

## ***2016 Annual Report and Notice of Annual General Meeting***

### **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**The 43rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society will be held on Wednesday January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 5.30 pm at Freddie and Pam Graham's property at 463 Manawaora Rd, Te Uenga.**

Parking is at Te Uenga reserve, with a short walk along the road or beach. For those with limited mobility there are 3 parking spots at the top of the Grahams' drive, near the road.

### **Summary of Focus and Activities in 2016**

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.

2016 has been another very successful year for the EBoIPS with a 33% increase in membership and a very sound financial position. Project Strip will continue to be partially funded by the Lotteries fund and EBoIPS membership, with our new local contractors Viki and Arana Rewha undertaking most of the pest control.

The EBoIPS made another successful funding application for the Tangatapu Wetland Restoration Project which will mostly cover weed control now that we have completed our last large-scale planting and pond-building. Foundation North funding enabled *Fish Forever* to embark on some baseline ecological studies and to run a very popular '*Voices of land and sea*' series of talks and presentations over the past summer and autumn.

### **Membership Report**

At the end of the financial year (October 31), there were 54 paid up members (families/individual members). We are hoping to maintain and improve this level of membership going forward. We are not recommending any changes to the membership subscription fees for the 2017 year. We are keen to continue to urge the next generation to take out separate memberships from their parents so as to ensure our membership grows. Please ask your adult children to email us to get a membership form.

## **Treasurer's Report by Jim Frater**

In my first report to you as Treasurer, I am pleased to report that the Society is again in a sound financial position. I would firstly like to thank Bryn Jamieson for his invaluable assistance in all financial and reporting matters. It has made my task so much easier this year.

With continued successful funding applications again in 2016, there is no need to consider drawing on reserves to fund our activities. Project Strip is now funded by Lotteries for a further 18 months and we have been successful in obtaining another year's funding from Foundation North for the Tangatapu Wetland Restoration Project.

We have ended the financial year with \$72,500 of funds in the bank and on term deposit, of which approx. \$55,000 is allocated to Project Strip, Tangatapu and any other Projects that we identify as suitable for our involvement, from both external grants and members' donations. The balance of \$17,500 is accumulated general reserves.

Your committee is recommending that the annual membership subscription remain at \$50 for the coming year, however, should you wish to add a further donation to this, we would encourage you to do so. Don't forget that all donations made by individual taxpayers will qualify for a 33% refund from the IRD at the tax year end.

The Annual Accounts will be distributed at the AGM. They will also be available ahead of and after the meeting on [www.eboipreservationsociety.org.nz](http://www.eboipreservationsociety.org.nz).

## **Pest Control**

### ***Predatory Pests***

The cycle of catches of pests (rats, possums and mustelids) on Project Strip followed the pattern of previous years (highest in late summer/autumn), and were about average in numbers. We are unlikely to ever see overall trap catches on Project Strip decline markedly because the Strip is a single line, the first defence against pests migrating from bush and farmland south of the road.

### ***Project Island Song***

Youngster toutouwai (North Island robin), tīeke (saddleback) and pōpokatea (whitehead) resulting from this spring's breeding on the islands of Ipipiri continue to attract attention.

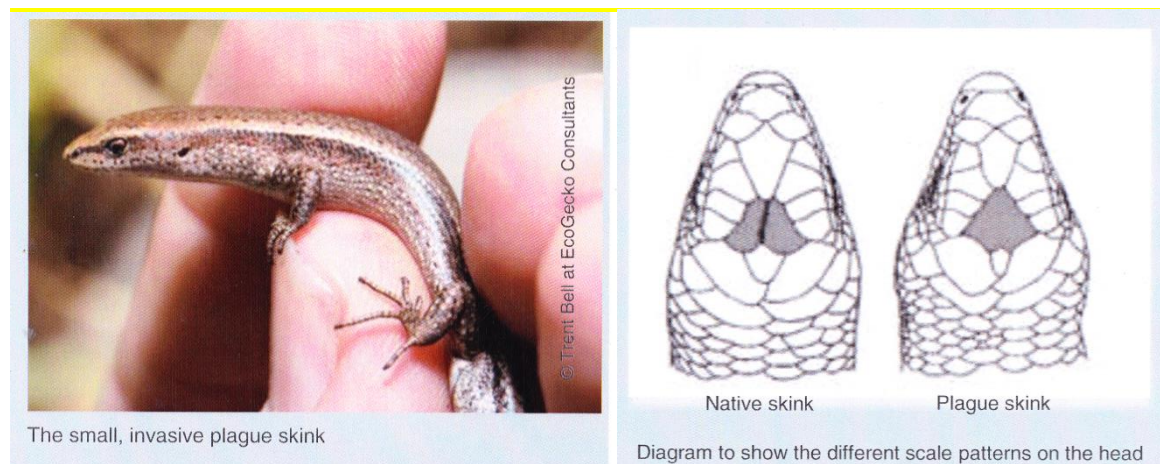
Once again, Fleur Corbett of The Guardians recommends your best bet to see toutouwai and tīeke is on Moturua Island, between Waipaoa and Otupoho bays; and on Urupukapuka, between Paradise and Cable bays. You may encounter pōpokatea on the way up to the lookout on Motuarohia Island.



