

2015 Annual Report and Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 42nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society Inc. (EBoIPS), will be held on Thursday January 7th, 2016, 5.30 pm at 439 Manawaora Rd, Philip Yates' Te Uenga Property.

While limited parking is available, please try and share a car with neighbours. We will provide directions and parking instructions with the meeting agenda.

Members

If you receive this report and are not a member of the Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society Inc. (EBoIPS), you may like to come to the AGM and consider joining the Society. Information about the Society and its role can be found on our website www.eboipreservationsociety.org.nz/

Summary of Focus and Activities in 2015

The Society has an interest in restoring and maintaining the native biodiversity of the eastern Bay of Islands. This is achieved by supporting local group projects and initiatives, and monitoring policy changes followed by writing submissions and appearing before the council when appropriate.

This year has been extremely positive and fruitful. The EBoIPS made 3 successful funding applications; two providing financial relief to Project Strip and Tangatapu Restoration Project, the third for an exciting new project collecting data on plague skinks and Argentine ants in 2016. Project Strip, which has been fully funded by the EBoIPS, will now be partially funded by a Lotteries grant. Project Strip has a new and diligent trap service person. Tangatapu's ponds now have a resident population of pateke. A viewing platform has just been completed. Funding has enabled Fish Forever to embark on some baseline ecological studies and start a very popular 'Voices of land and sea' series of talks and walks. Everywhere is looking far less weedy. Already a large part of the pine forest has been felled.

Membership Report

At the end of the financial year (October 31), there were 36 paid up members (families/individual members). We are hoping that with the reduction in membership fees more people will join.

Treasurer's report

With three successful funding applications there is no longer a need to consider drawing on reserves. Project Strip will now be substantially funded by Lotteries, opening up an opportunity to reduce the membership fees. This will be discussed at the AGM.

The Annual Accounts will be distributed at the AGM. They will be available ahead of and after the meeting on www.eboipreservationsociety.org.nz.

Pest Control

Predatory Pests on the Mainland

Whereas earlier in the year the good news had been that a good portion of the costs of servicing Project Strip were being taken care of through our successful application to Lottery Grants *Ngā Takuhe Rota*, part of the last half of this year has been plagued by poor servicing. The new contractors are Viki and Arana Rewha: if you come across them on the road during their fortnightly services, do make yourself known. Viki and Arana are involved with much of the local pest-control in the eastern Bay of Islands.

Project Island Song

Successfully keeping rodents and mustelids at bay has led to youngster toutouwai (North Island robin), tīeke (saddleback) and pōpokatea (whitehead) on the islands of Ipipiri attracting attention.

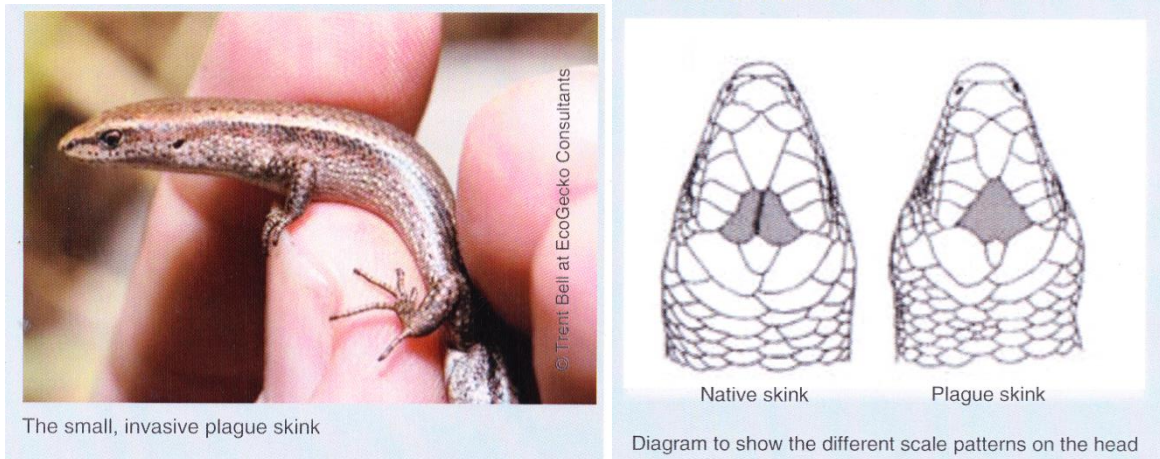
Fleur Corbett of The Guardians recommends your best bet to see toutouwai and tīeke is on Moturua Island, between Waipaoa and Otupoho bays; and on Urupukapuka, between Paradise and Cable bays. You may encounter pōpokatea on the way up to the lookout on Motuarohia Island.



Walks (purple) most likely to lead to toutouwai and tīeke sightings are from Waipaoa to Otupoho bays on Moturua, and Paradise to Cable (inside Round Island) on Urupukapuka.

