



## Congratulations!!!

Barbara Walter QSM

Ray Walter QSM



Well, many said it was bound to happen - and it did. Ray and Barbara were included in the New Year Honours for 2002. Both were awarded the Queen's Service Medal for Public Service.

Whilst it is true that many thousands of people have contributed to the success of Tiritiri Matangi over the years, no two people have like Ray & Barbara have. Although they are both employees of the Department of Conservation, their efforts

have gone well beyond what one would reasonably expect.

They truly are the face of Tiri, meeting, greeting, making people feel special and bringing alive the joy of conservation. Both Ray and Barbara have such a passion for island and its rare birds and all who go there really do feel that as a result of meeting them

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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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## New Year Honours

(continued from page 1)

The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi salute you both for your awards. You are both very deserving recipients.

Congratulations also go to Dr. Stella Frances, former Regional Conservator for the Department of Conservation. Stella is now a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to conservation and the environment.

## Editorial

On January the 17<sup>th</sup>, a number of DoC workers arrived on Tiri for the purpose of removing two 15 day old, female kokako chicks from the nest of our star breeders, TKW and Cloudsley Shovell. The first I knew of this was that evening when a somewhat concerned member, who had been on the island that day, phoned me to explain what had happened. My immediate reaction was one of astonishment and disappointment.

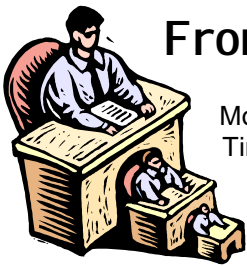
With three breeding pairs, this season could have been the one good season we needed to get the population increasing at pace. Unfortunately, predation and other factors soon saw our expectations turn to custard. All was not lost, however. One chick (male) fledged in early January and two eggs hatched. These chicks turned out to be female ..... just what we needed to compensate for our excess of males. It wasn't to be.

In hindsight, the science behind the removal of these chicks cannot be argued with. It is important for us to remember that, although it means a lot to us, Tiri is only a small piece in the jigsaw puzzle known as the Kokako Recovery Programme and that the big picture is far more important than each individual piece. It is also unfortunate that, as part of the programme, Tiri is expected to receive offspring from the Taranaki male and his partner at Mt. Bruce. Not only has there been no breeding success from this pair for 3 seasons, she died a few weeks ago.

Where there is a problem, is that DoC failed to consult with SoTM prior to the removal of these chicks. Had we been forewarned, we could have provided publicity in advance and members would have had the opportunity to understand what was happening. Our expectations would not have been raised, thus resulting in the disappointment we felt when the chicks were removed.

DoC have a responsibility, as they carry out their duties, to consult with interested parties. In this case, the relevant iwi were consulted, and invited to participate in the transfer, but we were not. What DoC need to realise is that kokako are our taonga also and we therefore have a right to be kept informed and to be given the opportunity to participate.

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



## From The Chair

Most of us know that Tiritiri Matangi is internationally recognised for its rare and endangered species. Yet, how many of us realise just how important it is? Do we take it for granted?

It is still only one of two island scientific reserves open to the general public. So what? I hear you say. Over the years tens of thousands of New Zealanders have seen species that they wouldn't otherwise get to see. Even more important, they begin to see just what we've lost in a thousand years of human impact, and why conservation is so important. After all, what's the use of spending enormous time and effort saving species, only to lock them away where nobody can see them?

Our birds are taonga for us all, living treasures that belong to each and every one of us and deserve to be a real presence in our lives.

Our visitors do not leave unmoved. They become instant advocates for preserving the species and habitat they've just seen. They tell others; the message spreads, grows, and influences... and slowly but surely, the great mass of ordinary New Zealanders begins to see why saving species is important. Politicians take note – and conservation's future is improved.

Here's one tiny example. My daughter's Year 4 class are using Tiritiri as a key part of their term 1 work – not just for the science, but for what the island has come to mean. What will they and their parents learn? That conservation is real, vibrant, passionate and emotional.

"The Supporters" has a vital role to play. We can - and do - make such a difference to New Zealand conservation far beyond the shores of Tiritiri. At the Annual General Meeting, we'll be telling you about our exciting vision and plans for the next five years, from a variety of speakers. From a new visitors' centre to turning Tiritiri into a major national centre for research, there's a lot planned. As the song says, 'baby, you ain't seen nothing yet!'

