

25 Year Celebration

Tiri Supporters love a celebration and there is plenty to celebrate about Tiritiri Matangi Island. 25 years since becoming a reserve seemed as good an opportunity as any to get together.



Tiritiri Matangi Island was first gazetted as a Recreational Reserve in 1976. Four years later, the status was upgraded to "Scientific Reserve".

25 years on and much has changed, to say the least. In recognition of this, SoTM held a dinner at Alexandra Park on Monday 17th September. With the assistance of the British Council, we invited Chris Baines, accompanied by partner Nerys Jones, as guest speaker for the occasion. Chris and Nerys also addressed the committee, on the island, the day before. They also stayed overnight and were rewarded with a close encounter of the Kiwi kind.

Chris may not be particularly well known in New Zealand but is certainly renowned amongst conservation circles in the UK. He is a regular contributor to the excellent BBC Wildlife Magazine. His ideas are forward thinking and pragmatic. As he spoke to us, it was refreshing to be reminded how simple some solutions to environmental problems can be. Quoting the recent Foot & Mouth problems as just one example, saving a few dollars by taking short cuts can have a high price in the long run. More on Chris & Nerys' visit can be learned from Peter Lee's chairman's report.

Simon Fordham

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This newsletter has been kindly
sponsored by 3M New Zealand



Dawn Chorus

Dawn Chorus is the official newsletter of the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc. It is published four times a year. Contributions (including photographs) are gratefully received.

Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc.

PO Box 34-229, Birkenhead, Auckland 1310

The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi is a non-profit conservation volunteer group. Founded in 1988, to further the aims of the Tiritiri Matangi habitat restoration and species translocation project, our four aims are:

- To promote and enhance the open sanctuary of Tiritiri Matangi and to ensure the continuation of the project.
- To provide financial, material and physical support for the work on Tiritiri Matangi.
- To heighten public awareness of the existence and role of Tiritiri Matangi as an open sanctuary
- To do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the foregoing objects or any of them.

The annual subscription is:

- Adult / Family / Corporate - \$20
- Overseas - \$25
- Student / Child - \$5

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Editorial

In simple terms, in our role as conservationists, our focus is on protecting species so that future generations can benefit from their presence. It would be fair to say that most of us also have a high regard for the welfare of animals as individuals, not just as a species.

Sometimes, however, these two values appear to contradict one another. It is a sad reality that some introduced species need to be eradicated to ensure the survival of our indigenous treasures. Such eradication usually, although not always, means the destruction of the offenders. It is essential that, where such action is necessary, it is carried out with as little suffering as is practical.

DoC are in the unenviable position of having to take responsibility for most of this work. They are to be commended for their efforts, not just for carrying out such duties, often with limited resources, but also for the way they consult with interested parties and their open explanation of their actions.

It is therefore unfortunate that the SPCA, our leading proponent of animal welfare issues has taken a grossly unbalanced stance against efforts to address a number of problems that do exist. Examples include the Kaimanawa horses, the problems with cats and, most recently, the rainbow lorikeet issue.

In the spring edition of "Animal's Voice", the magazine of the SPCA, both the cat and the lorikeet issues are addressed. Not once, in this magazine is there acceptance that domestic cats are a problem in New Zealand. They are!!! It dismisses the fact that domestic cats do kill native birds by suggesting that they prefer other prey including lizards. Do they not realize that lizards are also an integral part of New Zealand's biodiversity? Many conservationists, myself included, are cat lovers yet we do recognize that there is a problem.

The SPCA oppose the decision to class the rainbow lorikeet as an "undesirable organism" and consequently eradicate it from the wild, even though these birds have only been "live trapped", not killed. Lorikeet supporters seem to think that DoC have to provide absolute proof that the lorikeet will be a menace to native birds. I would suggest that DoC only have to show a potential risk to justify their stance. Surely we have learnt from past mistakes.

The SPCA suggest that there is no proof that lorikeets are a threat to the tui as a tui will chase off a lorikeet in a one on one situation. However, scientific research has shown that lorikeets usually travel in flocks and, once they establish, the tui's disappear.

For me, one of the key reasons for not allowing the establishment of the lorikeet is that the bellbird, burdened by the overcrowded conditions on Tiri, is now established on Whangaparaoa Peninsula. This leads us to hope that it is naturally reintroducing itself to the Auckland area. The lorikeet could inhibit or even prevent this from happening.

We have been fortunate in that, whilst many lorikeets were captured on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, none seem to have made it across the Tiri channel.

Reading "Animal's Voice", one very quickly picks up on an "anti DoC" attitude. I suspect that this may have its origins with the Kaimanawa horse issue and is now the driver for subsequent criticisms. As is so often the case when the "blinkers are on", those with opposing points of view are dismissed as being "extreme conservationists" or from the "militant sectors of the environmental lobby".

