

THE FRIENDS OF MANGEMANGEROA SOCIETY INC

Summer/Autumn Newsletter 2008



Chairman's Ramblings

This past six months have again seen many outstanding contributions from members and our community of supporting groups, schools, and the Manukau Parks team.

Mangemangeroa Walkway

Austen Gate has worked tirelessly doing all the 'groundwork' for our submission to the Mangemangeroa Valley Reserves Management Plan. This submission was to extend the Mangemangeroa Walkway up the valley under the bridge to exit at the Hayley Reserve in Hayley Lane. We are pleased to see this is under active investigation by Council Officers. Besides extending the 'green corridor' by connecting the Valley with nearby reserves, it adds another link to the series of walkways around the City. We trust that negotiations for the procurement of the remaining esplanade reserve to provide a continuous connection from the Mangemangeroa Walkway to Hayley's reserve will soon prove fruitful.

Rotary Involvement

Four years ago Rotarian families planted Pohutukawa (for children and grand children) in the Rotary Loop immediately below the Barn. Unfortunately, some in the lower and damper area failed and are now replaced with the Kowhai which will make a wonderful showing there in a few years time. The surviving Pohutukawa along the Loop hillsides are flourishing.

Two years ago we received a grant from the two Howick Rotary Clubs.. This money was used as payment to Naturally Native Nurseries who undertook to grow 400 (200 Kowhai and 200 Kohekohe) eco-sourced specimen trees for us. These specimen trees have been planted in areas where earlier plantings of pioneer species are able to provide shelter. On Brownie planting day each Brownie planted a kohekohe together with a named stake. In years to come it is hoped they will be able to relocate their tree!

It is appropriate to acknowledge the generous support given by these two clubs both financially and for their 'people power' on our planting days. On behalf of the 'Friends' committee I thank both the Howick and the Howick - Somerville Rotary Clubs for the continuing assistance given to us.

Chisbury Reserve:

This area of jointly owned land backs onto the Mangemangeroa Reserve. It has been of concern for some time as the weeds growing here spread into the reserve. Friends member, and Chisbury resident, John Clark recognised this problem and has undertaken, with the help of Bruce Keeley, to initiate dialogue with the owners. He reports that:

"We have had the first excursion into the bush and cut and poisoned a good swathe of ginger. We plan to have the next venture with the next month. We have collected a contribution from almost all of the Lot holders to cover the cost of sprays etc. A very good response. An application will be made to the ARC for an Environmental Initiatives Grant".

As this project develops, it may become a blueprint for future initiatives with local residents whose properties border onto Reserve land.

Local Conservation Group Social Evening

For some time the idea of getting together with the local conservation groups in an informal situation had been mooted. Finally this happened with over 70 people attending an evening at the Hassler Hall. A powerpoint presentation from Jessica and John Pybus about their visit to the Galapagos Islands with some wonderful photographs of the island species was most enjoyable. Groups represented at this evening included WECS, Pt View and the Tamaki Estuary Protection Society.

John Peat's book, [Howick Ranges. A History of Point View Drive] was launched this month and supported by Pt. View Heritage Society. The book is a history containing 200 pages of carefully researched information describing the 150 years of Pt. View Drive and includes over 80 photographs, paintings and early maps. Copies may be ordered from Dr. John Peat phone 09 274 3904 Price \$60 plus postage.



Nicola Rochester Regional Sales Manager for "The Scotts Company" has delivered 5000 fertiliser tablets for our use this year. Thank you Scotts

Annual General Meeting 2008:

This was well attended and we were rewarded with a brief business meeting and excellent address by Anne Rimmer, conservationist supreme and author of the delightful book "Tiritiri Matangi - A Model of Conservation."

Anne proceeded to delight us with an informative, humorous and fascinating presentation of the history of Tiritiri Matangi. Her talk covered from inception, to the present time and included all the work that has been done to restore the island to the wonderful park it is today.

The "New Zealand Geographic" May-June 2008 has a excellent article by Anne about Tiritiri Matangi.

For copies of Anne's book, e-mail her at rimmer@ihug.co.nz or ring our secretary, Deborah for other contact details.

We were sad to record the 'retirement' from the committee of two of our stalwarts, Jessica Pybus and Austen Gate, but both continue their involvement in tasks they have offered to do. Thank you both for the invaluable service you have both given - before and since the founding of the Society.

Committee:

Allan Riley, Chairman

Jim Duckworth, Deputy Chairman

Deborah Grant, Secretary

Brian Hanlon, Treasurer

Committee members: James Lee, Graham Falla, Sally Barclay, Bruce Keeley, Trudy McNie, Warwick Kitchen, John Spiller and Lyn Murphy our Howick Community Board representative

John Spiller

I have worked at Spillers Hammer hardware last 8 years.

Involvement in local body affairs began in 1995 when I top polled for the Community Board on my first attempt. I successfully stood for the board for three more elections becoming Chairman in 2004.