Peter Lee

**Deadline for Autumn Newsletter  
31 April 2002**

## Page 3 Bird



### Fantail

*Rhipidura fuliginosa*

Piwakawaka

If the Fantail was not one of our most common and widely distributed native birds, this would surely rate as one of our most treasured species. It is a delightful bird, found in a range of habitats throughout the whole of New Zealand as well as Australia and the Pacific Islands. A number of other Fantail species, including the Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*) are found outside of New Zealand.

Fantails are predominantly insectivorous and their unique tail allows for unparalleled mid-air manoeuvrability when catching their prey. It is not unusual, particularly in Winter, for these characters to pursue humans as we pass through tracks and grasslands. This is more likely due to the fact that we stir up insects rather than a natural affinity for the passing bipeds.

In addition to the pied form, the South Island subspecies (*fuliginosa*) also exhibits a black phase in 12% to 25% of the population. This phase also exists in the North Island but mainly around the Wellington area, suggesting self introduction from the South Island.

Fantails pairs do stay together year round and breed from August to February. However, chicks do have a high mortality rate as they are devoured by rats, moreporks and other predators.

Further reading: David Mudge has written an excellent article on the plight of the fantail in the January – February 2002 edition of New Zealand Geographic.

Simon Fordham

### Oops!!!

In the last bulletin, I made reference to the kingfisher being a winter visitor to Europe.

I have since learned that the European kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) is only partially migratory and can be seen year round in many parts of Britain and the continent.

Thank you to Ann Green for putting me straight on this.



# Kokako Chicks Transferred to Puketi

On Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, TKW and Cloudsley Shovel's two 15 day old chicks were taken from their Wattle Valley nest and transferred to an aviary in Puketi Forest near the Bay of Islands.

The reason for the sudden departure of these two valuable female chicks was that the Puketi population is in dire straits. This year only 15 lone males were recorded at Puketi, their last breeding pair was not found this season. The tiri birds are needed to help conserve the Puketi genes and eventually restore a viable population in this forest.

Over the past two seasons four kokako chicks from Tutamahoe forest (near Waipoua in Northland) have been reared in a purpose built aviary deep in the Puketi forest predator control zone. Unfortunately all four chicks were preyed on after their release, and despite continual improvements to hand-rearing techniques including 'predator awareness' training, the longest surviving chick lived for only four months. No chicks were available from Tutamahoe this year, as they have had a very poor breeding season.

In order that they may learn the special Puketi song the two chicks from Tiri will be reared in the Puketi aviary as before. However, instead of being released to the wild the two chicks will be paired in captivity with male Puketi birds and transferred to zoos at Auckland and Hamilton. It is thought that by taking birds at the chick stage, hand rearing them with puppets and exposing them to local dialect from resident birds and feeding tapes, these birds will be much more likely to successfully form pair bonds with local males. If all goes well with their new mates the offspring of these pairs will then either be released directly back to Puketi forest or will be transferred to Hen island until sufficient numbers are available to make a larger scale release back to Puketi (approximately eight birds).

Although we will sorely miss the two female chicks the Tiri population is relatively secure, with three breeding pairs and only the kahu to worry about (we think).

Steve McManus, the DoC ranger at Puketi, has invited any supporters who would like to see the birds in the aviary at Puketi to contact him on 09 407 8474 to arrange a visit. The birds will probably leave Puketi at the beginning of March.

At a short ceremony conducted by Ngati Toa kaumatua Wiremu Wiremu the two chicks from Tiri were named Tiri Waiata (rain song) and Tiri Koha (gift of rain), so that no matter where these birds end up, everyone will know where they are from. Thank you supporters for understanding the important role Tiri now plays in conservation throughout New Zealand. Although we would have been extremely happy to see Cloudsley and TKW fledge two female chicks this year the greater need of the Puketi population has prevailed.

Ian Fraser

Hihi/ kokako contractor 2001/ 2002

**An update as at 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2002.**

The chicks are now 34 days old and have been in the aviary at Puketi for 19 days. The chicks are doing well and as they develop and become more active, they will be given more protein in the form of chaffer beetles, wax moth larvae and locusts. They are currently being fed 13 times per day. Each feed typically diet consists of ½ a syringe of mashed food (5mls), 10-15 *Coprosma grandifolia* fruits, and ½ a chaffer beetle or 6 wax moth larvae at each hourly feed.

Steve McManus  
Ranger  
Puketi

## New Zealand's Largest Ant

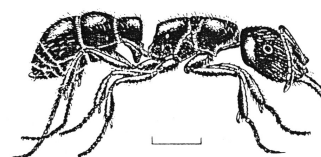
While excavating for the new road deviation onto the south end of Hobbs Beach a small nest of very large ants was discovered under a large rock.

