



FOMI Newsletter

December 2011

FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

FOMI Newsletter 46

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua

Special points of interest:

- Editorial
- Visit Mana Island
- Update on Editorial
- News from Sue on Mana
- Mana Island Shearwater Chick
- Committee

President's Editorial (Summer 2011)

Hi

The recent sighting of a rat on Mana Island got me thinking about the ups and downs of my involvement with ecological restoration campaigns and projects over the years. While I would naturally like to dwell on my successes, there have been enough failures, of one sort or another, to keep me honest and to remind me that I can't take things for granted. Some of the failures I have been involved with have arisen because of events outside our control, some because we don't know enough about what we are doing and some because of breakdowns in relationships or communications between people.

Let me give some examples close to home – these relate to Mana Island.

The recent sighting of a rat on Mana Island can be said to fall within the first category. Despite the best efforts of DOC with its bag searches, traps and monitoring, the Department only learnt that there was at least one rat on the island because it was seen on video footage obtained through a surveillance system installed to ascertain what was preying on shore plovers. What I find amazing that there has never been stoats on Kapiti nor rats on Mana, despite countless years of human occupation, until the last 12 months. Coincidence?

The concrete gannetry on Mana Island has, so far, been a glorious failure. Even though two birds famously turned up at the launch of the project in front of the TV cameras, none have been sighted since. Yet essentially the same combination of tools (decoy birds, imitation breeding site and sound systems) has been spectacularly successful recently at Young Nick's Head. Why? It could be because the successful site is on an exposed headland, to catch all the prevailing winds, and at about half the height of the earlier attempt.

The most insidious and probably the most intractable of the three reasons for failures is the last. It is often difficult to bring people or groups together to pursue common outcomes when they have different cultures, ways of doing things or priorities. It is even more difficult to sustain relationships over time. A good relationship cannot be taken for granted; it must be nurtured diligently and constructively. I have to say that this has not always been the case with the relationship between DOC and FOMI. There have been issues before which both parties have had to work hard at to successfully resolve. I have to say that our relationship is going through one of those periods at the moment.

Nobody likes failure. To me an individual failure is no more than a setback. Sometime you can remedy it immediately, as DOC will with the rat incursion on Mana Island. Sometimes, you have to bide your time until you learn more and can try again as Brian Bell from your Committee is doing with the gannet project. However, in a few cases, you have to accept that the problem is intractable and move on. I am confident that this will not be case with our current issues with DOC over its relationship with FOMI.

Colin Ryder, President

VISIT MANA ISLAND

Your Committee have arranged a trip to our Island scheduled for Wednesday February 1 next year, 2012. A charter boat with a capacity of 20 seats is available departing Mana Marina at 0930 an returning at 1630.

The cost will be \$60.00 per head for a guided tour.

To book your space email info@manaisland.org.nz
or telephone 021523444

Conditions apply. The trip is weather dependent. Because the transfer to shore is by dinghy, children under the age of 5 are not encouraged. A reasonable level of fitness is required to walk around the Island.

Should interest exceed space we will try to arrange additional opportunities in February.

Update on the Presidents Editorial

Contributed by Brian Paget

Since Colin's Editorial things have moved on with a couple of issues he raised. Firstly the good news. It would appear that the Mana Rattus has taken enough baits to have killed 4 of them, but despite further dog tracking and monitoring a body is yet to be found. DoC are reasonably confident in the outcome, and even better there has been no further predation of Shore Plover. The pity of it is that the Shore Plover project has taken a serious set back, and the island has a 2 year wait before it can be declared predator free again.

The second matter is the relationship between DoC and FOMI. A subcommittee of FOMI met with the Kapiti Wellington Office of the Department in order to uncover some of the communication issues, and resolve them. The meeting was very positive and set in place a number of procedures moving forward which will ensure that the relationship will enhance the partnership inherent in the Memorandum of Understanding. The meeting also covered off the the responsibilities and requirements of the current projects and those agreed for action in the next calendar year for FOMI.

