



FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INCORPORATED

PO BOX 54 101, MANA 5247

Newsletter Number 31

May 2007

Hi Everyone

It seems like an age since our AGM in March and already the year is almost into Winter.

The AGM was well attended and a fascinating insight into bird translocations was given to us by Helen Gummer, illustrated by slides of this year's release of the Fluttering Shearwater.

It was pleasing to see some competition for places on the Committee, and some new blood. See Page 7 for the current composition.

We are disappointed that we will not be able to offer as many members the Island experience this year. This arises from the substantial reduction in the planting programme, down to 6,000 trees compared with, at our peak, 25,000. A compounding factor is that Les Flowers, who along with Marinowai, has provided transport for many years, has decided that he is unable to commit his resources to FOMI this year. This means that we will be unable to provide opportunities for large groups of between 20 and 30 people. There will be limited opportunities for small groups, fewer than eight, to plant trees, but ideally they will have to spend a week at a time on the Island.

Along with this new approach to limited planting, your Committee are looking to provide other opportunities for members participating in such activities as weeding, gannet restoration (must get them in before the breeding season), bird monitoring, general maintenance, and of course both the Shore Plover and Fluttering Shearwater releases. Watch for notices as they arise, and this Newsletter for more information.

FOMI are now entering a new phase and will, apart from waiting for the forest to grow, have smaller projects in conjunction with DoC, aimed at improving the infrastructure for the future. In my view the Island has to be made more accessible, and have a user friendly infrastructure. To achieve that is going to entail plenty of work and input from volunteers.

Cheers
Brian

Volunteers Wanted!

There are several opportunities coming up for small groups to work on Mana Island for several days at a time. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy all of what Mana Island has to offer, albeit in winter.

It's a fantastic working holiday destination!

Tree planting: One week in June

Gannet Restoration: Two weekend trips in June/July

General maintenance: December, March and June

See back page for details

Competition

Friends of Mana Island would like a snappy slogan to sum up the Island
Can you help?

The winning entry will be published in the next Newsletter and the lucky entrant will win a free trip for two to Mana Island

The winning slogan will be incorporated in all future publications and communications from Friends of Mana Island

Please submit your entry to
Friends of Mana Island Inc
P O Box 54101, Mana
including your name and contact details

Island News from Grant

Sue and Frank and Piripi are settling into life on Mana with the veggie garden reinstated and Sue up to her ears in conservation projects on the Island. Piripi looks as though he'll take his first steps out here soon, that will keep Frank on his toes.

March saw the reintroduction of Shore Plover to the Island. We still have around nineteen Shore Plover residing on Mana from the original transfer and we expect to get the last ten from Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre soon. They will be held in our aviary for a few days prior to release in an attempt to imprint Mana as their home.

There are Brown Teal Chicks on three of the wetland ponds and lots of Kakariki about. The wetland is looking a bit dry lately and I did notice an eel squirming in what little water is left in Jason's pond.

Permanent rodent monitoring stations have been established throughout the Island. These will enable us to keep a close check on the rodent status of the Island and detect any invasion early.

The best approach by far is that visitors check their bags and gear before they arrive on the Island. We recently passed an audit of our preparedness and management of rodent invasion prevention methods.

Trevor Thompson is still chipping away at the Boxthorn and other weeds and we have also been collecting seed for next years crop of trees to be grown in the Nursery.

Recent rain is an indication that we will be able to start the winter tree planting soon. There are 6,000 or so trees in the Nursery this year. Not as many as previous years but that programme is being wound down as much of the area planned to be planted has been done. There are still a few gaps to fill though.

Earlier on in March, Jason gave a fantastic guided interpretation day on Mana Island to those people from FOMI who have contributed time and energy to the project. Jason's enthusiastic delivery made the day interesting and enjoyable for everyone. The weather was

great and folk were able to see close-up the progress made with the planting and species reintroductions. It was a nice opportunity for Jason to come back and see how things are going.

We recently had a visit from the Wellington Conservation Board who spent the day here discussing the future direction of Mana and its place in Wellington's archipelago of conservation islands. On the same fine weekend, a group of keen Ornithological Society members stayed out here to check, count and weigh the Sooty Shearwater chicks before they fledge. These Mana Island bred birds fly as far as the west coast of British Columbia for the summer to feed then return to Mana to breed.

