

Pūkorokoro Miranda News

Journal of the Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust

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Editorial

On an overcast September morning 34 years ago, a crowd of people gathered at the gate of the newly erected Shorebird Centre. A Ngāti Paoa kuia called them on to the site, commencing a powhiri to open and bless this building. So also began our long relationship with mana whenua.

In subsequent years contacts between the Trust and iwi were sporadic. Each of us had our own priorities. Ngāti Paoa were focused on supporting their people while developing their Treaty claim and achieving settlement with the Crown. There was also much work to refurbish and expand Wharekawa Marae. The Trust was focused on our education and public awareness programs and our engagement with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

From time to time there were significant events for us both. In 2007 we hosted a delegation from China. We accompanied them to an event on the marae at which they delivered a rousing waiata in Chinese. Several years later there appeared at the front steps to the Centre a stone commemorating our relationship with Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve: this was donated and blessed by Ngāti Paoa.

In 2012 we became fully aware of the grievous significance held for Pāoa by the name 'Miranda'. It was the name

of one of the navy ships that, in 1863, attacked the settlement at Pūkorokoro at the start of the Waikato Wars. Loss of life, dispersal, and land confiscation were all compounded by the area subsequently becoming known as Miranda. We set about changing our name and became the Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust. Following this initiative the Centre was subsequently the venue for a public meeting at which many people, including Hauraki Mayor John Tregida voiced strong support for officially gazetted the area as Pūkorokoro Miranda.

In November 2023 came He Rā Maumahara, a commemoration of the events of 1863. This moving ceremony was followed by breakfast at the Shorebird Centre – for about 250 people. Recent issues of *Pūkorokoro News* have catalogued the enormous contribution to the Trust of Kaitiaki Ranger Tansy Bliss, especially the transformation of the Robert Findlay Reserve. This pivotal role which has exponentially expanded our capacity is funded by Foundation North. A key reason our grant application was successful was our partnership with Ngāti Paoa, and our aspirations to introduce Te Ao Māori to our management of the reserve.

On the eve of the Trust's 50th anniversary, there occurred another milestone in our partnership. On September 22 the Centre hosted a memorable gathering of people from the hapu

of Makomako Marae. These are the whānau and hapū of Ngāti Paoa who most directly connect to Pūkorokoro and who were also the most impacted by the tragic events of 1863.

Widely scattered by those events, the people are now in a time of reconnecting amongst themselves as well as to the whenua, maunga, and awa of Pūkorokoro. This includes rebuilding Makomako Marae on Back Miranda Road, the closest marae to the Shorebird Centre.

The event, attended by almost the entire PMNT council, was a low-key day of making connections and getting to know each other. It began with karakia and pepeha at the Centre, followed by a visit to the Findlay Reserve where thousands of recently arrived godwits were arrayed spectacularly in front of the Stilt Hide. For many of our visitors it was their first visit to the reserve.

Our thanks to Preva Jackson, Lisa Tauroa, Hera Clark and Trudy Lane for their efforts organising and coordinating an event that further deepened the Centre's long-standing connection with Ngāti Paoa.

Over the coming years we hope to continue to strengthen our relationship with mana whenua. The Ngāti Paoa Treaty Settlement Bill is currently awaiting its third reading in parliament. Once that occurs, we look forward to celebrating with them.

Keith Woodley

Conservation Week 2024

The Department of Conservation - Hauraki-Coromandel kindly invited us to their Conservation Week and EnviroSchools event at the Kauaeranga Visitors Centre early in September.

We joined other wonderful organizations who are doing incredible mahi for our environment, including Hillary Outdoors, Thames Coast Kiwi Care, Predator Free Hauraki, Pare Hauraki, Seagull Centre and Doug and Jane Ashby.

Student groups from 10 schools across Hauraki and Coromandel shared the action they have taken within their schools to connect and care for their environment and then rotated through each of the conservation activities.

It was very inspiring to listen to the passion and aroha of the rangitahi and what they are achieving in their kura.

A great day of connection and curiosity and the Shorebird Centre was grateful to be a part of it.

Chelsea Ralls

Front cover image: ADRIAN RIEGEN



Conservation week at Kauaeranga Visitor Centre CHELSEA RALLS.

Flyway News

Keith Woodley reports on latest Flyway developments.

Diplomatic focus for Welcome to the Birds open day



Clare Fearnley SUE TOWNSON

Clare Fearnley was guest speaker at our Welcome to the Birds open day in October. She first went to China in the 1980s, studying at universities in Beijing, becoming fluent in Mandarin. She's worked in China in a number of roles over more than 35 years, most recently she returned to China in 2018 as New Zealand Ambassador. Prior to that she was Ambassador to South Korea and since 2023 has been based at MFAT in Wellington. Particularly noteworthy for PMNT, is her active engagement with issues relating to shorebirds and the East Asian Australasian Flyway. This is an edited account of her talk. Clare took part in the open day in her personal capacity.

Clare credits PMNT with helping advance shorebird awareness in China and in Korea. The environments in the Yellow Sea region have been impacted by economic development over recent decades - a combination of industrial development, urban incursion, marine farming - all of which has impacted shorebird habitats. The Trust has been active in the region since 2000, surveying and documenting the vital importance of Yalu Jiang as a migration stopover site.

'During my time in Beijing, I had quite a lot of contact with Liaoning Province, in particular with Dandong, which has administrative responsibility for the Chinese side of the Yalu River, an important feeding area for the migrating Bar-tailed Godwits on their migration North from New Zealand to their breeding grounds in Alaska. I know that several of you here today have visited the area and know what a unique place it is - looking across the Yalu River to the DPRK - the situation symbolised by the "bridge to nowhere" - one of the bridges across the Yalu - it doesn't quite connect with the other side. It's a place that brings you face to face with applied geopolitics.

'It is not a particularly rich area of China. In the period after the founding of the People's Republic, Liaoning was developed as a hub for heavy industry - but in the 80s and 90s as China began its 'reform and opening', the growth was strongest in the southern coastal regions, and the heavy industries inland and in the north were restructured. Liaoning was part of the Northern rust belt. Dandong and its surrounding areas still face economic challenges - including unemployment and depopulation. Choices can be hard to make - for example, maintenance of undeveloped wetlands and tidal flats - or fish-farming and the employment it would bring. But there's been significant evolution in thinking around the environment, particularly over the past 10-12 years, with increased emphasis on the need for economic development and ecological protection to advance together.

'COVID got in the way of repeat visits to Dandong, but we nevertheless had a lot of contact with Dandong, including through Dandong representatives taking part in

shorebird-related events at the Embassy. We also had the chance to visit the Bohai area to the south of Tianjin, during the migration of the Red Knots - a remarkable concentration of avian traffic in the Flyway.

'Over the years, whether on the governmental or non-governmental side, New Zealand has focused on engaging constructively, emphasising the treasure that the feeding-grounds are - of both national and international significance. This helped soften initial doubts about our objectives. This was helped along very much by the fact that Pūkorokoro folk had already been engaging so constructively over so many years. We were able to build on that. And previous ambassadors Carl Worker and John McKinnon had already forged links with Dandong, so we were building on an established track record of interest and engagement.'