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

The plague skink – only recognised out this way for the first time a couple of years ago – is continuing, it seems, to spread (or – and less likely - we are becoming more aware of them). During the flood in November, when the stream at Whiorau covered the road, dozens of plague skinks sought refuge on the tar seal.

We are keen to map the distribution (and spread) of plague skinks in our region. The diagram below shows how to distinguish this skink from all native ones. The plague skink is small, and it takes eyesight better than mine to distinguish the all-important scale, between the eyes, without a lens. But an in-focus shot from one of those fancy new cameras is usually enough. If in doubt, place your skink in container and then fridge, and let a committee member know.



**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.**

## Weeds

During the past year work has continued on road edges, reserves and private land. This spring the focus has been ladder fern, woolly nightshade, fleabane, pampas grass and jasmine. The limiting factor to more being done is labour.

For herbicides and spraying equipment contact Malcolm Waller 403 8340 [malwal@xtra.co.nz](mailto:malwal@xtra.co.nz)



## Tangatapu

Tangatapu has really transformed in the last two years, so much so that it is almost unrecognisable. The below photos were taken at the same place on the hillside in 2013 and 2016.



Another 4,200 plants were planted in the wetland and 800 on the hillside this year, bringing the total planted to 18,000. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final pond was dug. Each year there is some trial whether it be flooding or frosts, but this year it was pukeko damage and hydrology issues. The pukeko population has increased immensely and threatens the survival of pateke. Pukeko pulled out hundreds of small manuka plants and prolonged wetness killed others. Luckily Ngawha Prison donated large plants as replacements.

One of the biggest challenges of a wetland restoration with pond digging is the hydrology. A neighbouring stream that has become clogged is now back flowing into Tangatapu creating a huge risk of excessive flooding if there is large rainfalls. The challenge is getting a digger in to clear the block.

The EBoIPS has secured funding from Foundation North again. With only 1800 plants planned for next year to complete the wetland, most of the money will go to the biggest job – weed control and plant maintenance. We have contracted a Rawhiti team to carry out much of this work.

A 5-minute bird count survey in November this year showed a huge increase in forest birds in the wetland –grey warblers, tom tits and tui. And along the Whangamumu track tom tit, grey warblers and tui had increased between 15 and 35%. Fantails had a very productive year, with a 75% increase.

## **Fish Forever**

Using its \$29K awarded by the Department of Conservation through the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund (CCPF), Fish Forever has completed a series of ecological baseline studies in the Bay of Islands, concerning the health of the shallow-reef kelp; baited underwater video assessments of snapper densities; dive estimates of rock lobster and cryptic fish abundance inside versus outside the Maunganui Bay Rahui area; the key features of the communities of Maunganui Bay; and an assessment of the rare and special ecosystems of the Bay of Islands.

The reports will shortly be available on the Fish Forever website; there will be a public presentation of these during Seaweed, in March 2017.

## **Pine Forest near Te Rawhiti – Mostly Gone**

The main part of the pine forest has now gone, and has been replanted with manuka for honey production. It is not clear when the remainder of the pines will go, but the word on the street is that some are to be harvested this summer.

## **Weka Watch**

One or two weka have recently been sighted in the eastern Bay of Islands – including Bentzen Farm, Te Kanawa's Peninsula, and Hauai Bay. It is not clear if they have got here on their own steam, or have been transported.

They are a bird on the cusp of extinction – under more threat than kiwi. If you see one, please let a committee member know, and then ensure your Timm's traps are elevated.

## **Moorings & the New Regional Plan**

During the year NRC called for submissions on the new 10-Year Regional Plan which incorporates the Regional Coastal Plan and the Plans on Water, Air and Soil. Their plan is to incorporate all these into a single one. Your Committee made submissions on the area of the Plan relating to the Mooring Zones in Waipiro and Te Uenga Bay. In particular, we opposed the proposal to expand the Te Uenga Bay Mooring Zone on the grounds that there were inadequate shore facilities in the area for parking, dinghy storage and rubbish removal. We also proposed that the Plan specifically instruct the Harbour Master to ensure that the swing of moored vessels remain within the Mooring Zone when placing new moorings (currently he has been placing mooring blocks up to the edge of the Mooring Zone which allows the moored vessel to swing over into the adjacent waters), so as to ensure that moored vessels do not encroach into the adjacent recreational anchorage zone. This is of particular relevance to Waipiro Bay which has a “safe anchorage” designation adjacent to the Mooring Zone which, in our opinion, should not be reduced in size by the swing of moored vessels.

At the time of writing, NRC is considering all these submissions. A first draft of the new Plan is due out soon and further submissions will be called for later in 2017. The new Plan is scheduled to become operative in 2018.

### **Committee**

Your Committee this year has been constituted as follows: Executive Committee: Sandra Scowen (Chairman and Secretary), Jim Frater (Treasurer), John Booth and Bryn Jamieson; and as General Committee: the aforementioned together with, Malcolm Waller, Philip Yates, Sarah Yates, Louise Dews, