



Matakohē/Limestone Island Rangers Monthly Report – August 2007

- Spring must be on the way; Glen and Baldrick have an egg, the Pohutukawa are covered in fresh growth and the grass looks like it needs mowing!
- One month on from the storm and we have the island reasonably ship shape but some of the trees are going to take a little time to recover. **Golden Bay Cement (GBC)** also suffered some damage in the storm and as a consequence donated several tonnes of water-damaged cement to the island. We have already put some to good use. Pete was also able to salvage enough soft bags for concreting the shed floor at a later date and for other small concreting jobs. Many thanks, not only to **GBC**, but also to **Lawson's Cartage** and Hylton Edmonds from **Harbour Marine Ltd** who also generously donated their services. The island is very fortunate to have the support of these, and many other local businesses.



Hylton delivering the cement.

- Thanks also to NorthTec Conservation Corps who worked very hard to move all the bags the next day, tough work at 40 kg each!!

Flora

- The newly planted areas have coped with the storm surprisingly well. Pete has been through and re-heeled some of the larger plants - this may have to be done again in a few weeks time as the ground dries/firms a little.
- The more mature plantings have had their leaves stripped off, especially along the ridge on the eastern side. There is a lot of small debris on the ground in places, noticeably

under the manuka stands. Many trees have also been wrenched but hopefully most of these will survive.

- On the flip side the extra light penetration is encouraging the small seedlings to grow and the invertebrates will really enjoy the increased leaf litter; just all part of the cycle.
- We have located two large moth plants this month but have managed to collect up the pods before they spread their seed. Weed control is always going to be high on the list of work with several species established on the island, including Periwinkle, Mexican Devil, Blackberry, Cotoneaster and Moth Plant. During the winter Pete has continued to pull, cut/poison various plants and will resume spraying when the weather improves a little more.

Fauna

- Kiwi – We can report that Baldrick has laid an egg. However Glen is not yet sitting on it, he is probably waiting for another to appear before he gets on with the serious business of incubation (a 3 month process). In consultation with DoC we are keeping an eye on the nest and it is being regularly visited at night, so all appears to be well at this stage. Kiwi eggs are laid approximately 3 weeks apart, but the eggs of a clutch usually hatch within a week of each other. Glen behaved in a similar way in 2004, once there were 2 eggs present he settled down to his work.
- We released 2 birds from the Native Bird Recovery Centre last week. One was a Fluttering Shearwater, called Donkey, which they had been looking after for a few months. The other was a Fairy Prion, a beautiful pale-blue bird, which had been found exhausted on a local beach in need of a little R&R. The two birds were released at Shipwreck Bay and both were gone the next day.



Rescued Fairy Prion released at Shipwreck Bay

- Peewee the young Kiwi arrived safely from Massey University and was released into a penguin box at the bottom of Ski Slope. He had grown quite fat on the artificial diet and was very relaxed, catching himself a worm straight away in the bottom of the penguin box before we got the lid on!
- Lizards – Pete Anderson and Bryce Lummis from DoC came over earlier this month to help us with identifying suitable lizard release sites. Most of the species for translocation are expected to thrive here, particularly given the absence of predators, with many suitable areas of habitat. Thanks to Pete and Bryce for their valuable help and enthusiasm (and for lunch afterwards!).
- On his island rounds at the beginning of this month, Pete bumped into an unusual visitor. It was a young seal snoozing on the beach by the beacon. We are not sure

who got the bigger fright – the seal certainly left in a hurry. We suspect it is the same seal seen at Cafler Park at about the same time.

Predator Control

- The system is back up and running after the storm, many bait stations and a few traps were completely washed away. We spent a couple of hours one morning searching the shoreline around Onemana Point, locating 2 traps and several bait stations. A few bait stations have also turned up on the island and buffer zone beaches.
- The island traps have been quiet this month but a large female rat was caught in the buffer zone.
- Thankyou to the Wednesday Volunteers who rebaited the northern end of the island this month. As a result of our intensive predator programme rodent incursions appear to be very low – just the 1 mouse tracking, 1 rat caught and no stoats caught on the island for the year to date.

General

- Thanks also to Dwane who has completed the funding application for the tractor this month, fingers crossed we are successful.
- Pete assisted Richardson Stevens Consultants earlier in the month to recover part of the WDC's One Tree Point pontoon, which broke free during the storm.
- Grant, Pam and John Ward have also been over looking at dredging options for the all tide landing. The Dotterels will dictate the timing of the work – we are expecting them to nest shortly and their chicks fledged sometime in January.
- **Golden Bay Cement** have also donated some large '1 tonne' bags to the island this month. These have been really useful for removing rubbish from the island.

Up coming

- **Volunteer Wednesday September 5th**, pick up at 9 am, back around 1.30 pm after lunch, working bee in the Petrel area.

Pete and Cathy



Proudly Supported by; Forest Floor Nursery, Harbour Marine Ltd, Marine North Ltd, Northpower, Northland Port Corp, Northland Regional Council, North Tugz, Onerahi Lions, Phoenix Boats, Rentokil, Tawapou Nursery