

# Dawn Chorus



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*Ray and Barbara Walter at the Visitor Centre opening.*

## Visitor Centre opening springs surprise

The official opening of Tiritiri Matangi Island's new Visitor Centre was attended by more than 100 Supporters and friends in early November. As Ray and Barbara unveiled the plaque, they were surprised to discover that the centre was named in their honour - The Ray and Barbara Walter Visitor Centre.

**See story Page 3**



*SoTM members gather with Ray and Barbara for a group photo at the Visitor Centre opening.*

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# Editorial

The abundant flowering of natives on Tiri and the wonderful settled sunny weather we had for most of November are hopefully indicators of a good summer to come. The peak visitor season is now upon us and Tiri is looking great.

When next on Tiri, take a moment to stand on Coronary Hill and look along the ridge and down the island. The folds of bush that now cover the rolling back of the island, 20 years after the start of the re-vegetation programme, look fantastic and support a huge variety of our precious native birds. Highlight of this spring (besides the abundant flowering), was the opening of the Ray and Barbara Walter Visitor Centre which is featured in this month's issue. Many Supporters came to celebrate the opening of this excellent facility and acknowledge the dedication and passion of everyone involved in making it a reality.

It's my privilege to take over as Editor for Dawn Chorus from this month. It has meant a delay in production as I was away for most of October, but hope the wait is worth it. I'm a journalist with a passion for conservation, and first came to Tiri with our young family in 1993. As bird watching is another passion, it was only natural that I was drawn back to Tiri again and again, helping to plant trees, a stint on rodent monitoring, and for the past three years, guiding.

No matter how much you give to Tiri, it is the island that gives it back many times. Every visit to Tiri has a surprise in store, whether it's a quiet half hour in the company of a Kokako, watching the dynamics of a family of Saddleback, a Tui foraging on the ground, or a Kakariki digging in the leaf litter, or just enjoying the incomparable view up the Gulf and out to Hauturu - there is always something to delight the soul.

Hope you have the time to enjoy Tiri's special treasures this summer.

**Suzi Phillips**

**Deadline for the next issue: 20 Jan 2006**

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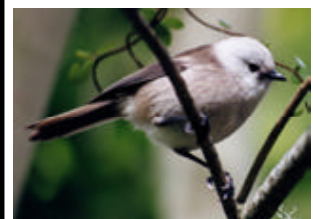
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The opinions of contributors expressed in Dawn Chorus do not necessarily reflect the views of the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc

## Funding for Tiri weeding

Simon Fordham recently attended a function organised by the NZ Conservation and National Parks Foundation. This was to distribute funding raised at the recent celebrity evening.

A number of Hauraki Gulf island projects received a share of the proceeds and Tiri benefited to the tune of \$3,200 to be used for the weeding program. Thank you!



Whitehead (Photo: Peter Crow)



## Opening celebrates Supporters' dedication

To the delight of everyone at the official opening of the new Visitor Centre on Tiri, DoC Rangers Ray and Barbara Walter, were unaware that the Visitor Centre was to be named after them.



**Hon. Chris Carter**  
(Photo: F. Oliphant, DoC)

First of the invited guests to speak was the Minister of Conservation Chris Carter, who retains the Conservation portfolio for a second term. He reflected on the Visitor Centre as part of the commitment to the importance of conservation education for present and future generations. "Tiri is an international icon for restoration conservation, and at international conservation events I often talk about what has been accomplished on Tiri. And about what can be achieved with a dedicated group of individuals working with the Department of Conservation to transform an island."

The Visitor Centre was important for both education and conservation, showing how natural ecosystems can be restored to support our unique bio-diversity, he said.

The new Auckland Conservator for DoC, Sean Goddard, said he had visited Tiritiri 15 years ago and could not help but be inspired by what he saw on Tiri.