Clare noted changes in China resulting from economic development and growing prosperity over the decades. 'When I first lived in China in the 1980s, the narrative was very clear - the priority was feeding and housing the people - and, while protecting the environment was a factor, the clear priority was economic growth. This continued on into the new millennium. However, when she returned in 2018, the change was marked.

'The slogan has become: "Green mountains and clear waters are mountains of silver and gold" which can have several meanings. It can mean that the priority remains economic development, but you need a good environmental base to have sustainable prosperity. That is one interpretation. Or you could interpret it as suggesting that a clean environment can also be an end in itself - and ecosystem and economic wellbeing are compatible. I tend to focus on the latter interpretation. But, either way, the dynamic really has changed.

'Given the current level of economic development and the increased attention to environmental matters there are now opportunities to diversify away from enterprises impacting ecosystems, including wetlands and coastal areas. There has been depopulation of areas like Dandong with people moving to bigger cities, so there isn't the population pressure. There is land that is not being used so there are opportunities to move people away from protected areas.

'And the birds themselves offer opportunities. 'Ornithology and birdwatching in China are a big thing. Enthusiasts invest in their hobbies and interests. They want to visit and see the birds and their ecosystems. Specialist tourism could benefit the region. We emphasised with our friends in Dandong that this is a globally significant treasure that they have in their backyard. Significant numbers of domestic travellers were already coming to see Yalu River protected area - and there would be international interest too. Our message was that we're keen to support Dandong in its efforts to protect and preserve it.'

As part of these efforts, during her tenure in Beijing Clare developed an initiative called Friends of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. 'The Flyway's a really interesting combination of more than 18 countries - it succeeds in bringing together around a common objective a range of countries with a lot of history: China and Japan, likewise Korea, as well

as Russia and the USA – plus Australia and New Zealand and the ASEAN countries. Our Pacific neighbours have shown interest as well. And the common thread moving through this is the birds themselves.

‘So, we decided at the embassy that it would be a good idea to breathe life into the EAAF, to bring various interests together. Drawing in embassies in Beijing, drawing in the Chinese central government, and Dandong, DOC, Pūkoro and the EAAF Secretariat in Seoul. We launched it at the New Zealand Embassy in 2019, and it’s still going. It was convened most recently in July this year, hosted by Grahame Morton, the current New Zealand Ambassador in Beijing. It’s an opportunity to shine a light on what a treasure the flyway is – over 250 bird species use it, a number of them threatened or endangered – at least 30-40 with populations are in serious trouble. To get that many countries together, talking about what could be done, focusing on what a remarkable thing the Bohai and Yellow Seas and the flyway are, is meaningful.

‘I don’t claim any direct connection, but a few months ago part of the Dandong site was given World Heritage status, which indicates China’s commitment to protecting that specific area. It is really a major thing to have even a subsection the Yalu River mouth given world heritage status. The real protection comes from the local decision making, policies, commitment. The fact that China has been enthusiastic about the nomination reflects good will and I am hopeful that we will see practical steps taken.

‘Now I know that many would like to see protection all the way around the coast from the Yalu down to the Yangtze. There’s a Chinese expression – “yi bu yi bu” - translated as “take things step by step”. Start with what you can achieve initially and build from there. And you know the setting of the wind on this issue is not hostile to increasing protection. So, the Friends of the EAAF provided an opportunity for policy discussion, expressions of hope and encouragement.

‘In addition, there are practical things that New Zealand can contribute to protection of the Yalu wetland area – like expertise in the control of spartina, where we have relevant experience. And we can support the links Pūkoro has developed with the Yalu Jiang

‘There was also other great work relating to migratory species going on in Beijing, some of it led by Terry Townshend, a British environmentalist. Beijing is on the East Asia-Australasia Flyway. We didn’t have shorebirds dropping in – but huge numbers pass overhead. Very sensitive recorders were placed on the tops of tall buildings around the city. These were able to detect bird calls and with sophisticated analysis identify the species of birds transiting above. There were several surprises in terms of the species of birds detected (I’m not sure whether that included any Godwits or Red Knots!).

‘We have developed a strong bilateral relationship with the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration (CNFGA) - which has administrative responsibility for wetland and estuarine areas in China. It’s a wide-ranging relationship - we have a strong forestry links. In 2019, when the head of CNFGA visited New Zealand, a new MOU between the two countries on shorebird matters was signed. We worked hard to keep the relationship with CNFGA alive during the COVID period, and it is now moving ahead again. It would be valuable to put flesh on the bones of that MOU.’

Clare also acknowledged the Trust’s work in DPRK. ‘In the north of the Korean Peninsula, due to the political and economic situation of the DPRK there are more areas of untouched tidal flats which means the ecosystems are not as impacted by development. It is incredible that Pūkoro has been able to keep that relationship going - very few other countries were able to access the DPRK. It is such a complicated political environment; this connection is unique.

Clare then talked about another initiative the Embassy had launched. ‘During the pandemic we couldn’t get out much – over the three years of tight COVID controls, there were extended periods where we could not leave Beijing. There were short periods when you could travel out to other parts of China, but not outside of the country without the risk of having difficulty returning. In the circumstances we tried to focus on what we could do rather than things we couldn’t. At the New Zealand Embassy, we looked at the space we had around the Embassy. How could we contribute to biodiversity in our immediate environment. I convened a group called “Ambassadors for Nature”, which grew remarkably quickly. It involved more than just Ambassadors, we involved the groundskeepers, the Embassy kids and others. I understand that it’s grown to about 35 countries now. And UN agencies represented in Beijing – such as UNICEF and UNDP – are also involved, together with Beijing City authorities. The group has made a voluntary commitment to give more attention to: planting local species of plants in their grounds, fostering biodiversity, developing insect-positive environments, setting aside space within the grounds to Go Wild, so as to be good for insects and birds. Perhaps a beehive or two, or a decent compost heap – a range of things. We were also keen to reduce bird-strike – so worked with a local group to mark windows with UV paint patterns – we couldn’t see them, but the birds could. Ambassadors for nature has also continued.’

Clare concluded by thanking the Trust for the invitation to take part in the welcome back the godwits open day and congratulating the Trust on its remarkable achievements. She looked ahead to next year’s 50th Anniversary of the work at Pūkoro.

Global Recognition for Yalu Jiang

On July 26 Yalu Jiang was added to the World Heritage List by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is one of five migratory bird sites along the coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China to be included, joining three sites listed in 2019.



Shorebird flocks at Yalu Jiang KEITH WOODLEY

UNESCO reports: ‘The area is a globally significant example of the shared natural heritage embodied in migratory birds. The sites are all situated in the largest intertidal wetland system in the world and one of the most biologically diverse, supporting crucial habitats for birds migrating along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. They serve a unique ecological function as indispensable stopover and staging sites that provide necessary food resources, ensuring fat replenishment and storage for subsequent flights during northward/southward migration. Without these important hubs, the successful migration, breeding, and population maintenance of birds in the flyway could not be maintained.



Tidal flats at Yalu Jiang KEITH WOODLEY

In addition to providing stopover habitat for migratory birds, the component parts include wintering areas and breeding areas for at least 45 threatened bird species including shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors.’ They also provide critical habitat for two of the world’s rarest migratory birds – the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and the Nordmann’s Greenshank, which depend on the tidal flats for their continued survival.