Pest-incursions are always a concern. A newcomer (well, at least newly recognised) on the adjacent mainland is the plague skink, which – together with Argentine ants and other pests – is the focus of

the Society's community activity this summer. Plague skinks have been located in many parts of eastern Bay of Islands, and they are characterised by being small, laying eggs, and having a single scale at the centre of the head.



Plague skinks are smaller than the native ones, have eggs rather than bearing their young alive, and can be distinguished by the scale pattern on their head. They live in many parts of the mainland eastern Bay of Islands and must be kept away from the islands.

Eastern Bay of Islands Citizen Scientist Project

Louise Dews has spearheaded this pilot project that will run for a week in January 2016. She will reach out to all members of EBoIPS, residents, summer visitors and families within the Eastern Bay of Islands. The project will be fun, child centric; an activity that informs, educates and engages.

The aim is to collect data for mapping the distribution of Argentine ants within our area, as well as mapping mustelid and rodent distribution and population densities. We hope to inform residents and visitors about the threats of plague skinks to our native fauna and collect data on sightings. All of the above will aid the planning of more efficient control programs in the future. The EBoIPS has secured funding for the project from Auckland Zoo's Conservation Fund.

More information on the project and how to get involved will be distributed to members via email and for non-members, a mail box drop is planned. Angela Newport from DOC will be guest speaker at the AGM and will talk about Argentine ants and plague skinks.

Weeds

During the past year work has continued on road edges, reserves and private land, where some landowners are making an effort themselves, others with assistance. The results can be seen notably along the road, where there is a marked lack of ginger, agapanthus, pampas grass, wooly nightshade and fleabane. Of late, patches of ladder fern, periwinkle and Mexican devil weed have been attended to. The limiting factor to more being done is labour.

For herbicides and spraying equipment contact Malcolm Waller 403 8340 malwal@xtra.co.nz

Fish Forever

Using its \$29K awarded by the Department of Conservation through the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund (CCPF), Fish Forever embarks this summer on a series of ecological baseline studies for the Bay of Islands.

These concern the health of the shallow-water kelp forests (and their inverse, the extent of the kina barrens), and ecosystems in the Bay which are rare and extraordinary will be given the thorough once-over, then catalogued and described. Most effort, however, will go into mapping the habitats and ecosystems of the coast between Cape Brett and Oke Bay – which includes the area of the proposed Maunganui Marine Reserve. Of particular focus will be the size and abundance of the predatory fish and the rock lobsters; and the types and numbers of small cryptic fish.

But as the ad says – there's more! The CCPF monies also help finance *Voices of land and sea*, a series of talks and walks to take place over this summer under the auspices of Bay of Islands Maritime Park (<http://www.fishforever.org.nz/latest-news/fish-forever-news/123-voices-of-land-and-sea.html>). The *Summer Festival of Exploration* is part of this too, with something for everyone of virtually any age.

Tangatapu

The latest addition at the Tangatapu wetland is a very sturdy and beautifully made viewing platform. John Booth was kind enough to donate the materials and Vic Turner constructed the platform. The view is phenomenal from this vantage point. To get there cross the stile at the road, then a few metres on your right are some steps and a track up to the platform.



Vic and Barbara Turner on the viewing platform. (Photo: Sandra Scowen)

Finally all the last 3 years of hard work planting 13,000 trees, digging ponds, controlling weeds and servicing a trap line is delivering results – and faster than expected. Seven pateke have been seen hanging out on the 2014 ponds during the day over the last few months. Since pateke are so shy

they scuttle off into the privacy of the carex sedge, which was specifically planted for this purpose, so there is no photo yet.

The funding secured by the EBoIPS has enabled the project to contract Rawhiti's Kathy O'Neill (daughter of Ron and Rangi Higgison) to help out two days a month with weed control and plant maintenance. This is perfect timing as one of the key volunteers as had to bow out for 6 months due to health reasons. But still more volunteer help is needed. Hence, in the first 2 weeks of January 2016 the coordinators of Tangatapu would like to offer another chance for all you holiday visitors to come to Tangatapu wetland for a combination interpretive tour and plant maintenance morning.



Tangatapu floodplain ponds and plantings, April 2015. (Photo: Dean Wright)

Pine Forest near Te Rawhiti

The pine forest is well on its way to being felled. John Booth works closely with P.F. Olsen, the company organising the felling, to ensure every endeavour is taken to keep the soil on the slopes rather than having it flow out into the bay. There has been no evidence from the water-clarity measurements of any ill-effects on the forest streams – although this remains somewhat untested because there have been no heavy downpours.

Aquaculture and Mooring and Marinas Strategy

There was no activity relating to aquaculture, moorings and marinas affecting the Eastern Bay of Islands during 2015.

Committee

Your Committee this year has been constituted as follows: Executive Committee: Sandra Scowen(Chairman and Secretary), Tony Beckett (Treasurer), John Booth and Bryn Jamieson; and as General Committee: the aforementioned together with Lisa Markwick, Malcolm Waller, Philip Yates, Sarah Yates, Kate McConnell, and Giles Boundy.