



Twig and Tweet Gazette

February and March 2004

Volume 1, Issue 3



Forest & Bird Sparks Mainland Island for Manawatu

The first credible steps for transformation of the Turitea Catchment Area near Palmerston North into a Mainland Island Wildlife Sanctuary have been undertaken by your local Forest and Bird committee.

The Manawatu Forest and Bird committee is grateful to all local members who have promoted the Turitea Mainland Island vision in past letter campaigns to city council. You now can see the first results of that great effort, and look beyond to the day when native birds will again be readily seen in the Manawatu!!

A ecological scoping report, co-commissioned by Forest and Bird Manawatu Branch and Palmerston North City Council, will guide development of a independent trust to promote and oversee establishment of the new Turitea Mainland Island.

The Island will be a Manawatu conservation site serving as a centre for environmental education, recreation and eco-tourism. We look forward to continued support and input from local branch members as strategies are developed for this major local conservation objective.

Manawatu Branch Plans Local Promotions

Here are two opportunities to introduce friends to Forest and Bird Manawatu, or just drop in and say hello! The **Esplanade Day** celebrations in Palmerston North on Sunday 22 Feb will feature a display by your local branch.

Information on upcoming activities including excursions, work parties, and branch meetings will be available, as will new information on the Turitea Mainland Island plans. A trip for 2 to Kapiti Island will be raf-

fled, so drop by the Esplanade for your chance at a look at New Zealand's premier predator free island! Tickets only \$2 each, so get some for friends as well!

A display at this year's **Massey Clubs Day**, to be held lunch-time at campus centre on 25 February, is the other opportunity. If you are one of the many local members who work and study on Massey Campus, stop by and say "hi"!

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Upcoming Manawatu Attractions

- **21 February:** Work Party at Kopane Bush
- **22 February:** Esplanade Day Promotion, Palmerston North
- **25 February:** Massey Clubs Day Promotion
- **28 February:** Excursion to Karori Wildlife Sanctuary
- **7 March:** Manawatu Estuary Farewell to the Birds
- **14 March:** Work Party at Barber's Bush

... look for more on pgs 4 & 5

Rotorua Excursion a Great Success: A Trio of Reports

Kokako in Kaharoa Forest

While the rest of the world were watching the Mars landing on tele, our party of 25 also were in another world, watching a family of kokako gliding high in the Kaharoa Forest canopy. Unique to NZ, the kokako's hauntingly beautiful song is made up using a variety of sounds including clicks, took-tooks, buzzes and mews.

We missed hearing them in the dawn chorus, but DOC biodiversity ranger and guide Carmel Richardson played a recording while we were having lunch down by the stream. Each range of kokako calls is unique to a particular forest. Carmel can tell the difference between her Kaharoa birds and those from the Urewera which include wow-wow in their repertoire.

Passionate about restoring the endangered bird to its natural habitat, Carmel is also an ardent supporter of the Kaharoa Kokako Trust (KTT). Formed in 1997 to assist with the ongoing scientific research and pest control management, the KTT uses volunteer teams from the Kaharoa and Hamurana areas to maintain bait stations. As a result the forest health has improved and the numbers of Kokako in the Kaharoa Forest have increased. For more about the Trust's work please phone Anne Managh on (07) 3323 450.

Story by **Rae Nicholls**



'Dimond', the NZ Falcon star of Wingspan Trust, Rotorua.

Photo: Rae Nicholls

Trip Review and Perspective

Rae Nicholls' trip to Rotorua and surrounds was absolutely fantastic. With a turn out of 25, we went to visit Carmel Richardson who has spent ten years as a DoC Ranger in the Kaharoa Forest taking care of the kokako. We were lucky enough to be enchanted by a family of kokako - what a pleasure to see these fabulous birds in the wild.

In the same afternoon we visited Debbie Stewart of Wingspan, the raptor project. Debbie is a trained falconer and we were able to see her flying Dimond, a small female NZ Falcon.

We travelled the next day to Mokoia Island bird sanctuary where Timoti showed us around. We visited Hinemoa's pool where she rested after swimming Lake Rotorua to meet Tutanekai. We climbed to the summit, and learned much of the history of the island. When Hongi invaded the island, one brave lady, Te Ao-Kapu-Rangi, Arawa wife of Hongi's second in command, was told that she could save as many

people as would fit beneath her legs. It is an insult to Maori to refer to a woman's legs, but ignoring this, and thinking quickly she leaped ashore and climbed to the top of an overhanging rock under which 750 of her people were spared sheltered beneath her legs.