Heritage listing is a significant step for a region that has been so problematic for so long. ‘The entire coastline lies within a densely populated and intensively used part of China that has been subject to very substantial anthropogenic modification and impact over a long period. While human activity has transformed vast tracts of the coast and tidal wetlands, policies that promote a more ecologically sustainable society are emerging to halt the transformation of the remaining natural areas and to even reverse trends by restoring key migratory bird habitats.’

‘To add complexity, however, many of the underlying factors of change, such as pollution, oil exploration and exploitation, marine traffic, the modification of major rivers and their sediment loads, wind energy and infrastructure on land and in the sea, stem from outside the property including the coast and near-shore waters.’

But World Heritage status it is not the entire solution. The newly listed areas include clear boundaries for adequate protection of birds when they are on-site, but birds depend on wider coastal habitats and hence protection and restoration efforts in these areas are equally important. The listed area at Yalu Jiang includes only the tidal flats where birds forage. It does not include any terrestrial areas required as high tide roosts. Nor does it include the area of flats where most people go to see the birds, and where some of the biggest concentrations of birds were recorded during surveys in 2004-2010.

There is an expectation that management of the World Heritage site will ‘ensure that there are no negative effects of development on biodiversity and threatened species, including any negative effects of tourism, wind turbines, pollution

(including from noise), land reclamation, and infrastructure development. Specific strategies and action are required to ensure conservation of areas above the tidal areas and to restore degraded wider systems that are important to support the core habitat within the property.’ Nevertheless, it is a great initiative for China to nominate these precious areas.

www.whc.unesco.org/en/list/1606

Ambassadors for Nature: New Zealand Embassy and EAAFP Host Celebration for World Migratory Bird Day

Since the New Zealand government joined the EAAFP in 2011, the Trust has noticed a steady rise in awareness of shorebirds among our diplomatic communities. In 2014 our ambassador in Beijing, Carl Worker travelled to Dandong to help launch our report on 10 years of bird counts at Yalu Jiang. Previously unaware of shorebirds he was clearly impressed by the occasion. His successors at the Beijing Embassy have all shown similar interest, especially Clare Fearnley. On 16 May, the residence of the New Zealand Embassy in Seoul became a hub of environmental celebration as it hosted ‘Ambassadors for Nature’. This special occasion was organised to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, co-hosted by the New Zealand Embassy and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The event featured speeches by Her Excellency Dawn Bennet, Ambassador of New Zealand, and Jennifer George, Chief Executive of EAAFP.



NZ ambassador Dawn Bennett and (far left) Flyway Partnership CEO Jennifer George EAAFP

World Migratory Bird Day is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need to conserve migratory birds and their habitats during their twice-yearly migrations in May and October. The Ambassadors for Nature event underscored the vital role that international cooperation plays in preserving these migratory waterbird species, which traverse thousands of kilometres across various flyways.

www.eaaflyway.net/ambassadors-for-nature-2024/

Renewal of MOU Ceremony between the EAAFP Secretariat, KOEN Yeongheung Power Division, and Incheon Metropolitan City

The EAAFP Secretariat, which is essential to the functioning of the Partnership, received some good news recently. Incheon City has renewed its funding and support to host the secretariat of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.

On 29 May 2024, the Memorandum of Understanding between Incheon City, KOEN Yeongheung Power Division and the EAAFP aimed at protecting migratory waterbirds and their habitats was renewed for a further five years. KOEN Yeongheung Power Division has been actively collaborating and providing financial support to the EAAFP Secretariat since their bilateral agreement in 2018 and the tripartite agreement in 2021. The extension of the agreement underscores their continued dedication.

Supporting recovery and management of migratory shorebirds in Australia

For many years we have been all too aware of steady declines in shorebird populations in the Asia-Pacific region. Recent analysis, however, suggests things may be looking up for some species.

Last year, a full reanalysis of the national population trends for 15 species undertaken by Tatsuya Amano and Andrew Rogers showed that these declines were continuing for some but starting to slow down for others. For example, the Far Eastern Curlew had been rapidly declining for decades, but has stabilized within the last 10 years, showing no further significant decline. It must be noted that while the declines appear to have stabilized for some species, we detected no evidence of recovery for any species. In response to these results, the Australian Government funded a follow-up project to try to find out why some species have stopped declining, and to understand which kinds of conservation actions have proven most useful for shorebirds in our flyway. Researchers from the University of Queensland and Deakin University have teamed up to work together on this. The results might help identify what type of management works best in promoting shorebird recovery. The new project will determine survival rates and reproductive output for several shorebird populations, enabling an understanding of which factors might be important for their further recovery. The project will analyse more than one million shorebird banding



Far Eastern Curlews KEITH WOODLEY

and sighting records to chart reproductive output and survival for key shorebird populations. This will help us understand what factors are leading to declines or stabilization in different shorebird species. Check out www.birdmark.net for frequently updated information.

The project will also analyse which conservation actions for shorebirds have been particularly effective. For example, when managers have tried an action, such as limiting off-leash dog access, creating artificial roosting sites, or controlling weeds threatening to choke a roost site, how often has that management been successful? How much did it cost? What difficulties were encountered along the way? All this conservation evidence will be summarised into a series of guidelines for managers, so they can benefit from the experiences of others. This shorebird management handbook will help give managers access to the information they need to achieve conservation throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Production of the handbook is scheduled for 2026.

A report from this project, which was funded by the Australian Government through the National Environmental Science Program's Marine and Coastal hub, is available at

www.nespmarinecoastal.edu.au/publication/australias-migratory-shorebirdstrends-and-prospects/

Norah Peachman

Norah Peachman, a long-time member of the Trust died in July, aged 98. Regularly present at Trust functions, Norah and her son Robert, were well known to many of our members. The well established plantings around the Shorebird Centre and Widgery Lake are primarily the legacy of three people: Anthea Goodwin, Esther Burgess, and Norah.

A long-time member of the Auckland Tramping Club, she remained in touch with them after moving to Tauranga, and still took part in some activities. In late September club members stayed at the Centre and were pleasantly surprised to know of Norah's long involvement with Pūkorokoro. Of particular interest was her superb tapestry showing an aerial view of the shellbank that hangs on our wall.

Loyal to the end, in lieu of flowers, donations to Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre were suggested. Our condolences to her son Robert who is also a life member of the Trust.

Recent sightings at Pūkorokoro

- c.5,000 Bar-tailed Godwits
- 940 Red Knots
- 10 Turnstones
- 34 Pacific Golden Plovers
- 1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
- 190 Wrybill
- 1 Black-fronted Dotterel
- 159 Royal Spoonbills

Caterpillars steal the show

During their field visit on Sunday 29 September, I expected visitors from the Auckland Branch of the Entomological Society to move slowly through the Robert Findlay Wildlife Reserve, swishing nets, beating bushes, searching through the long vegetation. However, just before we entered the Reserve their leader, Dr Robert Hoare*, casually mentioned he was looking for a scarce moth, *Planotortrix avicenniae*, whose larval stage roll or semi-fold together the mangrove leaves on which they feed. The caterpillars effectively stitch the leaf edges together with a silken web. From the safety of this shelter, they feed directly on the stitched leaves before moving on. They may also pupate within this same structure when they reach that phase in their life cycle.



One of the collected caterpillars in a 'rolled' mangrove leaf. ALAN FLYNN.