With the heightened awareness of ants on Tiritiri after the discovery and eradication programme on Argentine ant there was a panic phone call from Ray to Chris Green. Instead of another nasty invader these were the *Amblyopone australis*, the largest native New Zealand ant species (see figure). Queens can be up to a 10 millimetres in length and nests tend to have few individuals, with the pale brown, leathery looking pupae being a characteristic feature. The ant features large jaws (mandibles) that can cause consternation among certain folk.

When disturbed during the day they move rather slowly -

they are nocturnal, unlike most exotic ant species that are usually diurnal and move quickly, especially when disturbed. The nests are often found associated with rotten wood, in or under logs, but can also be under rocks. Like all ants they will feed on a variety of protein, such as small invertebrates, and some sweet foods such as scale insect honey dew.

Chris Green, Department of Conservation



Scale = 1mm

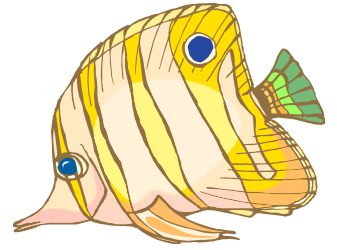
*Amblyopone australis* (Drawing by Errol Valentine)





# Shag Rock Ecology

Text and Photography by  
Roger Grace



On my return from a short New Year cruise on "Lady Claire" with Bruce Carter, I took the opportunity to dive Shag Rock off the outside of Tiritiri. I checked out the marine ecology and came up with an underwater zonation pattern for the major marine life.

About low tide level there was the usual mixture of *Carpophyllum* algae suited to this moderately wave-exposed site.

From two to about six metres the rocks were grazed bare, apart from numerous white anemones and areas of coralline paint, by a mixture of herbivores including kina, Cook's turban shell, limpets and green topshells.

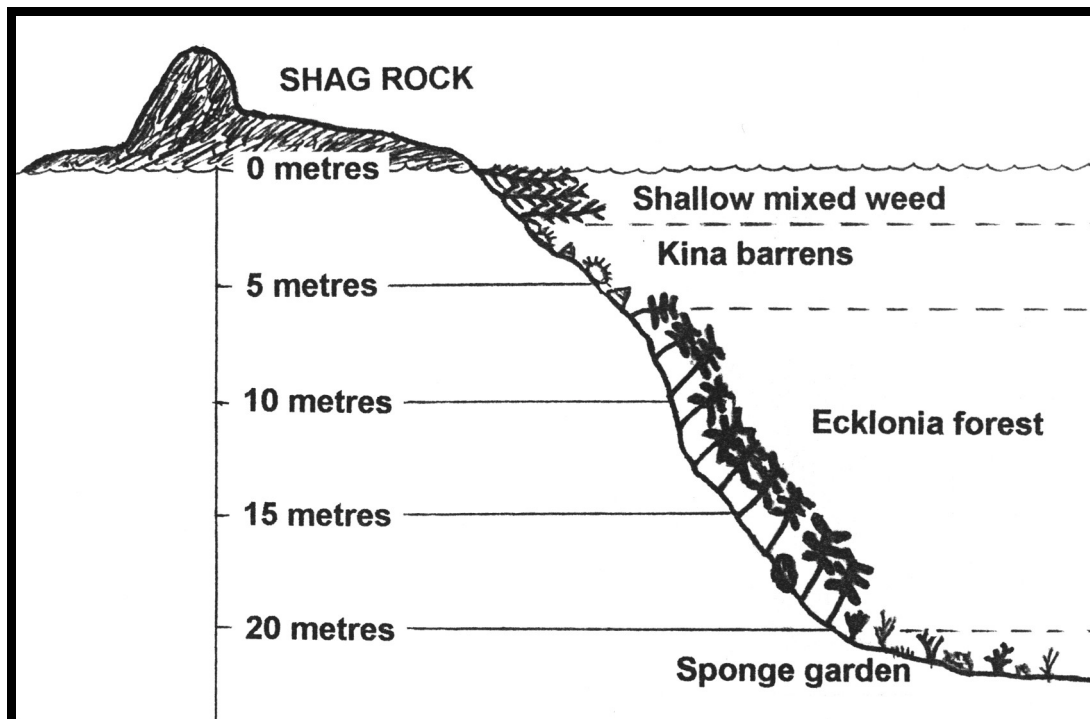
Dense *Ecklonia* kelp covered the rock from six metres down to 20 metres, beyond which the few remaining rocks supported several types of sponges and a white soft coral. The rocks gave way to gravelly muddy sand with many large dog cockles living buried with their openings flush with the sediment surface.