Organizations like the SPCA are an essential component of any civilized society and there is no doubt that they do a lot of good work. However, instead of condoning the right of individuals to release, as they desire, alien creatures into our environment, perhaps the SPCA should be concentrating on blatant, yet for some reason overlooked, examples of animal cruelty such as the encagement of animals, particularly birds, where the sole purpose of this action is for the pleasure of the prisoner.

Simon Fordham

The opinions of contributors, expressed in Dawn Chorus, do not necessarily reflect those of the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc.

Christmas Message

Each year that passes on this island sees changes that we could not have imagined at the beginning of this project. With the completion of the Service Centre (implement shed) it now means our vehicles machinery and tools are now in one building. We thank you for your continuing support and, in this "Year of the Volunteer", it shows how important the contribution of volunteers is to a project like this. Not all members are able to participate on the island but your support is important all the same.

We would like to thank our guides, shop people and all those volunteers that have given extra time on the island. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope to see you on the Waitangi Picnic Day, Wednesday February 6th 2002.

Ray & Barbara



**Deadline for Spring Newsletter
31 January 2002**

Oddity!



A rare Spine-tailed Swift, seen gliding over the island recently, was reported in an email from one of our members as a Swine-tailed Swift. Evidence, perhaps, that pigs do sometimes fly over Tiri.

Page 3 Bird



Kingfisher
Halcyon sancta
Kotare

This colourful native is common throughout the North, South and Stewart Islands as well as most offshore islands. It is certainly abundant on Tiri

Despite the name, fish is not usually the dominant component of a Kingfisher's diet. Whilst they dine on a wide range of vertebrates and invertebrates, they are most often observed feeding on large insects such as crickets and cicadas or, around the foreshore, small crabs. On Tiri, they indicate a preference for the abundant skink.

Nests are usually in holes in trees, banks or cliffs. Most years, one or more of the nesting holes adjacent to the wharf shed are used, as are many of the holes in pohutukawas around the island.

One peculiar behaviour is the way that they create their nesting tunnels. They forcefully fly into the bank, cliff or whatever, repeating this action until they are able to perch on the lip.

You may wonder if the generic name of the kingfisher, *Halcyon*, has anything to do with the expression "halcyon days". In days long gone, Romans and Greeks knew of the kingfisher but could never find their nests. We know this to be due to of migration, the kingfisher being a winter visitor to Europe, but legend suggested that the kingfisher controlled the wind and the waves. So that they could nest on the sea, they created a period of calm. This period, of around two weeks, is an annual, mid-winter event in the Mediterranean, hence the term "halcyon days", a time of peace and happiness..

New Zealand has a small population of the largest member of the kingfisher family, the Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae novaeguineae*), originally introduced to Kawau Island last century by Governor George Grey. On occasion, these have been seen or heard on Tiri.

Simon Fordham



From The Chair

What a wonderful dinner we had!

Yes, the September 25th anniversary dinner, with Chris Baines as the main speaker, proved to be a great success. I've received nothing but praise for Chris and his insights and thoughtful comments.

There's now serious thought being given to one particular idea: bringing International Dawn Chorus Day to New Zealand.

What is it? On this day, as many people as possible are encouraged to get up early to listen to the dawn chorus. As Chris described it, it began somewhat under "false pretences" in that he simply declared a Sunday in May to be "International Dawn Chorus Day" - and an obliging media dutifully reported it as such! Since its inception in the UK it's spread to other countries. What appeals most to me is that there was no elaborate and drawn-out process: Chris and a few colleagues simply made it happen, with a mix of enthusiasm, guile, commitment, contacts and a single clear idea!

If you think it's a good idea, and in particular if you would like to help to make it happen here in New Zealand, email or contact one of the committee. Watch this space...

The committee was fortunate to be able to spend some time with Chris and his partner Nerys Jones on the island, and Chris and Nerys stayed overnight. Both were extremely fortunate to see a kiwi when taken out for a night-time walk - it walked to within two metres of them! Needless to say, they were delighted - especially as I'd told them that the chances of seeing one weren't great!

It's always wonderful to gain new insights. Chris and Nerys certainly brought those. Both believe in business and conservation groups working in partnership to achieve "win-win" solutions (yes, I know it's a 'trendy' phrase, but it's so apt). Engineering and technical approaches alone won't solve our problems; we've got to think creatively - and this means harnessing the thoughts and energies of some rather unusual bedfellows at times.

In all this, the role of conservation groups can become much bigger than merely habitat restoration. We just have to be willing to engage.

Finally, Simon has stepped down as our inaugural Guiding Coordinator. Guiding is now an important and high-profile activity for us, and I'd like to thank Simon for all his hard work, particularly the Guiding Manual.

