



# FOMI Newsletter

November 2012

## Special points of interest:

- Editorial
- Fluttering Shearwater
- Whitaker Skink
- Gannets
- Membership Officer
- Bellbirds
- Fairy Prion
- Committee

## FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua

FOMI Newsletter 49

### President's Editorial

Hi

In my last Newsletter I referred to the roles of the Committee Members and their areas of interest and responsibility. They have been particularly busy over the past few months and you will find reports from them in this Newsletter.

Dale Shirliff on Seabirds and Whitaker Skinks,  
Brian Bell on the Gannets,  
Jason Christensen on Membership,

I also mentioned that going forward we will need specialist volunteers, probably in small groups, to carry out a variety of planned tasks. That process has begun with the Whitaker Skink project.

In the interests of updating our Membership list Darlene Adams, our past Secretary, undertook a telephone survey to update the list and contact details. This was a very helpful exercise which showed that membership was at it's peak in 2000-2001 of around 100 to the past three years of around 40. One reason for this was that in the peak of the planting effort of 25,000 trees per annum, in order to have subsidised boat trips passengers had to be current members, and FOMI contributed around \$10,000 per annum for the charter boat. 2006 saw the last of the bulk planting and the retirement of Les Flower and Marinowai from the transport scene.

Since then, commencing in 2007, we have arranged for a limited number of members day trips to the Island over summer, and these trips have a cost attached to cover the charter of a suitable boat for up to 30 passengers. Not only is weather an issue, only 50% of any arranged trips succeed, but landing is still tricky, particularly for the very young or elderly, and the cost per head now is around \$60.00. We do plan to run Open Days for members again, probably late February and March when the wind tends to be little more benign.

So Members are still important to us, not that our running costs are high because most of our work is carried out voluntarily and our projects are specifically funded, but we do need a core of volunteers who are available from time to time to provide grunt and or expertise for our projects. The Committee has decided that a Membership Secretary is a role and opportunity for a volunteer and applications are invited for that position in this Newsletter.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very happy festive season and a successful 2013.

Cheers

**Brian Paget,**  
President



## Flutterers and Whitaker's update from Dale Shirtliff

### Monitoring Flutterers

I accompanied Helen Gummer for the final 2 days and 1 night of her monitoring. The bad weather that made me a day late getting to the island had gone and sunny/moonlit conditions prevailed. Helen's most successful night for finding birds in burrows was Sat 25<sup>th</sup> – wet, overcast and windy. I was able to see a breeding pair that spent over 24 hours in their burrow the day of my arrival.

Some really pleasing data has emerged. All the birds she found were released or banded at Mana Island. She found 15 breeding pairs and 6 individuals. Birds from all three translocations made up the finds. Helen wrote up a report and produced a spreadsheet with the details of her monitoring for DoC and those interested (sent to FOMI committee).

The colony site is in excellent order. All burrows, entrances, (and hinged lids working) are accessible by the birds – Helen went to great pains ensure this in her day maintenance. One loudspeaker raised, the second one needs doing – to optimize sound carry.

Helen's routine – at the site each night 8pm-2am doing rounds hourly. Visit the site each afternoon to do maintenance and to do a day check of burrows. Article on the trip in Citylife with photos. 12 Sept. A concern raised over Diving Petrel Site but this may be self-sustaining. Diving Petrels were the first birds to be translocated to Mana and birds are returning. Only one speaker of sound system working.

### Whitaker's skinks

There is an ongoing need to protect the remaining Whitaker's skinks and other endemic species at Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve from rats, mice, weasels, stoats, hedgehogs. FOMI has funded this in the past. We have also funded replacement of pitfall traps (to trap the Whitakers), the cages for captures and the funding of the contractor to check/clear traps. Presumably FOMI would fund the translocation of Whitaker's skinks.

The response for volunteers was rewarding.

Helen, Michael, Mark, Robin, Glenys, Geoff, Amy, Martin, Gillian & Olaf, Bronwyn and Helen G all for offered to assist FOMI at Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve. DoC has come up with dates and an outline of jobs. I met with Lisa Clapcott from DoC to clarify this Friday.

Our work will help protect the rare Whitaker's skinks found here.

Lots of people have volunteered. I believe there will be jobs for all, particularly if we pair up.

A DoC officer will meet us on a date yet to be set, in early December. There are 2 different tasks. We will focus on task 1 to begin with in training.

### Tasks

1. Visiting the wooden mustelid traps (you have probably seen these beside walking tracks), checking bait, removing catches, resetting, recording. These are along the beach level walk track (carpark to near Wairaka Pt) and along the ridge top above (for the fit). This will be done once each month.
2. Shifting the pitfall trap used by the contractor to catch the Whitaker's skinks (which will later be transferred to Mana Island).

Other possibilities may arise later. Thanks once again. I will let you know soon when the training date is. DoC would like us all to fill in a volunteer form outlining preferences, experience and health & safety information. We will email these through soon too.





## The Gannet Nesting Site Relocated

### Preamble

The transfer of the existing concrete decoys now buried by grass and shrubs on the North West area was agreed in March so the task of transferring them to the Nursery area for renovation and repair. 62 of the original 80 birds were uncovered and the site prepared on the North East corner which was selected as a more suitable site.

Project Manager Brian Bell continues the story.

