

Motuihe Trust

Chairperson's Report

For Year ended 30 June 2023

It is a pleasure to report that the Trust and volunteers have had a very productive and busy year, despite the wharf being closed for half the year. The growth in trees and the expanding number of birds, tuataras and geckos has been wonderful to experience.

Foundation North

Foundation North funded the major portion of the significant budget items during the year including clearing invasive non-native trees and general operational conservation activities. The Motuihe Trust is extremely grateful for the long term and significant financial support from Foundation North.

Lotteries Grant

NZ Lotteries Grant Board approved a grant for weed control work on the island. Weed control work by contractors supplements the huge weed work effort by our volunteers.

Trustees

The trustees at 30 June 2023 were

John Laurence (Chair)
Michael Wood (Secretary)
Matt Baber
Matt Ewen
Jon Hind
Stuart MacIntosh
Max Smitheram
Julie Thomson
Peter Whitmore

Jill Soufflot was the Treasurer during the year but retired from that position in June 2023 when she was engaged as the Operations Manager.

Operations Manager

In June 2023 the trustees engaged Jill Soufflot as Operations manager on a paid part-time contractor basis to lead the volunteer programme, to chair the operations committee, to upgrade the communications strategy, and to assist with fund raising. Jill has also continued

in the role of preparing monthly and annual accounts while the position of Treasurer remains vacant.

Transport Services to Motuihe Island

The Department of Conservation closed the wharf for safety reasons after a storm in early February. After some repairs it was reopened to the public in early September 2023. Dreamweaver continued to bring volunteers to Motuihe and used their tender to ferry volunteers to the shore.

DreamWeaver, Sea Shuttles water taxi, and private Outboard Boating Club members provided ferry services for over 1000 volunteers during the year.

The Redboats provided a regular Motuihe service until the wharf closure.

The current status of the Motuihe wharf according to DOC is a couple more years and then it will be demolished and not replaced. The Deputy Director General of DOC inspected the wharf and reported back that it was not economically feasible to replace the wharf considering visitors to DOC managed islands in the Hauraki Gulf had other alternative islands to visit. The Trustees requested that the wharf be regularly maintained so that it did not fall into demolition status.

Motuihe Island is a favourite destination for many private boat owners and the enhanced tracks along with a wide range of white sandy beaches provides many interesting opportunities. Over the summer there were often many hundreds of boats anchored in the bays around Motuihe. Motuihe Trust has made available to all visitors PDF maps of the walking tracks and GPS based track maps which can be downloaded off the Trust website

Walking Tracks

The Tieke Track takes visitors into the middle of the western forest remnants where kereru, tieke, fantail, tuis, bellbirds, kakariki, silvereye, grey warblers, whiteheads, are often seen and heard. Tuataras are often seen basking in the sun next to the track. The hardy team of volunteers led by the Operations Group have maintained the track by keeping the drains clear and the surface free of weeds.

Volunteer activities

Motuihe Trust provides a wide range of activities and opportunities for people to be involved with conservation on Motuihe Island. Sunday public trips, corporate midweek trips, overnight monitoring trips, school trips, week long research trips, kiosk managing, short and long term trips.

Volunteers have been engaged in nursery operations, tree planting, kiwi monitoring, gecko monitoring, track maintenance and development, operating the kiosk and a host of other activities required to manage volunteers.

Julie Thomson chaired the Operations team until December 2022. See Julie's monitoring reports below. Fiona Alexander organised the weekend trips and provided volunteers with a monthly report on Motuihe activities. Simon Sheen organised the many large enthusiastic groups of midweek trips. See Simons report below.

Weed Control

Weed control has been a big part of the volunteer programme with mothplant and rhamnus plants being reduced to almost manageable numbers during the year, but a noticeable increase in numbers of large woolly nightshade and gorse. Foundation North and NZ Lotteries have funded the paid contractor weed programme. With the closure of the volunteer accommodation the weed contractors have resorted to using the woolshed as their accommodation. The Trustees and volunteers are now anxious to not let the weeds take hold again. Simon Sheen ably supported by regular experienced volunteers organised large numbers of midweek volunteers to keep invasive weeds under control.