Wayne Angus came out to the Island to recover our DOC mooring which had fallen to the bottom of the sea. The buoy had worn through but has now been inspected and replaced. While he was here, Wayne reconnected the fifteen kg anodes to the boat shed rails to limit corrosion.

Now that trips to Mana Island are limited to overnight stays, you'll need some sustenance. Here's a recipe for flapjack. Don't buy the over-packaged muesli bars — try this instead!

Flapjack

Note: Imperial measurements have been retained in order to provide a nostalgic experience!

8oz margarine (Olivio or similar)
2 teaspoons golden syrup
8oz sugar
10oz oats
4oz self raising flour

Melt the margarine and syrup
Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl
Pour the margarine mixture on the the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly
Place in a well greased swiss-roll tin and bake in a moderately hot oven 15—20 mns
Cut into fingers whilst still hot
Leave to cool in the tin

Mana Island Supporters' Trip by *Sharon Alderson*

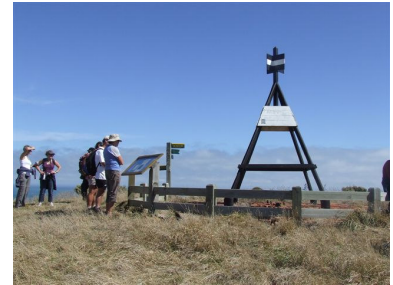


Coming ashore

As a new member of FOMI, I was greatly looking forward to the supporters' trip - a chance to visit the Island, with time to learn about the Island's history and wildlife from an expert. I was therefore delighted when the day dawned clear with little wind, having heard that the most difficult thing about visiting Mana Island was getting the weather to cooperate!

The day was fabulous in all respects. Great weather with an interesting bunch of like-minded people, takahe supervising the lunch break, and a guide who was entertaining as well as informative. The extent of the

planting done on the Island was explained, as well as other initiatives such as the 'stoned' gannets and the seabird chick translocations (complete with sound systems). While the lighthouse site was readily recognisable, other historic features were less so. Without our guide I would never have realised that at one point along the track I was standing where three and a half thousand sheep were buried! An early indication of New Zealand's biosecurity concerns - the sheep were slaughtered as a result of a disease scare, during the Island's term as a quarantine/research station for the Ministry of Agriculture. At the woolshed we learned of a more positive sheep story in the Island's history - New Zealand's second ever wool export.



At the lighthouse



Checking out the locals

While much of this may have been nothing new to the longer serving members of FOMI, it was a great introduction for those of us new to the organisation. The opportunity to see some of the wildlife was also valuable. Several of the bird species introduced to the Island were in evidence: North Island robins, kakariki, brown teal, takahe and the recently translocated shore plover. Occupants of the 'lizard lounge' also provided a talking point.

I look forward to visiting the Island again, hopefully with the opportunity to contribute to the cause; at the end of a spade or a paintbrush no doubt!

Many thanks to those who organised the trip and to Jason for his effort on the day.

Shore Plover by *Grant Timlin*

The exciting thing to happen in March was a reintroduction of Shore Plover to Mana Island. These small endemic shore birds were, in pre-human times, abundant around the New Zealand coastline. The introduction of Polynesian rats and later Norway and Ship rats decimated the population which became extinct on the mainland. A small population was harvested from the Chatham Islands from which chicks were raised for translocation to suitable sites around New Zealand. Mana Island is ideal as it is predator free.



On 2nd March, twenty one birds were brought from Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre where they were bred, then released into a temporary aviary where they were cared for for ten days prior to release into the wild. This is called a 'soft release' as opposed to just tipping them out onto the beach. Each method has its merits however. Since then we received a further ten birds from Mount Bruce which we will soft release and in another month we will hard release another ten or so. All this means we will hopefully have a viable breeding population on Mana. They do have wings however so don't be surprised to see them around the Inlet. We will carry out translocations to Mana of these little fellows for the next few years and hopefully build a viable population. Don't be confused by the name. They are not those large, noisy Australian Spur Winged plover we see around.

RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS FOR MANA ISLAND by Colin Ryder

***Trisetum antarcticum* (Shining Oatgrass)**



This is the latest rare and endangered plant to be translocated to Mana Island.