"I'm astounded by the changes that have happened since then, in the canopy, and in the sights and sounds on the island. I hope that all of Auckland will become aware of the special places on their doorstep, such as the islands of the Hauraki Gulf.

"Tiri is very special among those special places. It is a beacon, and a model and inspiration for our conservation work in the Auckland region. The Visitor Centre was an important milestone, and a premier site for the interpretation of the

As they pulled the cords to reveal the overhead plaque, their surprise was met with warm applause from the crowd.

Speakers and a dedication from Supporters' founder Jim Battersby, preceded the unveiling and the cutting of a red ribbon by Ray and Barbara.

stories of our threatened species, he said.

"Stories that are all the more meaningful when we can see and hear them. These include stories of both our natural heritage and our historical heritage, including all the people that lived and worked on Tiri, both Maori and European stories," said Mr Goddard.

"I would like to finish with a proverb: 'He kura taiao e hokia', which translates to 'A treasured home will always be revisited'.

"When I read this proverb in the new General Policy for Conservation, I thought of Tiritiri Matangi - a special place that has become a treasured home to many threatened species. "The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi have enriched the island through their repeated visits, and been enriched themselves through their involvement with such a special place", he said.

Ray Walter paid tribute to the work of his wife Barbara on Tiri, and said that without the support of Barbara, he would not still be on the island.

"I have said that as soon as we get a Visitor Centre I will retire, but it won't be quite like that. We will retire sometime next year now," he said. "It's great to see the Visitor Centre here at last as the culmination of our working together with the Supporters group.

"We started out with a visitors centre in a shed, then a garage, and now we have this \$400,000 facility on the same site. Well done to the Supporters for building this facility which will be enjoyed by many generations and beyond," said Ray.



*Three of the team who helped to make the vision for a Visitor Centre for Tiri a reality are (from left), Mel Galbraith, Carl Hayson and John McLeod.*

# From the Chair

Well, it has finally happened! Tiri now has its very own visitor centre ... and what a magnificent facility it is !

Ever since the formation of Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi in 1988, there has been a vision for a purpose built facility for visitors to the Island. Searching through the archives of our magazine, "Dawn Chorus", the first mention of a Visitor Centre was in issue 5, August 1990. Under the heading 'Future Developments', it read:

"A visitor centre near the lighthouse to provide better facilities than those in the nursery at present. This is a major project that will take some time, as well as a "large" sponsor, to ever see the light of day".

In December 1994 detailed plans were published in the Dawn Chorus. Eighteen months later a new design was published along with a model of the proposed facility. In 1998 it was reported that Ray Walter and Ian Higgins had marked out a new site.

Eleven years after the initial plans and after numerous changes to both the location and the design, the "Ray and Barbara Walter Visitor Centre" stands as yet another example of what can be achieved by a group of volunteers with a vision.

No project, particularly one of this magnitude, just happens. It takes a lot of enthusiasm and effort by individuals and whilst it is impossible to name all such persons, there are a number of persons without whose efforts the centre would not have been built.

There are the thinkers. Those of you that shared the vision of a visitor centre and shared your ideas and enthusiasm and thereby provided input into the final product.

While the building was ultimately paid for by "the Supporters", there were many that contributed to the "Visitor Centre Fund". Major benefactors were:

- ASB Charitable Trust who contributed \$42,000 towards the shop fittings
- Scottwood Charitable Trust who made a grant of \$50,000 to the project.
- The late Penny Mutu who bequeathed \$50,000. Bequests were also received from Terry Laver and Ray Ridgeway.
- The Department of Conservation who gave SoTM \$50,000 to undertake a track upgrade from next year, which we were kindly allowed to use for the Visitor Centre in the interim.