This general pattern of zonation underwater is common throughout the mid and outer Hauraki Gulf and open northern coasts, but is not what we would call "natural". Historically, the area grazed bare mainly by kina did not

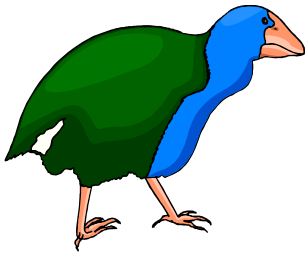
exist. It has gradually appeared over the last 40 years because of overfishing of crayfish and snapper.

Both of these predators eat large numbers of kina, mostly the smaller sizes, and in the absence of sufficient snapper and crayfish to keep the numbers down, kina have "exploded" and eaten out a wide band of kelp. Only in protected areas like the Leigh Marine Reserve have snapper and crayfish numbers recovered sufficiently to bring down the kina numbers to normal, and the kelp is returning to the previous kina-grazed areas. The process took about 20 years.

This clearly illustrates how widespread the ecological effects can be when two key species are removed in large quantities from the system. The "downstream" ecological effects are known as a trophic cascade. Without unfished areas like marine reserves, we may never have known what had happened to the kelp.

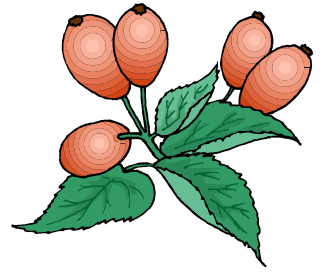


Generalised underwater zonation pattern of marine life at Shag Rock, Tiritiri. Shallow mixed weed dominates from low tide to about 2 metres. >From 2 to 6 metres the rock is grazed rather bare by kina and other herbivores. >From 6 to 20 metres dense *Ecklonia* kelp forest covers the rock. Below 20 metres sponges and other filter-feeders are common.



# Flora and Fauna Notes

Compiled by Barbara Walter, Ian Fraser,  
Morag & Simon Fordham



## Flora

There has been practically no mahoe fruit this season. There was a lot of blossom but this was blown off by strong winds.

Cabbage tree fruit is very late developing. Kokako and saddleback have been observed stripping the spikes of unripe fruit before it has had a chance to mature.

There is a little coprosma fruit on both karamu and Taupata. Also some pseudopanax fruit around

Stitchbird are very dependent on the feeders at the moment.

There is still one late-flowering kaka beak at the top end of the wattle track.

## Birds

### (The Feather Report)

#### **Takahe**

The 3 chicks are now 3 months old and are due to be sexed by feather DNA soon. They belong to:

- The lighthouse gang (JJ, Kaitiaki, Adot, and Rossie)
- Glencoe & Aroha
- Kristin, Ahikaea and Blackwatch

Irene & Bellamy's chick disappeared at 15 days, which was a disappointment, but at least we know that Irene now has a chance next year.

Blossom & Iti's eggs were infertile again this year. Perhaps Blossom is infertile as Iti had fertile eggs with her previous mate, Tussock.

Pounamu stayed with Greg but didn't breed. She has now fortunately

recovered from her liver infection, has put on weight and is looking good. Greg has persuaded her that the "in" place to be is Hobbs Beach, to the delight of most visitors but consternation to a few. Supporters have been busy on "Greg-watch" (a form of pest control) on Hobbs beach to dissuade visitors from feeding him, intentionally or otherwise.

Whetu is around the lighthouse / nursery area but is not accepted by his previous family – the most anti bird being Adot.

Whakama is also on his own, near Pohutukawa Bay. All birds are recovering after moulting and many look like feather dusters without handles.

#### **Kokako**

Since the departure of TKW and Cloudsley Shovel's two chicks on January 17<sup>th</sup> this intrepid pair have built their third nest of the season. For the past few days however they seem to have lost interest in the nest. We don't know whether this is because Cloudsley is about to lay or if she has given up for the season. We remain hopeful!

Shazbot and Kaha are still feeding their fledgling (Kanuka) and are showing no signs of re-nesting.