The last record of this moth was in 1984 and is marked on John Dugdale's distribution map as being in the lower part of the Firth of Thames. The only specifically noted location, however, was from Kopu. Now with mangroves super abundant in and around Pūkoro, our challenge was to see if we could rediscover this moth.

I was busy writing notes and when I looked up the entomologists were gone, swarming across the saltmarsh inspecting every mangrove tree in sight.

Robert was quickly inundated with samples of rolled or folded leaves, some with and some without caterpillars inside. Some caterpillars were lost to the wind or the haste in getting the precious cargo back to him. When his plastic container was full to overflowing, the group reluctantly moved on, leaving Robert to contemplate growing on all these caterpillars and discovering what they turn into.

Now the pace slackened, and other insects were duly examined. Tentative field identifications included a tiny



Robert Hoare receiving rolled leaves and caterpillars from enthusiastic participants. TANSY BLISS



Alan Flynn, left, Auckland Branch Entomological Society Secretary, helps Amaru Booth identify his find. TANSY BLISS

bark louse which could be winged or wingless, a leaf curling sac spider, a wax scale insect and a vicious looking orchid dupe wasp from Australia, *Lissopimpla excelsa*, found on the flower-head of Wild Carrot.

Once at the Stilt hide, we glanced at the birds - mere background - before returning to the Centre for food and the evening's entertainment. As darkness descended, 17 of us crowded round the Mercury Vapour light Robert had set up to attract moths. It was a cool night with a bit of a stiff breeze and for the first hour, participants outnumbered the moths.

Tony Steer, who provides welcome expertise and advice on moths and moths catching at Pūkoro Shorebird Centre, not one to sit still, patrolled the darkness with his net, bringing back an assortment of moths, showing they were out there, just not coming to our light! Soon everyone was up swishing nets, inspecting and shaking bushes, such that by the end of the session we had a respectable 22 different moth species on our list, thanks to everyone's contributions.



Entomologists inspecting mangrove bushes TANSY BLISS



Participants gather around the light Credit TANSY BLISS



Pseudocoremia indistincta caught at Pūkoro-koro Shorebird Centre. TANSY BLISS

Of particular interest were two moths swished from the scrambling Pohuehue, *Muehlenbeckia complexa* thicket. One, the Emerald Pug Moth, *Pasiphila muscosata*, is a small delicately marked moth which can vary from a deep emerald green to a lighter greenish brown as seen in the



The Emerald Pug Moth caught at Pūkoro-koro Shorebird Centre. TANSY BLISS

specimen caught. It was a new record for Pūkoro-koro and one of only a few recorded this far north.

The other moth was *Pseudocoremia indistincta*, which although recorded on a couple of occasions at the Centre, was new for me. The larvae of both these moths feed on the leaves of Pohuehue.

For further information on the insects seen, visit the Pūkoro-koro Miranda Naturalists' Wildlife Project on iNaturalist NZ and look for sightings from the 29 September 2024. www.inaturalist.nz/projects/Pukorokoro-miranda-naturalists-trust-wildlife-project

For more details on the Auckland Branch of the Entomological Society, visit www.ento.org.nz/regional-branches/auckland/

*Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, Senior Researcher and Lepidoptera Systematist for the New Zealand Arthropod Collection (NZAC),

*John S Dugdale (1934- 2020) A significant figure in New Zealand entomology, well known and respected as one of the leading experts on New Zealand Lepidoptera. His landmark publication, the annotated catalogue of New Zealand Lepidoptera, was published as Fauna of New Zealand volume 14 (Dugdale 1988). Reference www.nl.pensoft.net/article/89540/

Wetlands Artists

Last November Sandra Morris convened an artist-in-residence gathering at the Shorebird Centre. Her aim was for the 11 artists to develop work for an exhibition with a wetlands theme. It was a very pleasant weekend, informal and convivial. That it was also productive of ideas was confirmed at the opening of *Wetland: Pūkoro-koro* at the Miranda: Pūkoro-koro gallery on 28 September. The exhibition was predominantly works in watercolour, but also included prints and drawings. A percentage of revenue from sales will go towards restoration of the Robert Findlay Reserve.



Wetlands artists I-R Jennifer Duval-Smith, Vivien Davimes, Sandra Morris, Vivian Ward, Lesley Alexander Smith, Geoff Arnold, Wilma Blom, Keith Woodley, Carol Teutscher. Absent: Emma Scheltema, Marie Robinson. PHIL SMITH



Jennifer Duval-Smith and Tideline Pūkoro-koro LESLEY ALEXANDER



Sandra Morris and Olga Brochner LESLEY ALEXANDER



Wetlands exhibition opening LESLEY ALEXANDER



Pot-luck Dinner

In a now well-established tradition, the working bee was followed by a pot-luck dinner. Guest speaker Peter Fryer gave an account of his expedition to the Sub-Antarctic last summer. Visitors are likely to see a lot of Peter, as he will be our shore guide for much of the coming summer.

Simon Fordham, Morag Fordham and Adrian Riegen at the PMSC Pot-Luck Dinner 2024
SUE TOWNSON



Guest speaker Peter Fryer SUE TOWNSON



Chris Thompson and Kevin Barker SUE TOWNSON



Mary Perwick WENDY HARE



Alireza Mokhtar and Ali Zarebidaki at the working bee WENDY HARE



Kathryn Jones pruning. WENDY HARE

Building a hide in stages

A brand-new bird hide has appeared at Piako. In the January 2018 tidal surge weather event a stop bank breached, flooding 20 ha of farmland. Within months it became an attractive high tide roost for shorebirds. Waikato Regional Council purchased the property in order to rationalise and strengthen flood protection infrastructure for the surrounding area. But in doing so, they recognised that once the work was completed most of the drowned area would remain as bird habitat. They were amenable to our suggestion that a hide would be a further asset, so contracted the Trust to design and build it. During a volunteer working bee in July a pile of timber beside the Centre's driveway was transformed into a hide.

Main image: The view KATHARINA HECHT



Building begins KATHARINA HECHT



Conditions at the site on a cool day in August were rather muddy.

L-R Stuart Laurenson, Kevin Barker, Olga Brochner, Katharina Hecht, Bob Rigter, Ian Southey, Adrian Riegen, Nerissa Kirby, Michael Lellman, Peter Fryer, Gillian Vaughan, Geoff Day KEITH WOODLEY



Happy chippy Nerissa Kirby KATHARINA HECHT



Initial building team CHELSEA RALLS



Flat pack to Piako KEITH WOODLEY

It was then dismantled and became once again a stack of timber, albeit in a new format. This was then transported to the Piako site



A few weeks later a second working bee set about transforming the pile yet again.