Biodiversity

Julie Thomson led the various biodiversity initiatives including the kiwi monitoring field trips, the camera grid monitoring and the gecko monitoring trips. One of the highlights has been the number of new young volunteers who have become regular members of the wildlife popular monitoring team. There are now numerous opportunities for volunteers to be involved with monitoring native wildlife thanks to Julie and her team. See Julie's comprehensive reports below.

Bella Burgess prepared a report on Fungi on Motuihe and launched a programme for citizen scientists to record and photograph fungi on Motuihe and upload the photos to iNaturalist.

Island Based Weed Contractors

Stuart MacIntosh engaged for a third summer two students over the summer holidays primarily to undertake weed control and also to assist with the Kiosk and other volunteer activities. This proved to be very successful.

Finance and Administration

A huge thanks to Jill Soufflot for management and reporting of the Trust's finances. Thanks to Michael Wood for his legal input.

Funds were also received from DOC, NZ Lotteries, OBC members, and public donations, and from the Plant a Tree campaign which Lois Badham has been successfully managing.

Grants

During the 2022/23 year the activities were funded largely by grants from Foundation North, NZ Lotteries, and private donations.

During the year the Trust applied for funding from a DOC Community Fund for a grant to grow rare and endangered plants on Motuihe Island. The application was successful and the Deed of Grant was signed in December 2023

Relationships with Iwi

The Trust continues to develop our long-standing relationships with iwi of Te Motu-a-Ihenga; Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Paoa, and Marutūāhu, who are kaitiaki of the motu.

Governance

The Trust worked on the three year Strategic Plan , primarily

1. Demonstrably improved diversity of native flora and fauna on land, shore, and reefs.
2. Largely free of problem weeds, Free of animal pests.
3. Citizen Science programmes monitoring precious species. Conservation advocacy

And the initial objectives for 2022 and 2023 were: Volunteer engagement, Engage with mana whenua, develop a communications strategy, maintain weed control, increase citizen science projects, broaden requests to funding sources, flora enrichment and planting in key areas, consider appointing communication and operations manager.

Conservation Advocacy

During the year the main efforts were in operating the Information Kiosk during the summer and by maintaining an active and informative website. Stuart and Denise and Fiona managed the Kiosk and Fiona Alexander and Lois Badham managed the website. Fiona wrote monthly reports for circulation to everyone on the database.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make a difference.

The Motuihe Trust came into existence on 12 October 2000. Much has been accomplished and the fruits of the conservation programme are now becoming visible for all to experience.

Looking ahead it is proposed that more volunteers are given opportunities to lead and be involved with an extended range of conservation initiatives on Motuihe which are of particular interest to them. This includes the rare plant project, fluttering shearwater project, penguin monitoring, dotterel monitoring, five minute bird counts, fungi monitoring, tuatara monitoring, sand dune restoration,

John Laurence
Chairman.
5 December 2023

Annual report for AGM – for the year July 1 2022 to June 30 2023

Motuihe Citizen Science programme – Little Spotted Kiwi Call Count Survey and Camera Grid

Background

A total of 40 Little Spotted Kiwi (LSK) were translocated from Kapiti Island to Te Motu-a-Ihenga in 2009 and 2010. Of these founder birds, three are known to have died and were found dead shortly after the second release. An unbanded LSK was found dead on Snapper bay beach by Rob and Norm (members of our kiwi monitoring team) in 2019. A second unbanded LSK was found dead near the bridge at Snapper bay in 2021.

In May 2023, at the bottom of VL gully which was so hard hit by the cyclone, we found a banded female founder LSK which had been dead for some time. Her band number 0-31978 on her left leg indicates that she was captured on Kapiti Island on 17 March 2009. At that time she was recorded as (F Adult, Bill 76.6 mm, Wgt 1310g, in MOD condition).