After the tragic death of her first mate, Te Toa, Kahurangi quickly courted and paired up with one of the lone males, Te Karanga. Unfortunately Te Toa died just days before the eggs from his and Kahurangi's first nest were due to hatch and Kahurangi's incubation patterns became somewhat erratic. We considered pulling the eggs or chicks for hand rearing but as Kahurangi appeared to settle down within a few days and no one has

ever successfully hand-reared kokako from the egg. Sadly only one of Kahurangi's chicks hatched, and it died within a few days. We are awaiting pathology results but it is likely that the interrupted incubation contributed to its death.

Soon after, their first nest failed. Kahurangi and Te Karanga built a new nest nearby. Shortly before the eggs were due to hatch they were preyed on by an unknown predator. Harrier (kahu), mynas and morepork (ruru) are the prime suspects, although without video surveillance the identity of egg predators at kokako nests on Tiri will probably never be known. Although they can be somewhat secretive, Kahurangi and Te Karanga have not shown any sign of re-nesting since their nest failed.

#### **Stitchbird (Hihi)**

This has shaped up to be something of a record season for hihi, although not all of the records are good. We started the season with approximately 69 birds and so far 92 hihi chicks have fledged, two more than last year. This does not include the five chicks transferred to the National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce. Another eleven chicks are still in active nests, with another four eggs likely to hatch very soon. We will hopefully end up with over 100 chicks fledged this season, compared with 90 fledglings last season. Unfortunately the death rate among chicks this year has been approximately twice as high as last season. The reasons for this are unknown but pathology of the dead chicks may lead to changes in management that could increase survival in future seasons.

Sugar water is currently being consumed at an incredible rate because of the high numbers of hihi and bellbirds and the lack of flowers at this time of year.

## Brown Teal

The teal at the wharf dam has been seen occasionally. It is not so shy now and may have been an immature bird as it is now colouring up nicely. Hopefully it will be a male. There is also another small and very young, but also very bossy, bird on the bunkhouse dam. The resident female doesn't seem very happy at all with the interloper.

## Robin

Robins have also had a good year. Åsa Berggren has banded 76 chicks so far this year, with at least 47 adults also surviving the season so far. Five nests are still active.

## Other Species

Kingfisher have nested a second time next to the wharf shed. A kingfisher nest was also excavated into the bank forming the Kawerau track, just above the "petrel station". The nest was only around 6 inches from the ground and 4 eggs were laid. They didn't last long, however, as predators, probably mynas, stole the eggs soon after.

Two variable oystercatcher chicks are doing well in the vicinity of the wharf and 2 more have been observed on the outlying reef.

Tui, bellbird, saddleback, kakariki and whitehead have all bred well. Whitehead are especially abundant and there is an unconfirmed report of these in Shakespear Regional Park.

Unlike last year, shining cuckoo have been relatively quiet. No chicks have been reported this season although grey warblers, some with chicks are very common. A longtailed cuckoo was heard calling in Wattle Valley at night.

Atypical of the last 3 summers, there has been no sign of morepork with chicks in bush one.

One enterprising Tui was found to have made his way into a stitchbird feeder but couldn't find the "exit" and had to be redirected.

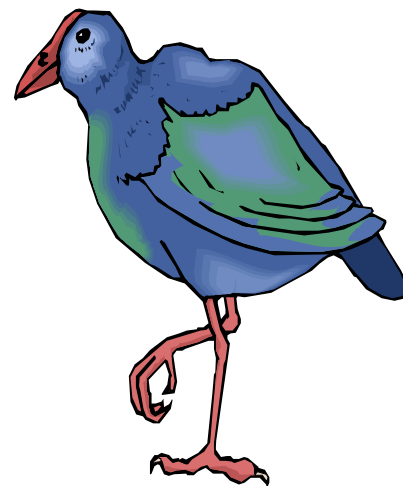
Kiwi have been calling a lot and there have been many sightings. A census is due in the near future..

As the kakariki generally left the flax flower heads alone this season, they are now reaping the benefits of plenty of available flax seeds to eat.

The white-fronted terns are frequently seen flying across the island, with sprat in beak, to feed their chicks.

Two native pigeons have been seen in wattle valley and 3 are regularly seen above the Kawerau Track.

A white bellbird has been seen, and recorded on video, in Little Wattle Valley.



## Argentine Ant Update

Since the first poison operation in February 2001 (see Dawn Chorus Bulletin 45 for details) the 11 hectare infested area has been monitored to see how many Argentine ants survived. As reported in Bulletin 45 99.98% of the ants were killed with only small pockets of ant remaining at the end of last season. Monitoring continued until winter set in then resumed in spring. Up until December results showed that only a few nests could be detected, mostly close to the coastline.