My interests include tramping and conservation. I am a member of the Howick Tramping Club, and have done conservation work in both the Northern Pureora forest (Rangitoto Station in the Maungatutu Valley), and the Hunuas. Both these projects focus on the recovery of the endangered wattle bird the Kokako and involve pest monitoring, baiting and track maintenance work.



John Spiller

Lyn Murphy

Lyn is a member of the Howick Community Board. She lives with her husband and daughter in Mellons Bay. For the past eighteen years she has worked as a senior lecturer in leadership at the Manukau Institute of Technology. She has qualifications in psychology and management and is completing a doctoral degree in accounting. Working as an occupational therapist, she spent ten years in the health sector specialising in forensic psychiatry. She has held a range of management positions in profit making and not-for profit organisations. She can often be seen running through Mangemangeroa in her ongoing attempt to keep fit



Lyn Murphy

Warwick Kitchen

I'm a Special Needs teacher at Pakuranga College and with the students have been raising manuka and mahoe plants for the current planting season. I live close to the Mangemangeroa reserve and enjoy experiencing it from the land and from my kayak. I have spent the last 35 years in the local community and found the natural environment (land and sea) here a stimulating place for bring up my children.

We really do need new (and some younger) members who are interested in the restoration work we do. There are many opportunities to assist, and it's not only with a planting shovel or spade. If you know of some keen 'recruits please ask them to contact Deborah, Sally, Graham or myself, or just turn out for one of our remaining planting days. A great way to see a little of what we get up to in our leisure time!

Happy planting everyone,

Allan Riley

The California Quail

by Bruce Keeley

Put its common name alongside its scientific name *Callipepla californica*, and it's not hard to deduce that this species originates along the western seaboard of the United States of America. The birds were first introduced in NZ in the 1860s-70s, at a time when acclimatization societies went berserk introducing every game bird they could lay their hands on. Fortunately, most of their ill-conceived experiments failed.

The California Quail, along with the Ring-necked Pheasant, has thrived over a large part of the country, and both are to be seen – or more often heard – in the Mangamangeroa Reserve.

The Quail's most characteristic call is a loud, carrying, triplet with the stress on the second syllable. 'To-**bacc**-o....to-**bacc**-o'....is a pretty accurate representation (which will appeal to smokers) though I notice my American field guide patriotically renders it 'chi-ca-go'. At closer range, a group of birds is highly conversational, as it keeps in contact in the undergrowth, with a soft, rapid 'put-put-put' - rather like a distant outboard motor. When disturbed, the tone changes into a louder metallic 'pit-pit-pit...'.

I have most frequently seen a covey of quail on the track between the 'kissing gate' below the old barn and the little boardwalk/jetty. A gregarious species, they are rarely seen other than in a family or larger group, either running like the wind or in a rapid whirring flight, typical of gamebirds. If undisturbed, they provide a wonderful sight with their forward leaning top-knot (both sexes) and the bold facial markings of the male bird, as they forage on the ground for seeds, insects and some vegetation.

While typically associated with scrubland (gorse, manuka, bracken etc) they will enter the forest verges, and show great ability in scaling oblique trunks and branches from where to gain a better view of the intruder, or to broadcast their loud territorial claims.

Nests are very well concealed in grass under thick cover of gorse, blackberry or bracken. Typical of game birds, there is a large clutch, numbering anything from 8 to 22 eggs, averaging around 13. The chicks leave the nest soon after hatching and feed themselves, but stay together as a cohesive family unit.



Totara (*Podocarpus totara*)

by Sally Barclay



Totara of medium size occur in a stand toward the more southern end of the Reserve although there are young totara appearing throughout and seed is gathered as part of the revegetation programme. There are no giants among this stand indicating that these trees have regenerated from seed left from felling by the early settlers about 100 years ago.

The thick foliage of the totara is of needle-like leaves which have a prickly feel. The adult leaves being shorter and wider than the leaves seen in juvenile state. New growth in spring gives a sage green appearance at this time.

Totara, like other conifers, have as their reproductive structures, cones which occur separately on male and female trees. The photo above shows a male tree bearing brown cones. The female cone looks more like a red berry with its seed sitting on top.

Totara tend to have a straight trunk with strippy bark. This bark peels away in long thin strips. This property means that the tree has little to no climbers attached to it. *P. totara* can be distinguished from *P. hallii* by the thick stringy bark of *P. totara*. Ewen Cameron and the Auckland Bot. Soc. have confirmed that what we have is *P. totara* only in the Mangamangeroa.

Research Project on Gender of Kohekohe in Mangemangeroa Reserve

I'm currently involved in a post-graduate research project in association with Victoria University, looking at the gender of kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*)- a question that has been debated since the species was first described by Kirk in 1889 as being 'perfect or rarely unisexual'.

