

Splish, Splash.. I was taking a bath



Photo: Suzi Phillips

It may not be summer yet, nor even spring—but no-one has told the takahe that! Suzi Phillips took this great shot on the island recently. Earlier in the year, when drought conditions prevailed on the island the various waterbaths were in daily use by many of the island's birds. Now that the weather is improving the birds are sprucing themselves up—perhaps getting ready for the breeding season, but maybe just enjoying themselves.

This is a great time of year to visit the island—lots of activity, the birdsong is fantastic, and there is a good chance of decent weather as well. If you haven't visited for a while, now is the time. See you on Tiri soon....

In This Issue

Whitehead
Page 3 Bird

**From the Chair
Defying Extinction**
Page 4

Tiri Kids Planting Day
Page 5

Flora & Fauna Notes
Pages 6 & 7

Kokako Plans
Page 7

Ranger Change
Page 8

What's that Weed?
Page 8

Nightlife
Page 9

UNEP Summit
Page 10

Tairaire
Page 11

Working Weekends
Page 12



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

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Editorial

Spring is here—well the birds seem to think so anyway. Lots of action on Tiri with plants showing the beginnings of the spring flush and birds exhibiting a wide range of calls, territorial behaviours and other pre-breeding activity.

The activity is not limited to the birds. A wide assortment of tradesmen have been visiting Tiri to work on the almost completed Visitor Centre (there will be more on the Visitor Centre in upcoming issues as we celebrate the opening). Volunteers continue to work hard on assorted tasks and the DoC Rangers continue to give the endless variety of work on the island their full attention.

Many Supporters also give a great deal of their time, and much effort, to the smooth running of the island. There are those who guide and work in the shop, and those who are less visible, but work just as hard, behind the scenes in various organisational or administrative capacities. There are a large number of Supporters who contribute to the Dawn Chorus. A rough count gives 21 contributors to the last issue!

While a lot of hard work goes into keeping Tiri running smoothly, somehow it doesn't always feel like work. I was lucky enough to spend a week on the island recently, helping out during Ray and Barbara's absence. The birdsong and spring flowering makes Tiri a very rewarding environment to work in. Even routine tasks like making phonecalls are so much more enjoyable if you can watch whiteheads foraging in the trees while you do so.

This month we farewell one of Tiri's hardest workers. Ian Price is leaving (see Page 8 for more) after three years waging war on weeds, among other jobs, as resident Ranger. Ian will be missed by many Supporters, and I am sure we all wish him well for whatever the future holds.

For both those who work on Tiri full time, and those who volunteer when and where they can, there is no shortage of opportunities for anyone wanting to make a contribution to the island.

One such opportunity is the position of Editor of the Dawn Chorus—I am likely to be moving away from Auckland in the near future, so we will need a new Editor. It is a lot of fun as well as a certain amount of the aforementioned hard work! Please contact me if you are interested.

Sharon Alderson

School Visits

Kauri Park School

Maungawhau School x 2

Glenfield College

Kristin School x 3

Oratia School

Northcote College Language Students

Freyberg School

Waihi College

Sunnyhills School x 2

Stella Marris School x 2

St. Marys Primary School x 2

Orewa Primary School x 2

Wainui School x 2

Epsom Primary x 1

Parawai School

Deadline for Next Newsletter: 21 October 2005

TIRI RECIPE BOOK

'Gourmet on Tiri' will be on sale in the Tiritiri Matangi Island souvenir shop shortly. Priced at \$10.00 per copy it will make an ideal Christmas gift for your overseas friends and family and no New Zealand home should be without one! It can be purchased on the island or by mail order using the form printed on the wrapper.

Many thanks to Sally Hally for all her hard work putting the Recipe Book together—and to all those who contributed recipes.

Whitehead

Popokatea

Mohoua albicilla

Page 3 Bird

At any time of the day, throughout most of the year, visitors to Tiritiri Matangi Island cannot help but hear and see the fast moving noisy feeding flocks of Whitehead. The flock use harsh chattering calls to keep in contact. The males have loud territorial calls which start with several chirps followed by canary like chimes and descending slurs which finish with a chuckle.

Whitehead was the fourth species to be translocated to Tiri - Dave Allen co-ordinated two releases of 40 birds each from Little Barrier Island in September 1989 and May 1990. Although difficult to see in the early days they have done so well that they are probably now the most common bird on the island. In recent years, this has enabled birds to be transferred to the Hunuvas (40 birds) and the Waitakeres (55 birds).

In the 19th Century Whitehead disappeared from a number of areas, possibly due to forest destruction and introduced predators. Only ever found in the North Island, they have now stabilised and occur patchily on the mainland, south of Te Aroha and are abundant on Little Barrier and Kapiti Islands. The other two species in this genus, the Yellowhead and the Brown Creeper only occur in the South Island.

The heavier male is distinguished by his white head and underparts. The crown and nape is shaded brown on the female and juveniles. All birds have pale brown upperparts and a black bill and eye. They eat mainly spiders, beetles, caterpillars and moths but also take small native fruits from, amongst others, mahoe, coprosma, hangehange and karo. The pelvis and hindlimbs are specialised for the use of the feet in shifting vegetation and leaf litter while foraging. They sometimes hang upside down to glean insects from leaves, twigs and branches and use their bills to flake off fragments of bark and break up dead wood.

In late winter family groups start to defend a territory. The group can consist of a breeding pair or sometimes two breeding females and up to six surviving young from previous years. In September the main female in the group builds her nest in 4 -7 days, closely guarded by the male.

The compact nest is a deep cup composed of twigs, dry grass, leaves, moss and lichen and lined with tree-fern fibres and feathers. Between mid October and mid November, the 2 -4 white variably speckled orange brown eggs are laid at 24 hour intervals. The female incubates for around 18 days and is then helped by the male and any helpers to feed the chicks during and after the 16-19 day fledgling period. Although the chicks start feeding themselves at around 10 days after fledging, they still beg and are fed at up to 9 months old. Young can breed at one year old but, in high density populations, breeding is delayed for several years. Although the Whitehead are brood parasitized by the Long-tailed Cuckoo as yet there is no evidence of this occurring on Tiri.

The average life expectancy for a Whitehead is 5 years but one Tiri bird, a male was 11.5 years old when last seen in November 2002.

Article: Morag Fordham

Photo: Simon Fordham



A note of thanks...

We would like to thank the Waitemata Trefoil Guild for their generous donation of \$50 for a stitchbird nesting box. The donation was made after the group visited the island, and it appears they enjoyed themselves!

From the Chair

It is often said that the only constant is change and Tiri is currently seeing plenty of change at the moment.

Probably the greatest visual change has been the Visitors' Centre. In just a few months we have seen the old buildings replaced by a magnificent new facility that we can be proud of for many years. The new shop is expected to begin operation in the near future and the interpretation area will be developed soon after. An official opening will be held on the 13th November.

When I first visited Tiri in 1993, the means of transport was, the Seaway. This boat took 1 hour to reach Tiri from the Wade River. Within 2 years, Gulf Harbour Ferries began services which reduced the time to around 15 minutes. Fullers also ran a few trips to the island but, in 2000, they purchased Gulf Harbour Ferries and replaced the two smaller boats with one larger one.

As reported in this newsletter, Fullers have chosen not to reapply for the contract and, consequently, Kawau Kat Cruises have been appointed as the new provider. We welcome Brett Somerville and his team to the island and look forward to working with Kawau Kat. At the same time, our thanks go to Michael Fitchett, Doug Hudson and the team at Fullers who have given us excellent service over many years.

Another significant change this year will be the retirement, this month, of Ian Price from his position as Assistant Ranger. After 3 years of outstanding contribution to the Tiri project, Ian has chosen to move on. There will be more on Ian in the next newsletter.

Our congratulations go to Jennifer Haslam who has been appointed to replace Ian. Jennifer is an SoTM member and guide who has a passion for the island and has already proven herself as a more than capable volunteer.

Simon Fordham

Defying Extinction - Concert for The Visitors' Centre



Photo: Four of the musicians, from left; Sasha, Natarani, Susannah and Fleur

On the evening of May 7th, around 150 people, most of whom were SoTM members, were treated to an evening of light classical & popular music at The Pumphouse Theatre on the shores of Lake Pupuke. This was the second such concert to raise funds for the Visitors' Centre.

These events were the brainchild of SoTM member and guide, Fleur Schultz. Fleur is not only a talented musician, she is a wonderful artist as well. On the evening, five beautiful paintings were auctioned, raising further funds for the island.

