



## Matakohē-Limestone Island Rangers Monthly Report – July 2009

The big news this month is that **Golden Bay Cement (GBC)** have increased their contribution to the island to match the operational funding provided by the Whangarei District Council (WDC), and have also expressed their future commitment to the island. The operational funding provided by GBC for the past eleven years has made a huge difference to the project enabling it to move forward to the well-organised professional operation it is today. The island looks forward to continuing to strengthen the partnership with GBC, WDC and Northland Regional Council (NRC) as the project develops into the future. On the island itself we survived the weekend storm with relatively little damage and have been busy catching up on general maintenance, as well as taking some time off with our sons.

### Planting

- Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped this winter, plants just seemed to fly in this year!
- 26 keen planters attended the final planting day for the season, a beautiful fine winters day, with just over 1500 plants put in, a great days work.
- In fact planting went so smoothly the committee decided to purchase an extra 700 plants for specific sites around the island, which were delivered this week. We will plant these in the next few weeks and on the next Volunteer Wednesday 5 August.



**Lots of cheerful little fantails have been attentively following visitors about on the island. They appear to have survived the winter well so far despite the wet & cold conditions at times.**

### Fauna

- **Kiwi** – Cathy has been checking the boys' location in the expectation they will begin nesting shortly. Currently Glen is living in the flaxes behind Gerry's Folly and Sir Ed is also in the flax, at the bottom of Ski Slope, both nesting sites they have used before.
- Onerahi School have been running a kiwi naming competition for the island born chick hatched by Sir Ed last year. The chick is to be named **Kahurangi** (treasure). The winner has been invited to help recapture the birds on the morning they are leaving the island as her prize – a very unique experience for any New Zealander.

- **Petrels** – the burrow rummaging continues! But still no conclusive evidence. David Crocket from the NZ Ornithological Society spoke at the last committee meeting about how we could encourage the birds to return but also reiterated that it is a waiting game and patience is required. It was reassuring to hear that generally we have been doing everything possible at this stage.
- **Brown quail** – Colin Bishop (ex-ranger) contacted Pam after the Ranger Report was sent out last month. It sounds like he is still really enjoying life and work in the deep south. He also reported seeing Brown quail on the island for a short time.
- **Caspian Terns** – thank you to the Wednesday volunteers who cleared the sandbank at Knight Island in anticipation of the terns returning to nest. The bank was very over grown with weeds leaving little room for the birds. Good numbers of both Caspian's and the little white fronted terns have been busy feeding in the harbour and it won't be long until they are thinking about nesting.

### **Predator Control**

- Many thanks also to John Ward and Gerry Brackenbury who helped Pete process 50 rabbits today for stoat baits. A very messy job but that's now a years worth of bait ready for the freezer.
- The island continues to be quiet with no trap catches to report.
- In the buffer zone one possum was caught at Onemana and a few mice are still present on Knight Island, in fact Gerry managed to catch one while working there recently with the other Wednesday volunteers.
- We have just finished the 3 monthly servicing of the island bait station grid for rodents. It was good to get over the whole island; carrying out maintenance on the grid and cutting lines in some of the more densely planted areas. It was also reassuring to find no mouse sign – either droppings or chew marks - at any of the stations.

### **Lizards**

- Cathy has almost finished the permit process for the Pacific and Common Geckos after further consultation with Richard Parrish and Ben Barr from DoC Conservancy to establish the best possible collection sites. The Moko skink permit with the extended capture sites at the Hen and Chicks has now been completed and signed off ready for the skink collection in November/December.

### **General**

- A WDC contractor removed the island pontoon last week for repair and it should be back shortly after a complete refurbishment.
- Bill Paynter has been over with John Barber from the committee to have a final measure of the shelter before the first of the six signs are produced. These will provide a lot more information for visitors and will be a great asset to the island – kindly sponsored by Whangarei South Rotary club.
- For the past two weeks Cathy has been corresponding via e-mail with an intern from Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago. The zoo has compiled a worldwide list of bird translocations and were very interested in the petrel project.  
To have a look go to <http://www.lpzoo.org/artd/species/overview.php?id=157>
- Cathy has also been busy writing on an island operation manual this month so that things like the power supply and water supply can be operated by following the notes. This should be particularly useful to island sitters and to the new ranger when Pete and Cathy complete their contract.

## Upcoming

- **Kiwi capture night** – is planned for the coming month with Onerahi Primary School set to name one of the island born chicks at the blessing as the birds come off the island Sunday 26 July.
- **Volunteer Wednesday – 5 August.** Pickup at 9am returning after lunch approximately 1.30pm. We will be planting the balance of the site-specific plants that the committee have recently purchased.

Pete and Cathy



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