



April 2013

FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

FOMI Newsletter 51

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua, 5247

Special points of interest:

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President's Editorial

Hi

Autumn has now arrived and the drought has been broken, somewhat too late for the rural community. Rather than prattle on I would rather celebrate the AGM held in March and well attended. For those who were unable to make it my Annual Report follows.

Presidents Report for AGM of the Friends of Mana Island Inc

20 March 2013

Good evening and welcome to our 14th Annual General Meeting.

In theory this report is for the 2012 year but due to our idiosyncratic rules our Financial Year is for the Calendar year of 2012 but the reality is that our AGM is always held in March and the Officers and Committee are appointed at that time for a year, which covers the last three quarters of 2012 and the first quarter of this year.

Since taking over the role of President last year I have pleasure in reporting that in my mind it has been a very fruitful and encouraging year for Mana Island. The Committee has been very active this year and I believe that the introduction of project based responsibility for each of them has tapped their energies and interests resulting in positive outcomes. I would like to thank Jason, Dale, Brian and Linda for the way they have accepted their folios and executed them. You will hear from each of them shortly.

Colin Ryder referred last year to the changes in DOC, and regrettably they remain unresolved as of now but are expected to be finalised by the end of June. The changes during the year have had an impact on Mana Island already, with Jeff Hall appointed to the Island and PJ's tenure extended, but with one boat covering Mana & Kapiti and staff covering both Islands a change of focus to core business has meant a reduction in volunteer opportunities. We had a meeting with Rob Stone, Area Manager of DOC, and clarified a number of issues and directions which I am sure will result in greater opportunities for volunteers to pick up the tasks which DOC will be unable to manage totally themselves with the resources they are likely to have.

In June last year I was privileged to join in the release of 20 Rowi, which were hatched at Franz Josef, matured on Motuara Island and hopefully to breed on Mana Island. A joint operation between DOC and BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust has increased the population of Rowi from 180 in 1996 to 400 in 2011 and hopefully Mana Island will assist in increasing the numbers to a target of 600.

In July Jason and his team collected 60 Bellbird on Kapiti for release on Mana. In March 2012 an alternative site was surveyed for the concrete Gannets and their re-location was completed in November.

Shore plover have had a chequered career on Mana with predation interfering with their prospects. So their breeding has been restricted to 4 pairs. Another release of 15 birds took place in March this year. They seem to enjoy Plimmerton.

Work has also commenced on preparing an action plan for floral diversity on Mana and a review of the Wetland area.

You may recall that we transferred 24 Kakariki (the Yellow Crowned version) in 2004, and it is with some satisfaction to note that they have bred so successfully that they are now forming the basis of an export market to the mainland. This export market also includes our Giant Weta which have migrated to Matiu Some and the Hawkes Bay.

Takahe continue to prosper with 6 chicks hatched this year.

A good example of the impact of the review of DOC has been that involving Whitaker Skinks, where whilst the species rate high on the priority list their habitat

Annual Report Continued

is not, so Dale and his team are filling the gap.

Whilst we can't accept any or all the credit for all these projects, what we have done over the years is provide and maintain the habitat for their success, and in some cases the part funding for them.

Funding over the past 13 years has been generated principally from Charitable Trusts supported by the gambling community and this is a reducing source of funds. We have in the past year received funds for the Whitaker Skink pest eradication from Infinity for which we are very grateful. In addition we have received a very generous sponsorship from Brother International (NZ) Ltd, which is the second such donation of our 3 year contract.

We are particularly pleased with the outcome of negotiations during the year with OMV New Zealand Ltd, a Wellington based Company who have agreed to fund the re-location of another 200 Fairy Prion on Mana Island. This will be another step in the establishment of burrowing seabirds on Mana Island to create an ecosystem which will support a wide variety of animals. The monitoring of previous releases of seabirds continues and shows a slow but increasing success rate.

So as you can tell we have had a very busy year and the prospects are to be even busier. To this end Jason has instigated a Membership drive, more to increase the expertise available for projects than for any financial purpose. Strength of numbers always helps if political pressures are required, and there is no doubt that with the current Government financial drivers DOC are going to need all the help they can get to do more, whilst having less.

Thank you

Brian Paget, President.

The election of Officers followed and I am pleased to welcome to your Committee Imogen Warren as Secretary and Dick Fernyhough as Treasurer.

Under General Business the Change to the Rules governing the appointment of an Auditor, as published in our last Newsletter, was passed unanimously. My thanks to our Hon. Solicitor, Roger Hayman, of Hayman Lawyers, and his team for putting together the changes required.

The address from Colin Miskelly followed the business meeting with a fascinating documented History of the translocation of bird species in New Zealand and their relative success or failure over time.