She was last seen by our trail camera at bottom of VL gully in December 2022 looking fat and well.

Following the summer droughts experienced by the Auckland region in December 2015, and from December 2016 to January 2017, the Motuihe Trust paid for a kiwi survey on Motuihe by Natasha Coad and James Fraser of “With a Nose for Conservation”. They carried out day-time dog searching and night-time call playback catching from 10-14 April 2017. They identified approx. 12 pairs, some unbanded and juvenile birds, and noted that our LSK were unusually non-vocal. They observed that all LSK handled were in moderate to good condition. This survey and one in 2012 (reports on our website), form the baseline from which our Call Count Surveys aim to detect whether the Motuihe kiwi population is increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable.

2017: Tamsin Ward-smith and Kay Griffiths of Wild Solutions were engaged by the Motuihe Trust to design a kiwi call count programme suitable for our volunteers. Tamsin and Kay chose 7 listening sites and trained up a team of kiwi call count listeners.

So, each year, we choose 4 nights between April and the end of July when the weather, tides and moon are aligned and then round up a team of 14 volunteers for each overnight trip, so that 2 people sit at each of the 7 listening sites. We put on our winter layers and sit for 2 hours (6-8pm) recording the time and bearing of each kiwi call and the sex of the caller.

Seven years of data:

Survey Year	Night 1	Night 2	Night 3	Night 4
2017 (April-training)	7 May (6 sites)	17 June (5 sites)	15 July (7 sites)	29 July (5 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	5	9.5	15.5	6 (1.4:1)
2018	7 April (7 sites)	19 May (7 sites)	16 June (7 sites)	21 July (6 sites)
Total calls/hour	4.5	4	8	7
2019	4 May (6 sites)	22 June (7 sites)	6 July (4 sites)	20 July (7 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	10 (1:1)	14 (1.5:1)	5 (4:1)	8 (1.6:1)
2020	6 June (7 sites)	20 June (7 sites)	11 July (5 sites)	25 July (7 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	10.5 (2:1)	16.5 (1.5:1)	10.5 (2:1)	14.5 (1.4:1)
2021 (April-training)	15 May (7 sites)	12 June (7 sites)	3 July (7 sites)	31 July (6 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	18 (2.6:1)	11 (4.5:1)	8 (3:1)	8.5 (1.4:1)
2022	7 May (7 sites)	4 June (6 sites)	25 June (6 sites)	2 July (6 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	12 (1:1)	15 (6.5:1)	8.5 (2.4:1)	19.5 (2:1)
2023	27 May (6 sites)	Cancellation due to	15 July (6 sites)	22 July (7 sites)
Total calls/hour (ratio M:F calls)	16.5 (2:1)	Weather	10 (3:1)	12.5 (4:1)

The **peak calling nights** indicate the time when many of the males are more territorial than usual and also keeping in contact with the females prior to mating and egg-laying. This time can occur any time between April and August and is presumably influenced by a range of environmental factors. The average calls per hour over the 4 listening nights were close to **9 calls/hour from 2017 to 2019**

Jumping to **13 calls/hour from 2020 to 2023** which should give us confidence that our LSK population is increasing. Since 2018, when the kiwi call rate was particularly low, we have started to make use of the trail camera data coming from John Laurence and penguin researchers who had cameras set up at likely burrows for our nocturnal and secretive species, (penguins, kiwis and tuatara.)

