

Date: Tuesday 21 November 2017
Time: 1.00pm
Meeting Room: Claris Conference Centre
Venue: 19 Whangaparapara Road
Claris
Great Barrier Island

Great Barrier Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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Aotea Great Barrier Local Board: Update - 21 November, 2017

Dear Izzy, Luke, Sue, Shirley and Jeff,

In our last report in August following your annual planning consultations we noted that we look forward to future workshops and discussions. These related to:

- Predator Free NZ 2050 and Pest Free Auckland opportunities
- A potential Aotea Great Walk
- How a pest management in the south of the island around Windy Hill, Mulberry Grove, the Rangitawhiri Reserve and private landowner pest control could be brought together in an oasis as expressed in the Ecology Vision
- A research and education partnerships, including with the University of Auckland.

Thanks to two public EOI processes that as you know, were announced in September, there has been progress on most of these matters. In addition the trust has attended the Hauraki Gulf Forum Seminar on seabirds (see Environmental news Summer 2017 just out), kicked off a project to protect Okiwi's kakariki, worked through the Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee (ACPAC) to seek DOC help on the decline in pateke numbers, advocated for more pest control on Hirakimata, and received a grant from PFNZ 2050 for community rat and cat traps. There is more detail on these below, however the focus of this update is the PFNZ 2050 EOI and related issues.

Pest Free Aotea: update on EOI process with Predator Free NZ 2050

Following the submission of this expression of interest, Ed Chignall, CE of PFNZ 2050 asked to visit the island and meet with the core team on Thursday 16 November. He is undertaking to meet all 40+ applicants so we were fortunate to get him for a day. Ed was hosted for the day by Izzy Fordham and Kate Waterhouse. At his request, the itinerary focused on answering all of Ed's questions for us (there were many) and covering the full scope of the projects proposed in the EOI. This meant that we focused on Rangitawhiri and the north, and the perspectives of iwi, Local board, sanctuaries, landowners and community. The day included:

- Welcome from Ngati Rehua Ngatiwai ki Aotea at Waipareira Claris
- Mulberry Grove – review of local project areas (school, community and Rangitawhiri Reserve) with Sue Daly and Jude Gilbert, met with local landowner committed to pest management.
- Windy Hill Sanctuary – with Jude Gilbert and Sue Daly, visit to trap lines, operational base, Q&A on trials and techniques most effective with the Barrier pests
- Drive through island – highlighting Kaitoke wetland, Hirakimata and Te Paparahi, species that are found there and features of our forests such as kamahi, tree daisies and other species you don't see on the mainland because of possum damage
- Glenfern Sanctuary - introduction to staff and trustees and operations of the sanctuary
- Ngati Rehua Ngatiwai Ki Aotea – lunch at Glenfern with Nicola Macdonald and five mana whenua representatives covering their aspirations and the detail of the Te Paparahi project.

- DOC drop in to meet local staff and (NB: Ed had sent a lot of time in Okiwi as a surfer and hunter in his youth so we did not spend time there)
- Walker family property and viewpoint of Rakitu – discussion of direct experiences managing pests on 25ha block over three years and the changes that have been observed over time; discussion of Rakitu value as a seabird island and next steps.

Ed's questions covered the full range of issues we expected and the discussion was open and frank. He complimented the quality of the EOI on several occasions and the quality of the discussions was also high, of which we should be proud. Topics included the support we are getting from DOC and council, the support of mana whenua (which he observed was high) the feasibility of the projects, where the community was sitting on big issues like pest free, the different methods and valuing what we have.

Next steps for discussion:

