



Rotokare Bush Telegraph

April 2009

Greetings friends of Rotokare

On the ground...

Kara's blurb:



The months seem to fly by incredibly quickly. I suppose I should admit that I have been on a few good trips which help that, in January to Great Barrier Island (where pateke cruised around the tent, and the beaches were like paradise!) and Stewart Island in February (where kiwi wander by day, kaka are everywhere, the blue cod are huge, and the elusive white-tail.... well they're too smart for this kid!). They were both absolutely stunning places to go and a real motivation for what we can achieve here on our own back door step.

Left: A cheeky kaka on the roof of 4-square, Stewart Island. Hopefully we have the same on the Rotokare education building one day!

Enough on the holidays... we should all be incredibly proud of the achievements been made here, some of which are NZ firsts. I'm thinking more so about the pest eradication - since the baiting operation last year, we have detected zero pest prints in the tracking tunnels. So to put that in perspective, before we started the pest eradication about 95% of our tunnels detected a pest, now it has dropped to 0% - and has been running the same result for five months now. I think that puts us in very good stead for starting species translocations in the not too distant future.

Only one rat has been trapped: near the car park in January – possibly one that jumped out of a vehicle. It is a timely reminder for us all to not become blasé with our potential to bring in pests – especially rodents. You are all probably starting to notice mice coming inside as the temperatures drop, and you may be surprised where they will hide in your garage/car. There are a few tips further on as to how you can help keep these critters out of Rotokare.

Simon's blurb:

Well it's been nearly three months since we arrived and I started work, my how time flies when you're having fun. The majority of my time has been spent on tracking tunnels, trap deployment inside the fence (as part of the overall monitoring), checking traps, and looking after the fence.

The DOC 200 traps are being serviced. We've done over 200 so far, with 120 already deployed around the fence and lake edge, and the remainder sitting ready for deployment if the need arises.

I've been really fortunate to meet so many people out and about enjoying Rotokare. I frequently come across people on the track as I'm going about my work, often stopping for a yarn, and hearing some great feedback and comments regarding the work to date, and the noticeable improvement in the flora and fauna.



Above: Drying a batch of tracking cards in the shed.

Many thanks to all those who have been turning out on Sundays and indeed during the week too! It is terrific to be involved with such a keen and dedicated group of people. A lot has been achieved recently and it couldn't have happened without your support, Thanks guys!

~ Volunteer Page ~

Pest monitoring - The tracking tunnels are now run in the middle week of every second month (next due around May 10th). It's a huge job but many hands make light work, and it's a terrific chance to see the bush and have a yarn with a few tui's or fernbird.

Fence checks – are a regular part of maintaining a pest free sanctuary and all are welcome to take part. This is ideally done in pairs. There are no specific days or time for the checks, so it's a very flexible volunteer option. It takes about four hours or so and only a few minutes of basic training for newcomers. The views are stunning!

Tools – If anyone has old tools or workshop equipment that is of no further use to them, and wishes to donate some to the Trust, we would be most grateful. We've put together a bit of a wish list that we need, or will need, when the new workshop and facilities are up and running. If anyone feels they would like to make a contribution, it would be a really useful donation to help stock the onsite workshop, or perhaps helping with other equipment important to the general operation.

General tools

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hammers | <input type="checkbox"/> spades | <input type="checkbox"/> wire cutters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sledge hammer | <input type="checkbox"/> shovels | <input type="checkbox"/> pliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> socket set | <input type="checkbox"/> grubbers | <input type="checkbox"/> spanners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> screw drivers | <input type="checkbox"/> loppers | <input type="checkbox"/> nail punches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hand saw | <input type="checkbox"/> riveter | <input type="checkbox"/> grease gun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> yard broom | <input type="checkbox"/> ropes | <input type="checkbox"/> metal vice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tin snips | | |

Power tools & equip

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air compressor | <input type="checkbox"/> orbital sander | <input type="checkbox"/> battery powered drill and skill saw. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> small water blaster | <input type="checkbox"/> weed eater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> drop saw | <input type="checkbox"/> bench mounted grinder | |

Other

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> saw horses | <input type="checkbox"/> fire hoses | <input type="checkbox"/> trailer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wheel barrow | <input type="checkbox"/> storage cupboards | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety gear– chaps, helmet, high vis vests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knapsack/spray pack | <input type="checkbox"/> shelving for workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet weather gear for volunteers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> spray unit for quad | <input type="checkbox"/> petrol water pump (small enough to carry) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-way radios | <input type="checkbox"/> quad bike | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> small kit-set storage shed | | |

Volunteer Profile



Name: Don Lichfield
Lives in: Eltham
Nickname: Litchy

In Litchy's previous life, before Rotokare, he was a keen hunter. Well, still is!