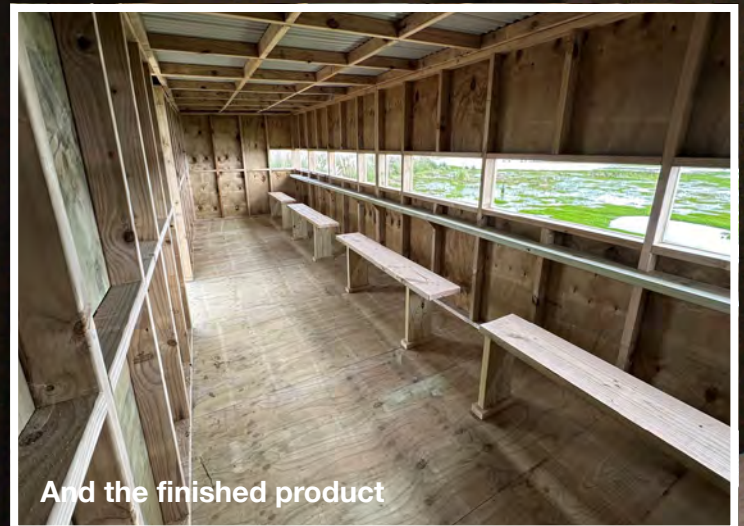
The site at Piako KATHARINA HECHT



Why labour is needed KEITH WOODLEY



The roof goes on KATHARINA HECHT



And the finished product

Piako hide interior ADRIAN RIEGEN

Birds and airports: seldom a good mix

Birds and airports are seldom a good mix. Yet many of the world's airports, such as JFK, Seoul-Incheon, San Francisco, and Auckland, are built alongside harbours and estuaries. How does Auckland Airport, adjacent to the Manukau Harbour, the most important shorebird site in the country, manage the risk of bird strike? Adrian Riegen reports.



In early August wildlife staff at Auckland Airport organised the first of three Aviation Wildlife Safety Conferences. Delegates attended from airports around New Zealand as well as Bill Rutherford from Perth Airport, who has been collaborating with Auckland Airport. The purpose was to share information about managing wildlife at airports, particularly birds, as they form the greatest risk to planes. It was pleasing to see Birds New Zealand Regional Representatives for Auckland and South Auckland attending the conference along with PMNT chair, Stuart Laurenson.

Kate Rogers, known for her movie reviews on TV3 was MC for the conference and did a fine job keeping proceedings flowing smoothly, her quick wit evident as she picked up on some of the stranger points of airport wildlife management.

In the past I have often felt airports just wanted to kill any birds that got too close to planes. Maybe not entirely true but the overwhelming attitude today is not to curse the birds but look for more

non-lethal ways of keeping them from interacting with planes. This is helped tremendously by new innovative technologies that are being deployed to discourage birds from seeing airports as great habitat. The biggest threat to the planes is birds flying across aircraft flight paths particularly at take off. Not all birds are a threat to aircraft: New Zealand Dotterels see the short grass between taxiways as ideal nesting sites and with few predators they are reasonably safe and seem unconcerned about the planes. One day when I was airside, I watched a Dotterel that was standing in a puddle on the taxiway. It walked to the nearby grass as an A320 taxied past and then walked back to its puddle.

We learnt about traditional bird-scaring devices such as noise cannons, but birds soon learn these don't harm them so will start ignoring them. A new wide-beam laser can be waved at the ground close to problematic birds to scare them off. It does them no harm, but it seems they never get used to it so can be driven away in the desired direction with skilful laser waving. This works on all bird species. Lasers of course can be dangerous if pointed directly at birds, people, or pilots approaching a runway, so the laser is fitted with a switch to shut it off if the beam is pointed above the horizon.

We also saw a radio controlled falcon that is flown like a drone to drive away unwanted birds. Kites made to look like falcons have been used but as these are in a fixed position on a post, they have limited effect as birds soon realise they are not really a threat.

Philip Martin, a wildlife manager at London's Heathrow, zoomed in with some of their interesting problems. Heathrow is surrounded by big reservoirs that attract huge numbers of gulls, ducks and geese particularly as a night-time roost. They have been having trouble with Canada Geese that fly west and low following the northern perimeter of the airport before turning south across the end of the runways. It looks like they are following the M4 and M25 motorways.

Auckland airport has a challenge with flocks of up to 14,000 Black Swans that gather in the Manukau Harbour on the western end of the airfield, where they feed on the seagrass beds, which are increasing, thanks in part to themselves enriching the waters with their droppings. The swans are not a problem while feeding, but are once they take off and fly across the runway, and there being so many of them, the risk of collision is very high. Solving this one is still a work in progress.

Wildlife veterinarian Lynn Miller talked about dealing with sick and dying birds that might be found at airports particularly those hit by planes. This was very timely with the potential threats we face in New Zealand if, and more likely when, the HPA1 virus reaches our shores. Something we should all be very mindful of if we find dead birds particularly seabirds washed up on beaches.

It was a very interesting conference and thanks to Lucy Hawley and her team for making it happen. I look forward to learning more about airport wildlife safety next year. In the meantime we airline passengers should be very grateful for all the work these people are doing behind the scenes to keep the flying public safe.

Be prepared, even on vacation

Tansy Bliss reflects on lessons learned while on leave.



Ballymastocker Strand, Fanad, Donegal TANSY BLISS

Early July and I had just arrived in Fanad, NW Donegal in Ireland, to visit my mother. I was 'on vacation' and so a trip to the beach on day two seemed in order. My mother agreed to drop me off on her way to play bridge so I could walk the strand and then walk home. I felt I was prepared, I had my binoculars, woolly hat, gloves, raincoat, swimsuit, snacks, sunglasses and sunhat.

There was a bracing wind from the west and terns were feeding furiously just offshore, then coming into land at a raised sandbank adjacent to a peaty stream that meandered across the sandflats to the sea. It was quite cold, so I hunkered down amongst the marram grass to watch the activities. Muttering to myself, I went through the tern identification in my head realising I had not brought any of the British bird guides or my notebook with me. Images of swimming and relaxing in the sun had put me in a different frame of mind, but here I was, totally rugged up trying to identify an interesting collection of birds!

Black tip on the reddish bill of the Common Terns, plain darker red on the Arctic; Sandwich, larger, with a pale tip to the black bill and raised sort of crest at the back of the head. Gulls were also gathered on the damp sand, and I slowly separated out Greater Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull and Black-headed Gull all in their different plumages: - adult, first year birds and juveniles. A Ringed Plover alarmed nearby and so I added that to my mental list.

Swallows scooped up insects along the edge of the stream, but then I realised there were Sand Martins too and looked for their tell-tale burrows in the steep sand cliff behind. A light shower came through and I pushed deep against the sand dune until the worst had passed before continuing my walk. I saw a raised lump with a small sand drift around it and went to investigate. It was a reasonably large dead bird, and I expected it to be a gannet as they are not uncommon along this stretch of coast. No, it was dark, and I identified it as a Cormorant, rather than a Shag.

I nudged it with my boot and as the legs came out of the sand, I saw that not only was it banded but it had an alpha numeric tag on it too. Red letters ZZR or Z7R on a white background. I better jot that down I thought and hopefully searched my day pack for a scrap of paper and pencil I usually have secreted into one of the pockets. Unfortunately, I had been very thorough cleaning it all out before my travels. I remembered about my phone/camera but realised I hadn't brought it, thinking why would I want my phone, which wasn't connected in Ireland, on the beach.



Cormorant Band TANSY BLISS

I tried chanting the letters in the hope that I would remember them but knew I couldn't be repeating ZZR or Z7R for the next 2 hours. I would be sure to talk to someone on my way home, and the letters would be gone. No option left but to break the Cormorants' legs at the joint and extract the bands. A messy but successful business. With the bands safely in the outside pocket of my day pack, I wandered on in the bitter wind, rewarded with excellent and unexpected views of a raft of Red-throated Divers and a small pod of dolphins less than 10 metres from the shore.

