



Newsletter No. 77

March 2019

Friends of Mana Island NEWS

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Message from FOMI President, John McKoy

Kia ora koutou. We have a slightly shorter than usual newsletter this quarter as we endeavour to keep on top of all the projects underway!

I hope everyone who attended the recent AGM enjoyed it. It was great to see so many people there. A special thanks to our guest speakers Gen and Nick, the DOC rangers on Mana Island for a wonderful talk about their work.

There's a wrap-up of the past year in [our latest Performance Report](#) which is now publicly available.

And here's a link to my [President's report](#) which I presented at the AGM. In it I pay tribute to the services of Darlene Adams who stood down as membership secretary after a long stint working for FOMI. We have really valued her input over many years. We welcome on-board Jim Cox in this role.

In April we will welcome the arrival of our newest immigrants to Mana, the North Island fernbirds from the Rotokare Scenic Reserve in Taranaki.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates on this new project.

Thanks so much for your support everyone. Keep an eye out for volunteering opportunities emailed to our members, and the new dates for another full season of guided trips which will be posted on our website in July.

Ngā mihi, John McKoy

Waikoko wetland working bees create a new walkway, by Jason Christensen, FOMI Executive

Creating a new track through the Waikoko wetland took two groups of volunteers the best part of two weekends in February. They put in 189 hours to create 166 metres of track by hand.



Fernbird (Photo: Christopher Stephens)



The track meanders quietly through the wetland. In March, a bird hide and picnic tables will be made, and the House Valley pond repaired.

Read a [report about the track's creation and more photos](#) of the new walkway with ribbon cutting for the opening. Well done everyone! And thanks to our sponsor OMV NZ Ltd for funding this new project.

Tiny seabirds win hearts, by *Philippa Sargent, FOMI Executive*

The 48 white-faced storm petrel chicks from the Chathams created quite a stir when they arrived on Mana Island on 11 February. There was a warm welcome for the new arrivals. from a large group including FOMI, DOC, iwi, OMV and media reps.

The chicks had travelled 800km to reach Mana, accompanied by Moriori and Ngati Mutunga representatives who gifted the birds to Ngati Toa.

This FOMI-led project was a long time in the making, and it went without a hitch. For three weeks after arriving on Mana the chicks were hand fed sardine smoothies by a team of volunteers led by wildlife biologist Cathy Mitchell. They were housed in individual wooden burrows. The last petrel successfully fledged on 4 March.

During the petrels' stay there were several guided trips of visitors who were delighted to see the chicks being fed, as well as volunteers on working bees who viewed them up close. "So cute" was the common refrain!

We will be waiting to see who from this group of first group of chicks returns in three to four years to start a new breeding colony. And, of course, we are preparing for the next batch of 100 chicks which arrives in February 2020, and further 100 chicks in 2021.

This project has been made possible through the generosity of our sponsor, OMV NZ Ltd. And special thanks to all the volunteers who gave up many hours of their time for this work.

[Watch this TVNZ video](#) showing the chicks being welcomed to Mana and being fed.

[And this Stuff video](#) featuring a really good commentary about the project by Graeme Taylor from DOC.



*Cathy preparing to feed a sardine smoothie to a chick.
(Photo: Dale Shirtiliff.)*



Great team work on March working bee, by Dale Shirtliff, FOMI Executive

It was a very productive weekend on 1-3 March, with lots of jobs undertaken on the island.

These included flax weevil site monitoring, setting up pitfall traps and monitoring, weeding and surveying for new burrows' installation.

[Read the full report here](#) showing what our volunteers achieved. Thanks for your hard work everyone!



Our sponsors make so much of our work possible.

Thanks to you all for your support – it is very much appreciated!



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