs laid: 13 (15) Eggs hatched: 0 (8) Chicks fledged: 0 (7)

(5 eggs taken to Zoo then aviary where they have been banded, awaiting release; 1 egg to Zoo/Aviary, chick later died; 1 chick died after hatching at the Zoo; 1 egg was transferred to Waipu; 3 eggs were non-viable; 2 eggs were predated.)

Pakiri: Eggs laid: 0 (5) Eggs hatched: 0 (0) Chicks fledged: 0 (0)

Papakanui: Eggs laid: 3 (3) Eggs hatched: 2 (3) Chicks fledged: 1 (1)

(1 egg was non-viable, 1 chick died after hatching, 1 survived to fledging, seen at Waipu)

Zoo/Aviary: Eggs laid: 0 (0) Eggs hatched: 8 (6) Chicks released: 7?(3)

Note: Chicks are usually considered fledged when they have been sighted away from their natal site. The table shows 3 chicks released from the aviary last season. One died shortly after release; the other two have not been sighted.

This season there are 7 chicks in the aviary awaiting release.



Mangawhai Teacher loses everything

In our last newsletter we wrote of the collaborative project of the local primary school (Mangawhai Beach School), the Trust, and other conservation groups. Teacher, Jackie Fanning, started an enviro group in the second term of 2022 with interested children gathering in her classroom weekly on a Thursday at lunch time. Now the Mangawhai community has suffered torrential rain (Friday, February 24th) and unfortunately

Jackie's home and vehicle are destroyed. She, thankfully, is safe though very shaken by the experience of having several landslides shunt her home off its piles, twist it around and turn over her van, half burying it in soil. Getting her life back on track is going to be quite a challenge as it is also for those many others who have also lost everything in Tairāwhiti, Hawkes Bay and Auckland.

Teachers like Jackie are treasures. You may wish to donate to help her get on her feet again through: <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/lost-everything-2>

Jackie started her little enviro group by showing "Fight for the Wild" and introducing the concept of Predator Free 2050 to her students. She then drew on several local conservation groups to help in various ways with their expertise. Our Trust, Alex Flavell-Johnson of the Shorebird Trust, Susan Steedman, Anne Neill, and Adele Mangnall of the Piroa/Brynderwyn Land Care Group and Neville of the Waipu Menzshed have all contributed their skills to the project. The children learned to trap (setting traps around the school grounds), to record data gained from trapping and tracking, and to hone their birdwatching/hearing skills. Jackie organised a photo competition for the whole school for Environment Day with help from the conservation groups who assisted with judges and prizes. She has opened up a wonderful world of nature to the children and taught them practical ways they can help in the protection of our wildlife.

- **Glenys Mather**





Pukorokoro – Miranda

Dawne and I were very lucky to attend a Wader Identification weekend at the Pukorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre in November last year. We had waited years for this opportunity – which was cancelled several times because of Covid19 – and DOC kindly offered to pay the cost of our accommodation and the course as we are both long-term Fairy Tern volunteers. Firstly, I learnt that “Chenier” is a shell bank where the waders roost at high-tide on the Firth of Thames near Pukorokoro. That’s where we did most of our observations, when the tide has pushed the birds up from their feeding grounds.

Course participants with scopes on the stop bank. *Photo: Dawne Sanson*

We went on a trip to the Piako River mouth, where a few paddocks have been inundated and they have been bought off the farmer for conservation purposes and they’re now an ideal roosting spot for waders. We found a gathering of Pacific Golden Plovers in a nearby paddock, on the outskirts of the larger cluster of waders, which included Bar-tailed Godwits, a few Red-necked Stints and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. The viewing was so easy from a stop-bank with a metal road, part of the Hauraki Bike Trail (Thames to Kaiaua).

Some more things I learnt:

- How to distinguish juvenile Bar-Tailed Godwits from adults - their speckled/dappled feathers.
- Looking at the relative size of different birds – in relation to Godwits, for example could be a starting point for identifying them.
- Red Knots are not red when they arrive in Aotearoa/NZ but start to colour up before they depart in autumn to head to their Northern Hemisphere breeding grounds.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpipers have a rufous crown!

The wonderful, expert tutors at Pukorokoro - Adrian Reigen, Keith Woodley and Gillian Vaughan were friendly and helpful.

- **Debbie Stone**

Debbie and I had a wonderful weekend at Miranda. We stayed at the Centre headquarters, very comfortable, simple accommodation with wonderfully nutritious meals prepared for us. About 12 participants gathered on the Friday evening where we introduced ourselves and prepared for an early 7.30am start the next morning to catch the high tide which is optimal viewing time. We drove a short way to the Robert Findlay Reserve and walked over a boardwalk crossing the salt marsh to a hide which allowed expansive views of thousands of Bar-tailed Godwits feeding and resting along the water's edge. Three experienced guides supported us and provided amazing expert hands on 1:1 tuition, helping set up telescopes, pointing out features to observe, and general information about the birds including other species present.

