



## Matakohē-Limestone Island Ranger Report – May 2013

Hooray, the rains have finally arrived with over 100mm falling in the last month and it's pouring as I am writing this. The rain dances I conducted after the last report seem to have finally worked!

On a personal note, I graduated from Unitec with a Degree in Applied Science (majoring in Biodiversity) and would like to thank everybody who helped to get me to this point and land my dream job (still have to pinch myself). Cheers everyone who helped.



**Me with proud parents**

### **Fauna**

- The morepork that seems to return every year at this time has made his presence felt, calling out to me from the macrocarpas where he likes hunting (look out lizards and Geckos). Jo took a photo of this bird last year so I will get one as well as soon as I can to compare them and see if it is the same bird.
- The major news this month is the return of the three petrels. They were found on the 22<sup>nd</sup> which is the earliest ever for the island so cross your fingers that they breed this season. Ilse Corkery, Northtec tutor and "petrel wrangler extraordinaire" came over to the island to demonstrate how to hold and read the bands on their legs.

The first birds that were translocated in 2004 would now be nine years old although no birds from this year have previously returned. Normally it is in year five that they return and are old enough to breed (they can return at four years and even three years). To monitor for their return all the burrows have three twigs set up across their entrances - disturbed sticks mean someone has been and gone. The petrel caller is also in action overnight to lure them in, as well as the camera to capture other activities.



**This is how finding petrels makes you feel  
(ah Irish smiles)**

## **Kiwi**

- Glen was due for his six-monthly weight and health check so Paul Cornille was over to do that but we could not find him - lost? dead? No, the tricky blighter and partner Baldrick had shacked up six metres up a metal pipe under the hill track.
- As a kiwi release is coming up shortly a round-up had to take place so Todd Hamilton (Landcare), Kane McElrea (NRC) and I saddled our mini kiwi horses and managed to catch three beauties in less than 90 minutes. This is not normal as I will more than likely find out over my time working with these special birds. I found this activity most enjoyable and cannot wait for the next one.



**Todd Hamilton with kiwi number two  
for the night**

- The Kiwi for Kiwis interim report, along with the funding application for 2013-2014 was also completed last month with a lot of help from Jo (cheers mate!). Since June of last year 16 chicks have been brought over to this crèche along with Glen producing one miracle. Eight chicks that had reached the required 1200g were captured and returned to the mainland.
- This month I will be attending my first kiwi hui in Cambridge which should be exciting in itself but also my first visit to the Maungatautari Ecological Island is on the cards.

### **Predator Control**

- The buffer is cranking along with three stoats, two weasels, two Norway rats, two ship's rats and five mice with another week still to go.
- I have been able to source bait from the good folk and sponsors at Rentokil Initial for the island mouse bust so requests for volunteers to take part in this job will be going out later this month.

### **Visitors**

- Had lots of visitors over at the beginning of the month but they have slowed down a little as the weather has taken a turn for the cooler. The number of fishermen has also decreased as the cooler weather cools the water and makes for fewer schnapper.
- Met Mark from Pacific Kayaks who runs trips to the island. He was with Anton from EMR and clients and friends who had paddled over with them.
- Dwane Kokich was over to check out some planting sites and do some weeding which resulted in a few adult moth plants found with heaps of pods. Other particular environmental nasties found included palms, woolly nightshade, ivy and Taiwan cherry. As the bush on the island matures it will be harder and harder to spot weeds so if you see any of these while on or around the island please let me know the location.



**Look at the size of that sucker 160+ pods and yes, I am happy to have got it**

- Friends Jackie and "spiderman" Brett Thompson from Northtec who are moving to Nelson, came over to the island with some of their friends from Whangarei.
- Gave a talk to the lovely folk at the Selwyn Centre. They also shouted me lunch and were a very friendly bunch of people, even though I was a couple of minutes late having gone to Selwyn Park first!
- My thanks to Collette and Nick for island minding while I go to the kiwi hui, hope you don't mind roughing it a bit.

## Upcoming

- **Volunteer Wednesday, 5 June.** Pickup at 9am at the jetty, returning after lunch at approximately 2pm. Among other jobs one that needs doing is mowing as the place is looking a bit like a jungle. Amazing what a bit of moisture can do.

Hei konei ra,

**Bernie**



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