



FOMI Newsletter

February 2014

FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

FOMI Newsletter 55

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua, 5247

Special points of interest:

- Editorial
- AGM Notice
- Beech Mast Year
- Project Report from Dale
- Subscription Due for 2014
- February Photos
- Committee

President's Editorial

Hi

Is this Summer I hear you ask?

Well it is almost March as I write this and we have endured the worst summer I can ever remember, and I have had a few, but the memory may not be as good as it used to be. We have had wind, rain, fog, earthquakes and unseasonably low temperatures up until now. Temperatures are up, I seem to recall a 30 last week, and we now seem to be steady in the 20's. It always seems to happen when everyone has had their holiday and are back to work with the offspring back into school.

There has to be a good side, hasn't there, spring growth continued well into February, the Wairarapa farmers have had little need for irrigation and surprise surprise, the wetland on Mana Island still has water in it along with the Brown Teal. I have had the opportunity and privilege of visiting Mana Island twice in the last couple of weeks, with more trips coming up in March. What a change and a pleasure it is to be able to travel by a boat with a walk on walk off facility. Not like the good old days, I hear some of you say and that is true, since 1987 tree planting by volunteers had to negotiate the trip from launch to Island by dinghy.

The first trip this year was to attend a Hui arranged by DOC for volunteer groups in the Wellington region to discuss the way forward with DOC and their new structure and the emphasis on Partnerships. If you attend our AGM you will hear more of what the future will look like in the world of Conservation in NZ and in particular our region.

This trip was followed shortly after by a group from one of our sponsors, OMV NZ Ltd, who are backing the next release of Fairy Prion due to take place in 2015, along with a number of local Rotarians. The weather treated us kindly on both days and the flora and fauna both contributed to an outstanding experience for all the visitors. Hopefully the upcoming fully booked trips will provide a similar experience for those who committed to visit. I have been impressed by the number of visitors who were part of the volunteer parties who planted some of the 500,000 trees over the last 27 years, and were unable to locate or access the plantings they carried out. It is true to say that the canopy is now quite substantial and it is timely to review what is in place and what can be done to ensure that the floral diversity is enhanced.

Brian Paget,
President

Annual General Meeting 2014

Notice is given to members that the AGM of The Friends of Mana Island Inc. will be held

at the **Mana Cruising Club**, Ngatittoa Domain

7:30 PM, 25 March 2014

The purpose of the meeting is to present the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and to elect the Officers and Committee Members for the 2014 year. Nominations for all positions are invited from the floor.

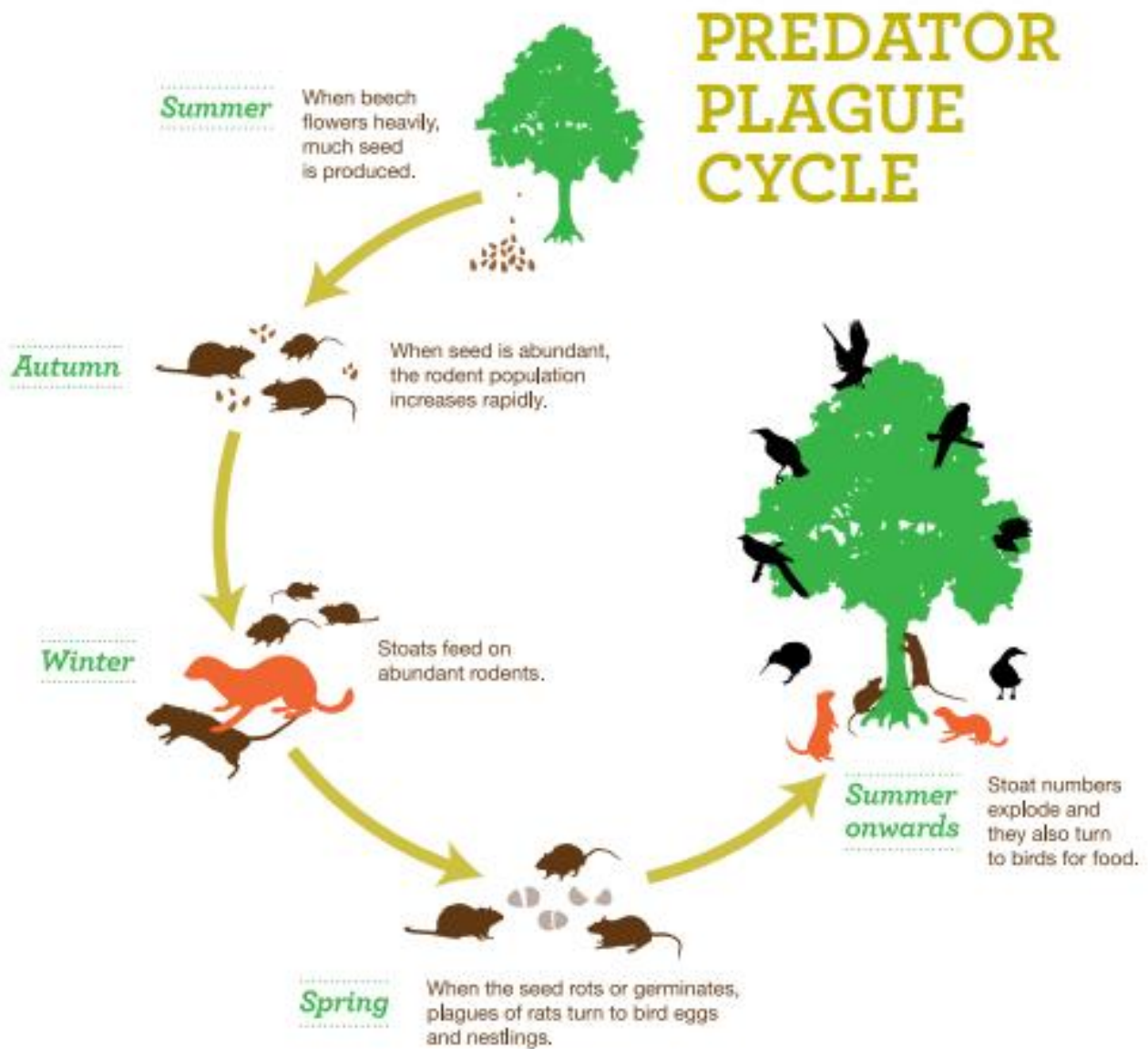
The AGM will be followed by a presentation from **Matt Barnett**, Partnership Ranger Department of Conservation, who will outline the changes in structure of the Department and their focus