1. *EOI*: PFNZ will get back to us on or about 24 November to let us know if we have been shortlisted. If we have then we will need to provide a detailed proposal by the end of January tbc.
2. *Pest Free Aotea Working Group*: Regardless of the outcome, the working group which put together the EOI will need to reconvene. If there are any changes people would like to see to the working group or process please let any of the core team know.
3. *Joint communications approach and plan*: needed to help build informed conversations and knowledge in the community over the coming months. People need the facts and to feel comfortable voicing their feelings vs the comparatively uninformed views being expressed by individuals to date dominating. This could cover all channels and include the Local Board, DOC, Auckland Council, the sanctuaries and GBIET activity over the next 6 months in relation to Pest Free Aotea, including summer events, radio, BB, social media and major projects eg Rakitu and the PFNZ EOI projects in Te Paparahi and Rangitawhiri.
4. *Elizabeth (Biz) Bell event on 9 Dec*: GBIET will support the board to complete detailed planning for this event in whatever way we can. To recap: Biz is well known to islanders and the board for her dedication over 20 years to working with black petrels on Hirakimata. Biz has just presented to a global conference in the UK: "It's not all up in the air" - a summary of her work in pest eradications on inhabited islands all over the world, in which she is rapidly becoming an authority. These are community driven projects that do not involved aerial poison drops. Biz will come to the island and share her learnings.
5. *Aotea Great Barrier "Pestival"*: a local version of Auckland Council's successful 24 June "Pestival" in March to provide the best of the best knowledge and tips to locals in an accessible expo style format, with supporting seminars and suppliers of pest management kit. Again GBIET is delighted to support the board in whatever way we can to progress this including sourcing speakers and content.

Other updates

1. **Pateke decline**: these birds are in serious decline on Aotea: the most recent flock count put the island population at 500 which is a dramatic fall on past years as board members themselves have noted. The causes of the decline are unclear but are likely to be multiple stresses including predation of eggs, ducklings and adults by cats, pukeko, dogs, rats and hawks. The effects of rabbits as resource competitors are unknown, as are the effects of high numbers of rats. Barrier pateke are also smaller than birds on the mainland. Clutch sized and fledgling rates inside Glenfern sanctuary are anecdotally 12-13 per season vs perhaps half that at other Okiwi locations. ACPAC have requested that DOC's regional Director of Conservation ask the Pateke Recovery Group for advice on how to arrest the decline. Any support the board can provide for pest control and community awareness of the decline would be appreciated.

2. **Hirakimata and black petrel protection:** the Trust is working with DOC to continue the A24 trial funded by the local board, alongside DOC cat trapping on Hirakimata in the coming black petrel breeding season (Alison Walker and advisor John Ogden). Biz Bell's ongoing population research will continue this summer as usual. However the level of funding that DOC is allocating to this is still minimal. Note that Ngati Rehua Ngatiwai ki Aotea have advised the true local name for these birds is *takoketai* - not taiko – which is a name used by southern iwi.
3. **Okiwi Kakariki Project:** this project is being funded by GBIET private donors in its first phase. This project will count the Okiwi kakariki and locate their nesting trees so they can be protected from rats and cats when chicks fledge. This work will be done by a kakariki researcher in the first week on December, with participation and support from Okiwi School, DOC (Jordan Scarlett), Auckland Council Biodiversity Officer Shanti Morgan, and Okiwi landowners and residents. The project has been in contact with Jo O'Reilly from the beginning but it appears that the Local Board was not aware of this. Last Monday 13 November at the Okiwi community pest project meeting, people were particularly interested that these kakariki are rarely, if ever, found in other places on Aotea. It is remarkable that the population has hung on in Okiwi and people are very keen to help protect them. A two page summary of the project is attached with some background information about the breeding behaviour of these lovely birds.
4. **Great Walk EOI:** we note that there is unease in the community about this proposal in the absence of an overall community centric (vs tourism operator centric) and conservation based strategy for tourism development on Aotea Great Barrier. ACPAC resolved last week to ask Destination Great Barrier to submit this EOI as it is not clear how the proposal would impact the conservation park and there are questions of co-governance to consider. The Local Board's Visitor Strategy will be very important context for any Great Walk submission which may arise from the current process. Certainly the impacts need to be carefully considered.
5. **Community Trap Library:** the Trust has received a grant of \$6500 from PFNZ 2050 for a trap library to be shared among community groups. This is part of a PFNZ 2050 nationwide project and is being delivered in partnership with the DOC Community Ranger for Auckland who has supported this funding coming to Aotea. We will be promoting traps and how to get them in local media and at New Year community events.

Thank you for your ongoing support of environmental issues on Aotea and for your direct support of the Environmental news publication. While it is "old school" hard copy information, the feedback we are getting on the new format and content is excellent and we plan to continue to produce it as a source of facts about the taonga and ecosystems of this island.

As always we look forward to working with you on the above issues and projects over the coming months.

Kate Waterhouse

Chair, Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust



Okiwi Valley Kakariki Project: Summary for Okiwi Community meeting 13 Nov 2017

This project aims to protect kakariki nests and fledglings in the 2017 breeding season and beyond. To do this we need to establish the size of the resident kakariki population in the valley and protect the nesting sites of kakariki in the Okiwi Valley from predation by rats and feral cats.