On 10<sup>th</sup> December 2001 a party of 14 dedicated ant baiters commenced the second poison operation. The party composed of staff from: - DoC Head Office biosecurity (wanting experience at the sharp end of biosecurity), MAF biosecurity, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society biosecurity, Environment Bay of Plenty, University of Auckland, Landcare Research (Nelson), Ian McLeod with his trusty weed team from Tiritiri, and someone from the Conservancy office bossing everyone around. The same specialised Argentine ant bait was used as in the first operation, except that the concentration of the toxin, fipronil, was reduced to 0.001% active ingredient. There was concern that the earlier 0.01% concentration had acted too quickly on the ants and we wanted to slow it down to ensure it got right through all the nests before they started to die. Fipronil is an extremely effective insecticide for ants and wasps at these absolutely tiny concentrations but absolutely safe for other animals that would need to eat physically impossible amounts to become ill.

The team crawled, climbed, and one case tumbled, over the 11 hectare area while laying the bait in just over two days. Baits, approximately 1 gm, were laid every metre in lines 3 metre apart over the whole area. No sign of Argentine ants was seen during the poisoning, unlike the first operation where high numbers were encountered. The very small population at North East Bay was also treated despite no Argentine ants being seen there this season at all.

Since the December operation there has been no detailed monitoring as any ants would be difficult to detect until they had formed into colonies that could be detected. Detailed monitoring will start in February and continue through till the end of this season and throughout the next three years. Any Argentine ants found will be spot treated with the same poison until we are satisfied that eradication has been successful.

Finally, thank you to those that have reported seeing ants in high numbers anywhere on the island – please continue to report these to Ray and Barbara and I appreciate these and will follow them up to make sure they are not Argentine ants.

Chris Green  
Department of Conservation





# Shed Warming

Olga Brochner



Tiritiri Matangi – the “Singing Island”, a magic place full of birds, forests and views with great tracks to view them all from. That seems to be what most people think after a visit to the Island.

What is often overlooked, is the work that has gone into creating and maintaining the tracks – and all the equipment that is needed not only for construction and maintenance, but also for all the other conservation and scientific research on Tiri. Just think of all the gear needed to control your garden and lawn at home, and then you will get some idea of what is required for Tiri's 220 hectares.



There is also the fact that once you have all the equipment on the Island, you have to keep it there. To transport it back and forth from the mainland would cost a fortune. Tractors, farm / quad bikes, various saws, mowers e.t.c. all require housing (housing equipment is necessary to protect it from the salt-laden sea air.) We needed to not only protect and store equipment safely, but also to store it all in one place, instead of being scattered all over the Island in various buildings.

Back in 1998 (last century!) the decision was finally made about where to site a much needed “implement shed”. A building sub-committee (ably assisted as always by Ian Higgins) worked on suitable plans, obtaining resource consent and DoC approval. Meanwhile, the rest of the SoTM committee looked at raising funds. Money for an implement shed is not easy to obtain, no matter how important it may be. However, several businesses gave the “Supporters” generous discounts which enabled the project to proceed. Also, groups such as the North Shore Branch of the Forest and Bird Society donated money towards construction.

During this process, the “shed” metamorphosed into a “service facility”, planned and designed to house not only all the vehicles, machinery and equipment needed for Tiri, but also to be a “home” for the conservation and scientific work taking place on the Island. For example, space to

prepare the Stitchbird's (Hihi's) supplementary feeds and a place to store bait stations and weed control chemicals. A large project like this was always going to be costly – but it was a necessity.

Construction of stage one began in 1999, and involved the pouring of the concrete slabs bases and the fitting together of the first shed, plus the installation of vital water storage tanks. Stage two began in 2001 after further funds had been raised. Again the duo of Ian's (Higgins and Price) were there to put the shed's together – which they managed despite various missing pieces! (Bravo guys.)

Labour weekend 2001 saw the final touches completed during a Supporter's working weekend. We lined the walls, painted (almost) everything and put all the gear where Ray told us to. Most satisfying.

So, what next but a celebratory official opening. This was planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 2001. Naturally top of the guest list where those firms and individuals who had enabled the Supporters to realise the facility's completion. We also invited special guests, such as Rob MacCullum and other DoC officials, representatives from the ASB Trusts, Conservation Board and even Helen Clark our PM.



Although the weather was rather “dodgy” at times, the rain held off and the celebrations went ahead as planned. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, several of those invited could not attend. Yet, thanks and acknowledgement was given to all involved in the facility's construction for their support by Peter Lee and Ray Walter at the official opening. After Ray drove through the white opening ribbon (on one of the quad bikes) we all toasted

the successful completion of this facility and various stories were swapped concerning “adventures” during construction.

