



# FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INCORPORATED

PO BOX 54 101, MANA 5247

Newsletter Number 32

August 2007

Hi

Winter is here or is it spring? Certainly the weather has been unpredictable, unseasonable and recently very warm, but no doubt very good for growth on the Island.

As you will all be aware by now, planting is almost at a standstill, and that will be so for years to come. Infill and endangered species planting is all that is happening this winter, by small groups of enthusiastic volunteers who are able to spend several days on the Island at a time, all very worthwhile and highly productive. The rest of us will have to content ourselves with watching all the stuff grow.

We have been successful in obtaining funds for the last of the Fluttering Shearwater releases of 100 birds programmed for January next year. On your behalf I went along to the funding distribution from the Mana Community Trust and collected our cheque. It should be noted that the Mana Community Trust have supported our projects for some years now, in particular the planting programme, our Mobile Field Station (the caravan) and the release of burrowing sea birds. We are grateful for their continuing support.

The recent release of Shore Plovers is another exciting programme which is scheduled to run over the next year or so. Already there are signs that they have spread their wings to the mainland, and some are regularly sighted south of Titahi Bay. The objective, of course, is to establish a breeding colony on the Island. I guess that spring will tell.

Watch out for our planned trips for small groups, your input is highly valued. We do plan to have some Summer events so you will be able to monitor progress. More news will follow later in the year.

In the meantime keep warm and out of the wind.

Cheers

Brian

## ***Congratulations Barbara!***

Our heartfelt congratulations go to Barbara Marshall who has just been awarded the Queen's Service Medal for Services to Conservation.

Barbara has spent a lifetime doing voluntary work. She is presently the National Secretary for the Federation of Mountain Clubs, a position she has held for 21 years. She is also Secretary of the Pauatahanui Reserve Management Committee and she has been an active member of the Tararua Tramping Club since 1987.

Barbara has been visiting Mana Island for over twenty years. She was on the very first Forest & Bird planting trip. In fact no planting was done — a barge-load of fencing had to be removed before any trees could be put in the ground.



*Barbara Marshall QSM*

On the Huts and Tracks Committee for the Tararua Tramping Club, she organises several trips every year to Mana Island. And while she is not quite as active now as she once was, she still goes over regularly and does her work at the bottom of the hill instead of the top!

## *News from the Island*

On a recent flight to Auckland, Grant looked though a gap in the clouds directly down on Mana Island and he was pleasantly surprised to see how well forested it seemed. The shrubland on the top of the Island covers a wide area not easily seen from the mainland.

In late May the boats were resurveyed and passed the survey with all certificates, charts and flares etc. up to scratch.

In June there was a problem with the submersible water pump which supplies all of the Island's water. It has now been replaced with a new solar-powered pump. The old pump, its power supply and the old tower were dismantled. Thanks to the power of the sun, water is once again flowing and the water tanks are full. It really was just in the nick of time as Grant was starting to run low on supplies of Speights Old Dark!

The winter season has been very busy with enthusiastic tree planters and volunteers helping to plant in excess of 6,000 trees. Gaps are now being filled which were either missed, or the plant survival was poor due to

perhaps a particularly dry summer. Tough species such as ngaio and taupata are key to patching these gaps to eventually provide a forest canopy and thus habitat for other plants and animals. Early planting ensures the plants will be well established when next summer arrives.

A load of potting mix was delivered early in July in preparation for the next nursery season. Ngaio cuttings have been returned from Taupo nursery with roots on and they will be potted up to grow on. A steady trickle of cuttings are sent up to Taupo over the year to ensure sufficient plants for the following planting season.

In late June the annual round-up of the takahe chicks was completed - banding, measuring and weighing two of this season's offspring. There are now a total of 42 takahe on the Island, which is about 15% of the entire takahe population left in the world. The adult takahe are starting to get their territories established for breeding, so there is a bit of scrapping and squabbling going on to sort out who will nest where. As the weather plays a major part in takahe chick survival,

a mild spring would be very helpful.