### Field Trip, Wednesday 14 November 2012

After three false starts due to rough weather Wednesday dawned a beauty and the Gannet field trip to Mana Island got under way. Four of Ngati Toa School's top class students were chosen to help the FOMI volunteers relocate the concrete gannet colony to its new position on the NE corner of Mana Island.

Jeff Hall, the new DoC Ranger on the island, had ferried the concrete gannets out close to the new site. This made it easy for the kids to help carry them into the new positions where they helped make nests and spray white paint around to look like guano.

The rest of the team helped Steve, the sound technician, to set up the system including solar panel and new speakers provided by DoC, which will broadcast gannet calls to help attract the birds.

Maybe the fantastic view will also attract the real gannets.

Judging by the enthusiasm to help spray around the false guano the Ngati Toa kids – Chayden Wineera-Roberts, Drea Parai-Tupene, Tania Noble-Shedlock and Pania Rei-Solomon thought that was the best part. Climbing down the cliff under the watchful eye of Paul to collect rocks to weight down the sound system was a bit of an adventure too.

The whole project has seen great cooperation and coordination between the various groups.

Thanks are due to:

- Leuellen Bonallack, Ngati Toa School Principal and Barbara Smith their teacher for letting the children have a day away from class. (Brian Bell made 2 trips to the school, firstly to confirm their interest and secondly to talk to the senior class children and brief the 4 lucky kids for the field trip)
- DoC people including Peter Simpson, Sue Caldwell, Di Batchelor, Jeff Hall, Stuart Cockburn, Steve the sound technician, and Frank and Dave the boatmen have been very supportive
- Bill Inge, PCC Manager of Parks and Reserves provided the paint for false guano

Finally, thanks to the great team of FOMI volunteers:

- Initial reconnoitre – Brian Paget, Bruce Koller, Martin Cawthron, Brian Bell
- Transfer of the gannets back to the Ranger Station – Allan Corry, Randall, Robin Chesterfield, Brian Carter, Frank and one other
- Repairing broken birds and weeding new site – Jonathan Swadling, Dale Shirtliff, Kath Bell, Brian Bell
- Painting repaired birds and further site weeding – Dale Shirtliff, Kath Bell, Brian Bell
- Setting out the gannets on the new site and helping install the new sound system – Allan Corry, Geoff de Lisle, John McKoy, Brian Bell.

The new site is visible from Karehana Bay at Plimmerton so we hope that the local bird watchers will keep an eye out for real gannet activity and let us know.



## FOMI Membership Officer Job Description

The Friends of Mana Island Committee is seeking a volunteer to act in an important role being the main contact person for the members. This can be a very rewarding role keeping our members up to date with the happenings of our favourite Wind blasted Island! The membership office can be a member of the Committee but is not a requirement! Their main job description duties are not limited to those listed below.

The membership officer will be responsible for:

- maintaining up to date membership records
- posting out the Subs notice on the 1<sup>st</sup> February each year
- sending out Reminder Notices for overdue subs in March
- collecting & correlating information from Project Coordinators, Doc and Volunteers for the Monthly Mana Island News updates
- sending out the News Letter to members and interested parties
- maintain a Volunteer Data Base
- being the main contact person for FOMI Coordinators to send Volunteer Requests to, for e-mailing out
- monitor the FOMI e-mail address ( eg [info@friendsofmanaisland.org.nz](mailto:info@friendsofmanaisland.org.nz))
- receipting subscriptions

If this sounds like you give me a call to discuss the role further Jason Christensen  
[jasonchristensen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jasonchristensen@xtra.co.nz) or 06 3777360

## Helen Gummer on the Fluttering Shearwaters

Helen is our contractor monitoring the burrowing seabirds, as mentioned in Dale's report, and she reported in September that, as part of her Conclusion:

"We could expect a minimum of 17 pairs to breed on Mana I. this coming 2012/13 season; 15 pairs were found together on this monitoring trip and there are another two burrows where only single birds were found yet both were breeding burrows last season. If the other burrows in which I found single birds and evidence of nest-building also contain pairs then there could even be up to 20 breeding burrows on Mana I. this season."

Good news indeed.

## Bell Birds

Jason reported in September that:

"It appears that the Bellbirds that were transferred to Mana have been very transient. Two of our birds released last month have turned up at Zealandia (Karori), Two birds have now been found dead in Titahi Bay, lets hope that's all that have flown away.

Its hoped that we might get some feed back on any by catch Bellbirds from the Yellow Crown transfer when they get to Mana later in the week.

## Fairy prion

Colin Miskelly reported in October

Five breeding burrows found, 4 eggs confirmed and one other likely. This is the largest number of pairs recorded of this elusive species on the island (four chicks fledged last year). Four adults were handled, including one that had not been seen since it fledged as a translocated chick in January 2004. This is the 20th translocated chick to return to Mana Island, and the first new transferee to be found since 2008.

**Your Committee** for the 2012 year is:

Brian Paget, President; Jason Christensen Vice President; Irene Swadling, Secretary; Ian Hoare Treasurer and a Committee of Brian Bell, Linda Kerkmeester, Dale Shirliff, Rob Stone or his representative (DoC Rep), Reina Solomon, (IWI representative).

To contact any of the above email them at [contactus@manaisland.org.nz](mailto: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](http://www.manaisland.org.nz)

Editor: Brian Paget

Sponsor: Caduceus Systems Limited Wellington

