



## **Matakohē-Limestone Island Ranger's Report May-June 2019**

**Hello and welcome to the new Matakohē-Limestone Island Ranger Report authored by your new ranger, Darren. Winter has now set in with the days getting shorter and quite a bit cooler although we have been quite lucky so far with not too many days of rain.**

### **Goodbye and Hello**

- It has been quite an eventful time with the previous rangers, Emma, Jono, Charlie and Quincy, moving off the island around the end of May. During the weeks coming to the end of their time on the Island they had been moving some of their smaller gear off the island with 22 May being the day of the big move. Helpers including FOMLI members Dwane and Leon, the new ranger Darren and other associates set off to the island with the experienced skipper, Emma, at the controls of the boat. The weather was perfect on the morning of the move with no wind, clear skies and a warm temperature making the exercise much easier. With the aid of the 4x4 Polaris and the trailer, all the bigger items were packed on to the boat in just a few short trips from the ranger's cabin and by midday they were all packed up and ready for the slow steady trip back to the mainland where everything was loaded up into the cars and trailers and the convoy set off to their house where everything was carefully unpacked and placed in the appropriate rooms. After all the packing was finished the volunteers were treated to a shout of fish and chips supplied by Jono.
- The move on to the island was not quite as eventful. With the help of Emma and Jono, most of Darren's gear was bought over to the island in just a couple of easy trips on the Petrel Tua Toru and was quickly set up in the house in only an hour or so.
- On the afternoon on 3 June (Queen's Birthday) we had the official farewell for Emma, Jono, Charlie and Quincy and the welcome for Darren. Freddy Tito from Te Parawhau, members of the FOMLI committee and family members gathered around the old school site where Freddy did the formal farewells, greetings and karakia. During this ceremony the annual kumara harvesting was undertaken with all four of the previous rangers getting the honour of digging up the kumara.



**Darren's gear arriving**

**Freddy leading the official  
farewell and greeting**

- The number of visitors to the island is beginning to, not surprisingly, dwindle as we enter the colder months of the year, although we have had a couple of small groups coming over on the sunnier days.

### **Volunteer Wednesday**

The usual Volunteer Wednesday almost did not occur with the forecast looking quite grim, however we decided to go ahead and a small group of strong individuals braved the weather and helped out with some pest plant jobs. Thanks to these volunteers we managed to remove a great deal of periwinkle, a few mature mothplant vines together with a bag of pods/seedlings and a small infestation of queen of the night from Gerry's folly. After lunch a group cleaned up some of the rubbish in between the vegetation island just outside of the shed, while the others shallowed the boat ramp to make it more accessible to get the Petrel Tua Toru in and out of the water. Unfortunately, the trip back to Onerahi was rather wet as the wind picked up just as we left the island creating quite a rather uncomfortable swell.



### **Plants and Animals**

#### **Petrel monitoring**

Between March and July is the time the oi/grey faced petrel will begin breeding and between June and July, after pairing up, they should start laying. After seeing a bit of a late turnout of a couple of birds in the burrows, we have not been seeing any sign of activity since late May. We are unsure if this has any correlation with the speaker - which plays an oi call on a loop - used to entice the birds to the burrows not working properly. It has since been fixed and we will hopefully see some more birds return shortly.

#### **Kiwi Glen new Tag**

Glen's transmitter was due for a replacement and after an unsuccessful attempt to locate the stealthy bird, Emma and I managed to find him on our second search hidden away in a burrow near Gerry's Folly. We managed to catch him and check his condition which was all tiptop, and went about replacing his old transmitter (which was running low on battery) with a brand new one which should keep him track-able for a little while longer.

#### **Albino oystercatcher roosting**

The oystercatchers are starting to form a pre-breeding colony on the rickety abandoned wharf near the cement works ruins and among these individuals a small albino oystercatcher can be sighted.



**The albino oystercatcher**

#### **Spoonbills**

A few royal spoonbill birds have started to appear around the island where they will likely remain during these colder months and will most likely return to the South Island during spring/summer where they will begin to form their breeding colonies. I would recommend looking at the website <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/royal-spoonbill> for more information re these birds.

## Pest Control

We have had a surprising amount of activity with our traps since the start of May, so far we have caught seven rats, most of those being trapped on Knight Island and one being caught on Limestone Island. We have also caught five mice, with three of them being caught on Limestone Island and two being caught on Knight Island. Fortunately, there appears to be no sign of activity from any mustelids (stoats, weasels and ferrets) let's hope it stays that way.

## Other News

### Boat Survey

On 5 June Steve Mabbot came over to the island to do his bi-yearly boat survey on the petrel Tua Toru. As expected the boat passed with flying colours.

### Volunteer Wednesday

The next volunteer Wednesday is coming up on the **3 July**, so tag along if you're interested in spending a day working on the island. I will be picking up volunteers at 9am at the Onerahi jetty.



Native hibiscus in flower



Nice sunset taken from the old school site



[www.limestoneisland.org.nz](http://www.limestoneisland.org.nz)