Our volunteers:

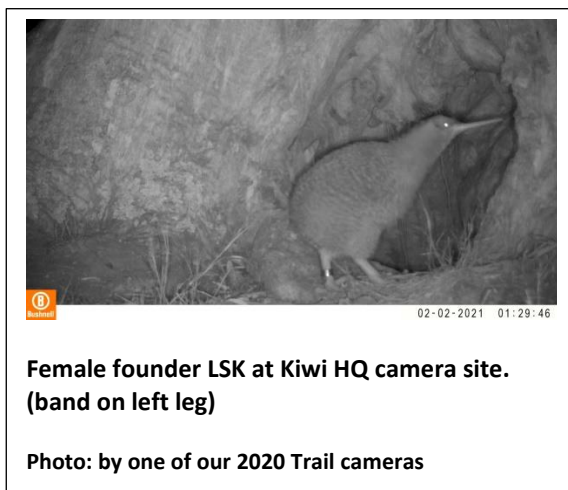
We have been lucky to retain a strong core of **nine of our original team**, who return each year to sit in the cold, help train the new recruits and a number of them have formed the **Camera Grid Team** which ensures that we have a whole lot more info about our, at times, very non-vocal LSK. Of, **12 new recruits**, trained in 2021, **7 are still actively** part of our 2022 and 2023 teams. Like the Motuihe Reptile Programme, the LSK monitoring programme attracts a growing number of young ecologists who are looking for field experience. In the last two years it has become increasingly easy to field a full team of 14-16 for each mid-winter listening night.

2023 survey: The extreme weather events of the first half of 2023 presented many challenges. Apart from a closed wharf, damaged trail cameras and later no power to the woolshed, our enthusiastic team was frustrated by the relentless wind and rain which cancelled our plans for an April and a June listening night. For the first time since 2017 we were able to complete only 3 listening nights in the time (April – August). We had to time our arrivals and departures to fit the tides so, on a number of our overnight trips we had spare time on the island. Our teams were eager to make the most of this time completing: spotlighting trials for wētāpunga, clearing culverts and dealing to moth plant pods on Tieke track, weed work south of Tieke track, camera grid work, seed collecting, nursery work and some fungi photography for Bella’s iNaturalist fungi project. We also trialled Cage’s Motuihe maps of monitoring stations on the app “ArcGIS Field Maps”.

Our team members were able to use this app “off-line” for locating listening sites and for recording data.

Our team for the 2022 and 2023 survey nights:

Experienced Leaders	New to Kiwi Team in 2022 or 2023 Training by partnering with a leader
Julie Thomson	Cleone Guy
Emma Salmon	Linzi Edwards
Tyson Williams	Millar Mercer
Jacqui Oldham	Jill Soufflot
Helen Bucksey	Ian Westwood
Jackie Rutherford	Cage Cardon
Talia Hochwimmer	Genevieve Herbison
Alex Mazonowicz	Indi Mallinder
Joce Service	Neisha Oikawa
Jeremy Hays	Nate McKenzie
Chris Challinor	Emma Dunning
Martin Draffin	Al Grant and Radika
Bella Burgess	
Rob and Norm Shaw	



Kiwi Camera Grid Surveys July 2022 to July 2023

Cyclones and extreme weather dashed our plans and damaged our cameras. Our fully trained camera team completed 3 of the 4 planned trips to Motuihe to check on the status of 13 trail cameras and do an SD card swap for each camera. The cameras are positioned at the entry area to 13 burrows which have been used by kiwis in the past. These burrow sites are spread over the island and there is at least one camera near each of the kiwi listening sites. When triggered by movement (day or night) these cameras record a 10sec video of the activity near the burrow. We can scan the videos (a 3 month period) for each camera and build a good picture of the kiwi activity around each burrow, mating behaviour, breeding success and males v females.

Example:

2021 Following breeding

From 11 cameras we identified 23 different kiwis, 13/23 54% were banded founder birds (6M:7F)
10/23 46% were unbanded

2023 Following breeding

From 13 cameras we identified 34 different birds 16/34 47% were banded founder birds(7M:9F)
18/34 53% were unbanded= 10 adults (in pair)+ 3 unpaired adults + 5 chicks(juv)

Thanks to our camera grid team: (July 2022 – 2023)

Julie Thomson	Jackie Rutherford	Joce Service	Jill Soufflot	Ian Westwood	David Waters
Riley Ellery	Talia Hochwimmer	Elaine Meade	Cleone Guy	Chris Challinor	Tyson Williams
Liz Bennett	Indi Mallinder	Helen Bucksey			

Development of other monitoring projects during our Kiwi overnight trips: (2022-2023)

Discussion, shared skills, and interests in common have resulted in the development of a Wētāpunga monitoring project and a Tuatara monitoring project.