(Photo: Fiona Oliphant, DoC)

*The Visitors Centre opening brought together six of the past seven SoTM chairpersons and they posed for this photograph with Ray and Barbara Walter (top) on the new Lighthouse Stairs. The chairpersons are (from left front), Jim Battersby, Mel Galbraith, Peter Lee, Dell Hood, Carl Hayson, and Simon Fordham. (Absent is Trevor Sampson).*

- Kitchen House who donated around \$6,000 towards the cabinetry in the building.
- The June Gray Charitable and Chenery Memorial trusts who, with the assistance of trustee Ross Craig, donated \$3,000 towards the "Children's Corner".
- Devonport Rotary who donated \$4,000 from the proceeds of the Devonport Wine & Food Festival. This went towards the historic steps to the lighthouse.
- SoTM member, Fleur Schultz who, through two concerts and one art exhibition, secured a further \$6,000 for the fund.
- Thanks are also due to the fundraising sub-committee - Bill Mancer, Carl Hayson and Peter Lee. It was thanks to their efforts that the bulk of the funding was secured.

There are those whose contribution was in kind:

- Rodney District Council for waving the Resource Consent and Building Permit fees.
- Department of Conservation for leasing the site to the Supporters for nil rental.

Then there are those whose contribution was their time and effort put into the project, most of it voluntary.



## From the Chair

### Continued

- Nigel Young is an example of a dedicated SoTM member who, as an electrician, not only sourced the electrical components at 'mates rates', he then donated his time to 'wire' the building, thereby saving the project thousands of dollars.

- One person whose efforts are not yet fully visible is Cathy Catto. Cathy, along with her subcommittee members, has devoted much time and effort preparing for the education and interpretation displays in the centre.

- Then there is Ray Walter. A "Jack of all trades" and master of most, if not all of them. Ray, of course, has been involved with the project since day one and the final design is very much the result of many hours of Ray's thought and consideration as to what would be the ultimate design. In recent years, he could often be found next to the tea urn, discussing the plans with interested members and listening, and often taking on board, suggested alterations.

- Similarly Barbara, along with her volunteers, has given so much thought to the layout of the shop. The shop is the largest ongoing source of income for SoTM and Barbara's experience in managing this has seen that income growing at a rate that, if it continues, we will require new premises within five years.

- There is one other person who, without his dedication to the project, we would still be waiting for our Visitor Centre. John McLeod. As Project Manager, John has been the driving force from within the committee in terms of the planning and implementation of those plans. Amongst other things, he has dealt with the various authorities to get the necessary permits and has subsequently overseen the project, coordinating the various contractors and sorting out any problems as they occur.

The decision of who should open the centre was



*SoTM founder Jim Battersby reads a dedication at the official opening of the Visitor Centre. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).*

a very easy one and while Ray and Barbara were aware that they would be cutting the ribbon, they were oblivious to the fact that the centre would be named in their honour. We all shared their joy when they revealed the plaque that commemorated this.

All in all, it was a wonderful day, topped off by a TV3 news item that reflected the passion that we all share for the island.

**Simon Fordham**



*Kereru (Photo: Peter Crow)*

## Native flowers inspire new T shirts

Josie Brennan started up Philanthropic Clothing in late 2003 to raise money for Mary Potter Hospice, after her father stayed in the hospice for an extended period of time.

Originally making women's fitted tees with real paua shell, the company expanded to produce men's and children's paua tees - the latter raising money for the Child Cancer Foundation.

In November 2004 she joined forces with photographer friend Rachael Voyce and they now produce PC's 'Native Flower tees'. Native Flower tees take a different look at some very familiar flowers, using Rachael's photography to get right down to the detail of the iconic pohutukawa, kowhai and manuka flower. Rachael inspired by a visit to Tiritiri Matangi Island decided that the charity aspect of the flower tees should go to the Island's conversation project. Five dollars from each tee shirt sold goes to the restoration project. To date, they have donated \$500.00.

All tee shirts are sold over the internet - [www.pcpaua.co.nz](http://www.pcpaua.co.nz) but also through selected stores.