Peter Lee

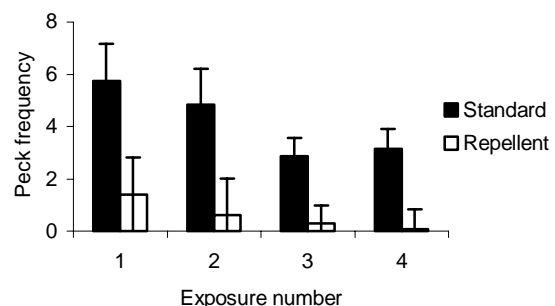
Possum Bait Research on Tiri

The friendly North Island robin, with its trembling feet and distinctive song, always adds to my enjoyment of being in the bush. Recently I've been using the robins on Tiritiri Matangi to learn how to protect robins and other native birds from eating possum baits.

In parts of New Zealand where possums, rodents and mustelids are common, many of our native bird species, including robins, are in decline. This has been caused by predation of birds or nests, destruction of suitable habitat, or competition between pests and birds for food. Removing pests from the forest allows native birds to recover and breed successfully, much like bird populations on pest-free islands. One problem though, is that birds such as robins and tomtits sometimes eat the poison baits we use to control pests. Up to 50% of robins and tomtits are killed during some pest control operations. My PhD studies (supervised by Lindsay Matthews, AgResearch, and Joe Waas, Waikato University) have aimed to stop native birds from eating baits, by understanding the feeding behaviour of birds. I've conducted a series of experiments to develop repellents that stop birds from feeding without putting off the pests!

With the help of Kylie Flight, I've observed the feeding behaviour of about 60 robins on Tiritiri over the last two winters. We offer robins choices between repellent treated and untreated baits on an area of cleared leaf litter in each birds territory. The feeding behaviour of each bird is recorded on video so that we can later determine how often the birds pecked at baits, how many baits the birds ate and how many baits they flew off with.

The results to date have been fascinating. Being extremely inquisitive, robins will quite happily peck at small pieces of cereal, dough or carrot baits, but they don't really like paste. Robins test a new food by pecking at it or by picking it up in the bill and dropping it. This makes it hard to find repellents that will stop robins from being poisoned, as they only need to eat about 0.2g of a 1080 bait to get a lethal quantity! When a robin doesn't like a food it will drop it and wipe its bill on a branch or twig. We've been lucky enough in our experiments to find a couple of repellents that effectively stop robins from eating bait (see graph) and once the robins have learnt about the repellents they avoid them from then on.



The only other birds on Tiritiri that have shown any interest in eating baits have been the occasional stitchbird or saddleback. The next phase of the research is to test the repellent with robins at different times of the year and to test whether we can protect weka and tomtits using the same repellent. We'll then need to conduct some field trials with DoC to make sure that the repellent treated baits will protect native birds and kill pests as well as we want them to. If you want to know more about this research, feel free to contact me:

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Positively Aiding

Story by Olga Brochner
Photos by Simon Fordham



No matter where you go or what you do in life, you can rest assured that you will probably have been or will be involved in some sort of accident.

A gruesome way to start an article – maybe – but, let's face it, accidents can happen any time and anywhere even on Tiritiri Matangi. In fact being on an Island, somewhat isolated with volunteers and visitors of all ages and health "levels", all doing a variety of activities, one could argue that perhaps, chances of an accident on Tiri are high. What's the answer? Well, Baden Powell got it right: Be Prepared.



With that in mind, Liz Maire and Christine McLeod from "Positively Outdoors" arranged a special day course for the Tiri guides, focussing on First Aid and accident management issues.

The importance of first aid training is obvious, so the aim of this course was to make us better prepared to cope with the type of accident that may occur on Tiritiri. Liz and Christine had thought of everything (including chocolate biscuits at teatime!) and we were all impressed with their level of organisation, presentation and professionalism. They used a variety of different teaching methods – and I even got to be "the victim" for awhile! (I made a wonderful unconscious patient!)



Contingency planning for a wide range of health scenarios were formulated and a handbook, with reference notes, was provided so as to back up our day's instructions.

We learnt how to deal with all sorts of potential accidents that could potentially occur on Tiritiri and to improvise with what is available. Basic physiology was explained so we could understand the body's reactions and the results of those reactions to conditions. For example, what happens in allergic reactions, shock, cardiac arrest, asthma etc. We covered a range of accident scenarios – and even had a chance to act them out. We assessed, acted and saved! There were props galore, including some very real looking wounds which certainly got the message across.

Information overload – not at all, as Liz and Christine certainly knew their stuff and regularly gave us breaks and "games" to rest the grey matter and provide much hilarity. The day was also a chance to reflect on what our roles would be when faced with an accident / accident victim.



For the guides amongst us there was the obvious question of working out just what to do with the rest of the group if one member had an accident plus discussions on the contents of the "bum bags" and the possibility of first aid posts. For those on the "construction" side of Tiri life, there were the added questions of safety as they have a fantastic array of potentially major "ouch" causing tools and gadgets. Remember – personal safety first.