Lake Okataina was also on our visiting list, and wondrous as the forest is, there was an unearthly silence where there should have been birdsong. This forest is virtually bird dead, although magnificently beautiful. More questions were raised than answered there.

Contributed by **Jane Carver**

Wingspan Whispers

Falcons fly fast whereas hawks soar. That is one distinguishing feature we learned and saw at Wingspan when its founder Debbie Stewart called the falcon 'Dimond' to her. Dimond started as an orphaned egg so they both revealed definite signs of attraction to each other. He was her baby and she was clearly not ready for him to leave her, as her comments certainly verged on empty-nest syndrome talk!

Debbie was featured on a television programme one evening in January 2004, where she showed how Dimond could chase away or eat birds that plague grapevines in the South Island. What a natural win-win situation! Other birds and raptors have been taken to her for help. The job found her so to speak, she now shares her love and expertise with people like us, Manawatu Forest and Birders! See their excellent website at wingspan.co.nz for more info on this excellent work! ~**Dianne Haist**

Welcome!

A warm welcome to nine new Manawatu Forest and Bird members, we look forward to seeing you at a meeting, work party, or excursion soon!

- ∞ R&D Crawford
- ∞ The O'Neill Family
- ∞ Zaneta & Patrick Park-Ng
- ∞ Hannah Parkinson
- ∞ D. Parkinson
- ∞ B Major & A Parkinson
- ∞ Alex James

Manawatu Committee Contacts

Manawatu Forest and Bird invites inquiries and ideas from future and current members, and the interested public. Feel free to contact us by whichever method is of most convenience to you. Our local committee roster includes:

Chairperson:	Donald Kerr	952 7001 x70836
Secretary & News:	Brent Barrett	353 1199
Treasurer:	Sally Pearce	359 4326
Feilding Contacts:	Alan Hawkins	323 0583
	Chris Thomasen	323 6876
Work Parties:	Jane Carver	355 8212

Our local email address is **forestbirdmanawatu@hotmail.com**. A full committee roster, and additional information are freely available on the national Forest and Bird website, **www.forestandbird.org.nz** and locally hosted website **www.environmentnetwork.org.nz**

Thank you to Christine Thomasen for the beautiful artwork created on this newsletter!! ~the editor

Conservation Conversations

A Happy New Year wish to each one of you! 2004 is a year of promise for all local conservationists, with new opportunities for real progress in the ongoing campaign to see the Turitea Catchment become a Mainland Island conservation area.

Realisation of this dream will provide the Manawatu region with a destination quality conservation reserve on the scale of what is seen in all our neighbouring regions: Wanganui (Bushy Park), Wellington (Karori), Hawkes Bay (Boundary Stream), and Wairarapa (Mt. Bruce).

More important than keeping pace with our North Island neighbours is the opportunity to provide high quality, predator free habitat for

endangered native plants and animals. However, big opportunities require big commitment from all stakeholders, including Manawatu Forest and Bird.

If you are wanting to make a positive impact for Manawatu conservation in 2004, perhaps this opportunity; either by virtue of it's proximity, scale or value, will focus your passion for local conservation activity. With a vision this big, there will be many opportunities for supporting with your time, energy, and money in the coming months.

Begin today to envision your future with a Mainland Island in sight of Palmerston North, and decide what part you want to play in realizing that dream!

~Brent Barrett

Our friends at **Environment Network Manawatu (ENM)** are online hosting this newsletter at <http://www.environmentnetwork.org.nz/>. ENM is an umbrella agency for environmental groups whose role is to encourage and support initiatives in the Manawatu area that have benefits for the wider community. Interested? Contact **Adie Leng** on (06) 356-8199 ext 7780 or econet@pncc.govt.nz



February 2004 Events Diary



10 February~ Branch Meeting: Ian Argyle & The Sledge Track

At our first branch meeting of the year, Manawatu conservationist and farmer Ian Argyle will present the story of the creation of the Sledge Track in the upper Kahutarawa Valley. This track is the Manawatu's newest bush walking opportunity, and is a centre for Palmerston North's future outdoor recreation hub. Ian has been the catalyst and organizer of the dedicated volunteer team which has seen the track through from concept to completion, and continues to be a force for conservation in the Kahutarawa.

There also will be a brief presentation on the recent work parties at Kopane Bush, and news of future conservation activities scheduled for this area. Meeting is at the Salvation Army Building on the corner of Church and Princess Streets, at 7:45 p.m. Guests and future members are most welcome. ***See you there!***

Ian Argyle standing near Argyle Rocks on the Sledge Track. Come along to the Tuesday night meeting and hear what he has to say about turning vision into reality!