***SoTM Subs Now Due***

***See insert this issue***



*Kristina's nest shelter*

## No grand opening for this one

Capricious spring weather brought gale-force winds, driving rain and thunderstorms. Ferry trips were cancelled. October was a month of ugly weather. And Kristina the Takahe chose to build her first-ever nest in a spot that offered little shelter. It was, Barbara reports, beautifully made and carefully lined with grasses, but not well sited. It gave a whole new meaning to the concept of 'Open Home'. Ray was instructed to build a house to protect the nest. "Hammer quietly", Barbara begged, fearful that the noise would send Kristina skittering from her eggs. But no, she stayed quite still on her nest while the shelter went up around her. This is the house that Ray built.

Kristina loved it. Alone among her kind, she had her own custom-built house, and it was there on November 11, that she hatched her first chick. Congratulations Kristina and Rossi - and Ray!

## Farewell from Sharon

The last Dawn Chorus, was in fact **my last** Dawn Chorus as Editor. I have taken the opportunity to go and work for DoC, down in Wellington, and will now find it difficult to get out to the island with any regularity! Suzi Phillips has kindly offered to take on the Editor role in my stead. I look forward to seeing how the Dawn Chorus changes with a fresh set of eyes upon it.

I'd like to extend a very heartfelt thanks to all those that helped me through the various looming deadlines, and often saved me from blank pages at the last minute! All of the guides, researchers and visitors who contributed over the last two years have helped to keep our 12 pages of glorious technicolour, a marvellous publication. I even received a letter from the Minister of Conservation complimenting the team on the quality of the Dawn Chorus. Those Supporters who are regular contributors deserve special mention and extra thanks; Barbara Walter, Morag and Simon Fordham, Jan Velvin and Ian Price, who all consistently delivered a high standard of material on time - for which they accumulated many brownie points !

I hope to visit Tiri as often as possible, and with Suzi producing the Dawn Chorus I have no doubt I will be kept up to date with all the latest happenings. Thanks again to all those who helped along the way, (including those who never wrote a word, or took a picture - but kept me sane!!). **SharonAlderson**



# Tiritiri Saddleback to Motuihe

A team from Motuihe Island led by Kevin Parker and Phil Thompson recently captured 20 Saddleback for translocation from Tiritiri Matangi to Motuihe island.

The birds were all captured between the 7 to 10th of August and released at a gathering of about 250 people on the 11th of August.

A total of 11 males and 9 females were translocated, including both adults and juveniles.

All birds appeared healthy on release and immediately started calling and feeding in

their new Motuihe home, a beautiful patch of coastal forest called Orchard bush. A large number of roost and nest boxes had been erected prior to the birds release. These along with an abundance of natural cavities should ensure good breeding success for the birds first summer on the island. As always the translocation team was greatly assisted by Department of Conservation staff, in particular John (Warkworth Assets Ranger) on Tiri and by Richard Griffiths on the release day and by SOTM supporters Kirstin, Gail, Mike and Yvonne, and Elizabeth. **Kevin Parker**



*Saddleback (Photo: Anne Rimmer)*

## Defying Extinction

### Variety Concert and Art Exhibition for Tiritiri Matangi Island on 4 March 2006

Fleur and friends join together in another fundraiser for Tiritiri Matangi Island. Pianist Fleur Schultz, flautist Sarah Herbert, singer Mary Livingstone, cellist Michael Palmer and clarinettist Theresa Thornton play a wide selection of light classical and well-known music, with something to please everyone. This is the third concert for Tiritiri Matangi, held at the PumpHouse by the shores of Lake Pupuke in beautiful Killarney Park, off Manurewa Ave, Takapuna. Original art by Fleur Schultz and other artists depicting birds of Tiritiri will be for sale in the Pumphouse cafe from 7.15pm, prior to the concert. Concert begins at 8pm.

**Ticket prices (for concert):** Adults: \$25, Students: \$15, Children: \$10

Free entry to the art exhibition.