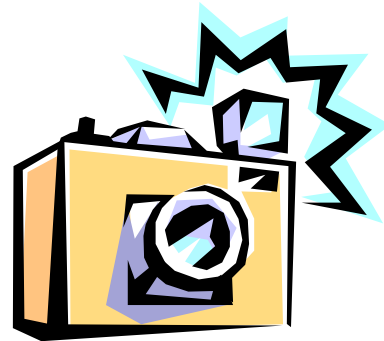
Feedback from all the attendees was very positive. We felt empowered, had gained confidence and will be ready to star in "Shorthand Street" whenever we are needed.

Seriously, it was a most rewarding day. Many thanks to Liz and Christine and to Sally Green for organising everything. Also, thanks to the Supporters as you paid for us to attend! There is another course planned for March 2002. If you are interested, please let Sally or myself know as soon as possible.

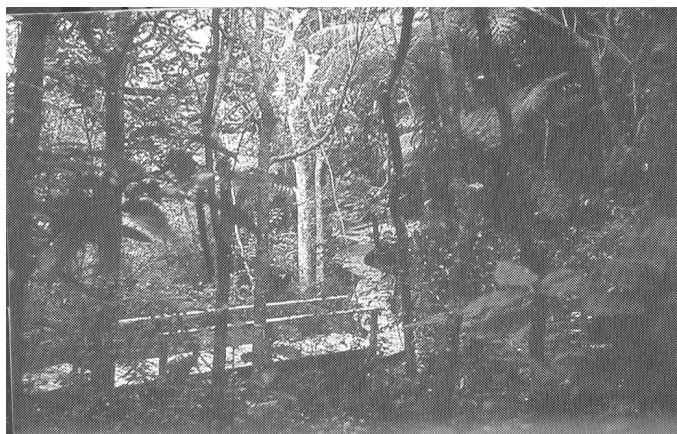


And the Winners are:

This year saw the running of the second SoTM photographic competition. 23 entrants submitted 108 photos. Supporter Patsy Schwabe kindly judged the competition. The results were announced, and the winners' photos displayed, at the 25th Anniversary dinner.



Overall Winner / Best Bird (Open) – Eve Manning



Best Landscape (Open) – Alan Still



Best Miscellaneous (Open), second overall – Eve Manning

Results

Where sufficient photos were submitted, separate awards were offered for photographs taken using compact type cameras. These entries were also eligible for entry into the open divisions.

Birds – Compact

- 1) Josie Galbraith
- 2) Joan Monahan
- 3) Josie Galbraith
- HCx2) Tessa Galbraith

Birds – Open

- 1) Eve Manning
- 2) Val Smytheman
- 3)= Eve Manning
- 3)= Margaret Chappell
- HC) Hilary Elfick

Best Overall

- 1) Eve Manning

Flora – Compact

- 1) Jane Rogers
- 2) Josie Galbraith
- 3) Alison Tatton

Flora – Open

- 1) Eve Manning
- 2) Eve Manning
- 3) Neil Davies

HC= Highly Commended

Landscape – Compact

- 1) Karli Thomas
- 2) Josie Galbraith
- 3) Peter Freeman

Landscape – Open

- 1) Alan Still
- 2) Isobel Still
- 3) Val Smytheman

Miscellaneous - Open

- 1) Eve Manning
- 2) Anne Rimmer
- 3) Peter Freeman

School Student

- 1) Josie Galbraith
- 2) Tessa Galbraith
- 3) Peter Freeman



Best Flora (Open) – Eve Manning



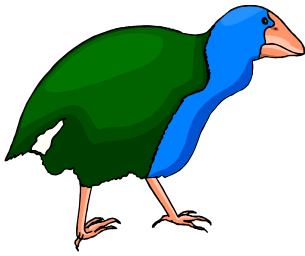
2nd Birds (Open) - Val Smytheman



1st Landscape (Compact) - Val Smytheman

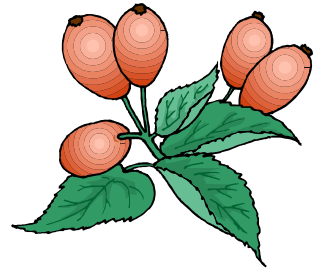
Thank you to all who generously donated prizes for this photo competition:

**Hanimex (NZ) Ltd.
Bayview Manly Quality Homestay
Time International Ltd.
Stardome Observatory
Gaylene Morris
Lacklands Photographic Ltd.**



Flora and Fauna Notes

Compiled by Barbara Walter, Ian Fraser,
Asa Berggren and Matt Low



Flora

This has been a great season for flax. After 2 seasons of the kakariki decimating it, what a welcome sight! Our overseas visitors are quite confused when they see tui, bellbird, stitchbird and saddleback with flax pollen on their heads. North East bay has been outstanding – a forest of flax with exceptionally tall stems and very little kakariki damage. It has flowered a month earlier than usual, whilst there is still plenty of other food for kakariki.

Two of the big pohutukawas are in full flower – the one above Hobbs Beach by the petrel burrows and the one on the corner of the road to Tiritiri Matangi Paa. The seems to be fewer flowers on the planted pohutukawa this season.