The musicians, Fleur Schultz (piano / vocals), Sasha Witten-Hannah (classical guitar) Natarani Theobald (cello), Calvin Gong (Piano) and Susannah MacDonald (flute), treated concertgoers to a range of beautiful pieces including Cavatina, Danny Boy and a medley from Phantom of the Opera.

This concert and auction raised almost \$3,000, bringing the total from the 2 events to over \$5,000. Thank you to all who contributed to this, particularly the musicians and, of course, Fleur, whose enthusiasm and efforts are very much appreciated.

Thanks also to Roger Lund & Shelley Kirton. Roger & Shelley donated a raffle prize of a yacht trip to Tiri which raised a further \$2,000+ for the cause.

A third concert will be held at the same venue on Saturday 4 March next year. Mark your diaries now. Further details will be in the November Dawn Chorus.

Simon Fordham

Tiri Kids Planting Day 2005



The Tiri Kids Planting Day took place on 3 July. Fifteen families took part, helping to replant the paddock edge below the lighthouse. The day included a guided walk by our young guides Finn, Jodie and Tessa. Those involved had a marvelous time, and we encourage Supporters with children to attend next years Tiri Kids Planting Day. Our thanks to Fullers, who provided free tickets for the kids.

WANTED:

Does anyone out there have copies of New Zealand Geographic magazines (complete with posters) of the following issues?

Issue 2 - lighthouse

Issue 6 - tuatara

Issue 21 - weta

These are wanted, if in good condition only, for display purposes in the new Visitors Centre.

Please contact **Cathy Catto** if you can help:

629 3903
higcat@actrix.co.nz

Defying Extinction:

Celebrating our Sanctuary Islands

Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna, October 1—31st

Defying Extinction showcases paintings of birds, bush and the coastal environment from well known and emerging artists, including leading New Zealand artist Dean Buchanan.

10% of all art sales will be donated to Tiritiri Matangi and Motuora bird sanctuary islands.

Feast your eyes, bring your wallets!

Opening night Monday October 3, 6.30—8.00 pm

Normal opening hours are:
9.00am—5.00pm Monday—Friday
10.00am—4.00pm Saturday

Fleur Schultz



Karo
Brent Booker

Flora and Fauna Notes

Compiled by Barbara Walter, Morag
Fordham & Jan Velvin



Takahe
Lynda Harris

Flora

KOWHAI KOWHAI KOWHAI.

We may not think it.....but Spring is looming for many of our plants. At present many are setting flower buds for their spring flowering. Not to be outdone the **Kowhai** *Sophora spp.*, are already starting to flower. We celebrate this great plant by having a special "Kowhai Trip". This year it is on August 28th. so treat yourselves and visit the Island while it is in a BLAZE of yellow. The flowers act as a magnet to the birds so a great display is guaranteed.

Most of our plants have fairly small flowers, often inconspicuous but despite this if you look closely, it is exciting to see the flower buds forming again. Spring flowering plants mostly give us fruit through the February, March, April period. Buds can be seen forming on **Hangehange** *Geniostoma rupestre var. ligustrifolium* a very shiny leaved plant which can be seen almost anywhere, and on **Kakabeak** *Clianthus puniceus*, good examples of these are on the right of Wharf Road between Graham's Road and the entrance to Wattle Track. **Ngaio** *Myoporum laetum* also has buds, there are good examples are by the toilet block at the Wharf. *Coprosma sp.*, *Pomaderris sp.* and many more are other budding plants.

While we are talking flowering times it is interesting to note that our old friend the **Puriri** *Vitex lucens* obliges us by flowering and fruiting all year round.

Some waxy white **Kohekohe** *Dysoxylum spectabile* flowers can be seen lying on the board walks, these unfortunately have been blown off the trees...or pecked off by enthusiastic feeding. As referred to in our feature plant notes on page 11, the thumb sized fruit on the tracks are **Taraire** or **Tawaroa**.

At this time of the year it is interesting to take a bud from the **Pohutakawa** *Metrosideros excelsa* and tap it out on your hand. From this tiny, tiny seed these big trees grow. Unbelievable!

Don't forget the Kowhai Trip it is a real treat!!!
Bookings can be made with Barbara.
Phone 09 4760010.