Why kakariki? Because it is truly remarkable that they have survived this long in Okiwi

Despite the presence of ship rats and feral cats a small population of red-crowned kakariki have been resident in the Okiwi Valley for many years according to Don Woodcock. Kakariki were widespread throughout the New Zealand mainland last century but today are very rare on the mainland and only common on islands free of mammalian predators. Despite cat and rat predation in Okiwi, kakariki have held on here, which could be because of a relative abundance of favourable nest sites and food sources. With pest control, Okiwi has the potential to become another stronghold for these birds. Without it, we could lose them and that is an awful thing to think about.

What do we know about them?

The number of birds resident in Okiwi is not known for sure, but groups of up to seven at a time are regularly sighted in the Okiwi River and nearby areas. They feed in totara, puriri and other food trees along the river as well as moving up and down the valley to forest (on DOC land) behind Okiwi settlement. Birds have been sighted on Hirakimata and on rat-free Motuhaku (Wellington Head). These may originate from Little Barrier or the Mokohinau group. Kakariki are believed to nest in mature puriri trees along the Okiwi River.

In other locations, **kakariki nests are typically in holes in the trunks of old trees** at heights of between three and six metres. Kakariki, like kaka, **spend several days on the forest floor once they fledge**, when they are at risk of being killed by cats. **Rats can predate eggs and chicks in nesting holes** and chicks are also known to die from disease in the nest. Clutches of up to seven are common elsewhere with predator control. Kakariki can breed twice in a season in dry summers and when food availability is good. Breeding begins in November and may extend until the end of March. In 2016, on Tiritiri Matangi last year, the first egg was sighted on 25 November.

We can protect our kakariki better by trapping cats and rats around their nest trees

Protection of nest trees is understood to be the most effective way of increasing the population through protecting both nests (eggs and chicks) and areas around nest trees (newly fledged birds). The location of trees in the Okiwi Valley needs to be confirmed to do this. There are many different pest management projects which may help protect them from rats and cats, once we know for sure where kakariki are nesting, including:

- DOC cat control network to protect pateke
- Okiwi School reserve pest management
- Okiwi River landowner project (new network of remote monitored snap traps)
- Okiwi Community Pest Control Project – feasibility completed
- Other pest management being done by community members

Note: Kaka also nest in the Okiwi River and where kaka nest sites are located we will share this information with DOC and landowners and consider what additional rat and cat control measures could be considered.

What support does the project need and from who?

1. Access to Auckland Council reserves, DOC and private land in the Okiwi Valley along the river to do bird counts, locate nesting trees and place and monitor traps
2. Community help to carrying out bird counts (simultaneously in the whole area) – interest from Okiwi School and residents, DOC, Auckland Council Biodiversity Officer, and the GBIET team
3. Locating nesting sites (kakariki researchers, with some local help, as above)
4. Installing and monitoring rat and cat traps once nesting sites are located from DOC, Auckland Council, Okiwi School, and landowners in the valley
5. Carrying out cat control around nesting sites from DOC, Auckland Council and landowners
6. Repeating the work next breeding season (and ongoing) providing everyone involved believes it's worth it
7. Funding the work – this time around, this project is being funded by anonymous donors and supporters of the GBI Environmental Trust. Further donations will really help.

Timeline

Mid Oct-Mid Nov	Okiwi Valley Kakariki Project planning, DOC and funding sources confirmed Confirm kakariki specialist researchers and timing of bird counts and nest-finding Seek support from Okiwi School, community and Ngati Rehua Ngatiwai Ki Aotea
Late Nov/early Dec	Nest location (timing tbc in consultation with kakariki researchers) Nesting tree protection trap network installed – goal to add to existing DOC, School or Okiwi landowner network depending on where nesting trees are found Additional cat control around nesting trees begins if possible
Dec/Jan	Breeding season bird count Trap monitoring ongoing (from late Nov)
April	Post-breeding season bird counts Review point: 2018/9 breeding season planning and project completion report (Year 1)

For more information or to help with the bird counts or nest tree protection work please contact:

Emma Waterhouse: Project Lead

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M: 027 700 1189

Or speak to our Okiwi based co-ordinator Kay Stowell at contact@gbiet.org