Photo: Rae Nicholls



14 February~ Trip to Sledge Track and Hardings Park

Having been inspired to see this wonderful local conservation area by Ian Argyle's talk at the Branch Meeting, you will surely want to join us for a bushwalking tour of the Sledge Track.

We've organized a Saturday morning excursion on the track, and up into Harding's Park. Organizer Vic Vercoe



A beautiful falls along Sledge Track. Photo by J. Robertson, provided courtesy of the website www.backcountrynz.com

requests that you bring a rain coat and lunch. In return he promises a day's fun, viewing some of the best local bush and waterways! Vic intends to walk right up into some of the new ridge tracks, while trip co-leader Rae Nicholls promises a gentler stroll along the steam track. Carpool from 9 a.m. at the PNCC carpark. Phone Vic on 357 5419 for details.

21 February~ Kopane Bush Work Party: see story on page 7

28 February~ Visit to Karori Wildlife Sanctuary

Your best chance to join with friends to visit one of New Zealand's premier sanctuaries. Predator-free for the past 3 years, this 250 ha reserve in the heart of Wellington is home to rare bird species such as kaka, saddleback, and kiwi. It

may also be a preview of the conservation area being promoted locally for the Turitea! Long-time local Forest and Bird member George Paton is organizing the excursion. The usual admission costs of \$10 per person will apply. A visit

to the century old Otari Native Botanic Garden is planned in the afternoon. George requests that you notify him by 27 Feb if you plan to join this excursion. George may be reached on 357 3628. You are most welcome to ring for details.

March 2004 Events Diary



10 March~ Wednesday Branch Meeting~

Note the **Wednesday**!! Our annual combined meeting visiting with our nearest northern neighbours, the Rangitiki Forest and Bird! This year it is our turn for travel and adven-

ture, with carpool to Marton at 6:45 from the Salvation Army Complex (corner of Church and Princess, Palmerston North). The meeting is a 7:30 p.m. start at the Presbyterian

Church in Broadway Ave, Marton. The speaker and their conservation topic remain a surprise to us in the Manawatu, which we all look forward to discovering! See you there!



13 March~ Native Freshwater Fish in Manawatu Lowland Streams

This is your chance to see the beautiful native fish in a local lowland stream, in a way that is safe and harmless to the fish, yet gives you the very best opportunity to see them close up. A great chance to invite a fishy friend along for a look at the native species, and at the scientific tools available for electrofishing and study of this important aspect of New Zea-

land's spectacular natural heritage.

We will be accompanied by electro-fishing experts from

"A great chance to invite a fishy friend along for a look at native species"

Massey University who will guide us to several spots in the stream-bed, and briefly catch and release fish to show a first hand example of the native biodiversity in our local streams.

Alan Hawkins is the excursion organizer, he can be contacted for details on 323-0583. A 9 a.m. start is planned, and a carpool will be available.



14 March~ Barber's Bush Clean-up

The Barber's Bush is in a phase of renovation and habitat improvement for native plants and birds, with volunteers organized by Manawatu

Forest and Bird member Chay Cotter. This work party provides an opportunity to boost progress in the restoration of this bush reserve nestled in

Palmerston North. Carpool 9 a.m. at PN City Council Carpark, or just stop by at Lalena Grove from 9:30. Phone Chay on 353 3430 for details!



27 March~ Work Party at Keeble's Bush

Forest and Bird members and friends are invited to join in the annual work party at Keeble's Bush. Manawatu Forest and Bird's current revegetation project, located in the Link Block next to Keeble's Bush, has been underway since 1996. The numerous native tree seedlings

established here need your help to reduce weed pressure.

This is a great opportunity to do your bit for local conservation while enjoying time with family and friends, and to have opportunity to look at the beautiful stand of mature native bush in the Keeble's Bush block

of conservation trust land just south of Palmerston North.

Work party organizer Peter van Essen is available for details by phoning 355 9076. A carpool will leave at 9 a.m. from Palmerston North City Council Carpark in Church St.

Manawatu Forest and Bird: the conservationist's choice for local action and national representation

Trip Report~ Bushy Park, 13 December

Despite a stormy weather forecast, a team of 15 adventurers set out to visit Bushy Park, and to hear about their exciting plans for conservation. Aably organized by Alan Hawkins, the group took in a tour of the Edwardian mansion, which once was a homestead, and is now a beautiful bed and breakfast and reserve headquarters.