Jan Velvin



Photo: Peter Craw

Fauna

Takahe

@Dot disappeared on 15/7 but was discovered by Grahams Rd looking a bit battered and bruised after being in a fight. She was put into the skink pen and although not looking very well she was still eating. However she deteriorated and Barbara and Ray took her to Auckland Zoo but sadly she died overnight. At this stage the autopsy shows @Dot had an enlarged, infected right kidney and a stomach infection. She had always been a very small bird but had recently lost weight.

Mungo and Irene split up in mid June. Although Mungo revisited that area of the island recently he is now back at the lighthouse area and Irene has disappeared. At 16 she is our oldest bird and has possibly died of old age.

Due to the high level of inbreeding in island populations the Takahe Recovery Group has decided to move some birds to improve the gene base. So Mungo is going to Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre and Bellamy is going to Kapiti Island. We will receive a male and female from Kapiti Island.

JJ/Blackwatch's chick is a male and has been named Lou.

All the other Takahe are fine.

Stitchbird/Hihi

The feeders were being used a lot by the birds due to the bouts of bad weather but now the puriri, five-finger, kowhai and wattle are in flower usage has declined.

Brown Teal/Pateke

Now there is more water in the dams the Brown Teal have reappeared. Finn the Philanderer soon got over Eva's tragic death and has been spreading himself around but appears to have settled down with Britannia on the upper lighthouse valley dam. Blue Bonnet is on her own on the lower pumphouse valley dam. Daisy is with Ruan on Fisherman Bay dam. Rose is on her own on the bush 21 dam (near Pohutukawa Bay). Ralph and Connie have returned to the island and are back on the NE Bay dam. A very handsome new male in breeding plumage has arrived on the bunkhouse dam and is being much admired by the resident three females. On the wharf dam Jemima and Ossie have remained faithful to each other. The Brown Teal should be nesting soon.

Kokako

At the beginning of July a pile of feathers was found at NE Bay but at this stage we do not know which bird has been predated. All pairs (Cloudsley Shovell and Te Koha Waiata, Kahurangi and Bel Canto, Shazbot and Te Hari, Ruby and Kaha and Keisha and Te Karenga) except for Eunice and Oscar are being seen regularly. The chicks Wairua and Storm have been seen near Wattle Valley. Zephyr has also been seen recently.

Saddleback

At the beginning of August 20 birds were caught and transferred to Motuihe Island.

Little Spotted Kiwi

One evening at the beginning of July Ian Price saw a very young bird. Recent sightings have been so good that colour bands have been seen on some kiwi.

Other Birds

The Pukeko have started to copulate. Little Blue Penguins have been heard "growling" under the seat at the bandstand on the Kawerau Track and under the steps in Wattle Valley.

Tuatara/Lizards

There have been occasional sightings over the winter months including two seen on the same night as the juvenile Little Spotted Kiwi was seen.

The Future of Kokako on Tiri

The aim of the Kokako Recovery Group is 1000 breeding pairs of kokako by 2020. Currently there are 615 pairs, which is well ahead of what is required to achieve this aim. Kokako are spread around the country in 23 separate populations. One of these populations is, of course, on Tiritiri Matangi. The first kokako on Tiri were introduced from Mapara and Mount Bruce in 1997. All of the current Tiri birds are related to our primary breeding pair – the infamous Te Koha Waiata (TKW— pictured above) and Cloudsley Shovell.



Photo: Peter Crow

The Tiri population is extremely important nationally as it provides a fantastic opportunity for public access and education. In 2004, 33261 people visited Tiri, of which approximately 15000 were school children and more than 3000 were international visitors. Many overseas visitors travel to Tiri with the specific aim of seeing kokako. Results of a recent survey indicate that, on average, visitors to Tiri see kokako 66% of the time on guided walks. Many visitors also see kokako outside of guided walks.

The Kokako Recovery Group recognises the contribution to public advocacy, access and education made by the Tiri population, and have made a commitment to ensure that the kokako population on Tiri remains healthy and abundant to allow this work to continue.

Tiri will also contribute in other ways. For many years it has been intended that Tiri play a part in conserving the Taranaki genes – there are insufficient remaining Taranaki birds to form a population in isolation (and they are all male). Currently these birds are breeding in captivity with females from other areas. Over the next few years offspring of these pairs will be released on Tiri, with the hope of further spreading the Taranaki genes.