Once back at home, I emailed the details and a photo of my find to the Manx Ringing Group whose email was still visible on the alpha numeric band.

The following information was received in response:

"Thanks for getting in touch and the photo of the ring. Z7R/5264275 is a Cormorant ringed as a chick in a colony on Maughold Brooghs, on the north-eastern coast of the Isle of Man, on 9/6/2011. There have been no sightings of this bird since it was ringed. A fair number of our colour-ringed Cormorants have been reported away from the Isle of Man, some in England and others in Scotland. I can't recall any from Ireland before. Kind regards, Mark

Mark Fitzpatrick, for Manx Ringing Group

Well, I thought, that was pleasing. The bird was 13 years old and had dispersed from the Isle of Man to a remote corner of Donegal and not been seen until now. I gleefully shared the information with my brother who also lives in Fanad and is part of the local birding fraternity. He was horrified that first I had handled the bird with no regard to potential bird flu complications, and second that I had headed out without my notebook or any identification guides! Lesson learnt.



Braided River Aid (BRaid): Caring for our rivers

BOFFA MISKELL

That the Shorebird Centre is closely associated with godwits is understandable given the publicity those remarkable creatures have attracted over the years. But so less significant for us, forming the other half of the PMNT logo, is the Wrybill. They are the reason we have always taken a close interest in the state of the braided rivers of Canterbury and Otago. A huge diversity of birds, fish, invertebrates and plants have adapted to live in those challenging and dynamic environments. Having evolved to live there, they depend on braided rivers for their survival. For Wrybill those rivers are the only game in town. But they are habitats increasingly under threat.

In 2006, concerned about the declining state of braided river species and ecosystems, BRaid was formed by people from across the South Island. Functioning as an umbrella group, it works to protect, enhance and restore braided river ecosystems through co-operation and partnerships with iwi, individuals, schools, community groups, commercial and recreational stakeholders, and with government departments responsible for river management including local and

regional councils, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Land Information NZ. They also work closely with Lincoln, Otago, and Canterbury Universities, Crown Research Institutes such as NIWA, and environmental management companies, supporting research and on-the-ground action to restore braided river ecosystems through a wide range of practical initiatives.

BRaid objectives

Provide effective leadership and advocacy, and encourage co-operation between all parties whose interests and activities involve braided rivers

Promote research and management to reverse the decline of braided river ecosystems

Collect, store, and share data and information on braided rivers through this website, newsletters, social media, workshops and seminars.

Since 2010 BRaid has hosted regular seminars for stakeholders, researchers and volunteers. I attended several of the earlier ones at which a clear and persistent theme was knowledge gaps; that much research and monitoring was needed to better understand the dynamics of the river systems and how best to manage them and preserve their natural state. The most recent event at Lincoln in July, was pleasingly different. It revealed that considerable work has been done and is continuing, and that prescriptions for managing

the rivers were emerging. A particularly heartening presentation from Jaz Morris, a Senior Ecologist at Boffa Miskell, showed how the seemingly intractable weed problem on vast riverbeds, could be effectively tackled, albeit with the appropriate resources. This is an abridged version of his talk.

Keith Woodley

Know Your Enemy: Catchment-scale riverbed weed surveys to identify risks and prioritise actions

Weeds hide predators, predators eat birds. If you don't have weeds, the birds stand a much better chance of success. The knowledge of that goes back many decades, and many of the people in this room were foundational in that early understanding.

But I am a botanist, and I want to give a shout out to some of our braided river plants – a lot of which are very small, some look as if they might be dead, and some may not have a common name. Green Vegetable Sheep, Scab Weed, Dwarf Broom, Riverbed Forget-me-not - these are beautiful, well-adapted species and just because they are tiny, often hidden, and don't have sexy names, we really ignore them a lot of the time when we think about why we are protecting braided rivers. And just like the birds, these guys get crowded out and excluded completely when weeds take over.



Upper Rakaia at Totara Point BOFFA MISKELL

A 'good braided' river, like the Upper Rakaia at Totara Point, is a beautiful sequence of active riverbed, stabilising bars, springs, older floodplain, and mature floodplains – a mosaic of habitats not only for plants, but also for birds, fish, invertebrates, and lizards. This sequence relies on the mobility of the braid plain and it being able to turn over, in other words for those braids to shift during peak flows like big floods. Weeds act as an anchor and lock that whole system down.



Lower Waitaki BOFFA MISKELL

Then you end up with a situation like the lower reaches of some of the rivers where intensive management means lots of herbicide spraying and bulldozing, just to maintain an open fairway for flood conveyance. Not every lower river is like this, and it is fair to say a lot of work goes into trying to maintain some of the open habitats in this river, but at some point, there are none of those native diminutive plant species carrying on in any kind of functioning way and that ecosystem is long gone.

Here is a better situation in the Upper Rakitata. The point isn't that you can go from that previous slide back to this through weed control. The point of weed control is not a kill count – if you wanted that you would just go back to somewhere like the lower rivers and unleash herbicide. The point is to take out, one by one, the sparse weeds that, if you let them, will flip this system over time.



Upper Rakitata BOFFA MISKELL

Regional Pest Management Plans

A lot of the work that happens in our braided river systems is driven by Regional Pest Management Plans. These are a function of regional councils, resulting from the Biosecurity Act and some other regulations, and have a 10–20-year lifetime. Plans have multiple objectives, including management of pasture weeds (things that affect peoples' livelihoods) as well as biodiversity weeds. The latter often play second fiddle, which can lead to an ambiguous status for some of our key weed species. Douglas Fir is mentioned once in the Canterbury RPMP, but it doesn't have an official status requiring you to control it, because then that would conflict with plantation forestry. Russell Lupin is an even odder one: it is there as a control priority in the plan but only if it is wild; you are still allowed to grow it in your paddocks for fodder and so on, but within certain limits, such as it cannot be near a river.

While rules in RPMPs are binding on landowners, there is very little enforcement. For example, the requirement that all Russell Lupins within 200 metres of a braided river must be controlled, is seldom enforced. Further limitations are that not all the species in the plan need to be controlled in any way, and if a new species is found there is no quick way to add it into the RPMP and require people to control it. So, dare I say it, we might need a 'fast-track' process for recognising new weeds, and to get them into a statutory management approach.

New incursions

I mentioned that RPMP processes can be sluggish, and we do need some 'fast-track' process. We have new things coming into New Zealand all the time, but we also have issues that seem to be exploding from existing species, such as Purple Willow being found way up in the Mathias. Then we have new things like Great Willow Herb in the Avon River corridor in Christchurch.

So clearly, we need to be able to manage new incursions, but we also need to think, whenever we find one of these horror shows, are they controllable? And does a response detract from more achievable objectives? I look at things like Golden Clam and Didymo, which spread through the simplest methods. Didymo is a unicellular

species that can be moved about by a damp bit of duck. We have thrown millions of dollars at these incursions, and we must ask ourselves - if you look at the simple ecology of these species, were we ever really going to take them on once they got here? But that can be a bit defeatist – are we not even going to try and deal with it?