This species is a perennial grass, and is extremely rare in the Wellington region, probably because of competition from weeds, and quarrying. It is endemic to New Zealand (from the Egmont coast around to Cape Palliser and at several sites at the top of the South Island) and in southern South America. It grows in beach gravel and sand and on coastal bluffs up to 30 metres above sea level. It is drought resistant when established. It looks very much like the introduced pasture grass, Yorkshire Fog, except that the flowerhead is distinctive.

Barbara Mitcalfe, a stalwart of the Wellington Botanical Society, has only seen three individual plants of this species in all her years of botanising around the region so that should give you some idea how rare it is locally although it is apparently quite common elsewhere. She had the foresight to collect some seed three years ago and several hundred plants have been grown on by the Wellington City Council's Berhampore Nursery.

The Department of Conservation is using this stock to establish new populations with 75 going to Mana Island. Sixty-two of these have already been planted out at two appropriate sites on the Island with the largest of 54 plants being fenced off to protect them from the pukekos and takahe.

Although it is not listed in the Mana Island Restoration Plan, this species is an important new addition to the island. The Mana Island populations will be seed sources and in time the species, as with all the other translocations, will hopefully establish its own ecological niche.

This translocation, undertaken without fuss or fanfare, illustrates what can be done with endangered plants by one person who knows what they are doing and prepared to do something. Okay, it's only one species, but it's important in its own right and, who knows, it may have eventually disappeared from the region. At least now, it has a fighting chance of surviving.

Subs

Thank you to those who paid their subscriptions so promptly. Your continued support is appreciated

Since 2001, FOMI has received \$87,005 in Grants and \$42,881 in Donations, making a grand total of \$129,886

Fluttering Shearwater Colony Off-limits at Night

There's a consensus among DoC scientists that there is nothing to be gained by visiting the new fluttering shearwater colony at night, and indeed that such visits may be off-putting to any birds of whatever species which are prospecting there.

This view is strongly endorsed by your Committee, so we would ask that those of you who visit the Island overnight do stay away from the colony. The DoC scientists feel that any information which can be obtained from the site, can be gained during the daytime. If there are any daytime opportunities for FOMI volunteers, then Island staff will ask you to perform any such work.

There's still plenty of wildlife to see at night: penguins; giant and tree weta; common and gold-striped geckos; flax weevils; and for the connoisseurs among you, leaf-vein slugs!

Sooty Shearwater's Travel Diary

NZ - Alaska - NZ

In 2004, NIWA and DoC fixed geolocation data loggers to 33 Sooty Shearwaters on Mana Island and Codfish Island. In January 2006 and January 2007 two of these birds were recovered on Mana Island by OSNZ members. Disappointingly, one of the loggers was not working but the following information was taken from the other. The migration path is amazing!

This was sent by David Thompson from [NIWA at Greta Point](#) -

'The bird spent the four days after capture in March 2005 in the Tasman Sea and near Mana Island, it then headed out to the Chatham Rise and east of the Chathams. The next 10 days were around the equinox so we couldn't get latitude data but from longitude data it stayed east of the Chathams. We can't tell if it occasionally returned to feed the chick during this period and went back out to the SE again or whether it had finished feeding the chick. From 31 March to 5 April it was a long way SE of the Antipodes in very deep water. It then moved down towards Antarctica and was south of the polar front in the deep ocean NE of the Ross Sea. On 8 April it began migrating eastwards in the high roaring forties, passing way south of Easter Island. Three days later it was well south west of the Juan Fernandez Islands and a day later well west of Chiloe Island off the coast of Chile. From 13-22 April it fed in seas south and west of Juan Fernandez Islands. On 23 April it started flying north up past Sala-y-Gomez Island.

It stayed near this Island for five days and then headed north and crossed the equator on 30 April, well north of Easter Island. It tracked north and north west up to the SE of Hawaii and was midway between Hawaii and Los Angeles on 5 May.

It then flew northwards until 9 May when it turned and headed into the coast of USA near Oregon, reaching there on 11 May. It flew up the coast past Vancouver Island and up to the Gulf of Alaska, reaching there on 20 May. It then spent the next few months around the vicinity of Kodiak Island and in the Gulf of Alaska, occasionally out to the Aleutian Islands. By 10 September the equinox took out latitude information again.

