



December 2014

FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

FOMI Newsletter 59

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua, 5247

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- Brother Sponsor
- Love for Uncle Arthur
- Fairy Prion Condominium
- Your Committee

President's Editorial

Hi

What a great year it is turning out to be. For some years now we seem to have been pushing the conservation of Mana Island uphill big time. Today it seems that the past 3 years have been worth the agony and the effort. I was reminded of this in the past couple of days, that despite the gale winds over the past weeks, I encountered Eliot Falconer who is dedicated to his schools program, loading up 5 trips for very young students for the day, or part thereof, to Mana Island. How great it is to have access to a suitable craft for a walk on walk off experience to a unique conservation estate. Add that to a number of other events during the year, and we are indeed fortunate to have a conservation project which is attracting so much attention now. The first thing to acknowledge is, of course, the support of our sponsors, Brother International NZ Ltd, OMV NZ Ltd and the Community Trust of Wellington, without whom our dreams and projects would not become a reality. Add to that an agreement with DOC over sharing the cost of transport to our Island so we can get volunteers to maintain and support the environment which has taken getting on for 30 years to create. FOMI have been part of the development for the past 16 years now. Our credentials are noted in the launch of a new book "Paradise Saved" which covers some 130 conservation Sanctuaries throughout New Zealand and demonstrates very clearly that reliance on the "gumint" and its agencies such as DOC is unable to put sufficient effort and resources to "save" any of the conservation estate, let alone our endangered species. This book is a must have for conservationists.

Like DOC, our Committee, or should that be your Committee, has undergone structural changes to focus on the various tasks which we have selected or prioritised and raised the necessary funding to carry out. We have in the past funded the release of Shore plover on Mana Island and regrettably have had to pull back on that due to predation, but still support the captive breeding program at Mt Bruce. We have, for the past year, monitored the Whitaker Skink pit fall trapping program in Pukerua Bay and supported the captive breeding program by supplying new cages. We are currently carrying out a "Biodiversity" review project to ensure that the original restoration plan, in so far as planting is concerned, is appropriate or requires some infill planting. Finally we have planned a further translocation of Fairy Prion in the New Year to ensure that there are sufficient burrowing seabirds established on Mana Island to re-generate an eco system which existed prior to human intervention and hopefully provide an appropriate home for Tuatara in the future.

We have had a great year and hope you all have too. We look forward to more of you contributing as members, and we believe that we are better placed now to offer you volunteer opportunities and to arrange day trips so you can all see the huge progress which has been made over the last couple of decades to restore Mana Island to its original glory.

Have a safe festive season and holiday.

Cheers

Brian



Mana Report for Tramping Magazine in a letter style from Diane Harries

Hi Esther

Just writing to you while I sit here on the shingle beach, waiting for the boat to pick us up from Mana Island, and ferry us back the 20 minutes to the mainland at Mana, near Porirua. We've been so lucky to have calm sunny conditions that let us get on with the conservation tasks for DOC. We came over on Friday afternoon, and our first task was checking all our gear for any stowaway rodents and seeds, before settling into the bunk rooms. Whanganui was well represented with Di (me), Warren, Juliet, Linda, Heather, Margaret and Robert, a visitor from Alabama. Sue, Lisa, Helen, Kate and Richard came from Wellington region.

The DOC ranger, Jeff and his family were returning after shore leave for a few days, bringing with them a group of green spotted and striped geckos, which we went to release in the valley nearby. They really are the cutest happy little lizards you could ever let loose up a tree.

Walks on the beach on sunset revealed several stingrays playing around in the shallows with their wingtips breaking the surface. Oystercatchers expressed their dismay while we watched the magic of a moonrise over Pukerua Bay headland reflected in the water beneath.

Work began on Saturday morning with a trek to the proposed gannet colonies where concrete birds are being set up and fake guano sprayed around each one, to attract nesting birds. The loudspeakers broadcasting the racket of a gannet colony totally overwhelmed the serenity of the site. Concern that this strategy wasn't working here has prompted creation of another site lower down the cliffs, in the hope that it will be more suitable and successful.

The afternoon activity of searching for weeds through the successfully regenerating bush sapped our strength, especially when we came to patches of speargrass waiting in ambush. The low numbers of pink ragwort and karo that we found pleased the ranger. A more relaxed wander along the Southern trail brought us around to a bench with a view down towards the wind farm at Makara. A light brown skink clambered his way up the flower stalk of a speargrass fitting neatly underneath the vicious spikes, and well protected from predators.

Sunday morning tasks included re-potting seedlings of kahikatea and matai, and general sorting of the tree nursery, fairly empty now that most of the replanting project has been completed. Light brown geckos and a lone takahe were spotted, with reports that the birds were nesting just now and hard to see. Other team members worked hard to dismantle a shore plover aviary that was no longer needed, thus providing materials for nest boxes. Warren worked on the wheels of the caravan and tractor to resolve their problems and organise parts to fix them on the next visit in December. I hope you enjoy your visit then too!