An exchange, planned last season, of kokako eggs between Tiri and Hunua in order to boost genetic diversity of both populations has not been achieved due to logistical problems. Eggs of a similar age and from accessible nests are required! However with the current breeding success (9 chicks fledged last season on Tiri) and the addition of Taranaki birds, the carrying capacity of Tiri will be reached in the next few years. To allow for continued breeding some birds will be removed from Tiri after each breeding season, and translocated to the Hunua ranges. Hunua is managed by predator control and provides a large area capable of sustaining many more birds than Tiri can hold. Much of the predator control work is done by volunteers.

The future is bright for Tiri kokako, and Tiri Supporters can feel proud of the island's contribution to the recovery of the kokako. The call of the kokako will be heard in many a Dawn Chorus around the country and Tiri will have played a part in turning up the volume.

More information on the Hunua kokako, or assisting with predator control, can be obtained from Hazel Speed (DoC):

hjspeed@doc.govt.nz
027 685 2206

Sharon Alderson

Goodbye, Tiri....

On 20th August, with some sadness I will depart Tiritiri Matangi Island as one of the Rangers for the last time. I have enjoyed the privilege of working on this amazing island, and especially with the dedicated group of people who make up the Tiri Supporters.

Having been a Supporter of tiri for over ten years I never fully appreciated the impact the Supporters have on the island's success until I began working on the island full time. While recognising the importance of the Tiri Supporters, I must pay special mention to that small band of you, who I would see on a regular basis, whether that was working in the shop, guiding or coming to the working weekends. You are the backbone of tiri and it is to you I offer a special thanks.



On reflection I feel satisfied in achieving a positive impact in controlling the weeds on Tiri, culminating in the removal of the boxthorn from Little Wooded Island. This all accomplished with the help of a dedicated group of people. A job which will be ongoing and, with the vigilance of Supporters, maintained.

To Ray and Barbara, the "King" and "Queen" of Tiri, thank you for your support. Two people who single-handedly have been the driving force for making Tiri the success it is today, their dedication and commitment is to be respected and admired.

Finally to Jennifer Haslam, the new ranger, I wish you well and feel confident your time on Tiri will be a success and a rewarding experience.

Until we meet again,
Good Health,

Ian Price

Hello, Tiri....



I am thrilled to be introducing myself as the new ranger on Tiri. Over the next few weeks I will be busy (starting and) finishing the renovations on my house, going through the changeover process with Ian, and rehousing Nigel, my cat. I have been a guide on Tiri since returning from my travels early last year and am now looking forward to working hard as a ranger for the island

Jennifer Haslam



What's that Weed?

Cape Ivy
Senecio angulatus

A woody succulent climber with fleshy leaves and yellow daisy-like flowers. Cape Ivy begins flowering in August or September. On Tiri this weed was originally found near the lighthouse keeper's houses. Now it is also found around the base of Coronary Hill.

Ian Price

Nightlife on Tiri

The search for the “big five”

One of the best aspects about staying on Tiritiri Matangi is the active nightlife. Although there is a possibility that you won't have seen anything after tramping about until 1am to the tune of weta stridulating, you also have a chance of seeing every one of the 'Big 5': little blue penguin, morepork, grey-faced petrels, little spotted kiwi and tuatara.

Little blue penguin come ashore after dark on the island. Don't go down to the coastline at dusk because you face a long and fruitless wait - this I know from experience. I spent some hours around dusk waiting for these endearing creatures to arrive, only to give up and return to the bunkhouse. Well after dark, I returned with some of my fellow bunkhouse mates and there were dozens of penguins coming to shore (I didn't check the toilet).



*Photo: Rowland Gerraghty
This penguin took a detour through the bunkhouse toilets!!*

After the penguins, it is a good idea to head up the hill to the petrel station above Hobbs Beach to see the petrels come in. Of course, it has to be the right time of year and if unsure, a few inquiries around the bunkhouse will clarify.

It is also a good idea to check the tuatara sightings book also located in the bunkhouse. This will at least point you in the right direction. While hunting for tuatara, you may stumble on a kiwi because the technique for finding both is the same ie. walk along as quietly as you can and if you hear anything

fossicking around in the undergrowth - stop, drop to ground level and peer intently into the bushes. This technique has worked for me on a number of occasions. Another good technique is to tag along with more experienced 'hunters'. Don't forget to look up as well. Moreporks are often seen at night although you can see them during the day as well.