By the 29 September it was obvious the bird was heading south again and the longitude fixes had started to bear westwards. The bird crossed the equator on 4 October north of the Marquesas Islands. It then headed mainly westwards through the Line and Phoenix Islands and passed near Samoa on 9 October then NE of Fiji and headed southwards but still north of the Kermadec Islands on 11 October. Unfortunately at this stage the logger started to go off line with long gaps of no data. There is one single fix near Mana Island on 22 Oct then either no data or nonsense data in short spurts until it was retrieved in 2006'.

Abstract from the paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA

Electronic tracking tags have revolutionized our understanding of broad-scale movements and habitat use of highly mobile marine animals but a large gap in our knowledge still remains for a wide range of small species. Here we report the extraordinary transequatorial post-breeding migrations of a small seabird, the sooty shearwater, obtained with miniature archival tags that log data for estimating position, dive depth, and ambient temperature. Tracks (262 ± 23 days) reveal that shearwaters fly across the entire Pacific Ocean in a figure-eight pattern, while travelling $64,037 \pm 9,779$ km roundtrip - the longest animal migration ever recorded electronically. Each shearwater made a prolonged stopover in one of three discrete regions off Japan, Alaska, or California, before returning to New Zealand through a relatively narrow corridor in the central Pacific Ocean. Transit rates as high as 910 ± 186 km day⁻¹ were recorded and shearwaters accessed prey resources in both the northern and southern hemisphere's most productive waters from the surface to 68.2 meters depth. Our results indicate that sooty shearwaters integrate oceanic resources throughout the Pacific Basin on a yearly scale. Sooty shearwater populations are today declining and because they operate on a global scale, they may serve as an important indicator of climate change and ocean health.

Friends of Mana Island Inc
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 27 March 2007 at Mana Cruising Club, [Ngatitoo Domain](#), Mana

President's Report

I thought that it may be a good idea to firstly give you a little of the background to the Friends of Mana Island, particularly for those members and volunteers who we, on the Committee, tend to take for granted. The idea for FOMI was floated by Jason Christensen at a public meeting held in this Club in 1998, with the prime objective of forming an Incorporated Society capable of providing an opportunity for the public to participate in the Restoration of Mana Island and to give support to DoC in the management of the Island. At that time I was the president of the Rotary Club of Kapi Mana, and saw this as an opportunity for Rotary to be involved in a local project with a conservation theme. Rotary put together the resources necessary to sponsor and document the objectives and the Rules which lead to the Incorporation of the Society on the 14 December 1998. At that time the Restoration Plan was just over half way through it's 20 year span which expires this Year. The activities foreseen were primarily to complete the planting programme, in which Forest & Bird were substantially involved up till that time, and to assist in fund raising for special projects such as the transfer of birds. It may come as some surprise to you that up until the end of our last financial year FOMI has raised a total of approximately \$100,000 in Grants for specific projects as well as donations totalling around \$40,000.

Last year, 2006, has seen the last of the substantial planting requirements, and we are advised that only 7,000 trees will be planted this winter, some of which may well be planted by Contractors. This will diminish the opportunities available for volunteers for weekend day trips, but of course it will reduce our outgoings for boat hireage which has been heavily subsidised in the past. Despite the weather gods we did get 10 trips away last year which meant that some 250 members did get onto the Island.

Last year we also commenced the release programme for the Fluttering Shearwater, with a trial of 40 birds. This trial led to a total rethink of the artificial burrows and the relocation and building of 100 new condominiums on a gentle South West slope. The trial also highlighted the need to be well organised for the full transfer of 100 birds released early this year, and it was the AGM last year that Barry Dent was appointed to manage the project, and what a great job he has done. The last release of this species will take place in January next year.

We have embarked on the refurbishment of our concrete gannet colony, which has only been partly completed because of some very unhelpful weather. We do intend to have them back on their nests before the next breeding season.

Apart from weeding, a fairly unglamorous task, and the occasional endangered plant species planting, there do not seem to be a great number of volunteer tasks for the current or future years. A DoC Plan for the next five or ten years would be a welcome indicator of how we may keep our members interested in providing either financial or physical support.

I have now been on the Committee since the formation of FOMI and in the chair for the past 4 years, and it is time that FOMI had a change. For the future there are a number of things which need to be tackled and which could involve FOMI. I see the future development as an opportunity for local and overseas visitors to enjoy a wonderful environmental experience as a given. A test run last Saturday demonstrated the level of interest which abounds locally, and a full boat load of 30 paid the full cost of the boat charter and were treated to a guided tour by Jason.

