



Matakohē-Limestone Island Rangers Monthly Report – June 2008

Planting

- Planting is progressing well with two of the three Sundays being beautifully calm and sunny, feeling more like summer than winter. Thanks go to Ian Page, Iain Reid and Chris Robertson who transported the plants from the respective nurseries to the boat ramp. The barge always looks great when loaded with all the plants and again we were blessed with a beautiful calm morning. Thanks also to the planters who have helped out so far; a very good turn out on the first Sunday got things underway, followed up by the Wednesday volunteers the same week. Several other groups have also been over midweek. We expect to plant for 1 or 2 more Sundays so if you have been thinking you would like to come over, try to make it this coming Sunday 22nd June 9am at the pontoon.



Before ...



... and after. Yes believe it or not this is the same location along the board walk track. Great how those little plants grow, planted around 2001.

Fauna

- Cathy caught Glen this month for his 6-monthly weighing and transmitter check. He is well and in good condition, getting ready for the upcoming breeding season.
- We have been checking the petrel site almost daily for any sign of returning birds. The tunnels all have fences up at the external and internal entrances, so we are looking to see if they have been disturbed and also for any petrel poos or feathers around the site.
- One day Cathy found 7 burrows with both the external and internal fences down! Someone had been right into the burrows, however there were 3 fresh kiwi poos around these burrows, so it seems a very nosy kiwi had paid a visit.
- The sound system is still playing petrel calls each night and the solar charged batteries seem to be holding their charge well despite some cloudy days.
- Cathy has completed the Petrel Translocation report for 07/08 and it has been circulated to all interested parties. A copy should also be available on the web site shortly. Thanks to Dwane who has been doing a great job of up dating the web site (from Croatia!) and posting some of the latest translocation reports for people to see. <http://www.limestoneisland.org.nz/>

Predators

- Rodents could drive you crazy if you let them!!
- Pete found a dead, headless, mouse at the ruins this month, possibly predated by a Morepork or Hawk. We placed bait stations and tracking tunnels intensively in the area where it was found but there were no further signs of mouse presence.
- Pete also caught 2 Norway rats in shoreline traps on the island. Both were adult males and both had stomachs full of rat bait. Whenever possible the rat catches are dissected and in almost all cases they have previously eaten the poison baits. That makes 5 rats and 3 mice caught on the island this year compared to only 2 rats for the whole of last year – definitely the year of the rodent.
- The good news is stoat catches on the island remain at zero for this year.....so far!
- The 48 regular tracking tunnels have been set this month as part of the routine three monthly monitoring. Previously we have put the pads out for just one night, which is the standard protocol for monitoring rodents. Cathy recently attended a workshop on pest eradications and learned that leaving the pads out longer increases the chance of picking up that potential one survivor. We left the pads out for 3 nights this time and are happy to report only birds and skinks tracked – no mice!
- Thanks to the NorthTec Conservation Corps team who baited the south end bait stations, once again as part of the routine 3 monthly programme.
- In the buffer zone 6 rats have been caught this month – a female at Onerahi peninsula, 2 at Onemana point and 3 on Knight Island. There is a lot of rodent (mainly mouse) sign on Knight Island at present and we are keeping the bait stations well topped up.
- 2 stoats were also caught in the buffer zone; a very large male at Onemana and a juvenile male on Knight Island. Possibly the rodent activity on Knight Island acted as a draw card for the young stoat. Pete was able to show the freshly killed juvenile to the Onerahi school group visiting the island, which caused a bit of a stir!

Visitors to the island this month

- NorthTec Conservation Corps – helping with the bait stations.
- Whangarei Intermediate School – imagining they lived on the island at some point in it's history and also following up on native tree identification and volcanoes in the Whangarei area (at least 10 can be seen from the Pa).
- Saint Francis Xavier School – studying endangered species, focusing on kiwi, but also looking at the restoration programme and the contribution it is making to provide a safe sustainable habitat for all wild life.
- Onerahi Primary School – thanks to the children and parents who planted just over 200 trees below the stock dam and also collected flax seed to propagate at school, ready for next year's planting.
- Several of the boys boarding at Curruth House (Whangarei Boys High School) also visited the island. The boys are planning to enter a competition run by BP. They are designing and putting forward a proposal to build bird-watering troughs for the island. If successful they will receive \$1000 from BP toward completing the project.

General

- The FOMLI committee combined their annual walkabout with the first planting day this year looking at: weed control, planting, all tide berth, and macrocarpa pruning.
- Pete completed the Red Cross First Aid refresher course.
- The barge has had its Nortel SSM in water survey; all paper work and boat maintenance was up to date.
- The Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi Trust final report has been completed with all funded operations carried out for the year ending 31st June.
- Steve Bowling Contractors have been over to price repairs to the island pontoon. A quote has now been submitted to the WDC.
- Pete also made a presentation to the Whangarei Native Forest and Bird Protection Society this month. Many of their members have supported the island over a long period and were interested to see what was happening.

Up coming

- Planting Day – Sunday 22 June. This could be the last planting day of the season. Pickup at 9am returning after lunch approximately 1.30pm.
- **Volunteer Wednesday – please note the change to Wednesday 9th July.** Pickup at 9am returning after lunch approximately 1.30pm.

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

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