



Matakohē/Limestone Island Rangers Monthly Report – December 2007

- We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers & especially the committee who have helped with the island this year and wish everyone a safe & happy festive season.

Kiwi

- Three more chicks have arrived this month giving a total of nine for the season & a total of 25 kiwis on the island. Interestingly the birds are arriving at quite light weights compared to last year, perhaps a function of the wet weather we have been experiencing. We expect another four or five birds from the second clutches.
- The young male Sir Ed sat for approximately 65 days before abandoning the nest – upon investigation we discovered a broken / rotten egg. Not entirely unexpected for a young couple.

Petrels

- The collection team spent a very difficult week on Taranga & were not able to bring the birds off with them due to the poor weather conditions experienced. However the team were able to measure & weigh the birds in most cases more than once to provide valuable data, which let a collection team, return to the island last Saturday & collect 22 birds that fitted the criteria. The numbers were down because the collection window is quite tight & had almost passed. Cathy spoke to Graham Taylor (Grey Faced petrel expert from DoC) who felt it was worthwhile to collect any birds we could even if numbers were low because they all add to the final colony size.
- Thanks to the original team who put in the hard yards; Grant, Tanya, Laurie, Tamsin, John & Cath. Special thanks also to Pete Emerson & Martin Hunt who gave advice & support while trying to get the team off in adverse weather. Martin also generously offered & subsequently used his own launch to make the one day collection trip possible.



Grant, Cath, John, Tamsin, Tanya about to be taken off Taranga after an arduous week – Laurie taking photo

- Thanks also to Freddy who blessed the birds & the welcoming party who were present when they arrived on M-L Is. The birds have settled in well & are about to go onto the straight sardine mix after three days of watered down sardine smoothie – delicious!

Lizards

- The lizards remain in quarantine at Massey University Albany, but 27 appear to have come through to disease screening without a problem. The other three have had a Cryptosporidia detected, which requires further investigation. Cathy is currently seeking the all clear for the 27 Shore skinks & we are hoping to release them at Ship Wreck Bay before Christmas.

Predator Control

- All quiet on the island this month & one weasel at Onemana. Todd Hamilton reports his stoat catches are on the rise but the buffer zone hasn't really fired up yet.
- Pete has also fitted up several more trap boxes with the new DoC 200's this month.

Tractor

- Yes the new tractor has finally arrived & Pete has had a few brief runs with the mower. The extra power & the modern gearbox system make driving the tractor much easier & quicker to operate.



Heavy equipment arriving for the all tide berth construction – the new tractor squeezed in one corner!

- A big thankyou to **Pub Charity** who provided a substantial proportion of the money to fund this new purchase.

General

- Thanks to the various groups that helped to prepare the petrel site this year; classes from Kamo High & Boys High, and the Volunteer Wednesday team. The site is looking really good & the birds have settled in well already.
- Thanks also to the volunteers who spent an evening filling the south end bait stations. Great to get it virtually all out of the way in one two & half hour blitz. Pete did a small amount of maintenance the next day & it was all finished.
- Pete also completed the Interim Report to **Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi Trust**. It was nice to be able to report our very low island catch rates, highlighting the buffer zone work, which the BNZ also pay for in part.

- Cathy attended the Veterinary Wildlife Conference at Auckland Zoo.
- Onerahi School has re-established their connection with the island this year sending over several classes. This month they completed a very successful 'sardine drive' for the island with over 300 hundred tins collected to feed the petrels. Thankyou to all the children & their families & the teaching staff.
- Some of you may have noticed several large pieces of machinery on the island over the past 10 days. The contractors have been working on the all tide berth with the job progressing well.
- Olly & Iain have also been over to complete the vegetation monitoring & shoot the photo points. This work will be very valuable in the future to scientifically demonstrate progress on the island.

Up coming

- Lizard release – keep an eye on your e-mail for a date.
- **Volunteer Wednesday** – a reminder there will be **no** volunteer Wednesday in January
- Dwane will be running his petrel trips again this year. If you or friends & family would like to see the petrels being fed & perhaps go for a walk around the island phone Dwane on 4360596 (koha donation for the barge)

Pete & Cathy



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