In order to meet future demand a number of things have to happen. The Island has to be visitor friendly, made safely accessible, with an interpretation plan and skilled guides.

All these things take time and planning and support from not only DoC but also the Tourist industry and the local and regional authorities. I know that our Mayor Jenny is very keen to develop this concept and if handled sensitively will receive the local support it needs. Such a vision needs a plan, and it also needs

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the preparation work to be carried out which will have time to heal the inevitable scars which will result from it. I would like to think that my grandchildren will be able to visit the Island with their children as of right, safely and at a reasonable cost.

I would like to pay tribute to the Committee for the solid work that they have put in, some for many years now. My special thanks go to Jan who has looked after the books for the past seven years and to our Honorary Auditor Fred Denz who has put the stamp of approval on her work. My thanks also go to Doreen who has produced some fantastic Newsletters, and I hope will continue to do so. I have mentioned Barry Dent's skills in the management of the Flutterers project, and I would like also to thank Kelvin for his management of the planting trips, a particularly frustrating role last year.

Finally I would like to thank our Sponsors without whom we would achieve very little. In the past year we have been supported by Hill Young Cooper, an Environmental Consultancy practice, whom we managed to finally get over to the Island on the fourth attempt. The Mana Community Trust has also provided financial support and Resene Paints supplied all the paint and other materials required for the Gannet refurbishment. I should also add that Sponsorship is becoming more and more difficult. Since the Government put limitations on the pokie machines the various Trusts through which the profits were distributed have reduced as have the funds available, with preference being given to sports funding, it would seem. We have recently made 4 applications for funding for a specific project and had two rejections, one a partial contribution with an invitation to resubmit for the next round and one put on hold for the next round along with a request for further information.

Future funding will be even more difficult unless there are special circumstances and a high degree of protection for endangered species.

There is still a lot of work for FOMI to do and to be involved with which will require a great deal of co-operation, consultation and participation with DoC. The nature of work and opportunities will be different and will have to be attractive to the wider membership if they, the members, are to be retained.

Thank you
Brian Paget,

Your New Committee for 2007

Brian Paget (President),
Doreen Douglas (Vice President/Newsletter)
Darlene Adams (Secretary)
Barry Dent (Treasurer)
Kelvin Hunt (Volunteer Coordinator)
Paul Quinn
Jo Greenman
Jason Christensen
Ian Cooksley (DoC)
Tama Coker (Iwi Representative)
Aka Arthur (Kamatua)

Visit our website: www.manaisland.org.nz



Mana Island T Shirts

\$20 each plus \$3 freight

Sizes S to XXL

Order from tshirts@manaisland.org.nz

Alternatively send your order with remittance to
PO Box 54 101, Mana 5247

Supply your name and physical address for delivery

Volunteer Opportunities

Planting

We are seeking volunteers who wish to spend a week on Mana Island planting approx 100 trees each per day -

Monday 11th June to Friday 15th June

Contact : Kelvin

Hm 235 6261 or Wk 238 3194

kindregards@paradise.net.nz



Gannet Restoration

We have two weekend trips completing maintenance on our aging concrete gannet colony. We are scraping and preparing the birds for a new coat of paint, hoping to encourage live birds to take ours a little more seriously

30 June/ 1 July (four people)

7/8 July. (six people)

Departing Mana Cruising Club Saturday 9am and returning Sunday afternoon.

For more information contact Kelvin Hm 235 6261, Wk 238 3194 or

kindregards@paradise.net.nz



Maintenance

Wanted! A group of six fit energetic people who are confident working with machinery and tools, unsupervised. This team needs to be able to commit to three or four volunteer trips throughout the year. The work could include weed-eating/scrub bar, woolshed maintenance, sign painting and track trimming.

The first opportunity is two nights and three days, 3 - 5 September

We would then be looking at further trips in December, then March and June 2008

If you are interested in this project but the timing is wrong, register your interest and it will be tailored to the right team of people

Contact Jo Greenman on 021 038 0295 or email Jogreenman@paradise.net.nz



Go on - leave the mobile at home and be a real ranger for a few days!