**For Concert ticket sales,** phone 489 8360, fax 489 9818, or email [boxoffice@pumphouse.co.nz](mailto:boxoffice@pumphouse.co.nz)



(Photo: Anne Rimmer)

# Flora and Fauna Notes

Compiled by Jan Velvin, Barbara Walter,  
and Morag Fordham



(Photo: Peter Craw)

## Flora

I spent all last year praising the amount of flowering we had...thought it was truly amazing, BUT Mother Nature says I can do better than that YOU JUST WATCH ME!!!!

And are we watching spellbound.....Kodak must be on the payroll somewhere !!

Those that have been fortunate enough to visit the Island in the past month have been captivated by the flowering display on the flax (*Phormium tenax*) and the cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*).

Arriving at the wharf, that whole valley is a sea of flax flower spears, strangely largely undamaged this year by the Kakariki. It seems that every bird has a special orange mark on its forehead from the flax pollen.

As if one treat isn't enough the cabbage trees are also exceptional. Not only producing veils of white flowers but perfumed too.

Spring is a productive time in the plant world and almost all plants are either in flower or setting seed. Not to be out done we even saw a Pohutakawa in full bloom last week. It is just past the Petrel Station. Promise of a good summer?

Speaking of flowers our plant for this issue is *Muehlenbeckia complexa*. Its' close relation *Muehlenbeckia australis* is the large vine found on Wharf Road just above the platform at the entrance to Wattle Valley. It is in flower at present.

Also flowering and among the more unusual plants are the NZ Gloxinia (*Rhabdothamnus*) which can be found behind the Stitchbird feeder in Wattle. The two plants have quite different coloured flowers, one orange, one a lot redder. There are always variations within this colour range.

Now we have The Steps to the lighthouse in place, the Rengarenga lillies (*Arthropodium cirrhatum*) are more noticeable with their lovely white flowers.

Across the board we are having a GREAT flowering season. Others to look out for are;

- Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*)
- Ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*)

- Rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*)
- Akeake (*Dodonea viscosa*)
- Puriiri (*Vitex lucens*)
- Whau (*Entelea arborescens*)

If you are visiting in the next few weeks don't forget your camera. **Jan Velvin**



Blackwatch and Lou last January (Photo: Suzi Phillips)

## Fauna

### Takahe

Bellamy was transferred to Kapiti Island on 30 August where he quickly established a territory and paired up with Squeak, an older female who was originally Bubbles (Tiri bird) partner. Montague arrived the same day and soon established himself. He "played the field" with Ahikaea and her daughter Calico but has settled down with Ahikaea and they now have one chick, perhaps losing the second to a hawk. Since the fledging of the chicks, Calico has been beaten up and has left the family. She is now living not far from Whakama but is very stressed. As Mungo is a young and hopefully fertile bird it has been decided to leave him here. Blossom, an older infertile bird will be sent to Mt Bruce once he has recovered from his injuries probably incurred during a fight.

On leaving home Greg's daughter paired up with Blake but Mungo beat him up and has won the lady. So Greg is now on his own creating havoc with the visitors wherever he goes. Mungo and Tiri took over Greg's old territory, Hobbs Beach,



## Flora and Fauna Notes - *Continued from page 8*

but Tiri has now moved on again. A very stressed and battered Blake is now living at Fisherman's Bay.

Kristina's (and Rossie) nest was very exposed so Ray built a frame around it and despite the noise while building the frame she stayed put on her nest. One of the two eggs has just hatched and the other one was a midterm dead embryo.

JJ (and Blackwatch) is not nesting which is not surprising as she is now 15 years old and is not seeing as well as she used to.

Whetu continues to stay around the lighthouse area and as there are no spare females Glen-coe is also on his own.

Iti disappeared during August and is now assumed to be in Takahe heaven.

As at the end of May there are a total of 286 Takahe (this does not include birds under one year old) of which 171 are in the Murchison Mountains and surrounds (an increase of 13.6%), 83 are on islands, 28 are at Burwood and 4 are display birds (2 at Te Anau and 2 at Mt Bruce).



