



BRING BACK KOKAKO

For more about bringing back Kokako to GBI see our website or give us a call.

Bird of the month.... Dunnock or Hedge Sparrow *Prunella Modularis occidentalis*

When you have put out food for the hens or some birds seed have you ever noticed a rather non-descript bird amongst the others there? It is not a House Sparrow or a Chaffinch so possibly then it could be a Dunnock.



Dunnock –Hedge Sparrow *Prunella Modularis occidentalis*

Dunnocks are an introduced bird inconspicuous in their habits, seldom flying far, feeding on the ground moving with a slow shuffling gait. Smaller than a House Sparrow with upper parts of the body being brown, streaked back. The throat and breast are slate grey with under parts paler and heavily streaked flanks. The feet are orange brown. It has a slender brown bill and the eyes are also brown.

If you were lucky enough to find a nest it would be well concealed in a thick hedge, bush or a tangle of creepers. More than likely close to the ground. Clutches are usually of 4 deep blue eggs. The can raise 2-3 clutches in a season August - January.

Keep an eye out for this shy, unassuming bird which was introduced bird to NZ in 1868.

EP

GBI Trust 10th Anniversary Dance



BEETLES OR BEATLES

Summer Event at
Tryphena Club
on 11th January, 2013
Start planning a "Beetle" or
"Beatle" outfit and come
dance to Beatles music

For Sale:

Bird prevention window decals - \$30 plus postage \$2.50 email: gbitrust@xtra.co.nz or phone:4290940

Environmental Notice Board

- 27th Sept - Auckland Council Environmental Initiatives Funding Closes
- 26th Sept - Auckland Council Environmental Planning Sub-Committee meeting GBI
- **We are looking for someone to Audit our Annual Accounts next year. We would prefer someone with an interest in Great Barrier Island. Phone 4290940 if you are interested.**

Please email gbitrust@xtra.co.nz if you would like to join our Bush Telegraph mailing list



BUSH TELEGRAPH

FREE

Issue 4: September 2012

The joy, rewards and challenges of volunteering....

Did any of you see the notice in the Barrier Bulletin some 6 months ago asking for volunteers to help monitor the cat traps on Hirakimata? They were up around the Black Petrel nesting sites. My neighbour did! She volunteered the two of us. Our orientation was an 8 hour affair. Up Hirakimata from Windy Canyon and onto the Mt Heale hut, back to Hirakimata and down the Kaiaraara track.

We started in January and finished our last trip mid June. We caught 3 cats in that time, all on the one trip, and we put that down to fresh rabbit bait. We caught at least 15 rats, big ones too! We found 3 dead Black Petrel chicks. Whether they were predated by cats or died of exposure or starvation we don't know. These finds were when it had been raining quite hard and the specimens were in a bad state of deterioration.

We both have enjoyed the beauty of the bush, one for learning, the other a relearning. From one fortnight to the next there was always something new to see. Plant species you haven't noticed before because you usually find only a seed or flower. What animal or bird turns a rat skin inside out leaving no body just a bit of gut? We were disappointed in the lack of bird life. The odd fantail, grey warbler, wax eye, tui and kaka seen. Kakariki heard 3 times. But we were so happy to see tomtits on a number of occasions (3 in one day). We also saw some of the released robins which we understand came from Windy Hill Sanctuary. These were the highlight days.

So for me it has been about being out there in the bush again listening and seeing. For my neighbour was getting to know about the bush and seeing first hand in her local board roll what is happening with Black Petrels on Hirakimata.

For DOC it was a way to help in a way that can be allow them to spend their time on other conservation needs. It would also seem with DOC's budget cutbacks volunteers will be a way of the future if we want to protect our very rare and endangered wild life species.

We learnt that pest eradication is such a huge issue that we will all need to find some way to deal with it.

EP



Kaitoke Dunes Links Golf Course

In the 18 months I have spent developing the new Kaitoke golf course I have noticed some significant physical and biological changes. In the development process I have been conscious of the need to protect and preserve the balance and find ways to enhance the biological diversity.

On the greens and fairways I have increased fertility to promote grass growth, which has in turn increased insect life. This year I have been encouraged by the abundance of fantails, warblers and pipits, kingfishers and larger than normal rails.