Photo: Ian Southey

If you do go out at night on Tiri, don't forget to place red cellophane over your torch so as not to blind the little critters you are hoping to spot and if you do get to see them all in one night - well done! And if not, it doesn't really matter, the island is fantastic at night and it is pretty special to get to stay the night there. Happy hunting!

Xenia Meier

Recently there have been many good kiwi sightings on Tiri. Petrels and moreporks are around at this time of year, while penguins can be found all year round. Tuatara are more frequently seen in summer, but with the weather warming up it should be possible to see tuatara now as well. - Ed

Tiri Kid off to UNEP Summit

One of SOTM 's younger members will be represented amongst seven passionate young environmentalists from across the nation named as Sir Peter Blake Ambassadors . Finn McLennan-Elliott, who attends Western Springs College , has been a regular visitor to Tiri over the last few years and recently he has graduated as a guide, working as a team with his father John. He dug holes as part of the inaugural Childrens Planting Day in 2004 and was invited to assist with the brown teal release in 2002.. His namesake Finn the Philanderer continues to thrive.



Last year, , his prizewinning project in the NIWA Regional Science Fair, examining the feasibility of whitehead translocation to Kauri Point on the mainland was awarded a special Department of Conservation environmental prize. Following that, Finn applied for the Sir Peter Blake Trust scholarship and was thrilled to be chosen .

The 2005 ambassadors will attend the United Nations Environment Programme Children's World Summit in Japan in July. This year's 6th summit in Toyota City will bring together more than 500 10-14 year old children from around the world , the overall theme being "Towards a Sustainable Society". During the 4 day event the participants will take part in brainstorming sessions, workshops, seminars and fieldtrips which will include a visit to the World Expo in nearby Nagoya .

"I want to go to the UNEP World Summit so that I can broaden my knowledge of the world's endangered species and the measures people in other countries are taking to preserve them," Finn states. "It will be a great opportunity to hear about the experiences of kids like me who have

a passion for their environment." Finn will take the chance to spread the story of Tiritiri Matangi's success at preserving endangered bird species and hopes to make connections with other children who have been involved with attempts to do the same in other countries..

Executive Director for the Sir Peter Blake Trust, Mark Orams, says, "It is wonderful to see such commitment to the environment from our youth. These children have such a "can do" attitude - they really want to make a positive difference - and they are doing so."

The Sir Peter Blake Trust was launched in 2004 with a \$3.8 million contribution from the government and support from foundation partner Westpac and other supporting bodies, and aims to continue the work of Sir Peter Blake to encourage global awareness of environmental issues.

www.sirpeterblaketrust.org.nz

Article and Photo by
Cait McLennan Whyte

New! Improved!

The Tiri Shop

In temporary premises during construction of the new Visitor Centre, but with all your favourite Tiri items still on sale

**Call Barbara on 476 0010
for phone orders**

Nearly time to start the Christmas shopping..

Lovely warm polar fleece, a great array of T-shirts, be the best dressed Tiri Supporter....

A New Ferry Service for Tiri

On 4 August, Kawau Kat Cruises replaced Fullers as the supplier of ferry services to the island.

Whilst this came as something of a surprise to all, we have since learnt that, with the contract due for renewal, Fullers did not put in a bid as their parent company, Stagecoach, has opted to concentrate on commuter services rather than tourism.

Kawau Kat is very keen to work with DoC and SoTM to make the most of the Tiri experience. In addition to retaining virtually all of the benefits offered previously, there will be additional advantages such as an annual donation of \$10,000 to island projects.

For bookings with Kawau Kat, please phone:

0800 888 006





Calendar of Events

2005

Kowhai Trip

Sunday 28 August

Social Evening

Monday 12 September

Guest Speaker: Mark Hauber

Topic: Riflemen
& Farewell to Ian Price

Supporters Adults Non- Working Weekend

October 8-9

Labour Weekend Working Weekend

October 22-24

FULL

Supporters Families Weekend

October 29-30

Official Opening Visitors Centre

Sunday 13 November*

*Sunday 20 November is
backup date if boat cancelled
on the 13th

**For all of the above
(except the social
evening) bookings must
be made with Barbara,
not Kawau Kat —
Ph: 476 0010**

Taraire

Beilschmiedia tarairi

Taraire is one of our important “ long term canopy trees”. Ultimately a very large, handsome tree growing to 22m. **Taraire** is aptly described in older plant books as “lofty”. It's seed is a purple drupe ,which looks similar to an overgrown olive.