The way we think about this is the idea of an invasion curve: when something is just starting out on its spread, that is the most cost-effective time to control it. This makes perfect sense, but sometimes, and perhaps with Golden Clam - because eDNA says it has been here for a while - we don't know where we are in the invasion curve. By the time we have seen it we may already be some way along the curve and might already be in the territory where any response is going to be very costly.

So, we do need to think – is anything achievable? Should we just pack up and go home?

Hopefully, for the rest of the talk, I am going to show you some examples of success and why we should absolutely carry on.

The benefits of catchment scale management

The example I am going to give is weed management at a catchment scale. This happens in several of our braided rivers in Canterbury, Otago, and Marlborough. A lot of this work is guided by weed management strategies designed for each upper catchment. They are based on surveys, mapping and controls out in the field, and their intention is to guide single project managers working across agencies and across land tenures. But they also, in the absence of one of those cross-agency programs, enable local action by local groups. They provide a list of things to get on with and allow for a 5-10 year check in and reassessment.

Who is doing it? Management of the rivers is a multi-stakeholder process including Department of Conservation, Toitū Te Whenua / Land Information New Zealand, Regional Councils – such as ECan, District Councils, Trusts such as Rakaia Catchment Environmental Enhancement Society, Landcare Groups and River Care Groups, Rūnanga, Landowners / Occupiers, Fish and Game, and ENGOs. All have healthy braided river catchments as a common

goal. And weed control isn't the only thing going on. Many of these rivers have broad restoration objectives.

The scale of what is involved is enormous. For example, the area managed under the Rakitata 'Braided River Flagship Programme' for weeds, is 150,000 ha of catchment - that is just above the gorge, and compares to the size of Rakiura Stewart Island! The Rakaia catchment is even bigger. We are talking about big areas, small weeds, and big landscapes. It is clear we are always going to miss things and always going to be following up and doing things over multiple years.

Therefore, you work to a plan, you tackle the highest priorities first, you work beyond the RPMPs because these strategies are prepared with an ecological and biodiversity flavour rather than RPMP compliance. You need to involve stakeholders frequently otherwise you may find yourself locked out of access. You may also not receive those hot tips – 'hey, I saw some Spanish Heath in this random bit of the Rakitata', so we can go in and deal with it.

One person or group is responsible meaning they oversee data management, coordination and accountability. With multiple funding streams for these projects, if one agency or partner loses funding for a particular year, the overall funding resilience is still there. And there are efficiencies from working across the entire area. Because there is a huge cost to getting to some remote places, whether it be by multi days on foot or 4WD or by helicopter. None of it is cheap - remember 'the size of Stewart Island' when you think about that.

A major consideration with the catchment scale projects is land tenure. You may have some LINZ riverbed and some DOC hillside, and you may have some Russell Lupin which doesn't really care what side of the border it's on. So, to get on top of lupins you need to work across land tenure, otherwise it gets out of control.

How do we do it? There are some misperceptions here too. I think most people think of an *Apocalypse Now* situation where you bring in the choppers and just go to town with herbicide. And it is true that in the past there has been some by-kill from indiscriminate spray methods. Yet just as we used to use 30 kg per ha of 1080, we are now down to 2 kg for that. Techniques are improving,

and over time our understanding of what we are doing gets better, and a good contractor who knows the land can absolutely nail it. For example, a section of Broom in a really confined gorge was removed by spot spraying from the helicopter, leaving the beech trees around it untouched. So, we are trying to absolutely minimise the amount of herbicide put into the environment and minimise the by-kill here.

With sparse and low stature weeds, ground-based control is needed. This is very intensive stuff in terms of time and cost, and for Russell Lupin here we are talking about the Forbes River (in the Rakitata catchment) way, way up the headwaters against the main divide of the Southern Alps. Again, just think 'the size of Stewart Island' and you will understand why this is ongoing, and why it takes decades to get on top of.

You need to audit your contractors and ideally employ them over multiple seasons if they are good so they can get to know the area, so that you can make sure they are skilled up in identifying species, and that you can make sure their health and safety practices are good enough for where they are going.

There are several examples of the horror stories of weed infestation we have come across out in the braided rivers, where we have been preparing these sorts of strategies. Here also are some examples of the work that has happened and some of the results we are getting.

The Dart is a partly braided river in its mid and lower reaches. A few years ago, there was a landslide dam which drowned a lot of forest. A random thing sometimes called False Spirea, a relative of Rowan and a specialist of shingle habitat, became established on the slip. Once it gets into shingle streams and shrublands it is very hard to kill. But who has even heard of it? I hadn't seen it before I was down there. And so, you think - what do I even do with this?

The drowned forest has also created all this silty substrate for a huge infestation of Grey Willow. There are thousands of trees across hectares in a very tricky spot to control because of the dead beech trees. It is going to be heinous to get on top of. But, because of some of this survey work, we now know that it's there and we can think about how on earth we are going to get on top of it.

Another horror story involves some gorse found at the head of the Havelock River, on a 4WD track almost near St Winifred's Hut. On foot it is a solid two or three days walk from the road end, with the main divide only a couple of km away, yet you are getting Gorse here! It most likely came in on a 4WD, all the way up there. It is only if you are out there surveying that you pick these things up.

Unlikely comebacks



Potts River 2018 BOFFA MISKELL



Potts River 2024 BOFFA MISKELL

Now for the better side of things – the reasons why we do this. For example, over the last couple of decades on the Potts, a tributary of the Rakitata, there has been an awful lot of work to get on top of this Broom infestation

and we are now seeing the results. It is fantastic outcome that I hope will make you all understand that this work is worthwhile, that it needs to carry on. If there are sceptics in the audience thinking the floods have reworked a lot of this island and that probably got rid of a lot of this Broom, yeah well that is the point. We are allowing these braided rivers to function naturally by having the floods mobilise the braids, rather than if you had just let this go and it becomes a big stable island.

Another example is the upper Rakitata just above the gorge. What mid-catchment looks like this? This is outstanding – there is bare gravel, sparse Mat Daisy, Scab Weed, and tussock. A fantastic story of hard work. So, I really wanted to leave it here – and leave you with these conclusions.

- Weed control is not just killing plants to save birds – braided river specialist plants are worth saving in their own right
- RPMPs and other regulatory mechanisms currently do not 'capture' biodiversity weeds well
- Cross-agency programs can be effective at large scales when you work alongside stakeholders, across land tenure and beyond just the RMPP requirements
- Weed control is not about killing weeds – it's about protecting habitats and landscapes, and going about it the right way
- When new pests arrive – reassess but don't take your eye off the prize. Yes, we have been killing Broom and Gorse for decades, and we should go on killing Broom and Gorse because • Hard, consistent work pays dividends

Jaz Morris



Upper Rakitata just above the gorge BOFFA MISKELL.jpg

How do weeds get around?