By increasing the wetland areas, we hope to increase the aquatic wildlife such as frogs, eels and birds. (On 13th Aug we heard our first frog sound) Visiting us recently were sighted 2 bittern, which is encouraging although they could have been the same bird in separate locations. We also have a pair of pateke visiting, and hope that they will breed this year.

I have kept the infertile boundaries intact, where the diversity is rich and varied. There are healthy populations of kaka feeding on the pinecones and huhu grubs living in the felled pines. I have started to reduce the pines to a more healthy level to help encourage the more acid loving native varieties.

We will keep you posted on the wild life developments on the course. Often surprisingly there is a symbiotic relationship between nature and golf courses. I remember working on the Gulf Harbour Golf Course where the bunkers provided a habitat for breeding dotterels. I hope that the natural diversity will be as much an important part of this links course as the visual beauty that attracted me to it.

Game on and keep you posted

SO



Kokako, Penguin, Fantail, Morepork and Seagull soft toys with real sound for sale. Price: \$22.00 each
Ph: 094290940



Pond at Kaitoke Dunes Links Golf Course, Claris, Great Barrier Island

Cat Trapping in Okiwi

Once widespread throughout New Zealand the pateke, or brown teal, is now largely restricted to Great Barrier Island, parts of Northland and the Coromandel. Populations have also been established through translocation to managed or pest-free sites such as Cape Sanctuary in Hawke's Bay, Tuhua/Mayor Island and Zealandia in Wellington.

Since the mid 1990s, Okiwi Station has been DOC's focus for pateke research and management (predator and habitat) on Great Barrier. The trapping of feral cats was initiated in 2000 in response to an audit of the pateke programme which highlighted predation by cats as a likely cause for pateke's population decline.

Around 150 cat traps are currently in place around Okiwi Station, and on the Whangapoua spit. These are a mix of live capture cage traps, and 'Coni-bear' traps that kill cats instantly. Traps are baited with rabbit or fish frames.

In the 12 years since trapping started in Okiwi, around 1200 cats have been trapped, with another 130 or so shot. Cat captures follow a similar pattern each year with captures peaking in winter months and then again in late summer (March), with total captures (of around 120 animals) similar over the previous 5 years.

The numbers of pateke counted in the Okiwi Basin since the trapping of cats (and other management activities) began in 2000 demonstrates a halt to the pre-2000 decline, and a slight but steady increase since 2000.

DOC has live capture cage traps available for short term loan if residents have issues with feral cats on their properties. To arrange the loan of a cat trap, or for any information on the control of feral cats which DOC undertakes, contact George at DOC on 4290 613.

GW

Did you know....

Very few people are concerned about the worms in the scallops. We are still waiting for divers to help survey the scallop beds.

If you are interested or don't think there is a problem please phone Peter Edmonds at 09 4290414

FREE CAT SPAYING GBI RESIDENTS

For the **Month of October** the GBI Trust is offering to pay **100%** of the cost to **spay your cat.**

Limited to 10 cats only

So be in quick

Phone Anne Kernohan 4290463 for an appointment

(Only standard operations subsidised, any extra costs are your responsibility)

Kindly sponsored by
Auckland Council Biosecurity

Fungal Foray....

A three day 'Fungal Foray' in July with Dr Maj Padamsee of Landcare Research has opened our eyes to the wondrous world of fungi in the Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Sanctuary. Ninety four new specimens were added to the 40 from Great Barrier already on the Landcare data base with a further 6 collected on Maj's walk into the Hot Springs for well deserved soak. It is one thing to have an enthusiastic team out collecting but another to sit quietly working your way through each specimen to identify it, photograph it, collect DNA samples, and prepare it for drying. Thank you Maj, and partner Jamie, for the gift of your time and expertise. Our field team and interested locals thoroughly enjoyed the experience and are now avid fungi spotters.

JG



Fungal Foray team – (l to r) Kevin Parsons, Rachel Vlasich, Dr Maj Padamsee, Emmy Pratt, Fenella Christian, Dave Vlasich, and Jamie Blackman.



A stinkhorn fungus.

facebook

Find Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust on Facebook