I'm looking at five populations of kohekohe in Golden Bay, Wellington and Auckland (Mangemangeroa). I started in 2006, with the intention of monitoring the populations for three years to cover fluctuations in flowering and fruiting. Manukau City Council have authorized my use of the Reserve.

It's necessary to look at the **morphological** gender of each tree in the winter, which involves microscopic examination of flowers for the presence of pollen and ovules and the **functional** gender in the summer months, by identifying and counting fruit. Pollen is also tested for viability. Many of the trees have been tagged with VUW and a number.



Results to date have been interesting, with all populations consisting of females, hermaphrodites, and non-fruiting hermaphrodites or 'males'. This seems to suggest that kohekohe are somewhere on an evolutionary continuum between hermaphroditism and dioecy.

Understandably, in public reserves such as Mangemangeroa, the sight of an elderly woman skulking around looking intently at the trees has raised a few questions. It is surprising how few people are familiar with this spectacular species and I am always happy to fill them in!

Lynsie Kerr

Trudy's Corner

- Request that FOM give some consideration to the partnership agreement and come up with a plan for the next two years.
- Trudy and Anna have produced some wonderful new brochures, flyers and an extensive map of parks and groups in the area for the notice board at the Howick Information Service.
- Trudy also had an example of the new sign for the Sandspit Road end of the reserve which met with approval from the committee.
- FOM would like Trudy to implement cementing in of the tree signs with available funds.
- MCC require a FOM member to do a two day St. Johns course
- Re security at car park Trudy commented that MCC policy is to monitor the parks for one year and they don't promote the use of cameras. Sally suggested another security light may be useful. The police are aware of the situation and will check while on their patrols. Trudy was to speak to Tim Knight regarding the security.
- The new contractor had written a most apologetic email to Trudy offering to source and replace some young Nikau plants damaged by overspray.
- MCC had replaced one of the gates on Somerville Road. FOM thanked Trudy
- There is a new lease agreement with the grazier which Tim Knight from Council is responsible for.
- There was mention of a feral cat observed in the reserve. Trudy to follow up.
- Warwick Kitchen is keen to get a watering system actioned at Pakuranga College for the raising of the Mangemangeroa seeds which MCC may be able to assist in funding.
- Fencing of the area for Forest & Bird Planting has been completed and excellent preparation of this ground for planting should see some very happy plants in there at the end of the planting season. Some Health & Safety training is required by members before the next round of planting.
- John Spiller thanked Trudy for executing a speedy repair on the vandalised section of the track.

Contact details for the
Friends of the Mangemangeroa
Society Inc

Allan Riley - Chairperson
Ph: 534 4067 Allan.r@ihug.co.nz

Deborah Grant - Secretary
Ph 535 7072 debsgrant@ihug.co.nz

web address:
[www.aerolink.co.nz/mangemangeroa/
main.html](http://www.aerolink.co.nz/mangemangeroa/main.html)

Link to other conservation groups in
the Auckland Region:
www.manawa.org.nz

See also www.arc.govt.nz for
upcoming events in the Auckland
region

A Brief Look at Restoration.

This year we have been fortunate to have been able to have the support of Jim Duckworth, Somerville Intermediate, Graham Falla and his Forest & Bird team, Star of the Sea and Pakuranga College where in excess of 8000 plants have been propagated in shade houses for this years plantings. This is the largest the 'Friends' have undertaken. The number of plants raised indicating the success of the seed collecting carried out early in March.



A tray of manuka (48 plants) grown in root trainers and on their way to the reserve

FOM is privileged to have Graham Falla as part of our committee. He is recognised as a person of huge knowledge where restoration work is concerned. Graham has been the key figure behind the collection of seeds, propagation of the plants and offering advice as to where and how we should replant areas for restoration.

Initially the restoration project began with the growing of pioneer species; karamu and manuka. The manuka because they were fast growing and provided shade and protection for the canopy species and the karamu to attract the birds so that seed from the existing mature forest is deposited (along with the appropriate dose of fertilizer) among the pioneer species. We are now, after a period of **five** years finding seedlings growing under these protective species. These include kahikatea, taraire totara, puriri and mahoe. This is just what Graham said would happen!



Kahikatea and totara seedlings growing under the manuka in the Forest and Bird restoration area below the barn.



Left to Right: Sprayed area ready for planting; new plants; plants in same area a year later; four years growth

To help nature along we are now planting propagated species within the more advanced areas of the regenerating pioneer species. This year we have planted 250 kowhai, 200 kohekohe, totara, putaputaweta and still have some small taraire to plant later in the year.



Left to Right: Puriri grown in the long root trainers from seed collected last year, James standing beside a tray of karamu ready for planting out (Note the frost at James feet); Doug "in the thick of it" planting; puriri emerging above the manuka

This year a small group of members has been planting on a Thursday morning. Any member who would like to join this group or who knows of a club or sports group who would enjoy the physical activity of digging holes and planting trees please contact Sally Barclay 534 6196.

World Environment Day: Our Lady Star of the Sea children planting for the future