Birds

(The Feather Report)

Takahe

At present, we have 3 families with chicks, all hatched at approximately the same time (early November). The lighthouse gang of Whetu, Kaitiaki, JJ, A Dot and Rossie had 4 eggs in the same nest of which 2 were A Dot's and infertile (had different shell pattern to JJ's). JJ's eggs produced one chick – quite a sight to see 5 adults with one chick! Unfortunately, after a fight between them, Whetu appeared with a cut toe that became infected. He didn't respond to treatment so a trip to Auckland Zoo had to be made where he was under the fine care of Richard Jakob Hoff and his veterinary team for 6 days. Since returning, there have been further fights and he has not been accepted back into the family unit. Little A Dot really fought with him. None of them are badly injured but whether he will be accepted in due course we do not know.

Kristin, Ahikaea and helper Blackwatch have one chick from 2 eggs. This is their second season together. Aroha and Glencoe have a chick – they had 2 fertile eggs. The second egg rolled out of the nest and we found it “pipping” with no bird sitting on it but Aroha above it with Glencoe looking after the first chick. It could have been out of the nest for some time and, as there was a heavy shower of rain approaching, we transferred it to the lighthouse gang. Although it was still ok at the end of the afternoon, it was “pipping” only erratically and was found dead, halfway out of the shell, the next morning. Glencoe actually nest-minded for the first time.

Of the other birds, Blossom and Iti had 2 eggs in 2 close, but different, nests and the egg that she wasn't sitting on went cold and was infertile. As she gets easily stressed, her second egg has not been candled so we will have to wait and see. This is due to hatch approximately November 30th, assuming it is fertile.

Bellamy and Irene have one chick. They also have one other egg but it is not known if this is fertile. Supporters of longstanding will know that Irene has been on Tiri for 7½ years. She was transferred from Burwood Bush (captive breeding facility) where she was a successful breeder for a while. She is now nearly 12 years old. She paired on Tiri with Bubble (a Kapiti Island bird) and always had infertile eggs. Bubble was found to be infertile and was transferred to Te Anau Wildlife Park 17 months ago. Irene then paired with young Bellamy but nothing happened last season. He was probably too young but this year we are very excited for Irene and Bellamy.

That leaves Greg, Pounamu and Whakama! Whakama was finally rejected by Pounamu and she and Greg have been together since early

June. This has kept the mischief-maker, Greg, away from the beach (most of the time). Pounamu usually lays early in the season but has failed to do so, she hasn't looked in good condition the last couple of weeks. We weighed her and found that she had lost a lot of weight although she is eating well. Matt Low, our own stitchbird researcher, also a vet, looked at her and it was decided that, when Whetu was helicoptered back from the zoo, if a zoo vet assistant could travel as well, tests could be done on the island as Matt hadn't the right equipment here. Maria arrived, took samples, including blood, and it appears that Pounamu has an inflamed liver. She will be on medication for several days then Matt will take further samples using equipment sent out. We are grateful that Matt and the zoo vet staff are obviously concerned for Pounamu (who may also be carrying an egg), one of our best breeders.

Whakama is alone!

Stitchbird

Sandra Jack, DoC, is now assisting Ian Fraser – a very busy season with Stitchbird and Kokako.

There are 52 chicks from the first round and 18 nests ready for a second clutch, some which already have eggs.

Kokako

Cloudsley's Shovel's chicks hatched but sadly the nest was predated. Shazbot has at least one chick in her nest. Kahurangi secretly built a nest and her eggs are due to hatch 8 December. It's a very good, well hidden nest, especially for a first timer. Although it has been known before, it is rather rare for kokako to breed in their first year. Tragically, her partner, Te Toa, was found dead, the cause uncertain.

Interestingly, Te Karenga now seems to have his eye on Kahurangi.

Piccolo has not been seen for several months. Barbara suspects that some feathers she found several months back may have been those of Piccolo.

North Island Robin

Total birds - 86. (24 pairs, 5 lonely birds, 33 fledglings). There are still 5 on-going nests. Several sitting females may have been taken by morepork. Becky, who helped with research on the robin last year, and this year on stitchbird, is going home to Scotland. We will miss her.

Saddleback

Some juveniles have fledged. Two adult birds have been found dead, one which was feeding chicks in a nest in Wattle Valley, probably both dive bombed by Tui. Our last Cuvier Island bird, now 17 years old, has eggs again this year but we are not sure if she still has the same mate (hatched on Tiri 1985). There have also been 3 known clutches of 3 eggs this season, one of which has produced 3 chicks, the others 2.

Brown Teal

There is a very shy female seen at dusk on the wharf dam and there have been sightings of females on the Lighthouse Valley dam and Fisherman's Bay dam. There is also one bird that feeds around the watchtower during the night. A pair have been seen at the Kawerau Track stream. He appears to be our only male. We are still hoping for more brown to be released.