Photo: Jan Velvin

Some seed can now be seen lying on the boardwalk in Kawerau Bush. At the entrance to the “old bush”, from the sea end, is a **Taraire** which is labelled and still carrying some fruit at the top. The fruit is a favourite food for the birds, but I have read that unless boiled it is poisonous to man.

The tree has very attractive, distinctive leathery leaves which are heavily veined. The young shoots and the undersides of the young leaves are covered with an attractive brown tomentum which reminds me of suede. **Taraire** are commonly found from Northland to just south of Auckland in lowland forests and along the banks of streams. The flowers are small, yellow-green and can be seen from spring to early summer.

Taraire is a member of the Lauraceae family as are *Beilschmiedia tawa* **Tawa** *Beilschmiedia tawaroa* **Tawaroa** and *Litsea calicaris* **Mangeao**.

Beilschmiedia tawaroa also grows on Tiri. It is a recognised northern form of *Beilschmiedia tawa* and is commonly found on the northern off - shore islands and the northern coastal forest. Both are canopy trees, **Tawaroa** being the smaller form. Their leaves are smooth margined and pointed with the leaves of **Tawaroa** being the broader.

We are very familiar with other members of the largely tropical Lauraceae family. Included among its members are *Laurus nobilis* the bay tree, *Cinnamomum camphora* the camphor tree, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* the cinnamon tree and the Avocado.

Jan Velvin

Visitor Centre—going, going, gone

What An Experience!!!

Anniversary Working Weekend proved to be a first in many respects for me - and what a great experience it was! Being a newbie to Tiri I had no idea what I was letting myself in for, but decided to give it a go anyway - surely it would be a laugh, and yes a bit of hard work too!! Well “a bit” was an understatement, but haven't been so destructive for years - what a feeling.



The aim of the weekend, I think, was to clear the area for the new visitor centre - to knock down the old one, pull out the vines, take down the fence and generally clear up (I think I can still feel those achy muscles now!!!). So we set about the task. At about lunchtime it appeared we'd disturbed a Weta (or two as it turned out). Wow, the first of my firsts - I'd never seen a Weta before (they are not that common in England!!). What a strange yet stunning creature - fantastic!!!

Then it was time..... We'd pulled the jib board off the inside and the boards off the outside, we were covered in dust and all that was left of the old visitors centre was a frame! Ray signalled to Olga to hop on the tractor and let her destructive side take effect!! We all stood clear, and in what seemed to be slow motion, Olga drove the tractor into the frame, crushing it bit by bit going..... going..... Gone!! The end of an era - The start of a new one!!

So we'd done a good days work and headed down to the crystal clear waters for a well deserved swim, dinner and lots of laughs to follow.

One of my hopes for the weekend was that I'd spot a Kiwi (once again not that common in England!!). So we walked and walked on Saturday night, we could hear their distinctive call, but they were obviously determined not to be seen (at least by me!!). So on Sunday night I managed to persuade Kevin and Olga into doing another

night walk, I was feeling rather hopeful!!! And ... hey presto, there was a kiwi right beside us (well in the undergrowth), I watched mesmerised and then as if to show off - it stepped out and ran (or rather waddled) across the road in front of us!!! Amazing!!!!!! My first sighting of a Kiwi, Thanks Kevin and Olga for your patience, it's well and truly appreciated!!! Fantastic!!!

We continued the hard work, track maintenance and clearance, the filling and emptying of numerous trailer loads of clay and many many laughs!!!

It was a brilliant weekend, for some I'm sure sad to see the old visitors centre gone, but the new one is looking fantastic!!!



So when's the next working weekend..... count me in!!!!

Nicola Brady

Working Weekends

Thanks to the following for all their hard work:

Kaueranga Valley Forest & Bird

Rotorua Walkers

David & Louise Gauld's Group

Queens Birthday Supporters Weekend

Manukau Tramping Club

Howick Tramping Club