Female Hihi at nest (Photo: DoC Library)

### Stitchbird/Hihi

At the start of the season there were 148 birds of which 53 are females (23 are juveniles from last year) and 95 are males (43 are last years juveniles). This is a fantastic number considering 60 went to Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and 3 to Mt Bruce.

At the moment there are 54 nests including one natural nest and one nest in a Saddleback nesting box. 33 of the nests have chicks, 17 have eggs and 4 are still being built. There are 82

nestlings with more every day.

Due to all the natural food available at the moment the feeders are not being used that much. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary now has chicks.

### Brown Teal/Pateke

Jemima and Ossie (Wharf dam) produced three ducklings at the end of August but they all disappeared within a few days. She has just reappeared with another four and it is hoped she will have more success with these.

Britannia and Finn the Philanderer produced two ducklings but she moved them from the Pumphouse dam to the Bunkhouse dam and then to the bunkhouse water trough and they disappeared. She has been seen recently with four ducklings. Finn is still sharing his favours between her and a metal banded female on the Bunkhouse dam.

Ralph and Connie (who reappeared after being missing for a while) who live on the new wetland dams at NE Bay are a pair, and now have four ducklings. Ralph still has his "piece on the side" as he visits Rose (Bush 21 dam) from time to time. Daisy and Ruan are on Fishermans Bay dam and Blue Bonnet is occasionally seen on Lighthouse Valley dam.

### Kokako

Sadly Kaha (only 5.5 years old) died of a severe fungal respiratory disease at the end of September. His mate Ruby has now paired up with Russell and is sitting on two eggs.

Cloudsley Shovell (and Te Koha Waiata) abandoned her first nest and renested. She now has two chicks in her new nest.

Shazbot (and Te Hari) is nesting and Kahurangi (and Bel Canto) is sitting on three eggs.

Eunice (and Oscar) is lining her as yet undiscovered second nest. Her first nest was poorly constructed and a broken egg was found underneath it.

Te Karanga and Keisha were seen courtship feeding. They now have a nest and are busy lining it.

Zephyr and Chinook are being seen regularly around the Ray and Barbara Walter Visitors Centre. Wairua and Storm and at least on unbanded bird are seen from time to time.

### Saddleback

The first chicks of the season were banded at the beginning of November and there are now lots of eggs and several chicks.

***Continued on page 10***

## Flora and Fauna Notes - Continued from page 9

Quite a few of the birds recently transferred to Motuihe Island have been sighted. Some are breeding with the first chicks already fledged.

### North Island Robin

All the first clutches in Wattle Valley and some in Bush 22 disappeared, probably predated by Morepork. At the end of October the second nests in Wattle Valley were again predated. An adult female was found dead presumably dive bombed by a Tui.

At the beginning of November there were 38 pairs and two females have changed partners. Eight pairs have eggs, ten pairs have chicks and twelve pairs have fledglings. Two pairs are on their third clutches as their other clutches were predated. Thirteen pairs are on second clutches of which only two pairs had successful first clutches. Four pairs have done nothing so far. The Robins transferred to Glenfern Sanctuary on Great Barrier Island are doing well. Five breeding pairs have been found and one female nested with one male and then moved onto another male. There have been 16+ eggs laid (+ refers to a nest 4 metres up a tree that has not been checked yet). Five+ eggs are incubating and there are eight nestlings, five of which have been banded.

### Fernbird

At the end of October Kevin Parker carried out a survey and found two clutches of chicks and estimates there are 40-50 birds on the island. As they are nesting they are very quiet at the moment.

### Other Birds

Little Blue Penguins everywhere are having a poor breeding season. One pair is nesting under Ray and Barbara's house. In early October a penguin was seen feeding another smaller but still an adult bird. Possibly this was courtship feeding not witnessed before.

