



## Matakohē-Limestone Island Rangers Monthly Report – July 2008

Winter seems to have arrived this month with several trips to the island being postponed and wet weather affecting the last two planting days. Fortunately, the cold winter weather also brought fresh snow down south, just in time for our trip to Wanaka where we enjoyed a very nice break and four perfect days skiing!

### Planting

- A big thankyou to all the volunteers who helped with planting this year. Last week the Wednesday volunteers completed the shoreline strip leaving about 400 plants to go in around the Edge House ruins to enhance the site for a lizard release in 2009. We will plant these on the next Volunteer Wednesday, which will complete the planting programme for this year.
- Photo – last month the before and after photo created a lot of comment. Pete found this shot of the ruins in the archives earlier this month.



**Restoration takes long-term commitment and dedication but the results over time are plain to see. It was actually quite difficult to find a clear space to take the photo due to the vegetation in the foreground!**

### Kiwi

- Cathy continues with the routine monitoring of adults and it looks as though both 'Glen' and 'Sir Ed' are settling into a nesting pattern. 'Sir Ed' and 'Kahui Whetu' continue to be very attached to each other, often camping under neighbouring flax bushes, if not together, for the day.
- **Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi Trust** has very generously approved our funding application for 2008/2009, allocating almost \$10,000 toward the trapping programme for the coming twelve months. The stoat traps not only play a crucial role in maintaining a safe habitat for the kiwi chicks but also help to provide a safe environment for all wildlife, especially the ground dwelling/nesting birds; including the NZ Dotterel, Variable Oyster Catchers, Banded Rail and Fern Bird.

### Fauna

- Lizards - planning is well underway for the next collection trip, this time to the Chickens Group of Islands. Cathy has booked in the trip with Bryce at DoC and we have also received the Lizard Handling Permits required. Cathy is currently putting the team together for the November trip; they will be collecting Moko and Ornate skinks from Whatupuke Island.

- Around the island up to fifty Pied Shags and many Australasian Gannets have been particularly busy fishing for sprats. Ashore the Fantails and Fern Birds seem to be everywhere at the moment including around the cottage, great to see.
- Petrel site monitoring has continued this month with lots of burrow activity recorded, sticks knocked down and burrows disturbed. From the scats and probe marks it appears to be the handy work of a young kiwi that has taken a fancy to the petrel site/caller! On the advice of Andrea Booth and David Crockett we have also been up spotlighting at night, but all quiet.

### General

- We made two interesting presentations this month. Cathy spoke to the annual conference of the Captive Management Group about the lizard translocations.
- We both spoke to the local Ornithological Society, who were particularly interested in the Petrel programme, but also enjoyed seeing the general progress being made on the island.

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### Predator Control

- The island traps have been quiet with routine servicing carried out.
- Pete and Matt poison baited the northern end of the island this month.
- In the buffer zone 2 rats and 2 stoats have been caught. One of the Norway rats caught on Knight Island is the biggest rat Pete has ever seen, a very large male.
- As reported last month the rodents have been busy on Knight Island in particular and this month a mouse was caught in one of the DoC 200's there, indicating the sensitivity and catching ability of these traps.
- Thanks to John Ward for assisting Pete with rabbit bait preparation. A messy job, skinning, gutting, and chopping up the rabbits ready for salting.

### Up coming

- The weather has also been affecting work on the all tide berth with the final blasting and dredging being delayed until the end of July. Hopefully everything will come together this time so that the berth area can be dredged out to full depth providing a much needed all tide/all weather anchorage for the barge
- James and 'Percy' are due back on the island shortly to catch the next crop of kiwi ready for release back to the mainland. We are currently seeing kiwi scat all over the island and it will be interesting to see who we catch.
- **Volunteer Wednesday – please note the change to Wednesday 13th August.** Pickup at 9am returning after lunch approximately 1.30pm. Planting around the Edge House to enhance the lizard habitat there.

Pete and Cathy



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