Brother Trip to visit the Gannets

As mentioned in the Annual Report Brother International NZ Limited have provided an Annual donation as a result of participation in their environmental initiative. They have indicated that their donation this year, the third such donation, will be \$10,000, which is a fantastic effort. Our obligations are to provide them with an Annual report on the sea bird projects and an opportunity for up to 6 of their staff to visit Mana Island and contribute some voluntary labour. This years trip took place last Friday, 19 May, and thanks to the weather gods and DOC the day turned out to be calm and whilst cloudy at times, rainless in a window of exceptionally wet weather week either side. Only 4 Brother staff were able to make the trip and they carried out some weeding on the Gannet site whilst I made a pathetic effort to increase the extent of the guano. On our return to base we spent a pleasant time in Forest Valley observing the activities of fantail, north island robin, bellbird and yellow crowned parakeet (Piwakawaka, Toutouwai, Korimako, Kakariki) and back at base some Takahe and Shore Plover. (Tuturuatu).



Transfer of 60 bellbirds from Kapiti Island to Mana Island, 25 - 30th July 2012.

An extract from a report by Melody McLaughlin and Annette Harvey, March 2013



Summary

With favourable weather the translocation took 6 days: 1 day to set up four aviaries, seventeen mistnets and the banding station; 2 days to catch and process 66 bellbirds; 2 days for them to settle into the aviaries, key into the food and regain some weight; and 1 transfer day. 1 male died in the aviary (cause unknown), 4 were released on Kapiti Island and 15 males and 46 females were transferred to Mana Island by helicopter and released there with no losses.

Introduction

Mana Island is a 217 ha Scientific Reserve approximately 2.5km from the adjacent mainland, off Porirua and north of Wellington. The island was farmed for over 150 years, the last stock being removed in 1986. A regenerating forest remnant remained at this time, totalling around 2 hectares. A revegetation programme commenced in 1987, and a total of over 500,000 trees have been planted to create a low forest canopy and open shrub land community.

The island has been free of mammalian predators since mice were eradicated from Mana in 1989- 1990. There is a network of contingency bait stations checked monthly, and a rodent audit using tracking tunnels is completed every 3 months.

The island is home to a few surviving resident species; namely Cook Strait giant weta, goldstripe gecko, and McGregor's skink. In addition, eight bird species have been introduced, including three species of burrowing seabirds, flightless takahe, and the New Zealand shore plover. A small wetland restored in 1999 now has a population of brown teal/pateke which were released in 2001. Mana also has a lizard population of ten species, four of which have been introduced. Two weevil species have also been translocated to Mana.

The reintroduction of bellbirds forms part of an overall ecological restoration programme for Mana Island (see Mana Island Ecological Restoration (Miskelly, 1999). This programme comprises the restoration of habitat, flora and fauna. The Friends of Mana Island Incorporated Society (FOMI) was formed with the principal objective of supporting and assisting the Department of Conservation (DoC) in implementing the restoration plan for Mana Island. Community conservation groups such as Forest and Bird, FOMI and various tramping clubs, school groups and members of the local community have contributed a large number of volunteer hours to many of the conservation projects on Mana Island and to assist the two permanent DoC staff. In addition, Forest and Bird raised sponsorship funds for the mouse eradication project and FOMI has funded and lead many of the species introductions. The island is within part of bellbird former range, and remains of bellbirds are recorded in middens on Mana Island (Miskelly, 1999).

The purpose of the translocation was:

- To transfer up to 60 birds, predominantly females, to help the re-establishment of bellbird/korimako to Mana Island which was begun in July 2010 with the transfer of forty three birds.
- To enhance public awareness through advocacy and public participation in the conservation management of the bellbird populations on Mana Island. This will be achieved by involving skilled volunteers (FOMI/OSNZ) in the translocation and post-release monitoring. Once populations are established, the public will be able to see and hear these species when visiting the island.
- If successful, this transfer would create another potential point of dispersal for bellbirds to re- colonise other parts of the Wellington region naturally (e.g. bush areas and margins on the adjacent mainland from Makara to Pukerua Bay).
- To use the population, once they are well established, as a potential source for translocations to other suitable habitats.

Photos by
David Cornick



A recent view of the tops of Mana Island

Photos taken by Brian Paget during a trip taken by a Tawa Walking Group and GOPI in March 2013



Flax Weevils have spread far and wide



Your Committee for the 2013/14 year is:

Brian Paget, President; Jason Christensen Vice President; Imogen Warren, Secretary; Dick Fernyhough, Treasurer and a Committee of Brian Bell, Linda Kerkmeester, Dale Shirliff, Irene Swadling, Rob Stone or his representative (DoC Rep), Reina Solomon, (IWI representative) and a co-opted Membership Officer, Darlene Adams.

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

Editor: Brian Paget

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