Wētāpunga – a subgroup of our Kiwi monitoring team have been trialling the use of 2 of our new trail cameras, plus baited Black Trakka tunnels and some day-time spotting, to get evidence of survival and establishment of wētāpunga (bred by Auckland Zoo and released on Motuihe during 2019 and 2020).

In early May 2023, once Zoo staff recovered from the flooding, we were able to have Ben Goodwin and Liam (Auckland Zoo Ectotherm department.) lead a couple of training days for any of our interested volunteers in carrying out a Trakka tunnel survey in Von Luckners and Orchard bush gullies. At this time these gullies on Motuihe were exceptionally wet and although there were some wētā prints on the cards, none of them was sufficiently large enough to belong to an adult wētāpunga. However, our keen troupe of wētāpunga enthusiasts has matured into our official

Wētāpunga monitoring team:

Bella Burgess	John Laurence	Ben Goodwin
Julie Thomson	Helen Bucksey	Jackie Rutherford
Joce Service	Cage Cardon	Maisie Hamilton Murray
Tyson Williams	Cleone Guy	Chris Challinor
Liz Bennett	Kamya Patel	Katie Vanderstock



Disaster Gully 2022

Follow-up release of 30 wētāpunga to Disaster Gully in May 2023.

On May 12, Te Motu a Ihenga/Motuihe Island received another 30 adult wētāpunga from the highly successful breeding programme at Auckland Zoo. In their following kiwi call survey night our kiwi team, inspired by Ben Goodwin's training, found time to complete an hour of spotlighting in Disaster Gully. They were delighted to spot 7 adult wētāpunga.



Spotlighting 2023

It has been a delight to co-ordinate the activities of this dedicated bunch of enthusiasts for NZ's native ecosystems. Thank you, Julie Thomson. December 2023.

Annual report for AGM – for year July 1 2022 to June 30 2023

Motuihe Citizen Science programme – Reptile monitoring



A photo Miriam Walker



B photo Chris Challinor



C photo Chris Challinor

Gecko Survey December 2022

- A** Can you count adult v juvenile Raukawa geckos?
- B** Juvenile Duvaucel gecko
- C** Duvaucel footprint in Trakka tunnel
- D** Pacific gecko



D photo Miriam Walker

The Motuihe reptile team have made a great recovery following the 2021 year of Covid restraints and lack of access to the island. In 2022 we managed to complete a specific training day for 8 new recruits, the maintenance work needed for the two gecko monitoring grids plus more new recruit training and finally, the December survey of both the gecko grids. In 2021 none of these events could take place and by the end of 2021, half the original team (trained in 2017) were unavailable for a variety of reasons.

Active team for this period of work – July 2022 to June 2023

From original team training 2017	New to reptile team 2022
Julie Thomson	Joce Service
Jackie Rutherford	Helen Bucksey
Wes Wana	Jacqui Oldham
Talia Hochwimmer	Emma Salmon
Alex Mazonowicz	Tyson Williams
Jill Soufflot	Cage Cardon
Ian Westwood	Indianna Mallinder
Robyn Shaw	Miriam Walker and Alex
Norm Shaw	David Waters
	Linzi Edwards
	Chris Challinor

Obstacles for the sustainability of our citizen science Reptile Monitoring Programme

Weather events and Motuihe wharf closure have caused us to constantly re-organise our scheduled work. We have had to make use of over-night trips and the Auckland Sea Shuttles more than we planned and ran out of FN funding at the end of 2022. The Trust has had to use fund reserves of \$3,000 to keep our monitoring programmes running until the end of 2023. A difficult funding environment has also contributed to this issue.