Whitehead

Now our most abundant native, with many juveniles around. There are unconfirmed reports of Whitehead at Shakespear Regional Park.

Fernbird

There have been a few sightings, one at Pohutukawa Bay, one in Wattle Valley and one near the Bunkhouse Dam.

Others

Kakariki (Red Crowned Parakeet) are now nesting. Tuis are everywhere, feeding juveniles. Bellbirds now scattered in the more recent planted bush as well as Wattle Valley and more mature bush areas. Penguin chicks have fledged. 3 sightings of male tomtit in recent weeks. Kingfisher are once again nesting in the bank by the wharf shed. Skinks are the main food source for the chicks. Kaka have been visiting. A spine tailed swift was around the lighthouse area for 1½ days. A variable oystercatcher has her nest, with 3 eggs. to the south of the wharf.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR TIRITIRI VOLUNTEER WORKER RAY RIDGWAY

On a beautiful spring day in September a group of supporters of Tiritiri Matangi, Friends of Arataki, NZ Native Forest Restoration Trust, and personal friends of Ray Ridgway gathered for a brief service on the hill above Hobbs Bay, where a memorial seat has been installed. Ray had been involved as a volunteer worker on Tiritiri for many years. Having been seduced to come and work in New Zealand as a young man, Ray had no family here, but loved his adopted country, and found great pleasure in working for groups supportive of protecting and enhancing our natural heritage. Tiritiri Matangi was extra special! Now, thanks to his friends, DoC, Barbara and Ray, we shall all have our view of Hobbs Beach enhanced as we rest on his memorial seat after puffing up the hill.

Patsy Schwabe



WORLD-WIDE RADIO HAM LIGHTHOUSE WEEKEND

Keen radio hams made their way to all sorts of lighthouses world-wide for a special weekend on 18-19 August. Out on Tiritiri Matangi heavy pieces of equipment and aerials were transported and manhandled up to the Tiritiri Light by three enthusiasts from across the water. As soon as they had it set up it was all on! Contacts were made and logged over the entire weekend period - there seemed to be little sleep for the local lot! Voice contacts, call signs and photographic images were transmitted far and near. The computer/email world has been well and truly utilised by these guys! It appeared that the Japanese and Chinese hams were having a separate competition of their own and there were eager contacts from that part of the world. It seemed like a really good weekend for Henry and his mates!

Another fascinating facet of life on Tiritiri Matangi!

Patsy Schwabe



The “Other” Ian

Confusion reigns on Tiri. There’s another Ian in DoC’s clothing. This one is normal height (as opposed to extraordinarily tall) and has dreadlocks, something one has trouble visualizing on the first Ian.

The genial Ian Fraser is on Tiri to study stitchbirds. He’s in residence in the bunkhouse and there is much confusion with the two Ians, especially when it comes to phone calls.

Anne Rimmer

Brochure Reprint

Text & photo by Cathy Catto

In recent weeks, I have been coordinating the reprint of both the brochure and postcard. In the past, SoTM did not own the photo and, for each reprint, we had to pay royalties. Thanks to Heletranz Ltd. and Tony Monk, we now hold aerial photos of the island, to use as we wish.

The map of the island has been updated and will be the same map used in any new signage on the island. The map has been simplified by stating what are roads and what are walking tracks. Other changes are the inclusion of the fernbird and putting all of the birds on one page to help visitors with identification. I updated the photos around the island and was amazed at the understorey through the Kawerau Track and near the big pohutukawa trees since the first brochure was printed. I also noticed the magnificent flax flowers which the kakariki seem to have left alone this year, unlike previous years when they nibbled holes in the base of the flowers, thereby preventing them from flowering.

2002 Island Diary

January 26th – 28th
Anniversary Weekend Working Bee

February 2nd – 3rd
Supporters’ Non-working Weekend

February 6th
Waitangi Day
Supporters’ Picnic Day
(book with Barbara – not Fullers)

March 2nd – 3rd
Supporters’ Families Non-Working
Weekend



Wednesday 10 October A Day with a Difference

Text & photo by Val Smytheman

Why, we wondered, was the boat not heading towards the wharf?

Why was the distant, shrouded figure (who turned out to be Ray) walking up and down the wharf spraying?

The answer to both questions was that a swarm of bees had taken up position on the wharf. Thanks to Barbara’s brilliant suggestion (and an obliging skipper), parents, teachers and pupils of Tapora School, along with a number of guides, were lucky enough to enjoy the special treat of a circumnavigation of the island, while Ray attempted to disperse the “invaders”.

The job was still not complete when we berthed, but finally we received “disembarkation orders” – “cover up as much as you can and move quickly and quietly along the wharf and straight up to the dam”. And so, although it was warm and fine, it was a steady stream of hooded and jacketed, long trousered people that braved the last few bees and began, at last, their memorable day on Tiri.