Conservation for prosperity *Tiakina te taiao, kia puawai*

Beech Mast 2014

A document posted on the DOC Website (well worth a visit at www.doc.govt.nz/battleforourbirds)

Heavy seeding in our native forests this year will drive high rodent and stoat numbers that prey on endangered birds. 'Battle for our Birds' is a predator control response to protect our native wildlife from predators.



FOMI Report for the AGM from Dale Shirtliff 13/02/14



Fluttering Shearwater

FOMI carried out translocations fluttering shearwater chicks over three summers, 2006-2009. This entailed capturing chicks on Long island, Queen Charlotte Sound, transporting them to Mana and feeding them until they fledged. The chicks dispersed far and wide but now the long wait to see how many returned as adults is now bearing fruit.

In August, 2013, Helen Gummer and myself spent 8 and 4 nights respectively checking the man made burrows for signs of adults returning to breed or at least check out the site. 51 adults were found, 24 pairings and 3 individuals. This was up from 36 birds in 2012 with 12 pairs and 6 singles. As reported in the newsletter the monitoring involved night-time hourly visiting of the burrows between 8pm and 2am. During the afternoons maintenance of burrow entrances and lids, removal of overgrowing flax and tauhinu and grass was carried out.

Just before Christmas Helen and I returned and 12 chicks were banded, a thirteenth one was too small and banded later. This was 3 chicks less than 2012 but still a very successful breeding season. A working bee to ensure the burrows are in good shape for the next breeding season will be held in late April.



Whitaker's Skinks

For just over a year 12 FOMI volunteers have been checking the mustelid trap lines at Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve – along the beach and along the bluff tops. Stoats, weasels hedgehogs rats and rabbits have been caught but only in small numbers – a sign that the trapping is effective. Trap lines are being checked twice a month. Previously, DoC was only able to check traps quarterly. This effort has had a significant effect in protecting the wildlife of the area including skinks and geckos. Each volunteer group records catches and these are reported to DoC. The major reason for protecting the area is FOMI's project to trap and breed Whitaker's skinks.

This summer for the first time FOMI has contracted out the pitfall trapping of Whitaker's skinks. Jacqui Macintosh has been setting these lizard traps in an effort to capture these very rare skinks. DoC has moved the responsibility of projects like this to voluntary organisations like FOMI. No Whitaker's skinks have been trapped though dozens of more common species are released by Jacqui. We live in hope that sufficient Whitaker's can be caught to give us the option of beginning a colony on Mana Island. Recent vandalism – the pulling out of the ground of around 10 of these traps has been put right and all traps are now back in action.

Subscriptions are due now for the 2014 Calendar Year

You will have received your renewal notice for your Annual Subscription for this year. Financial Members are entitled to vote at the AGM and are given precedence for volunteer opportunities which may be available during the year.

We are currently working with DOC on a program of work which can be carried out by small groups of volunteers with appropriate expertise to function independent of their supervision. This will mean that we will be looking for leaders to provide the management of these groups or for volunteers to be trained in the various skills required.

We expect to have that program and details published in the next Newsletter.

This work is over and above the requirements of the Projects which we already have in hand, including the Fairy Prion release in 2015 & 2016, the ongoing monitoring for Whitaker Skinks and Shore Plover, the concrete Gannet relocation and the Floral Diversity work.

Your subscription funds those projects which do not have specific sponsors.



Mana Island Photos taken in February 2014 thanks to Kath Bell & Brian Paget



Your Committee for the 2013/14 year is:

Brian Paget, President; Jason Christensen, Vice President; Julie Harrison, 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