"I've been coming out to Rotokare since I was a kid. We used to bike out here all the way from Eltham".

"Now I like seeing the bush. The birds are all coming back".

Litchy is incredibly dedicated to the project, and there aren't many days that you don't see his ute out there – it's nearly impossible to keep him away!

A huge thanks goes out to

☺ Tony Green for a very generous donation of a box full of tools for the workshop.

☺ Also, thanks to Noel from Webby Engineering, and Carl from Downer EDI Works, for their help with the gate signage.

☺ The Kiser family for kindly donating a kitchen for use in the education facility/meeting room.

☺ A BIG thanks to the Eltham Lions Club who have indicated that they will help get the buildings up to scratch. There will be lots of work, with plenty of building, painting, nailing etc etc. and we are keen for more people. Keep an eye out in next months Hawera Star for more information about this project.

BIOSECURITY TIPS

- Check your vehicle for signs of rodents
- Pack your bags on the day of visiting – not the night before
- Install rat and mouse traps in your garage/shed
(We can provide these for free to Rotokare visitors, please ask)
- Please leave pets at home
- Report any sightings of pests inside the reserve



Comments from Taranaki Regional Council CEO

The Taranaki Regional Council's Chief Executive, Basil Chamberlain, says the Council has been happy to be part of the Lake Rotokare project by assisting with predator control, and will continue to liaise with the Trust and provide advice and advocacy when needed.

"The Trust's achievements so far are the result of a community effort for which the locals deserve full credit. It's a fine example of how grassroots commitment and energy can bring good results," he says.

"The gains in terms of the environment are potentially significant. This project not only protects indigenous biodiversity in Taranaki, but enhances it.

"It will also be a valuable educational resource and role model for current and future generations," says Mr Chamberlain.

Barrys Bit

Have you seen a North Island Robin?

They have sometimes visited Rotokare but so far have not stayed for any great length of time. The first record we have was August 1999 and was heard or seen until April 2000. This was a juvenile male and had made its home in the bush at the head of the north arm of the lake.

There were no further reports until April 2005 when one was heard in the bush on the west side of the lake. A couple of times it seemed that 2 birds were being heard. The last report was in April 2008 though sightings were not continuous over the period.

It seems unlikely that there is an individual there at present as so many people have been working through the bush and a Robin is unlikely to go unnoticed.

The birds that have been recorded have obviously immigrated from some other bush area and the most likely is the Collier/Dickson Covenant to the east on the shores of Rotorangi. There are no populations to the west and they are not present in Egmont National Park.

While it would be possible to reintroduce them to Rotokare it is likely that they may do this themselves now that the predators have gone.

If you see or definitely hear one please report it to myself, Kara or Simon.

Robins are very trusting and regularly approach people in the bush looking for invertebrates that may be uncovered or dislodged as you move through. They have a habit of suddenly appearing alongside you from seemingly nowhere and can be encouraged by scratching up the leaf litter to expose grubs and other goodies.



Barry Hartley

Picnic Tables

Now that the carpark has been tidied up we are looking for further sponsorship for new picnic tables as part of completing the tidy up project. The Red Cross have kindly donated two already, but there are an additional four that would love your name on them. So if you can think of anyone who would like to donate a table please ask them nicely and tell them all the benefits that Rotokare has. Sponsors will be acknowledged by an engraving on each.

Friends of the Lake

It was great to see some of our members feature on TV's Hunger for the Wild. Hope you enjoyed the goat curry.

Well it's that time of the year when all the subs are due again. We have had a few keen people who have paid already but for those others like me, who can't remember, we have included an invoice. Just fill it in and return to P.O. Box 33 Eltham or for those that ebank there is an account number on the form. There was a fantastic response to our "Friends of the Lake" last year so in anticipation of the same I would like to thank you. If you feel you can't financially support the Reserve, any volunteer help is still very much appreciated. If you have an email address and not receiving the newsletter electronically please advise us so that we can save on the cost of printing and posting

I hopefully have all the postal addresses and emails updated now but if you know of people who aren't getting their newsletter please let us know. We have a few emails returned so would love to correct this.

Soft toys: These have been selling very well and I never have many left so if you would like any please ring me on 06 7648756 and I can order them in for you. Large toys are \$20 and smaller one \$15. Also now have fantails, pukeko, wood pigeon and kokako available.



Here is a pic of Shay Dean installing a lizard cover on a tree - we are doing this as part of a long-term monitoring programme to establish which lizard species are present/absent in Rotokare - also to detect changes in abundance and to help planning for our species translocations.

Whilst we can predict which species are in there, the only confirmed one is the goldstriped gecko. These are endemic to Taranaki and Mana Island (ie found only in these two places), and typically found in coastal areas - so at Rotokare they are one of the more inland populations.



**Rotokare Scenic
Reserve Trust**

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