Think of them for simplicity in 3 broad camps:

- 1) Ones that have delicious berries that birds move around (e.g., Rowan, Spindle Tree, Sweet Briar Rose)
- 2) Ones that are wind spread – including Grey Willow, but increasingly it also includes Purple Willow which was planted out by lots of regional councils. The theory was to plant all females over here, so it will be sterile and won't spread, and all males over there; but eventually the two meet and you have seed blowing miles in the wind. False Tamarisk is another one in that category with light seeds that can travel upriver. While we are helped by the prevailing northwest winds on our Canterbury braided rivers, we do have easterlies which will take things back up the catchments.
- 3) Stuff with hard, durable seeds, like lupins, gorse, broom. They will often explode out of the seed pod and get thrown a few metres. That gets them around a little bit, but the real thing is when those heavy seeds get into the water and are transported down river, they are durable they can cope with that and resprout wherever they are deposited. Or they can end up in a bit of mud and a bit of tread on someone's 4WD, or someone's gumboot when they get out of that 4WD. One assumes that is how Gorse got on a 4WD track near St Winifred's Hut, way up the Havelock River.

Which brings us to the human factor. Looking at a lot of surveys in these catchments over the last few years, where do you find weeds? On 4WD tracks and around huts. There are of course some differences with some species. With Grey Willow you always seem to find them anywhere. In some places we are also dealing with the legacy of settlement in a lot of these high-country rivers. Some of these 4WD tracks and huts were, only a few decades ago, used for mustering, and some things have been deliberately planted – Gooseberry, Antarctic Beech, you name it – for firewood, or food. Humans are usually the number one factor, especially for establishment of new weed species, but then it depends on the species itself as to how it gets moved around after that.

Inaugural Shorebird Coast Run

Chelsea Ralls reports on the inaugural Shorebird Coast Fun Run.



Runners preparing to set off CHELSEA RALLS

Saturday 31st August 2024 – Despite waking to stormy weather, the inaugural Shorebird Coast Run at Ray’s Rest drew keen participants who embraced both the elements and the cause. Organized by Tim Ashby-Peckham, the event was a fundraiser for the Pūkorokoro Shorebird Centre, and it brought together runners, volunteers, and community in a spirited day raising awareness for the shorebirds and their habitat here.

Tim, a runner who is passionate about conservation, envisioned the event as both a great training environment and an opportunity to help support the Trust and its work. Initial planning had him thinking it would be a worthwhile event if 40 participants signed up, but a month before the race all 200 spots had sold out.



Some of the Fun Run crew Chelsea Ralls (L) and Tim Ashby Packham (R)

The morning arrived dry and calm but threatening, as race officials set up the course. By the time the tents were erected the forecasted front arrived, the rain and wind making conditions difficult. At one-point organisers considered delaying the start but at the final moment the rain cleared, the thunder rumbled in the background and 132 determined runners powered off on the 5km and 12km courses.

The courses kept to the seaward side of the road with the turnaround for the 5km just before the Hauraki Cycle Trail crosses the road and the 12km course passing through the Robert Findlay Reserve across the Pūkorokoro Stream and almost to the Tasman Miranda Holiday Park before turning around. A flat but sometimes challenging course on the grass sections.



Some perspective on distance travelled CHELSEA RALLS

Kids joined in the event with their own fun run based on the migration of the Kuaka and competition for best bird-themed costume, and food trucks were onsite to help keep supporters warm and refuel runners.

The Shorebird Centre want to thank Tim, his supporters and organisers for all their hard mahi and planning in creating this successful event. It not only raised \$1,000 for the Trust but has introduced a new audience to this unique rohe, and everyone involved - volunteers, supporters and participants - created a community event to be proud of.



Members of the Jerrl Can Charitable Trust CHELSEA RALLS

We are optimistic about having another memorable Shorebird Coast Run next year and that it becomes another key event for the Shorebird Centre and community.

CELEBRATING

50

YEARS OF



Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust

Keeping the birds coming

2025 is our 50th Anniversary

We are working on ideas to celebrate this milestone. We will circulate details once they are finalised.

Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust



The Shorebird Centre

283 East Coast Road
RD 3 Pokeno 2473
phone (09) 232 2781
admin@shorebirds.org.nz
www.shorebirds.org.nz
www.facebook.com/

Pūkorokoro Shorebird Centre
Manager: **Keith Woodley**
Centre Assistant: **Chelsea Ralls**
Kaitiaki Ranger: **Tansy Bliss**

Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust Council

Chair: **Stuart Laurenson**
Deputy Chair and Banding Convenor:
Adrian Riegen
riegen@xtra.co.nz
09 814 9741
Secretary: **Emma Salmon**
secretary@shorebirds.org.nz
027 527 6727
Treasurer: **Gillian Vaughan**
gillianv@gmail.com
09 817 9262
Council members: **Wendy Hare,**
Trudy Lane, David Lawrie, Bob Rigter
and **Olga Brochner**

Magazine

Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust publishes *Pūkorokoro Miranda News* four times a year, in print and digital editions, to keep members in touch and provide news of events at the Shorebird Centre, the Hauraki Gulf and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. No material may be reproduced without permission.

Acting Editor: **Keith Woodley**
keith@shorebirds.org.nz, 09 232 2781
Layout and production: **Bernie Cornford**

See the birds

Situated on the Firth of Thames south of Kaiaua, the Pūkorokoro Shorebird Centre provides a base for birders right where the birds are. The best time to see the birds is two to three hours either side of high tide, especially around new and full moons. The Pūkorokoro high tide is 30 minutes before the Auckland (Waitematā) tide. Drop in to investigate, or come and stay a night or two.

Budget accommodation

The Shorebird Centre has bunkrooms for hire and two self-contained units: Bunks cost \$20 per night for members and \$35 for non-members. Self-contained units are \$90 for members and \$135 for non-members. For further information contact the Shorebird Centre.

Become a member

Membership of the Trust costs \$50 a year for individuals, \$60 for families and \$75 for those living overseas.

As well as supporting the work of the Trust, members get four issues of PMNT News a year, discounts on accommodation, invitations to events and the opportunity to join in decision making through the annual meeting.

You can join at the Centre, pay via our webpage (www.shorebirds.org.nz), by direct credit to bank account **02-0290-0056853-00** or call the Centre with your credit card details. Contact admin@shorebirds.org.nz for further information.

Bequests

Remember the Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust in your will and assist its vital work for migratory shorebirds. For further information contact the Shorebird Centre.

Become a Volunteer

There's always a need for volunteers to do a variety of jobs including helping in the shop, guiding school groups, meeting visitors at the hide, working in the Centre garden, joining in the restoration project at the Findlay Reserve, helping with the Shorebird Census and lots more. If you're interested chat with the team at the Centre to see what will best suit you.

PMNT's work is made possible by the generous support of our sponsors



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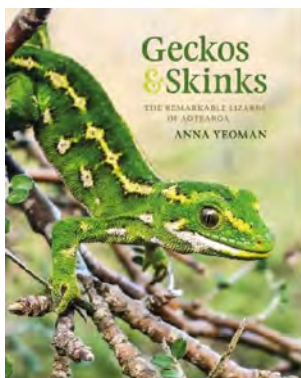
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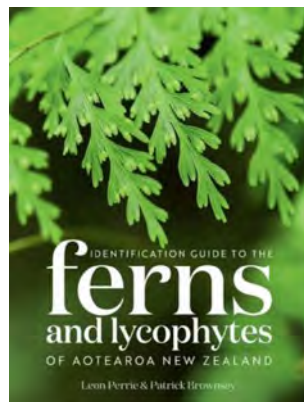
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Send an email to shop@shorebirds.org.nz. Ring 09 232 2781 and chat to the friendly team

We'll be happy to help

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