**Pigeon Post September – October**

The grass clippings are blowing in my face while I mow the lawns, and the birds are busy nesting, it must be spring!!

Our Takahe have kicked into another breeding season. We had planned to do another egg transfer to Southland of their first clutch nests this year, but the birds had other plans. Our birds were a bit tardy in getting going here while the southern “foster” pairs started earlier. The requirement for them to start around the same time was lost on the Takahe, but at least they’re nesting!

We also have a few new pairings formed over recent months following the sort of behaviour one would liken to “Days of our Lives” or “the Young and the Restless”. The first nests of the season have started to hatch so hopefully we get a reasonable run of weather to help the chicks establish.

The Shore Plover have also started nesting. With one nest confirmed so far. If you are coming over for a wander around be sure to give them plenty of space so they can do their thing. There has been no shortage of sand hopper laden weed on the beach to feed them, following the regular stormy conditions. While that may be good for feeding the plover, it does make for a grumpy Ranger trying to keep the slipway clear to launch and retrieve the boat!

There has been a good number of Fluttering Shearwaters nesting in there artificial burrows on the southern cliffs. When the chicks hatch, mum and Dad will be flat out feeding out to sea during the day to return after dark and feed them.

Plans to boost the Fairy Prion population are well underway. Friends of Mana Island and Contractors had a site visit recently to plot where the wooden artificial burrows will be dug into the hillside in preparation for two translocations of chicks in 2015 and 2016. These chicks will be tube fed by keen volunteers for 10-14 days before they fledge on their own and hopefully return as adults to breed in a few years time.

Island visitors have been few and far between as the windy conditions dictate. Although of special mention was a bloke who came across from Titahi bay on one of those standup paddle boards...well done that man!!

A couple of months back about 200 kids, teachers and parents from Plimmerton School had a few day trips onto the island. It was great to see so many here enjoying the place. The opportunity to get some work done was not lost on me. The groups assisted with beach clean ups, biosecurity checks off rodent tracking tunnels and weeding the concrete gannet colony. The Catamaran vessel that transported them, disembarking by a gantry on the boulder spit made it very handy. There is now potential and scope to get more school groups out here to enjoy what the island has to offer.

Well that may be enough navel gazing for now, there are lawns to be done!!

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The Islanders