



Friends of Mana Island work party report 9-11 August 2024

Participants: Philippa Doig, Richard Nichol, Kate Nolan, Martin Watson, David Cornick, Natasha Nipper, Nick Ryan, Katherine Smith, Tim Borrer, Ethan Price, Laurel Stowell, Paddy Leatherby, Lex Grubner, Francesca Neal

Friday evening

Several groups headed out and found penguins near the sheds opposite the Lockwood. David Cornick led a walk through the wetland and over the House Valley track. The first aid packs were checked and a list made of out of date items.



Saturday

We divided into three teams.

Nick, Philippa, Martin, Tash and Richard headed to the no access track under the macrocarpas with spades and saws. They entered the young forest area beyond weevil MIQ to remove neglected yellow pipes. They removed around 200 pipes and then met another team (Kat, Francesca, Lex, Laurel and Ethan) at the lighthouse site. They had been track clearing on the track that runs past weevil MIQ. We had lunch together and then went for a recreational walk to the gannet site



where we admired the new seaweed nests and closely clustered groups of gannets which we hope will prove irresistible to the passing gannets, one of which we sighted and encouraged in.

Philippa and Tash walked to sound system 2 near the petrel station and checked the battery charge. We then went to the fairy prion site and removed bamboo canes which might be a danger to workers on that steep site and also to the seabirds coming in fast at night. We then went on to the Fluttering Shearwater site at South Point and made sure Burrow FS 28 and its tunnel



were completely empty before we blocked the entrance with a rock. This burrow was invaded by bees last summer and we want to prevent a seabird using the burrow again in case the bees return and block the entrance with a new hive.



Kat, Francesca, Lex, Laurel and Ethan had cleared the track which runs past weevil MIQ. Jane Haxton, the ranger, was particularly concerned about flax bushes which are hanging into the track, dropping dead leaves and causing problems for the vehicle and mower. Also problematic is the tough creeping mingimingi. All the tracks on the island need regular maintenance and it is impossible for the ranger to keep all the tracks wide and clear. FOMI might be able to buy two more heavy duty loppers to make this ongoing task

easier. Mingimingi bushes are persistently invading the open space of the track and need to be removed from the edges and middle of the track. This team saw several gold stripe geckos and giant Cook Strait weta.



At the lighthouse for lunch the two teams swapped tools and information about the tasks we had been working on. Kat's team moved down the Tirohanga track to the highest takahe capture pen and entered the bush behind the pen. This team estimated they had removed around 200 pipes (20 pipes to a rubbish bag). Ethan tracked his movements and found he had walked more than 10 km!

David, Paddy, Kate and Tim worked their way through the wetland, weeding and then also removing yellow pipes in the wetland and along the side of the track leading towards the hill. Their heap was as large as the heaps higher up the hill so between all the teams we feel that we may have rescued around 600 trees.



In the late afternoon Paddy and Tim walked around the island because they were both new to Mana Island. After dinner there were expeditions to the beach and a kiwi walk over the House Valley track. Although we didn't definitely spot any kiwi, we all loved the calm evening walk with stunning views to the mainland.

Sunday

We were lucky to find that we had 5-minute bird count expertise in the group so Kat and Richard headed off to check all the 5MBC stations on the island. Ethan accompanied them to find out what was involved.



The rest of the group divided into two teams to work at clearing on the south end of the Tirohanga track. Laurel, Kate, Philippa, David, Tim and Paddy headed up the hill. At one point someone spotted a yellow pipe and we decided to remove it. It turned out to be seething with dozens of geckos of all sizes which were extremely reluctant to leave their home in the cut pipe.

Then we all visited the Fluttering Shearwater site as some people had never seen a seabird translocation site before and we explained the world-leading nature of the success of the Fluttering Shearwater translocation to Mana

Island. After that we worked our way down the Southern Loop, clearing overhanging and encroaching bushes. We continued down the Tirohanga track until we met Lex and Nick doing the same thing on the way up. Martin, Fran and Tash were also part of the uphill group.



We met up at the Lockwood for lunch at 1pm and enjoyed delicious leftovers from the shared dinners. After lunch the house clean up happened without drama. The tools were scrubbed, dried and oiled and counted. We have an inventory list of tools on the back of the FOMI cupboard door to make it easier to keep track of what we have.

Everyone had an hour to enjoy the island in the sunshine and the Charmaine Karol arrived at 4pm to take us home. A bonus was a rollicking ride to Paremata until we got into the shelter of the bay.

We were lucky to have calm and sometimes sunny weather for the weekend. This was a strong team of volunteers who achieved a lot over the two days. Thanks to Jane who supported all the volunteer work and last but not least to the hardworking volunteers. We hope to see all of you back again.

Philippa Doig 13 August 2024