I came away from that meeting feeling very positive that there is a place for FOMI in the future, albeit a different role from that which was envisaged 13 years ago when incorporated.



Pataka Museum

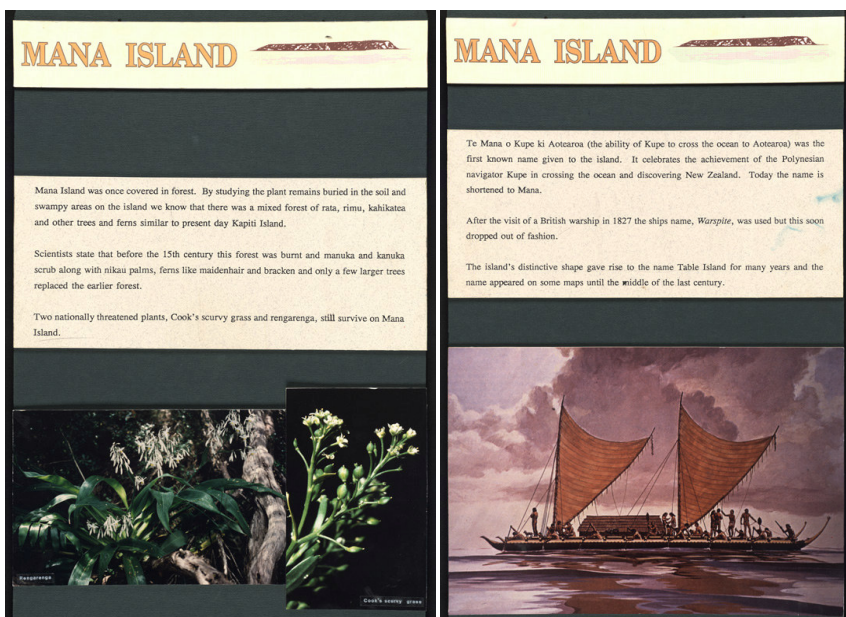
FOMI are fortunate to have been gifted the original display material of an exhibition mounted in the old Pataka Museum.

Whilst the material is somewhat dated in presentation, particularly compared with the 2009 Pataka exhibition, the Committee agreed that it was worthy of preserving for the day when we might have a full blown Visitor Centre (hopefully much more modest than that of Zealandia). We have had the panels digitized and reproduced in durable panels for display, hopefully on Mana Island itself.

This will be a useful addition to the interpretation material in the woolshed, and the start of a long term project to provide information on the Island's history and points of interest.

We do have all the material from the 2009 exhibition in storage but the display area needed to mount it is just not available on the Island.

Our thanks go to Pataka and in particular Bob Maysmor, the Curator, for making the material available.



If you are interested in the History of Mana Island, you could do well to track down Bob's book, which may still be available from the Museum.



News from Sue On the Island as at December 2011



Shore Plover

Currently have 4 breeding pairs and two single 'floating' birds. Breeding and nesting is being intensively monitored, following Recovery Group advice, as part of the rat incursion response.

Takahe:

We currently have five pairs with first clutch chicks and three pairs incubating second clutches.

Bellbird/Whitehead:

Fledglings of both species have begun to appear over the last fortnight, the most frequent sightings are in Forest Valley and House Valley catchments, and to the south near Hole in the Rock. These indications are really positive for another successful breeding season for both species on the island with good recruitment and retention.



Seabirds:

Colin Miskelly visited overnight on November 29th to band any diving petrel chicks. Here is an excerpt from his email: "Of the eight eggs seen in September (my last visit) seven produced fledglings, plus I found an eighth chick in a burrow where I had previously failed to find the nest chamber. This compares with five chicks fledged from this colony in both of the last two years.

The prions were as secretive as usual. Six sites showed signs of recent visits, but only one had an accessible chamber with the bird present (on an egg in burrow 17).