Red-crowned Parakeets/Kakariki are starting to nest.

The Spotless Crake at the Wharf dam had two chicks in mid-November.

The pair of Paradise Shelducks had six ducklings but they are now down to two.

The resident pair of Magpies was seen chasing off a third Magpie. They also chase off their fledged juveniles and any Hawks.

A pair of New Zealand Pigeon was seen mating in Wattle Valley.

There have been up to eight Kakas on the is-

land. A pair was recently seen courtship feeding and is hanging around and investigating the Kaka nesting box.

There are lots of Kingfishers around and our usual pair is nesting at the Wharf. Another pair is nesting in Wattle Valley.

There are a lot of Grey Warblers around and there have also been good sightings of recently arrived Shining Cuckoos.

Both Bellbirds and Tui are nesting everywhere but quite a few Bellbird eggs and chicks have been predated. There appears to be more Tui than ever perhaps due to the prolific flax flowering.

Diving Petrels were seen above Fishermans Bay at the beginning of October. In August two New Zealand Dotterel were seen on the reef. A Caspian Tern was seen on the same reef and another one was seen at the Fishermans Bay dam. The Variable Oystercatchers are nesting.

Due to the fantastic flax flowering (not eaten by Parakeets this season) all the nectar eating birds are being seen with orange crowns.

### Other Fauna

A seal was seen scrambling up on the rocks at NE Bay on 14 August. A Brydes Whale and a pod of dolphins were seen out to see off Tiri.

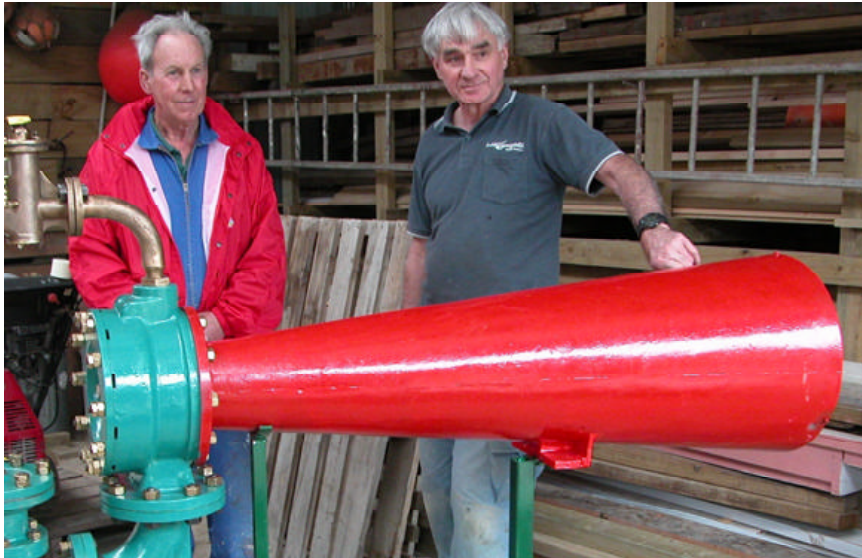
An eel (300mm long) was seen flapping its fins and arching its back in the Kokopu pool and was probably trying to digest something large that it had swallowed.

There were five Tuatara seen on one night recently.

*Kaka (Photo: Peter Craw)*







Two of the members of Toi Toi Trekkers who did further work on the foghorn on a recent working weekend are Noel Newsome and Colin Johnstone.

## Tiri Working Weekends

Thanks for all your hard work.

Women's Outdoor Pursuits

Whangarei Tramping Club

Toi Toi Trekkers (Foghorn)

Supporters Working Weekend - getting ready for the Visitors Centre opening

# Pohuehue - Muehlenbeckia complexa

(Family: Polygonaceae)

It is time we had a look at this undervalued plant. Yes it is sprawling ! Yes it can be invasive ! Yes the flower is insignificant ! BUT it provides invaluable habitat for Takahe ,Kokako, Fernbirds, Little Blue Penguin, Kakariki, Kiwi, Pukeko, Brown Quail, Lizards and the common Copper Butterfly among other insects.