Around 10.30am we returned to the Centre where the cook treated us to warm muffins for morning tea. We then drove north from the Centre to Ray's Rest Reserve located next to the Taramaire Wildlife Refuge Reserve. Here we observed numerous Wrybills (which breed in the South Island and then migrate north), Turnstones and other species such as Pied Stilts, Northern New Zealand Dotterel.

A delicious lunch was followed by a drive to the Piako River mouth, as Debbie has described above. An evening lecture about shorebird identification and we were ready for bed and another early start on Sunday where more time was spent observing birds at the Godwit hide.

Juvenile Godwit – Keith Woodley from Pūkorokoro News February 2023, Issue 127.



Over the course of the weekend we observed both the common and rarer migratory birds – Bar-Tailed Godwits, Red-Necked Stints, Turnstones, Red or Lesser Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Wrybills - as well as New Zealand native and endemic land and shorebirds such as Pied Stilts, White-fronted Terns, Gulls (Red-billed and Black-backed), NZ Dotterel, Royal Spoonbills, White-fronted Herons, Caspian Terns, Pied Shags, Oyster Catchers, Spur-winged Plover and around 20 other common land and shore species.

I thoroughly recommend a visit to the Miranda centre. Keith Woodley, staff and volunteers are all very friendly and knowledgeable about the birds. There is also a very well stocked shop at the Centre selling anything bird- or nature-related.

- Dawne Sanson

Updates

Thanks to Bennetts: Bennetts Chocolate Factory have continued their support of our Trust with another generous donation from sales of fairy tern cards and eggs (praline and chocolate).

Northern Regional Council: The legal work on the policies and rules for Northland is, we hope, heading for a close this year. Our remaining issues are with trying to get significant bird breeding areas in Northland harbours the same protection as Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) and ensuring that the general rules and conditions for coastal works protect bird nesting, feeding and roosting areas.

We've had an encouraging response from the Northern Regional Harbourmaster to our concerns about jet ski speeding in what are supposed to be low speed areas of Mangawhai Harbour.

Sandmining: The Trust having joined the appeals against sandmining continuing off the Mangawhai – Pakiri coastline, our expert witnesses, Ian Southey and Alex Flavell-Johnson are busy preparing their evidence. We are very grateful to them and to our barrister, Chris Patterson, all of whom are giving their services to the Trust free of charge.



Advocacy on the Run

Jeannie Preddey relaxing after joining Auckland's Round the Bays Fun Run, showing off her fairy tern T shirt and hat patch and pin.

She was one of 20,000 joggers and walkers who took part in the annual event.

Mangroves

Jane Vaughan muses on the protective role of mangroves

I was reminded during Cyclone Gabrielle of how important mangroves are in protecting land, fixtures and plants against erosion. We were very lucky in our local area to have less damage from the strong winds than other places but there were a few large trees like pines and poplars blown over.

In 2012 the Environment Court decided after a public hearing that mangroves could be removed from Mangawhai Harbour and this was duly carried out by the Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society. In all, consents for removal of approximately 42 hectares was given, the largest area being the mangrove island of 12 hectares between the Pub and the Back Bay jetty in the upper harbour.

I live on the Kainui St arm of the upper harbour and have an excellent view of the Back Bay jetty and surrounding areas. As the wind increased during daylight hours of the cyclone, I observed the waves getting bigger and bigger until they were over 1m in height with white caps, heading from the direction of the southwest past the Pub.

The next day we were notified that the excellent wooden walkway which the local "Trackies" had built through the mangroves from Molesworth Dr to connect with the Back Bay jetty, was closed. With the removal of the mangrove island the fetch from a strongly wind-blown high tide was now more than a km and even though the walkway was strongly and well built, it obviously could not stand the hours of buffeting during the storm at a point where there were very few mangroves left to protect it.

Maybe if the mangrove island was still in place this would not have happened.

Coincidentally, Jane received this just after writing the above:

.....Spanning extensive stretches of shore across five different continents, mangrove trees cluster on the perimeter of tropical and subtropical coastlines. Though unassuming, the mangrove's dense tangle of limbs provide habitat for an explosion of unique and complex life and offer super-charged solutions to the climate crisis in more ways than one. Mangrove forests can trap 4-10 times more carbon than land-based trees, support biodiversity, and prevent billions of dollars in storm damages every year.....

This came from an organisation called Only One. You can find them at:

[Instagram](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

hello@only.one

See the attached article for more information related to this subject. Jenny Price, our treasurer discussed this article at our AGM and was requested to circulate it, so here it is....

Best wishes,

Heather Rogan and your Trust committee