Failure of key infrastructure on Motuihe (accommodation, water and power and wharf) plus DOC's lack of funds to repair/replace it continue to add barriers which have been overcome (2022-2023) by the resilience, enthusiasm and determination of our monitoring teams.

What keeps us going:

- Our reptile monitoring programme is hugely dependent on the trained and experienced volunteers who return each year to train up new recruits, carry out the maintenance work and then, in the midst of pre-Xmas madness they cover 100+ monitoring stations twice over two days.
- This monitoring programme continues to attract a healthy and expanding bunch of graduate ecologists/herpetologists who help us to stream-line our operations and they enjoy the field experience with our taonga species which may not be so easy to find at their work sites.
- For all the team members, the exciting encounters with endangered species which are rare or absent on the mainland and the excitement of reporting successful establishment of a species in restored habitat.
- Steve Latham's new large shuttle can safely transport (Okahu Bay to Motuihe) our optimum team size of 16 adults plus overnight gear. The transport subsidy from Foundation North or Trust reserves.
- Donation of a huge stack of Black Trakka tunnels by DOC ranger Emma Dunning which will save us \$700+ dollars as we expand our grids
- Continued grants from Foundation North for our consumables such as the ink cards for the trakka tunnels.(Currently \$420 for 200 cards delivered.)

Annual Gecko Survey- review

Background:

Three gecko species have been translocated to Motuihe Island

- *Woodworthia maculata* or Raukawa gecko - 60 from Otata Island in December 2013
- *Haplodactylus duvaucelii* or Duvaucel's gecko - 88 from Stanley Island in March 2014
- *Dactylocnemis pacificus* or Pacific gecko - 54 from Tarakihi Island in Dec 2014

Reptile monitoring grids set up in 2017

These were designed and installed by Dylan Van Winkel, a Wildlife ecologist/Herpetologist at Bioreserches.

The Raukawa grid

Is a grid of 67 monitoring stations radiating out from the release site for the 60 Raukawa geckos.

Each station consists of two monitoring tools:

- An ACO –double layered onduline sheets providing a daytime refuge for nocturnal geckos
- A TT(tracking tunnel) – polypropylene(Black Trakka) tunnel which is activated with a banana baited card with a central ink strip. Lizards attracted to the lure will pass through the tunnel and leave footprints which can ID the species that belongs to the footprints.

The Duvaucel/Pacific grid

Is a grid of 40 monitoring stations radiating out from the common release site for both 88 Duvaucel geckos and 54 Pacific geckos.

Each station consists of three monitoring tools:

- An ACO
- A TT (tracking tunnel)
- A CFC - black cell foam cover that is wrapped around the trunk of trees and secured with nails, providing an artificial arboreal retreat for lizards.

Monitoring is carried out annually in the month of December.

Data analyses:

Data collected in the field is recorded on hard copy datasheets and then migrated into electronic format (Excel spreadsheets). The series of spreadsheets provided by Dylan have basic data interpretation tools (graphs) so each year our simple graphs are up-dated and are easy to interpret.

(Please check the attached appendix "Motuihe Gecko surveys Dec 2018 to Dec 2022") to see the up-dated graphs following the Dec 2022 survey.

Our December 2022 survey

Raukawa Grid:

Both monitoring tools are providing strong evidence of a well established Raukawa gecko population around the release site. The total number of geckos seen in 68 inspected ACO's has doubled since the 2020 survey.

There has been a similarly dramatic increase in the number of, and size of, social aggregations of adult and juvenile geckos under certain ACO's. These favoured sites are in a coastal strip stretching 150m west of the release site.

2020 4 sites with aggregations ranging from 6-14 individuals

2022 9 sites with aggregations ranging from 7- 22 individuals

There are also lots of native skinks at this site, their collective tracking rate (footprints in the trakka tunnels) is double that of the geckos. We keep a close eye on their footprints and are happy to report that there were **No prints** that could be the introduced Plague skink.

