



Matakohē-Limestone Island Ranger Report – February 2009

For most of this month we have been away on holiday catching up on lieu days, which seem to accumulate at an alarming rate during spring. The island is now very dry and the fire risk remains high despite the rain this week. The Coprosma especially are feeling the strain, wilting in the afternoon heat.

Island sitters

- Many thanks to Donna Stuthridge, Riaan Elliot and John Elliot who looked after the island while we were away. Donna kept an eye on the transmittered kiwi – confirming that they weren't nesting and the traps were also regularly checked while we were away ensuring the island remained safe.
- John also completes the island diary each day while on the island, great fun to read, with detailed fishing reports and a lovely little poem, thanks John!

Kiwi

- The adult kiwi on the island seemed to have finished breeding for the year. Sir Ed successfully hatched his first ever chick and has not had a second clutch. As reported earlier, both the eggs in Glen's second clutch proved to be infertile and we now have them on hand to show visiting school groups. Glen has now had his 6 monthly weighing and transmitter check.
- We welcomed a new chick onto the island this month. The chick was hatched at the Native Bird Recovery Centre when the father abandoned the second egg in his clutch, after successfully hatching the first one.



Angela, a Canadian student volunteering on the island, about to release the kiwi chick into a 'nest' under buffalo grass.

Predators

- On the island there have been two Norway rats caught this month, despite the very low rodent numbers on the surrounding islands they still keep coming!
- In the buffer zone; 2 stoats, 2 Norway rats and 2 possums have been caught.

General

- The Wednesday volunteers once again achieved far more than Pete was expecting; all the debris from the shelter-building site has now been transported off the island and the large pile of macrocarpa logs next to the shelter have now been moved. Several piles were placed along in the foreshore strip adjacent to the shelter and some was also moved to the far end of the island between the Karaka grove and the mangroves, to enhance the lizard habitat at each location.
- We have also been fortunate to have the assistance of a very capable Canadian student for the past week and for a few days next week. She has been helping Pete to get the island back up to speed after being away, including helping him to drag the sandbags off the petrel site! Through the internet the island is receiving an increasing number of enquiries from overseas students looking to volunteer on ecological projects in New Zealand.
- Park Care have been over weed eating the tracks, which look great as usual when they have been. They also got back into the petrel site to knock the grass back, after a couple of month's growth while the birds were in residence.

Visitors

- There has been a noticeable increase in the number of independent visitors this summer with lots of people enjoying a walk, swim, and picnic on the island. The beautiful summer weather has probably helped but perhaps also a sign of the increasing profile the island has in the community.
- We had several enquires for guided trips while we were away and the bookings for trips and presentations are coming in again now that we are back.

Upcoming

- **Volunteer Work Wednesday – will be on Wednesday 4th March.** Pickup at 9am returning after lunch, approximately 1.30pm.
- The Moko skink collection trip is booked with DoC. We will be camping on Whatapuke Island at the Hen and Chicks for a few days setting the pitfall traps and hoping for more hot weather. While there we will also assist DoC with some of their island work including monitoring for rats and lizards.

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

www.limestoneisland.org.nz