Cheers





Summer Trips to Mana Island

Many of our Members ask when they can get to our Island and my standard response is that you can do so on a work trip or the trips we have arranged over summer when the weather is more settled and, of course, it is a period when work trips are less frequent and the fire risk is higher. So we have again arranged for trips for Members and their friends or families in February and March 2015. These trips have a cost attached and are guided by one or more of our team so you can observe the progress which has been made in the restoration of Mana Island over the past 27 years since it was gazetted as a Scientific Reserve. Friends of Mana Island has now been in operation for 16 years and has been instrumental in the success of the planting program, the establishment of burrowing seabirds and the introduction of a number of endangered species. This is your opportunity to visit our Island and enjoy the very special environment we have all generated out of land previously farmed for over 150 years.

These trips are on a Charter boat, walk on, walk off, and are scheduled for:

Saturday 21 February 2015
Wednesday 25 February 2015
Saturday 7 March 2015
Saturday 21 March 2015

The Saturday trips have a capacity of 30 seats with the Wednesday trip 15 seats.

The cost per head is \$45.00 to cover the cost of the boat and guides. A common concern is that the capacity is governed by a head count and this unfairly means that families with young children may find this too much of a burden. We are, where we can, a little flexible in this and it may be possible to arrange for a 2 for 1 cost, depending on the age of the children. Contact us and each case will be determined on merit. We expect payment to be made on the day prior to departure. There are no facilities available on the Island apart from some basic shelter and toilets, so plan on being totally self sufficient. Very young children are not encouraged as buggies and wheelchairs will not be transported.

To make a booking email FOMI@manaisland.org.nz and we will attempt to meet your needs.

Brother Sponsorship

A reminder that our funding from Brother will be dictated by an International program which requires you and all our supporters in NZ to vote on line, preferably on a daily basis. If you can find just a moment to vote every time you first access the Internet each day and go to this URL you will see the image below.

You will note that to date we have 20,017 points which is marginally ahead of our Aussie level of support, and I would like to keep it that way.

You have been doing incredibly well, but we could do better to ensure that we get the Shore Plover back to Mana Island, so keep it up.

It is estimated that this could provide us with up to \$10,000 annually.

<http://www.brotherearth.com/en/top.html>

Let's donate!

Donate Click for the Earth

When you choose the activity you want to support and click the "Donate" button, Brother will make a donation of one yen (about one cent USD) per click on your behalf.

Peru Conserving the tropical rainforests 28,241 pts Details Donate	Canada Developing forest resources through tree planting 20,005 pts Details Donate	Mexico and South America Support for tropical rainforests conservation 20,826 pts Details Donate
USA Reforestation through planting trees 107,791 pts Details Donate	New Zealand Habitat restoration for endangered species 20,017 pts Details Donate	Australia Supporting research survey on manta ecology 20,007 pts Details Donate
Japan	China (Inner Mongolia)	China (Shenzhen)



Uncle Arthur finds love at last !

Jeff (the DOC Ranger on Mana Island) reports in his most recent "Pigeon Post" the love story of Uncle Arthur, now a 9 year old, and ostracised from his equals on Mana Island because of a damaged left leg which made his gait somewhat unattractive. He was transferred to Te Anau Wildlife park recently (courtesy of Air NZ as he could not fly) and introduced to Monty, a female with a similar affliction, and the reports are that they are propping each other up in what seems to be a very productive relationship. For further progress reports you should look out for the "What's Now" program on TV2 in February. Jeff also reports that the mating season is in full swing on Mana and there is no way he can sleep in, the chorus has made his alarm clock redundant.



Fairy Prion Translocation due on 22 January 2015

This project to transfer 100 chicks from Takapourewa/Stephens Island has been planned for 2 years and is now about to happen, thanks to the sponsorship of OMV NZ Limited. All approvals and consents have now been issued so all we need is the weather to co-operate. The following images show that, unlike Auckland and Christchurch, the accommodation is ready and waiting for the new arrivals.

All photos by our intrepid photographer and volunteer Dave Cornick



Your Committee for the 2014/15 year is:

Brian Paget, President; Jason Christensen, Vice President; Julie Harrison, Secretary, Dick Fernyhough, Treasurer and a Committee of Brian Bell, Linda Kerkmeester, Dale Shirtliff, Irene Swadling, Rob Stone or his representative (DoC Rep), Reina Solomon, (IWI representative) and co-opted Membership Officer, Darlene Adams and co-opted Volunteer Officer, Sue Chesterfield.

To contact any of the above email them at contactus@manaisland.org.nz

