



## Friends of Mana Island Work party report December 6-8 2024

Participants: Annemieke Hamilton (leadership team), Laurie Smith (leadership team), Philippa Doig (leadership team), David Cornick, Alyx Brooks, Monika Nowicki, Tim Borrer, Richard Grasse, Helen Gummer, Neil Holland, David Mobbs, Karen Wood, Ann Hayman and Paul Hing Mather.

### Friday evening

Departed the mainland via GoMana and arrived at Mana Island about 4.30pm after a smooth ride over. Health and safety, introductions and dinner followed.

Annemieke and Ann headed to the Petrel Station where they banded the last three chicks to complete Diving Petrel banding for this season. All this season's Diving Petrel chicks within the study site are now banded, and fingers are crossed that they all successfully fledge and return. They also checked burrows for Fairy Prion, Diving Petrel and Fluttering Shearwater to identify any returning non-breeding birds or yet to be identified breeding adults of this season's nests. They returned to the Lockwood at 1am.

On a shorter outing, Richard, Philippa, Laurie, Paul, Karen, David M, Tim, Monika and Neil set off with red torches to search for kiwi around the back of the wetland and through the House Valley track, returning along the north Tirohanga. They had five or six extraordinary sightings of kiwi who gave them extended views of themselves close up before disappearing into the bush – perhaps it was the same kiwi following alongside us and emerging to wow us at frequent intervals!



Fairy Prion

### Saturday morning

The yellow pipes were calling and Paul, Tim and Philippa took off to scramble around in dense scrub, often reduced to crawling as well as suffering many scratches, torn clothing and getting disorientated: as in: do you have any idea which way the track is? Tim located a rich seam of densely located yellow pipes after quite a bit of fruitless searching, and we rescued around 120 trees which had long ago outgrown their pipes. The spot was GPS marked so that another team can (possibly) find it. There are many more pipes to remove. The ones we got off were left on the track for Jane Haxton (DOC) to collect when convenient. Then this team moved to the Petrel Station and scooped nutrient-rich water (seething with dead geckos) from the tank behind. Our buckets were carried to the Fairy Prion site to water recently transplanted tauhinu seedlings which will give cover to the returning seabirds in the fullness of time. Later in the afternoon Tim and Paul walked to the Hole in the Rock after a cup of tea and Laurie and Ann went for a swim, assuring everyone that it was a wonderful dip. We took their word for it.

Laurie screwed the defibrillator case to the wall in the living room of the Lockwood. It is just inside the ranch slider so easily accessible from inside or outside in case it is needed. Installing this defibrillator (or heart restarter as it now called) represents at least five years' research/campaigning/sponsorship-seeking on Laurie's part and finally, once the machine itself is activated, we have the defib on Mana Island. Good work, Laurie!



Defibrillator in position



Haymakers



Mulch!



The grass on the open areas and on the tracks had grown enormously while the mower was out of action. Jane has done a sterling job mowing since she took over as permanent ranger on Mana (congratulations, Jane) but the long cut grass lying around the Lockwood and elsewhere was a problem so Karen, David M, Laurie and Ann set off with wheelbarrows, rakes and forks and covered an amazing amount of ground, raking, heaping and dispersing the cut grass under nearby trees. This was a tough job in the hot sun and everyone gained a lot of respect for farm workers who would have worked cutting and raking hay by hand back in the day.

This team, along with Richard, also weeded in the wetland. The bindweed is very resistant to efforts to get rid of it and is an ongoing, tedious task. More satisfying was releasing kahikatea trees in the wetland. These trees now have more light and air around them.

The seabird colony. Sound system 2 was working but Annemieke had ambitious plans to revamp and get both systems working. Luckily, we had the expertise and strength of both David C and Neil to start work on moving Sound system 1 to give it better longevity. It has been at its current site for over 30 years and the vegetation is now starting to encroach on its solar panels. An old solar panel frame was disassembled, dug out and moved the from South Point, near the Fluttering Shearwater site to nearer the Fairy Prion and White Faced Storm Petrel sites and is ready to be installed. David C and Neil worked on trouble shooting Sound System 1 to at least get it operational again. On Saturday night both systems proved to be working well. By the end of the day the seabird located team had extracted 2 very old sound speakers and 4 long lengths of cable. Annemieke and Alyx worked around the Petrel Station monitoring and banding suitably developed Fluttering Shearwater chicks in the morning.

