

MOTUIHE PROJECT RESTORATION

February 2008

NURSERY NEWS:

2008 plant production is well underway. Can you believe all the root trainers are already full and now seedlings are being planted into plastic bags. 150 Root trainers of Karo are the bulk of seedlings prepared for winter planting. The chalkboard in the woolshed has the current list of seeds that need to be collected. A great job in the cool forest on these hot summer days. You are bound to hear saddlebacks and a variety of other birds. To the team in the nursery, keep up the good work.

MONITORING MATTERS:

Birds: All the bird data has been collected and results will be presented in the next newsletter. On a slightly different note, bellbirds have been recorded breeding on Rakino and red crowned Kakariki will be translocated to Motuihe in the near future.

Reptiles: The reptile monitoring hasn't officially started as the soil

microhabitat takes a while to develop. We have detected several copper and moko skinks in the shelters which is great news. Moko (a threatened species) was only recently discovered (April 2007) by Dr Kim Babbitt. Since then we have detected Moko in reptile shelters and invertebrate pitfall traps right along the coastal fringe of the island.

Invertebrates: Massey University (Albany) kindly lent us use of their laboratory for a couple of days sorting invertebrates collected last spring/summer/autumn. An Entomologist Stephen Thorpe is to do a beetle voucher collection. Stephen is a PhD student at Auckland University and one of the country's top entomologists. This voucher collection will consist of one or more representatives of all different beetle species that were present in the pitfall traps and will help us identify all the beetles collected. Ultimately we will be able to assess how these beetle communities differ among the habitat types and how they change over time.

Vegetation: We are about a third of the way through vegetation monitoring and will hopefully finish this up by the end of winter. A preliminary look at the data suggests that the amount of seedling regeneration is incredible and we have recently found the first mangleo seedling on the island which was likely dispersed by birds.

Many thanks to all of you who have volunteered time to participate in the monitoring programme. Thank you to Matt Baber for providing this update.

ISLAND NEWS: The summer International Student Volunteer group of 10 overseas students who were on Motuihe for two weeks during a hot and dry January have done a superb job with tasks of weeding, pricking out seedlings, monitoring, infilling root trainers and installing new island signage. They particularly enjoyed cooling off at the end of the day with a swim on our great beaches. Motuihe Project are pleased to be involved again with a well organised team such as ISV. Thank you to the Motuihe leaders, the young participants and their leader Tracey, for their energy and enthusiasm. Have a great fulfilled two weeks adventure travelling through New Zealand. Thanks also to George Nelson for making the small mementos for this group.



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WEED WORKS: Hand weeding and spraying of mothplant, rhamnus and woolly nightshade has continued throughout the summer period. Great progress has been made over the years to eradicate the Island of its weeds, however it is an ongoing task. Contact 0800 668844 if you wish to join the weed spray team.

INFORMATION HUT: Early December saw the arrival of the Motuihe Project Information Hut. A huge thanks to Mobil for their donation which has enabled the purchase of this hut and the stock items. This has raised the Project's profile with 1400 visitors since 22 December. Brian Gidley, accompanied by his wife Margaret, have provided background information on the restoration, bird translocation, conservation, guided walks, island history, sold souvenirs, t-shirts, drinks and ice creams. Brian has manned the hut throughout the summer holidays and every weekend. Well done Brian & Margaret and thank you to Mobil.



ISV Group January 2008



Moko Skink

VOLUNTEER DATES:

Saturdays: Every Saturday

Sundays: 2nd and 4th

Transport: (Advise Ticket Office you are a Treeplanter for discounted fare)

360 Discovery:

Depart Auckland Pier 3

0915hrs, 1400hrs, 1700hrs

Depart Motuihe: 0945hrs,

1430hrs 1730hrs