



Matakohē-Limestone Island Ranger Report – July 2010

Well, thanks to all our wonderful volunteers the planting is almost complete with only a few bits and pieces remaining. The stats stack up as follows:

Plants planted	2756
Planting days	6
Youngest planter	Age 1
Oldest planter	Age 70 (ish – my mother told me it is rude to ask)
Most plants planted	Iain Reid (he just squeaked in over some very stiff competition from numerous other dedicated planters). This means he wins the coveted "Golden Spade" award

The plants are off to a great start too, with lovely gentle rains following each planting day and occasionally falling during the planting day. With the good rain all the wetlands have filled back up again and visiting ducks are making the most of it.

We also had the Wednesday Volunteers over to do some of the more specialist enrichment planting. This involved planting canopy and understorey species that require more shade and shelter in and around existing plantings. Seeing everyone popping in and out of the bush put me in mind of a flock of kereru, depositing plants instead of seeds to help the forest develop. There were also some individual efforts, Gerry Brackenbury spent the day helping Jo plant around Gerry's Folly and along the southern coast and Dwane Kokich has been busy planting as well as spreading various seeds and pulling weeds on his travels.



**A ripper of a day for planting. Not sure why they aren't all busy digging.
I suspect everyone is standing about admiring the serenity.**

Golden Bay Cement Visit

This month we got to head off on a bit of a junket. We boated over to Golden Bay Cement for a tour to find out a bit more about what they do over there. The tour got off to a great start with a ride in the Jigger, the little electric train that runs out to the end of the very very long wharf. It is a great way to arrive, heading over the mudflats and through the mangroves. We also got to do some more spoonbill spotting with a flock of five feeding just below the wharf. The tour itself was brilliant. We learned a huge amount about the cement making process. Basically it did not seem all that different from how it would have been done here on the island in the 1800s – just on a much larger scale and with considerably more technology involved. Our tour guides, Paul and Theda, explained that it is very important to get the chemistry just right so that buildings like the Sky Tower do not fall down. I would agree - VERY important. It was also really cool to see how much effort goes into making the factory as efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. We managed to leave the tour with a whole new wardrobe as well, Golden Bay kindly donating hats, vests, shirts, socks and wet weather gear and even some steel cap gumboots for Ben. We are now even easier to spot nipping across the channel on a rainy day in our very fluoro raincoats and pants. Thanks very much GBC



**Looking out toward Limestone Island from the top of the GBC tower.
Once again we were unable to find a hat that would fit Ben**

Kiwi

The Northland kiwi hui was held this month and Jo went along. The day was run brilliantly thanks to Helen Moodie from Landcare and Wendy Sporle of BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust. There was plenty of learning and idea sharing as well as lots of networking with like-minded, passionate community groups all doing fantastic kiwi work. Very inspiring.

We also got the good news this month that our BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust funding application was successful. BNZSKT will once again be sponsoring the mustelid trapping portion of our predator control programme on the island and in the buffer zone. This funding is vital to our programme and is much appreciated.

Along with our predator trapping, last year's BNZSKT funding also sponsored a new information board for the shelter. This was finished last week and is now up in the shelter and looks fantastic.

Back on the island, we are seeing less of the chicks out on the mown grass areas at night. We think they might be hanging out in the bush more now that the summer crickets have gone.

- Sir Ed and Kahui Whetu have moved on from their spot near the planting site so no early nest there but they are still roaming the southern face.
- Glen's egg timer transmitter is working a treat and is showing that he isn't incubating.
- Baldrick's third transmitter in as many months is working as it should.

Fauna

- Both dotterels on the sand barge are now in their rusty coloured breeding plumage. According to records both seem to have been coming here for years, with the female banded 11 years ago in December 1998. We think it is about time she had a name of her own and so we would like you all to help us come up with something clever and witty. Quite often the birds are named based on their leg band combinations. For example I knew a bird whose band was MB-YRO – he was known as Biro. However, I also knew a bird who had only one leg and no bands and he was called Hoppy. So anything goes really. Our girl has a metal band on her left leg and then an orange, green and white band on her right leg; this is written as **M-OGW**. So come on all you pun masters – email us your suggestions at limestonerangers@gmail.com.

Predator Control

- Maihi Cooper from Rentokil came over to review our pesticide programme and gave us some great advice on bait types, presentation, location and targeting mice in particular. It is fantastic to have this resource available to us and we will be continuing to pick his brain.
- No captures on the island this month again. Hurrah.
- The buffer captures have been at pretty normal levels with a weasel and a mouse caught on Knight Island, a mouse trapped at Onemama and a shiprat trapped at Onerahi.

Visitors

- Three well attended public planting days. Thanks very much for giving up your Sunday morning lie in.
- Iain Reid brought over another group of Northtec students who managed to fit in some planting as well as learning.
- Paul MacDonald from Whangarei District Council brought over nine officers from the Council and spent the day looking around the island at options and opportunities, including the track network.
- The Maori Land Court visited the pa site to take in the excellent panoramic views of the Whangarei Harbour and surrounding headlands.
- We had a few extra volunteers this month who did some great work for us. Ruari Flynn, a Northtec student came over for the day to get a bit of work experience. We also had Liam and his special needs carer Jim over for an island visit and to do some baiting.

General

- Ben sprayed out all the coastal bait stations to keep them visible and appealing to visiting critters.
- Jo completed the end of year BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust Funding Report summarising the comings and goings of kiwi from the island over the last twelve months
- The Community Conservation Fund Progress Report was also completed, summarising last year's planting and preparation for this year's planting.
- The sheep got their mohawks shaved off and had a tidy up round the back thanks to Ken Massey and his neighbour Warwick who came over to do the crutching.
- Richard from Marine North came over to do some servicing work on the barge. It now has a lovely new steering cable making it even more fun to drive.
- Bryce from Absolute Gasfitters came over to fit our new gas heater. It is the best thing ever. No more beanies indoors.
- With the rain and showers this month there have been a phenomenal number of rainbows about. Jo saw this one while out kiwi tracking – thought you might like it. We checked Rat Island for the pot of gold when we next did the buffer traps but someone must have got in before us. Ben also saw a moonbow this month. Apparently he did not make this up and this is a real thing – you can check these out on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moonbow>



Upcoming

- **Volunteer Wednesday – 4th August.** Pickup at 9am at the jetty, returning after lunch approximately 2pm. If the weather is co-operating we will be going on a search and destroy mission for moth plant, privet and ginger.

Hei konei ra

Jo and Ben



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