My favourite was told by Phil Pushon (representing Wilkinson Smith Contractors) concerning a slight hassle they encountered while they were blasting the road. Rubble from the road became much needed fill for levelling the service facility’s site. Trouble was, new bits for the rock boring drill were required, and there were no more ferries for a while. Don Wilkson (the boss) decided to fly these bits over himself, and drop them out of the plane’s window on to Tiri. But, he missed the island and the bits landed in the water. Phil and Ray hollered at some fishermen to haul in the bits and bring them to the wharf – which they did. Except they took them to Gulf Harbour’s wharf – not Tiri’s wharf! So much for the best laid plans. One can only imagine what those fisherman thought was being flown over and dropped onto Tiri!



Today, looking at the service facility, one is not only impressed by the structure itself, but also the thought that the entire \$170,000 cost for it was raised by the community represented by the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi. So, on behalf of the Committee, I want to thank all the supporters, businesses and Individuals who made it all possible. You have constructed a “shed” for the birds – not just the blokes!



Special acknowledgement for their support towards the service facility to:

Aqua-Fil Water Solutions  
 Neil Barr  
 Coast Concrete Construction  
 Rennie Dowsett  
 Greg Eton  
 Fullers Group Ltd.  
 Ian Higgins  
 Ian Price  
 Wilkinson Smith Contractors Ltd.



Trevor specializes in painting light fittings



Marilyn takes a moment to admire the paintwork



## 2002 Island Diary

March 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Supporters' Families Non-Working  
Weekend

March 18<sup>th</sup>  
AGM

March 29<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>  
Easter Working Bee

April 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>  
Supporter's Families Weekend

May 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>  
Supporters Non-working Weekend

June 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Supporters' Bellbird Trip  
(book with Barbara – not Fullers)

June 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Queens Birthday Weekend Working  
Bee

### Oops - #2!!!

In the last bulletin, the lighthouse photo shown in the results of the 2001 photo competition was wrongly attributed to Val Smytheman. It was, in fact, taken by Karli Thomas.

Apologies to Karli and Val for the error.



## School Children Recognised for Tiri Artwork

A visit to Tiritiri Matangi Island, in May 2001, provided some children from Orewa Primary School with the inspiration they needed to create a striking work of art.

Together they produced a banner showing examples of New Zealand endangered species found on this island.

The takahe, bellbird, saddleback, stitchbird and many more enabled the children to win the regional finals in the World Wildlife and Mother Earth Conservation Banner Competition and then to win a highly commended in the national finals.

The banner showed all the mystical qualities of Tiritiri Matangi Island that will encourage children of the future to protect and care for the environment.

Helen Stringer



## Thirty Years On

The following item was taken from a Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park Board publication from 1971

### Tiritiri – 350 acres of Park Land

Eighteen miles north of Auckland, Tiritiri is the site of an important lighthouse station and has a vital role in communication for the port of Auckland. The marine reserve includes 19 acres whilst the rest of the 350 acre reserve is included in the park.

This land has been grazed by stock for most of this century but recently the board decided to terminate the grazing lease and allow the island to revert to native bush.

There is only one good sandy beach, the rest of the coastline rising sharply in cliffs. Several forested gullies with giant pohutukawas and fresh water streams hold promise of attractive camping sites but. Until facilities are built, public access is limited to daylight use only.

### SPECIAL NOTICE

The long rank grass growth during the early stages of regeneration will create a fire hazard for some time. Picnic fires must be lit below the high tide mark and extreme care must be taken to extinguish them properly.

# Cartoon Caption Competition



Clive Francis, a British cartoonist, recently visited Tiri and met Greg, the Hobbs Beach Takahe.

Clive kindly sent us his impression of Greg so we thought a caption competition would be appropriate. Suggestions so far include:

- "All bags will be checked by the management"
- "Of all the birds on Tiri, the takahe really take the cake".

What do you think? Send your entries to [tiri@clear.net.nz](mailto:tiri@clear.net.nz) or mail to PO Box 64 042, Botany Town Centre, Auckland 1730.

A gift voucher from the SoTM shop will be awarded for the best suggestion.

More of Clive's cartoons can be found at [www.cartooncupboard.com](http://www.cartooncupboard.com)



Volunteers at Anniversary Weekend were honoured by the presence of founding chairman of SoTM, Jim Battersby. Jim has recently become a guide and intends to participate in many more working weekends.