The shore plover establishment project is complete for the year and the aviary will soon be packed away. Monthly monitoring of the birds will continue - the current tally is 22. The interesting time will be the lead-up to the breeding season when the birds pair-up and prospect for territory. Let us know if you see a little dotterel-like bird on the mainland beaches near you. Some have been seen up at Waikanae and on Titahi Bay beach.

Frank recently spent a few days running the tracking tunnels to complete the quarterly rodent audit. This is a way of checking to ensure that there has been no invasion by rodents. The result was that the Island is squeaky-clean.

Piripi celebrated his first birthday on the Island, complete with cake, candle and excitement! He is fast growing into a young boy who loves the outdoors. He took his first few steps a few weeks ago at 11 months old. He is pretty pleased with himself when teetering along, his big grin revealing new teeth.

### *Shore Plover*

It appears that a group of shore plover regularly travel to and from Mana Island. Mike Peers, birdwatcher recently spotted and recorded five banded Plovers on the shore South of Titahi Bay.

## *Paraparaumu College Students model sheep* by Stacy Moore



*Cerid Burbidge-Jone, Connor Tieman, Hayley-Ann Oakley placing their model sheep inside the historic woolshed*



*TVNZ crew filming the students taking the sheep off the boat*

Mana Island Scientific Reserve is managed for New Zealand's flora and fauna. Historically sheep and cattle grazed on its hillsides but were removed because of an outbreak of scrapie disease and Mana Island became a DOC nature reserve in 1987.

DOC maintains the Mana Island historic woolshed for public interpretation. But what do you do when you can no longer have real live sheep in your woolshed?

Paraparaumu College students came up with an answer. Teacher, Nicola Easthope and pupils in the environmental action group - VOICE, decided to build life sized model sheep! Students met at the DOC office on weekends and holidays to construct a small merino flock out of chicken wire, paper mache, bits of real wool and paint.

Upon completion, recent graduates Hayley-Ann Oakley, Cerid Burbidge-Jones, and Connor Tieman, took Rambo (the ram), Buttercup (the ewe), and Lamb Chop (the lamb) over to Mana Island to place them in their new home.

They were joined by a TVNZ crew who filmed them setting up their sheep in the historic woolshed. "It is special to be on Mana Island and is a final step in finishing the sheep," said Cerid. "The students of VOICE feel as if we are contributing to the historic interpretation on Mana Island. I am inspired by all the conservation efforts of DOC staff. This reinforced my ambition to go into a conservation field someday," commented Hayley-Ann.

## *Oral History*

Denis Fairfax is looking after the FOMI oral history programme. He is keen to tape record the reminiscences of those who worked on the Island or had a significant association with it, especially in the period before DOC assumed control.

So far, he has interviewed mainly farmers but he would also like to know of any diaries, interesting photographs or collections of cuttings which relate to the Island.

Copies of completed tape recordings are deposited with the National Library and with Pataka, the Porirua museum.

To contact Denis, phone 239 9201, write PO Box 54 101, Mana 5247 or email [Brian@caduceus.co.nz](mailto:Brian@caduceus.co.nz)

## ***Volunteer Opportunities***

Now that tree planting is drawing to a close, FOMI is planning to run bi-monthly trips to the Island to do whatever Grant and Sue decide. It could be planting, weeding, painting — whatever needs to be done.

There are places for six fit energetic people who are confident working unsupervised.

The first of these trips is two nights and three days

3 - 5 September 2007

Contact [Paul on 04 902 4321](tel:049024321) or [021 160 8833](tel:0211608833) or email [Brian@caduceus.co.nz](mailto:Brian@caduceus.co.nz)

## ***Volunteer Statistics***

1999	48
2000	180
2001	179
2002	320
2003	401
2004	386
2005	191
2006	139
as at 24/3/07	212
Total	2056 Days

These are the Department of Conservation volunteer statistics since 1999. Many thanks to everybody who has helped and an especial thanks to Kelvin who has organised the trips for the last few years.



## ***Mana Island T Shirts***

\$20 each plus \$3 freight

Sizes S to XXL

Order from  
[tshirts@manaisland.org.nz](mailto: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

Visit our website:  
[www.manaisland.org.nz](http://www.manaisland.org.nz)

## ***2007 Committee***

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)

*Newsletter kindly sponsored by Mana Transport Ltd*