Duvaucel and Pacific Grid

Duvaucel geckos:

In 2022, all three monitoring tools are detecting the increasing presence and reproductive success of the Duvaucel population. The adults and juveniles are again being seen under the CFC's but at a much reduced rate compared to 2018. Many of the cell foam covers are damaged and frequently blown off the tree trunks. Replacement of these covers during the 2023 maintenance work may reverse this trend. During 2022, the Motuihe ranger, our weed contractors and other volunteers recorded sightings of Duvaucel's both north and south of the current perimeter of this grid.

Pacific geckos:

None of the monitoring tools have been consistently detecting increasing numbers of Pacific geckos or juvenile recruitment. In 2022, we were relieved to discover a few Pacifics under the CFC's for the first time, but there was no tracking of Pacifics in the tunnels and no adults or juveniles under the ACO's. We have been advised by lizard researchers and others that the Pacific geckos are difficult to detect with our current tools so we are looking to trial some different refuges and some spotlighting in the next monitoring year.

Looking ahead (July 2023 to June 2024)

- Fully booked teams(with waiting lists) for gecko grid maintenance (October 14-15 2023), and annual gecko survey (Dec 9-10 2023)
- Continue to support development of Cage's ArcGIS maps app for use by our monitoring teams.
- Encourage lizard researcher to test new arboreal onduline refuges adjacent to our Duv/Pacific grid
- Start expansion of both Raukawa and Duv/Pac grids
- Trial some spotlighting for geckos in Duv/Pacific grid
- Continue development of a non-invasive Tuatara monitoring project suitable for any volunteers (leader Helen Buskey)
- Start development of a skink monitoring project for Motuihe

It has been a privilege to co-ordinate all the volunteers who make the work of this reptile monitoring team happen for another year.

Thank you all,

Julie Thomson
November 2023

Planting Report by John Laurence

The planting season started on Motuihe on 31 March and wrapped up on 13 August 2023. The 1915 plants were planted in 11 trips mainly by midweek volunteers who enjoyed the Dreamweaver ferry trip with the added bonus of a dinghy trip to and from the block or beach as a result of DOC closing the wharf to volunteers. The trees planted were mostly canopy species and they were planted amongst existing plantings of pioneer species. Puriri, karaka, taraire, kohekohe, totara, kahikatea, and kowhai were planted along with some smaller species in some of the gaps. Weeders worked in the same vicinity as the planting teams concentrating on mothplant vines, woolly nightshade and rhamnus.

Nursery Report by Phil Francis

In the 12 month period to June 30th 2023 we can claim success in building up stock numbers that were cut drastically short due to Covid and weather events. There are now approximately 4000 plants, mainly canopy species, that should be ready to go out during the next planting season. Success was due to a combination of the rebagging of rejected stock and the pricking out of substantial numbers of seedlings. Along the way there was the opportunity to group plants together according to their species and or their age.

It was satisfying to expand the range of conifer species to include rimu and matai but it was disappointing to have lost pingao and spinifex due to the failure of the plastic house roof. This season we missed the opportunity to collect ngaio and kohekohe seeds.

As usual the progress relied heavily on volunteer numbers. Larger mid week trips with access to the Dreamweaver tender for coming ashore were invaluable. The leaders on these trips moulded into a slick group that with the minimum of discussion would set about their tasks. Sunday trips organised by Fiona, while usually smaller, supplemented this activity. They were able to attend to more detailed tasks that are often not practical with larger numbers to be supervised.

At the time of writing the nursery is about to accept rare plants nominated by Shelly Heiss-Dunlop and to embark on a kaka beak survey. Consequently it is imperative that certain matters be attended to. Namely DOC reinstating a reliable gravity feed water supply and the construction of a sound growing house where seeds can be germinated in either a dry or moist environment.