TIRI CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

By VJS

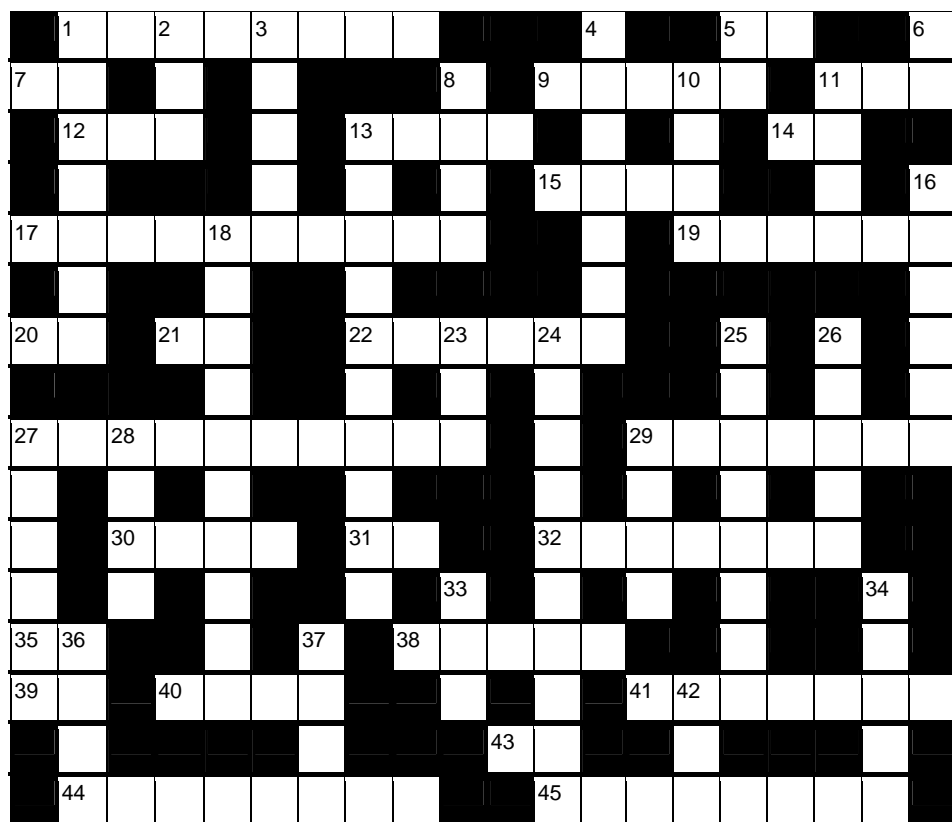
Across

- 1) Sounds like a Polar explorer following a ringer for this bird (8)
- 5, 14, 5dn) Complete 3 birds ___Toa, ___Hari, ___Karanga (2)
- 7, 20) Dad is perhaps at Tiritiri Matangi --- or Papakura (2)
- 9) The top track? (5)
- 11) This bird can be found in Puketutu Island (3)
- 12) The light of the island? (3)
- 13) Was this bird down in the dumps? (4)
- 14) See 5ac.
- 15) Care about an old land measurement (Tiri has about 544) (4)
- 17) This bird has a bag around 2 qualifications with the French in the middle (10)
- 19) Get round a girl to find this seabird (6)
- 20) See 7ac.
- 21) Sounds like a member of a singing group, but it's a band (2)
- 22) In Bangkok a Korean finds this bird (6)

- 27) Cabin situated between an Italian river, Great Britain and one Australian state leads to a tree (10)
- 29) Does this bird dine out with the MP's? (7)
- 30) You may not give one of these, but a bird of the night does (4)
- 31) TKW's mate (2)
- 32) Miss catching an insect --- this bird hopes it won't! (7)
- 35) Sounds like the first letter of 36 down (2)
- 38) This silly bird has been a temporary visitor to Tiri (5)
- 39) See! -- but it sounds as though you shouldn't look high (2)
- 40) This insect doesn't sound as if it's drier (4)
- 41) A flower around a ship? Yes, it could be a flower --- or one of our birds (7)
- 43) Compass bearing for a Tiri bay (2)
- 44) Oliver Twist's request specifies meat -- but it's a bird (8)
- 45) Can you find this plant in Kahurangi or Abel Tasman National Parks? (8)