Helen and Monika went to South Point to process this season's Fluttering Shearwater chicks, with Alyx and Annemieke joining them when finished at the Petrel Station. In total Helen and Annemieke banded 41 Fluttering Shearwater chicks and if all the current eggs and chicks survive, there could be 44 or more chicks fledged this season (a potential island record). Monika weeded Cooks Scurvy Grass at the top of the Fluttering Shearwater colony at South Point. These precious seedlings are marked with a white stake and there are plans to collect more seed in 2025 and further propagate this very rare plant. The plants were also watered and tended to by Alyx and Helen. CSG needs weeding and watering every work party.



**Helen and Monika processing a FS chick for banding**



**David C and Monika remove old speaker system wiring**



**Annemieke with a banded Fluttering Shearwater chick**



**Alyx and Helen tend to the Cook's Scurvy Grass plantings**



## Saturday evening

Ann went to the wetlands and observed several pateke from the bird hide. Annemieke and Alyx went up to the Fluttering Shearwater site and the Petrel Station and checked burrows for Fairy Prion, Diving Petrel and Fluttering Shearwater to identify any returning non-breeding birds or yet to be identified breeding adults of this season's nests. Philippa led a kiwi walk with Ann and Karen but, to their disappointment, this evening (windy and noisy) no kiwi showed itself.

## Sunday morning

Predicted high winds and chop meant that we were going to be picked up by Glen Cooper at 1pm instead of 4pm. Everyone stayed and worked near the Lockwood in case of any earlier pick up as the weather system moved in.

Richard and David C led the way with an early start on track clearing at the northern end of the Tirohanga track. Laurie, Karen and David M worked raking grass in the whenua pou area and the next open area in front of the ranger's house. Philippa and Ann collected cereal pellets and fed the takahe which use the fenced area behind the Lockwood and then moved on to raking and spreading grass under the trees with Laurie and David M. The raking was made difficult because of long creeping clover tendrils which trapped the forks and rakes.

Alyx, Monika and Annemieke did a grand job sorting out yellow pipes into re-usable pipes and plastic rubbish. These are in labelled fadges in the open shed behind the rec room. Glen Cooper is happy to transport several fadges at a time on the Charmaine Karol and David C is willing to collect them with his van and deliver them to a planting project that can use them. Philippa has approached Pene Burton Bell to ask if Forest and Bird Kapiti-Mana can use a lot of plastic planting pipes and will also ask Friends of Taupo Swamp if they need any.

Jane and Tim tackled the track to the Hole in the Rock with weed eaters, which volunteers are allowed to use, and made a real difference to that track. Jane has had a lot of things to catch up on since she started her job on Mana Island.

Laurie saved four pairs of hedge clippers from the tip by straightening blades and tightening the nuts. These tools are now ready for further use. He also did a good search and tidy of the tool cupboard (failed to find the six Stanley knives) and updated the inventory on the back of the cupboard door.

Helen took the opportunity to spend several hours doing seabird data entry

Laurie cleaned window frames around the Lockwood as Jane had asked, and everyone was back at the Lockwood at 11am to have some morning tea and clean the house. Jane is concerned at the amount of rubbish accumulating on the island and we helped by taking away some boxes of magazines and books (and a child's cricket set) to give



**Takahē, a bit suspicious of new feeding team**



**David M, Haymaker**



**Alyx and Monika sorting Yellow tubes into rubbish or reuse piles**



to a charity shop or recycle. Every work party FOMI should try to remove some unwanted items from the island. If we can reduce the amount of rubbish on the island and recycle or dispose of it on the mainland we would be helping Mana Island.

At 12.15 we started to walk to the beach for our traditional photo and to wait for the Charmaine Karol, expecting a bumpy ride back. It turned out to be rough but without drama.

Our sincere thanks to Jane Haxton (DOC) who hosted us with great efficiency and good humour and of course to our fourteen volunteers, both new and returnees, who gave up their weekend to be worked hard in the hot sun and wind.

Philippa Doig

Dec 9 2024



Standing left to right: Laurie, Richard, Paul, David M, Ann, Karen, Tim, Helen, David C, Alyx  
Kneeling left to right: Monica, Annemieke Philippa, Neil