Lastly I wish to say that I can not see myself continuing in the role of nursery leader beyond Easter next year. The role is becoming physically beyond me. A replacement requires someone who knows their horticulture, can maintain the likes of irrigation and can prioritize tasks to reflect the volunteers on hand. The latest efforts to recruit 'monitors and ecologists' have not seen anyone presented as a possible nursery leader.

Phil

Heritage Report Year ending 30 June 2023 by Fiona Alexander

As the Heritage co-ordinator I have attempted to bring the unique heritage of Motuihe to the attention of supporters of the island. As new information has come to light I have added it to the heritage section of our website. I have also inserted heritage stories in to the newsletter. Earlier this year the Department of Conservation undertook an investigation into the heritage value of the Motuihe Wharf. They contracted archaeological landscapers to carry out the work. The Trust looks forward to receiving a copy of this report as the wharf is critical to the restoration work on the island.

A major activity this year has been the restoration of Ethel Browning's Grave. I would like to thank the Trust and the wider Motuihe family for their support for this project.

Midweek Volunteer Trip Report by Simon Sheen

1,234 volunteers across 24 visits represents another great midweek volunteer trip year. Groups from over 43 workplaces planted, weeded, track cleared, nursed (sic) and, according to all recorded feedback had an excellent time. The state of the nursery, lack of visible weeds around the island and re-opened tracks is a testament to the Trojan work completed. No wharf, tractor, decent weather....no matter as the supervisor stalwarts kept this invaluable programme running, wading ashore, getting on with it with minimal fuss, giving up work days, limited work leave or simply committing to the cause. As ever too many to mention but Jill, Phil, Lois, Graham and Colin stand out as does Graeme who regularly took out troops in his own boat. Kirsty from the Dreamweaver ferry deserves special mention: without her generosity midweek visits would have collapsed. We should not underestimate what a 'working' visit to the island means to so many one off volunteers. They wouldn't come on their own but as part of a team take away fond long term memories of our special place. We provide an invaluable window into a conservation wonder; to see a Tuatara in the wild whilst improving the environment - priceless. This is all done with minimal assistance, no subsidy just the rewarding experience and the happy, tired faces back safe and sound at pier Z. In addition donations from businesses have materially contributed to other Trust projects that need financing. This is a unique programme which works. More of this sort of thing.

Simon Sheen

Track Clearing Report 1 July to 30 June by Lois Badham

Great track clearing progress has been made in the last 12 months with the completion of the Outbound (Ranger's House to Tieke Track start), Woolshed to Eastern Bays (partial), Pa Point to Snapper Bay Loop and Ocean Beach Coast tracks. Calypso intersection to Billy Goat Point, Biodiversity stream and the Return tracks are partially complete and will be worked on in the year ahead. Approximately 3km of track clearance work has been accomplished by groups of between 4-20 enthusiastic corporate weekday and weekend volunteers. A popular fulfilling task for volunteers as their achievements can be viewed at the end of their day.

Tieke Track maintenance, under the guidance of Jackie Rutherford, has been a challenge during the year due to high rainfall, ferry cancellations and wharf closures impacting

volunteer access. Work is currently underway to clear drains, cut back foliage and general track maintenance so that the track is ready for summer.

Lois Badham

Sunday Volunteer Trips Report by Fiona Alexander

During the year ended 30 June 2023 there were 13 Sunday volunteer trips to Motuihe. In the previous year there were only 10 trips due to 8 cancellations due to covid. The trips involved 199 adult volunteers and 123 students (Secondary and Tertiary). There were 4 trips cancelled due to the weather and 4 due to the wharf closure after cyclone Gabrielle. Sunday trips were badly impacted by the wharf closure because we use The Red Boats and they do not have a tender for landing on the beach. The biggest challenge for Sunday trips is the lack of leaders. However, there is a proposal to train more leaders. The work carried out on Sunday trips is planting trees during the winter season and in the summer months weeding, track maintenance and nursery work.

Fiona Alexander