Down

- 1) Abracadabra! Take away a cad, and find someone who works magic on Tiri (7)
- 2) Produce an egg -- or a song (3)
- 3) Snatch back before the East. It brings heavy loads to Tiri (5)
- 4) For this musical bird there are 200 after a Greek letter, and 50 between 2 ducks (7)
- 5) See 5ac
- 6) A call to attract attention --- of the grey faced petrel? (2)
- 8) None? No, although the brown teal is amongst the world's rarest (4)
- 10) Sounds as if a horse goes round about for this bird (4)
- 11) Sounds as if you must look behind you to see this bird (4)
- 13) Look after a learner in the rear --- it's a young bird (10)
- 16) This takahe could have told us a tale about 1000 (6)
- 18) Not a heavy dwelling on the island (10)
- 23) You can find this bird in Lake Ada, but not on Tiri (3)
- 24) Two monarchs surround a swimmer, and the result is a bird (10)
- 25) Noble cat goes around and gets this bird (3,5)
- 26) Does this bird flinch at the sight of us? (5)
- 27) About 50 follow a cat or a dog perhaps (or maybe a rabbit) for this bird (6)
- 28) This bird sounds as if it's laughing at us (4)
- 29) A group -- or a coloured ring (4)
- 33) By the sound of it, this bird once cut the grass on Tiri (3)
- 34) Maori love this bird (5)
- 36) A fool(ish) 1000? -- no, a wonderful group of about 1000 (4)
- 37) It sounds like a vehicle towing a ring, but it's a tree (4)
- 42) Legend without end -- but most Tiri inhabitants have two (3)



Letters to the Editor



Following on from last issue's theme, further correspondence has been received on the harrier problem on Tiri. In the interests of diversity, supporters are invited to correspond on any subject relevant to Tiri.

Dear editor

I fully support Graham Ussher's views on the possible elimination of Australasian harriers visiting Tiritiri.

By all means, destroy visiting Mynas and Australian magpies, both species being known alien predators of nesting birds. However, Australasian harriers are native and protected by law, and are natural predators.

In mainland forests, some kokako nests built in exposed positions, such as crowns of treeferns, have been predated by harriers and possibly moreporks. However, most nests are built in locations which have a dense covering of supplejack or pohuehue vines which hides the nests from the view of marauding harriers.

As the forests of Tiritiri continue to mature, kokako will eventually find more secluded sites for nesting in safety.

In an earlier issue of "Dawn Chorus", there was an account of a morepork capturing a bird in broad daylight. Before the elimination of kiore from Tiritiri, moreporks probably preyed on young kiore as well as on insects. Since being denied this substantial food, moreporks will presumably prey on birds.

From observations of several mainland morepork nests, I found that the morepork usually captured a bird or mouse at dusk and during the night fed almost entirely on insects and the occasional nocturnal gecko.

Geoff Moon O.B.E.
Natural History Photographer

Greetings Simon

I totally support your suggestion to cull the Tiritiri Matangi harriers as often as necessary in order to give the kokako a chance of survival. In my view, it would be irresponsible not to do so.

The kokako released on the island had no say in being set free in an area that overall gave them insufficient shelter from the likes of the harrier.

For years I have looked forward to a time where I could go and visit a place to stand in awe to hear multiple kokako and I was delighted to learn of the release of the birds on Tiri. I thought my vision was about to be realised. You can imagine my dismay, upon reading your editorial, to discover what was happening! And I can only imagine your dismay, and that of your supporters' team, so close to things.

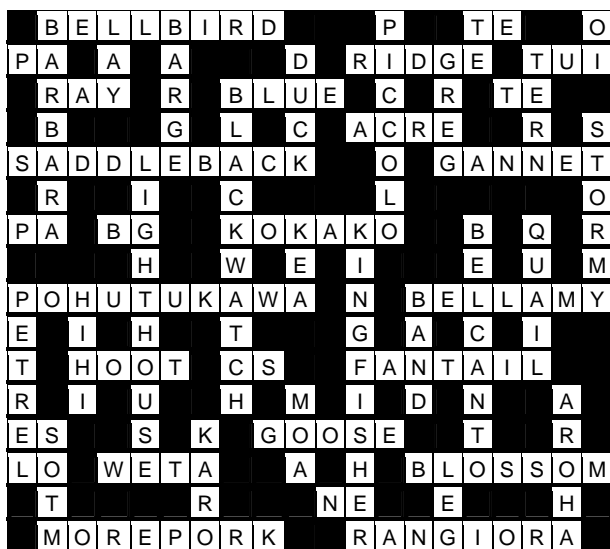
We all know we can't afford to take unnecessary risks with the few kokako that remain and it seems in this case humans have to take a lead to do what is necessary to help stop any further kokako deaths. After all, without help, we wouldn't have any black robins, would we?

Thanks for putting your thoughts forward in your autumn editorial. Culling one native bird to save another is not a choice any of us would like to make but, like you, I don't see any other option.

I hope you receive lots of support for the call you have made.

Mike Shennen
Principal
Mt. Maunganui Primary School

Crossword Solution



Editor's note – As mentioned in the fauna report, more kokako have been lost. Te Toa has been found dead. A nest has been predated and Piccolo, one of last season's chicks, has disappeared. One can only surmise.

This small gap at the end of the newsletter is an opportunity for me to express my grateful support for all those that have contributed to the Dawn Chorus in my first year as editor.

I also appreciate, very much, all of the positive feedback I have had. It must be said that it is not the editor that makes the magazine, it is those that create the events and those that record them.

My sincere thanks to you all.

Simon Fordham