100 Years Ago

## Man Dies When Ship Hits Rocks

A shipping disaster, attended unfortunately by the loss of one life, occurred near Auckland early yesterday morning when the barque Royal Tar struck on Shearer Rock near Titirangi and the mate, a man named Kirby, was drowned. The direct cause of the disaster is not known but the facts will no doubt be investigated at a nautical inquiry which must ensue.

The Royal Tar left Auckland Harbour on Monday evening for Kaipara and about half past one yesterday morning she struck Shearer Rock, a well known and duly charted danger spot. The morning was fine and the Royal Tar had a fair wind.

Shearer Rock is just around Titirangi lighthouse, about half a mile north east by east from Titirangi Pt. and is marked by a red danger buoy floating some 60 fathoms from the rock. The recognised course for vessels on such a voyage as that on which the Royal Tar had started is outside the buoy.

All accounts of the disaster go to show that everything possible was done when the vessel struck to save the woman and child on board, then the members of the crew. A hole had been torn in the ship's bow and the water was running in.

Danger rockets were at once sent up and the boats lowered. In spite of the danger the mate Kirby seems to have thought there was time to save some of the belongings on board; at all events he went into the deck cabin, although the captain states he told him not to. In the meantime the captain and the second mate saw their only chance was to leap into the water and they were safely picked up by the lifeboat.

When Kirby entered the cabin it burst open with water, some attributing this to the mizzen-mast breaking away and others to the heavy inrush of water due to the barque slipping further off the rock. But, whatever was the cause of his death, the last seen of Kirby was when he entered the cabin.

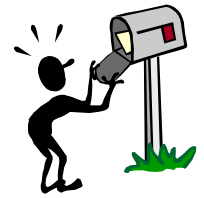
NZ Herald

29 November 2001

Titirangi Is. is obviously Tiritiri Is., proving that editorial inaccuracy is nothing new



# Letters to the Editor



Since the publication of the Spring bulletin further correspondence has been received, from both sides of the fence, on the harrier versus kokako issue. As important as this issue is, it was decided at the time that enough correspondence had been published on this matter. In the absence of thoughts on other issues, here is an encouraging letter sent to Barbara & Ray.

Dear Barbara & Ray

My name is Nicholas John Burke. I am aged 11 and am writing to you out of concern for the pukekos that live on the side of the Northern Motorway before the Harbour Bridge.

I visited Tiritiri Matangi Island on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001 – my most recent trip. I saw how the pukekos were so happy. Later I was told that the pukekos living on the Northern Motorway were having their homes destroyed. There is a new bus lane going in for traffic concerns and it is taking the place of the pukekos' home. What I am asking is could you take the pukekos to your island so that they can have a happy life again? Or, if not, talk to the North Shore City Council about this operation. The operation has already started to take place so most of the pukekos are already homeless.

If you are unable to help the pukekos, could you please write back as fast as possible to tell me that I need to find some other way of getting them rescued.

It would mean a lot to me if you could take an interest in this situation but I will understand if it is not possible. Remember, this letter is for the sake of the pukekos.

Yours Sincerely  
Nicholas Burke

Readers are encouraged to send their views on any Tiri related subject. Please forward these to [tiri@clear.net.nz](mailto:tiri@clear.net.nz) or mail to PO Box 64 042, Botany Town Centre, Auckland 1730 .

## Anniversary Weekend Project

For many years now, volunteers have devoted much time upgrading and repairing man-made structures to meet OSH requirements. There is a certain irony that, because they are natural features, there has not been the same need to do the same on some of the more dangerous tracks.

One of these, the lower end of the Hobbs Track, has for some time been particularly dangerous. Erosion, particularly from high tides and onshore winds, has made this short section steep and, in wet conditions, very slippery. It is also part of the track that visitors use when commuting from the wharf to Hobbs Beach.



The solution was simple. To close this section and take the track straight ahead towards Hobbs Beach. This did require the removal of a few small trees and the breaking of some (fortunately fragile) rock. As is the Tiri way, enough people got stuck into the job and completed it within 48 hours and now we have a safe and durable

access to the beach. It is already hard to imagine how it used to be. The old section of track will be replanted next winter to provide stability for the bank.

This is just the beginning of a series of projects to upgrade the track between Hobbs Beach and the wharf.

One species that was not impressed was the blue penguin. That evening, one was seen, by the new structure, wondering why there was a wall where there used to be access so a bypass has been built to allow them access to the new track.

