

Friday 8th December 2023

A 16 strong team (plus an additional 3 friends of Pat and Flora) departed the Mana Marina fuelling wharf at 1600 h via Glen Cooper & GoMana onboard the Charmaine Karol. After processing through biosecurity and H&S a small group set off to find and set the Speckled skink pitfall traps in House Valley. An excellent 1900 h Mana Island potluck dinner (and dessert including ice-cream!) was had.

After dinner the seabird crew headed up the hill (Helen & Annemieke) arriving at the Petrel Station at 2015 h for banding the last Diving Petrel chick, surface monitoring, and then moving to the Fluttering Shearwater burrows at South Point for the same. Joining them that evening at differing times included: Derek, Elaine, Heather, Pip, Ben, Angela. Excitingly the 16th translocated White-Faced Storm Petrel was discovered. Meanwhile over the other end of the island up the north end Will led a MIQ weevil monitoring expedition with Rebeca, & Steve. The team even found an 18-month-old weevil. Smaller night walks were had around the houses and wetland.

Saturday 9th December 2023

Started the day at 0800 h with a health & safety briefing along with Pat. The seabird team was Helen, Annemieke, Angela and Steve. Angela and Steve worked on the back-breaking burrow maintenance and clearance of the Fluttering Shearwater burrows at South Point, whilst Annemieke & Helen mainly focused on the bird banding and measuring.

Vaughan, Linda and Richard undertook wetland assessment – further detail in Vaughan's report to follow. Pat joined them for the first hour. In short it seems that the wetland is naturally silting up with several ponds now dried up and woody plants taking over. Unclear what this may mean for some of our wetland species – perhaps Pāteke monitoring is on the cards in the future? This team also undertook some afternoon weeding!

Will ran a Pitfalling team at the Flax Weevil pitfalling site (Ben, Elaine,



X-20140 – one of the larger Fluttering Shearwater chicks. Image by Annemieke.

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Derek), which included setting up the pitfalls, and working on removing the irrigation system – no mean feat!

Finally, up the far north Heather, Matthew, Rebecca, Diane, and Pip, were busy working on the Gannet painting. As it turned out, they were a bit resource limited (brushes and yellow paint) but never-the-less they undertook a great job, even with the wind and made a strong start on this project painting up 41 “birds”. Hopefully on the future trip we will see real Gannets (like we did (up until November 2020) following the last gannet repainting (October 2019). It will be good to have the gannets all spruced up again prior to prospecting (which can be as early as July).



Top: The Gannet colony before. Bottom: the Gannet colony after – and that’s only with black & white paint applied! Images by Rebecca.

All were returned to Lockwood at 1500 h. The speckled skink pitfalls were checked and closed – given the looming possibility of an earlier pick up on Sunday due to weather. Had another great Mana Island potluck dinner with BBQ items (& dessert). Skipper Glen confirmed that the boat was returning at 12midday Sunday. A quick planning session with Sunday’s timeline was created.



The gannet painting team in action – image by Heather.



Last gannet seen at the gannet colony – taken 28 November 2020. Image by Annemieke

Helen and Annemieke returned uphill at 2053 h for seabird monitoring and were joined by Ben. The remaining Diving Petrel burrows were checked for fledging success. Checked Prion nests for nest status. Checked Fluttering Shearwater colony for surface birds. Further evening short-walk options around the Lockwood were offered and taken up by most.

Sunday 10th December 2023

With an early departure comes an early start! We were all packed, with the seabird team (Helen, Annemieke, Pip, Heather, Matthew) starting up the hill just after 0700 h. The 106 WFSP burrows were cleared, and remaining boxes of the 101 Fluttering Shearwater burrows were completed.



Steve with the removed irrigation piping! Image by Will.

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Linda and Richard started Sunday with some light-welling and giving some much-needed vegetation maintenance including the Mana Island heritage peach trees and Kahikatea in the wetland! Will and team (Derek, Elaine, Ben, Vaughan, Angela & Steve) closed the weevil pitfall traps and finished up removing the irrigation piping.



Left: South Point Fluttering Shearwater burrows super overgrown. Right: After the awesome work of the burrow maintenance team this weekend!

Given the swift depart required from the island Diane and Rebecca worked on cleaning and tidying the Lockwood, which was excellent. Some much-needed editing also occurred of food which had been in the pantry far too long!

Departed Island at 1200 h along with Pat, Flora Tess, and friends. The waves were quite high, and choppy with a southerly rolling in, but as we were surfing back in the same direction as the waves, all things considered it was quite an agreeable return.

Special mention to Pip and Richard. Pip brought along a guitar, and Richard whipped out his

Overall, despite the shortened trip, with an excellent team, we were still able to undertake some excellent work! Thank-you all!

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Cheers,
Annemieke Hamilton



Right: Friends of Mana Island members, approximately top to bottom, left to right;
Will Brockelsby, Angela Dawson, Vaughan Keesing, Ben Wright,
Steve Rowell, Heather Evans, Matthew Durling, Richard Grasse, Derek Richardson,
Linda Kerkmeester Helen Gummer, Philippa Sargent, Rebecca Chrystal, Elaine
Richardson, Diana Oates,
Annemieke Hamilton

Image taken by Pat