The caretaker provided a comprehensive overview of the property's historical and conservation significance. He emphasized that the original land owner was well ahead of his time both in his care for livestock, and foresight in the set-aside of significant conservation areas on his hill property. Today Bushy Park is again on the cutting edge, with plans and fundraising underway for predator-proof fencing and re-introduction of native birds.

After the tour, the team set out to walk the property and see the dense stands of native bush, which have benefited from use of predator controls.



Excursion team in front of the massive tree "Ratanui", a prime example of Bushy Park reserve's high conservation value.

Photo: C Thomasen

'Ratanui', the largest Northern Rata, was a real highlight. On the return journey, the group visited Kai Iwi beach and the Bason Reserve.

Manawatu Forest and Bird member June Sowerby, known to us for her cheerful smile and helpful attitude. It is with a sad heart that we say farewell...

Farewell Dear Friend

The December Bushy Park excursion was the last time June Sowerby joined our team before her unfortunate disappearance over the New Year. Known to us for her enthusiasm, trip leadership, excellent suppers, and cheerful manner, our friend June will be missed by all....

Photo: Rae Nicholls



Trip Report~ Rata at Mikimiki, 10 January

The first excursion of the New Year! Sixteen participants, including new local branch members and 5 keen students from International Pacific College were on board for this trip into the Wairarapa to walk through and view the Mikimiki area near the Tararua Ranges.

Frequent trip leader Alan Hawkins reported that the day was excellent weather, and the

entire crew had a fantastic time! Although the peak of the rata bloom had unfortunately passed by this date, a few beautiful flowering ratas were still to be seen. Many birds were about as well, with whiteheads, long-tailed cuckoos, and wood pigeons recorded.

A highlight of the trip included the opportunity to see the 1930s plant nursery used to

"...a few beautiful flowering ratas were still to be seen. Many birds were about as well..."

propagate redwoods, which have now become giants of the forest in a highly dense stand.

Kopane Bush Update

Next time friends ask you what Forest and Bird is up to locally, say **"Kopane Bush!!"**. What makes this patch special? For starters, it is a representative fragment of original lowland bush on the Manawatu Plain, complete with wetlands area, a thing that is mighty hard to come by these days! Secondly, it is threatened by invasive weeds and wind damage. And finally, it is a stunningly beautiful patch of bush!

This has prompted Manawatu Forest and Bird local action organizer Jane Carver to step in, offering assistance to increase the ecological health of this patch with a series of work

parties and related conservation activities.

Our first visit and work party was 14 December, a spring day with no rain but a stiff gale! What a time to learn about the sheltering value of native bush. Within the mature stand where

our team worked to eradicate ivy, we were well protected, while the tempest roared!

Despite gale conditions, the landowners graciously gave us a comprehensive tour of the



Conservationist and Kopane Bush land-owner Jamie Fricklington, and Manawatu Forest and Bird member Michael Greenwood work together to give a native tree seedling some much needed breathing room!

bush, highlighting their ongoing conservation efforts, which now include weed control and establishment of native seedlings at the northern and western sides.

Building on this team effort, **a second work party is planned for 21 February.** We

invite members and friends interested in actively conserving Kopane Bush to join the team on 21 Feb. Phone local work party organizer Jane Carver on 355 8212 for details!

Albatross Campaign: Local Update

SAVE THE ALBATROSS CAMPAIGN...Brent Stephenson says "Thankyou" to Manawatu Forest & Bird and is most grateful to receive our contribution toward his trip. He joined the crew of the **Mary Rose VI** in Wellington and sailed on Saturday 24th January. Voyage organiser and ship captain John Ridgway's daily diary and logbook on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/alabaster/A1127062> makes interesting reading, giving a glimpse into the fantastic time Brent is having, and the richness of birdlife to be seen in our Southern Oceans even today. A recent excerpt follows:

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Date: Wednesday 28 January 2004. Day 186. SE of Chathams.

"What a Day! And its only just begun!" Chortled the tousle-haired, be-ear-ringed, soon-to-shave Brent. Literally jumping with joy in the aft-cockpit at 0600. "Has he done much teamwork?" I wondered. The boat is a home and it has to be kept up to scratch or the muttering begins. ("Have we become just a mobile bird-hide?") But for now, Soft Plumage Petrel, Black Winged Petrel, Broad-Billed Prion, Little Shearwater and the whole panoply of Albatrosses keep our new resident real Birder on cloud nine. As Graham Taylor promised, the Chatham Rise has produced the richest variety and quantity of seabirds we've encountered since leaving Cape Town. New Zealand is truly the Sea-bird Capital of the World and it is wonderful to see how New Zealanders do value their environment....

Into the mist... John Ridgway
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