The single fluttering shearwater pair at that site had a chick about a week old."



At the South Point site we have six young fluttering shearwater chicks from the the same number of nests (one was thought to be abandoned early on but now has a healthy chick). Hoping to id any outstanding adult (parent) birds whilst they are brooding their chicks, and then chicks will be banded by either Lynn/Helen or Colin M in January.

Weeds:

Di and Nicki have just under a month to go on the island, and have the Northeastern cliffs to search and weed.

Membership Details

FOMI are keen to cease printing the Newsletter and using snail mail. The last newsletter did not reach many members because of incorrect or aged data on our Members Data Base.

Ideally we would like our members to download the Newsletter from our Website or alternatively receive it by email. Regrettably a large number of emailed Newsletters bounced for Newsletter 45, and many of them from "paradise"accounts.

For those of you who wish to receive the Newsletters by email should provide updated details of your current email and physical addresses by completing this form or by email to info@manaisland.org.nz.

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Name:.....email:

Address:.....
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Rat eats poison, monitoring work continues on Mana Island

Extracted from a DoC press release dated 14 December 2011

The Department of Conservation (DOC) biosecurity response plan implemented following the sighting of a rat on Mana Island in November has paid off, with confirmation that a lethal dose of poison has recently been consumed.

“We were pretty happy when the bait blocks were checked and it was evident that the rat had nibbled on them. When the bait was weighed, it was confirmed that the rat had ingested a lethal dose,” said DOC spokesperson Brent Tandy.

Mr Tandy pointed out that, while this is good news for now, a body has not yet been found – however, no sign has been seen of the rat for over a week.

“Although all signs to date point to their being only one rat, we will continue extensive monitoring until we can be sure that there are no other threats to our precious island wildlife. Keeping our island nature sanctuaries pest free is a constant battle and we will continue to use traps, tracking tunnels and rodent detection dogs to monitor the island.”

Volunteer Opportunities

Maintenance Group .

Rescheduled for weekend of **14/15 January** 4 spaces available. Purpose of this trip to work on some of the historic sites (Bells/Lighthouse gardens).

Threatened Plants Group -

Next trip for this group for weekend **25/26 February** (6 spaces).

Shore Plover

Monitoring to possibly recommence in January (subject to need and resident birds/breeding). Tentative dates planned are **14/15 and 28/29 January**.

Weed Control

Next trip for this group planned for weekend of **10/11 March** (4 spaces)

All trips to Mana Island are weather dependent – trip is confirmed on the evening prior to scheduled departure.

Mana Island is predator-free and a sanctuary to a number of threatened plants and animals, so please observe the following:

Pack your bags the day of the trip to minimise the risk of rodents stowing away. Check all bags etc for rodents before departing Paremata. Ensure soles of footwear and clothing are clean of any dirt and plant seeds.

Smoking is not permitted.

Bring sturdy footwear and wet weather clothing (weather conditions can change rapidly). Bring your own overalls/work clothes if you have them. We do have some overalls available, and also provide gloves for planting/weeding etc. Sun hats and protective cream are recommended. (Parts of Mana are very exposed to sun and wind). For overnight trips remember your food, sleeping bag and personal toiletries etc. First aid kits are available for use whilst on the island.

Please notify the ranger of any medical conditions on arrival and bring any personal medications with you.

To make a booking for these work trips email info@manaisland.org.nz or telephone 04 2338411

Your Committee for the 2011 year is:

Colin Ryder President, Brian Paget Vice President, Darlene Adams Secretary, Barry Dent Treasurer and a Committee of Brian Bell, Jason Christensen (alternate Linda Kirkmeester, Rob Stone or his representative (DoC Rep), Tama Coker (Iwi Rep), and Allan Sheppard and Irene Swadling.

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

For a colour version of this Newsletter download one from our web site or request delivery by email, www.manaisland.org.nz

Editor: Brian Paget

Sponsors: Mana Transport Limited, Porirua