Few of our plants could lay claim to a habitat providing list like that. It also provides shelter for emerging seedlings. Maybe nowadays in our busy lives we just don't take time to stop, look and listen. I have found the following extract from a letter in an old Botanical book.

'Mr J. Andersen thus writes to us with reference to this plant: -

"There is another plant which baffled me for years. In my walks I would be brought up standing by a delicious fragrance, and I would search the neighbourhood ,quaffing from the various plants, but always

without success - and you know how the sense of smell dulls after too much snuffling - and I would have to leave unenlightened. On one walk there were three places where I caught the fragrance - in brief, I found it a few weeks back. It is the straggling unattractive Muhlenbeckia complexa. That name does not appeal and shall not be the popular name! I have heard one which I omitted from my list " wiggly- bush" This describes its habit very well, and may be adopted; but look at the lovely fruit of the plant - a cloudy goblet divided at the rim into four, with shapely black seed in the centre - "the lees of this wine of fragrance." I want to call it " kiss - in - the - cup," for its elusive fragrance ,and in the thought of the immortal song " Drink to me only with thine eyes".'

What wonderful emotion ! Maybe next time we will stop and take the time to observe and smell the flowers which are just forming. **Jan Velvin**



Fernbird on Muehlenbeckia (Photo: Margaret Chappell).

## Please don't feed the Takahe !



Greg saw me coming and hurried down the road to meet me. I had been warned about him; about his greed and persistence, so I walked past him and pressed on up the hill. When I looked back there he was, following me about 15 metres behind.

I hardened my heart and pressed on, but so did Greg. After about another half kilometre I stopped to look at an interesting bird. While fumbling with the focus of my binoculars I became aware of a soft scratching on my bare leg. There he was, testing his claws for grip on my skin. He looked up pleadingly. The body language of his steady gaze said 'Food, food!'. Mine, in reply, said 'No food Greg. No food'.

He still followed a while longer before giving up. That's when I felt mean. Here I was on lovely Tiritiri Island refusing food to what might well be the cutest Takahe in the world. But what else could I do? **Tony Priestley**

## School Visits

St Mary's Primary	
Alfriston College	
Koru School	x2
Whangaparaoa Sch.	x2
Avondale Int.	x2
Beachlands School	x2
Lincoln Heights	
Westmere School	x2
Tamaki College	
Leigh School	
Northcote College	
McLeans College	x2
Westmount School	
Gulf Harbour School	x3
Epsom Primary	x2
Papatoetoe Int.	x2
Corran School	
Waipu School	x2

## Funeral Donation

SoTM would like to thank the Van Wijk family for their donation.



*Oskar Williams checks out the books.*

## Look what's new at the Tiri Shop

Christmas is nearly here and the shop on Tiri is full of some great gift ideas for the nature lovers in your family.

There's a great choice of books for adults and children, and a great range of T-shirts too.

The latest design, is a Hihi/Stitchbird in the hand-painted T-shirts, that Barbara has been waiting on for four years. It's a worthy addition to a lovely range of T-shirts, and there are many other styles and designs to choose from.

A new book on the shelves is "Sanctuary" by Eric Dorfman, that Barbara recommends as a great read. Sanctuary explores some of New Zealand's most beautiful and interesting nature reserves and includes a chapter on Tiritiri Matangi. Told from the perspective of an enthusiastic naturalist, it is part natural history and part travel diary.

The shop has new "Natives of New Zealand" notepaper with a delightful cartoon of some of Tiri's birds on each page. There are also the beautiful Tiri mugs and bowls by ceramic artist, Lynda Harris and many other gift ideas from bird socks to badges. If you can't make it to the shop before Christmas, you can phone Barbara on 476-0010 to discuss your gift requirements.