



Friends of Mana Island

Work Party Report April 11-13 2025

Trip co-leaders: Philippa Doig and Colin Munn

Participants: Colin Miskelly, Leonore Hoke, Katherine Smith, Erin Patterson, Bernie Salmon, Phoebe McLean, Tom Hitchon, William Brockelsby, Karen Nicoll, Lex Grubner and Jaz Hamilton.

This trip was a postponement from the previous weekend April 4-6 when the swell was too great for the trip to the island. The arrangements were a bit rushed as the usual fortnightly postponement date would have been at Easter weekend which we were keen to avoid. We had good weather, a bit warmer than we might have expected in April and some people found it very warm for intense working. We were a group of 13 as there were two researchers staying in the Lockwood and one FOMI member pulled out on the Friday, too late for Hannah to find a replacement. Colin Munn prepared a detailed list of jobs with possible team leaders and equipment required which was very helpful during the weekend.



Pou Whenua and a fine calm day

Friday evening

Weevil MIQ (Colin Miskelly)

Colin Miskelly led teams up to weevil MIQ both nights for 1-hour timed-searches for tagged flax weevils inside and outside the enclosure. A total of 172 weevils were removed from the enclosure over the two nights, and 425 were checked outside. No tagged weevils were found (the last sighting of a tagged animal was in February). Other team members involved were Will, Katherine, Tom, Lex, Leonore and Erin, plus DOC volunteers Geoff and Dallas.

Kiwi Walk

A few others enjoyed a walk around the back of the Waikoko wetland and up House Valley track on a beautiful evening but, alas, did not sight kiwi.

Saturday morning

5-minute bird counts (Colin Miskelly)

Colin Miskelly and Katherine completed independent counts in perfect conditions on Saturday, walking in opposite directions around the 20 stations. A total of 1310 birds of 27 species were counted, with bellbirds by far the most abundant (with a mean of 10.8 per 5 minute count). All counts have been entered into eBird.

Pitfall trapping (Colin Miskelly)

Will, Phoebe and Leonore set the 160 pitfall traps on Saturday, and Will, Erin, Katherine, and Colin Miskelly cleared them on Sunday. A total of 753 Raukawa geckos were found living in the traps before they were set, including two traps with 62 and 61 geckos each. A total of 420 lizards of four species were caught on Sunday, comprised of 272 Raukawa geckos, 83 northern grass skinks, 48 copper skinks, and 17 glossy brown skinks.

Incidental bird sightings from Colin Miskelly

Several team members reported seeing or hearing a kererū. The pitfall trapping team saw a kārearea (New Zealand falcon) on Sunday, and a reef heron flew past as we were waiting for the boat on Sunday afternoon.



Helmets on! Colin Miskelly and Jane



Yellow pipe removal (Bernie, Colin Munn, Philippa)

The Makita Multitools (Bernie brought his own) made a great difference slicing the yellow pipes off the trees. We were working about half way between two no access tracks and removed about 160 pipes, sorting and piling 130 on the track for Jane to collect. Another time we will take up several robust sacks which will make it easier to carry the pipes from the worksite to the

track, about a 15 minute walk through dense undergrowth. On this occasion we improvised with a raincoat zipped up and turned inside out and a long piece of string. In the



future we thought it would be worthwhile having a team of four with one person designated to carry the pipes to the track as the others removed them. Our smaller work party numbers meant that we did not have a team on yellow pipe removal on Sunday. There are plenty of pipes still to remove!

Cooks Scurvy Grass propagation (Erin and Tom)

Tom Hitchon and Erin Patterson continued work to establish further Cook's Scurvy Grass plants at the fluttering shearwater colony. The plots set up in February 2025 were weeded, with seed sown and watered in as per the seabird manual written by Helen Gummer. Further seed was collected from the adult plants at the site and added to the remaining packets of seed. Flowers and unripe seed is still present on the plants, which could potentially be collected at a later date. Potential CSG habitat was also identified along the Hole in the Rock track and on the coast parallel to this track.



Tom sowing CSG seeds

Seabird Sound system (Lex, Jaz, Phoebe and Tom)



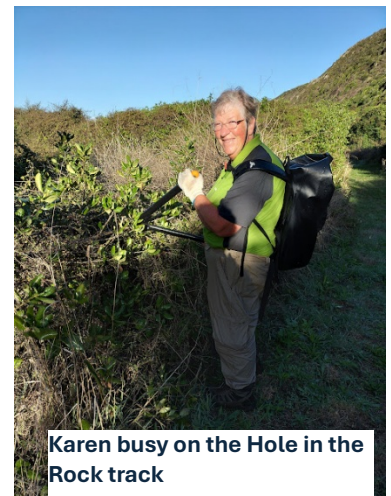
New solar array (Photo Lex)

Lex, Jaz, Phoebe and Tom spent many hours on both Saturday and Sunday working on the seabird sound system. Lex and Jaz have both written detailed accounts of the electrical work done and what still needs to be done at the next work party.

These accounts are stored in the FOMI Google Drive under workparties 2025, April 11-13 2025

A new solar array was set up in a better position for sun, solar panels were tested and much rewiring was done. Of course, all of this work and findings couldn't be possible without the help and

guidance of Lex, whose electrical engineering background was fundamental to the success of the new array build. Phoebe helped to find and remove long-forgotten cables at the old site, and relocate plants offset by the new array location. Tom found some time between scurvy grass watering to help us dig out the deep rebar pegs which the old Sound System site used as an anchor



Karen busy on the Hole in the Rock track

Track clearing

Karen transformed the Hole in the Rock track, working there on both Saturday and Sunday, making it much easier for Jane to mow. Erin, Tom and Colin Miskelly worked on the Weta Valley track which had become quite overgrown in the upper reaches.

Wetland area

Colin Munn checked over the changes made in the wetland but found the results disappointing in that there was little water in the ponds. The summer and autumn have been very dry and hopefully the next inspection will show better results.

Kiwi walk

A more successful (for some) kiwi walk on Saturday evening. This was even more frustrating for those missed seeing a kiwi

Sunday

Woolshed maintenance

Philippa and Leonore worked with Jane to give the Woolshed a general spring (autumn) clean. We swept piles of gecko skins and poo out of the shed, cleaned windows and the solar panels. Then Philippa and Leonore moved on to digging out the silver



Leonore and sparkling windows

beet in front of the Lockwood which is seeding wildly. Seedlings are even turning up on the beach. The compost bin was almost full by the time we finished

Tree Lucerne control

Colin Munn, Bernie and Tom used a map with designated problem areas to pull out, or cut and paste tree lucerne.

We all gathered back at the Lockwood for lunch and the clean up which was completed very quickly. Everyone had a short free time before we need to be on the beach at 3.45pm for the Charmaine Karol.



Tom and tree lucerne

Rubbish removal

When we left we took off two fadges and two smaller sacks of yellow pipes and general rubbish for the landfill. Mike Doig met us at Mana Marina with a trailer. We made a dash for the Spicer Landfill which closes to trailers at 4.45pm and disposed of this non-recyclable rubbish.

This weekend was a most successful work party with several participants bringing useful tools and all making a real difference to the island. My thanks to DOC (Jane, Dallas and Geoff) for hosting us, to all participants for working hard and especially to those who helped carry and load fadges of rubbish.

Philippa Doig

15.04.25



From left, standing: Karen, Colin Miskelly, Kat, Jane, Lex, Colin Munn, Leonore, Erin, Jaz, Tom, Bernie.

Seated: Will, Philippa, Phoebe

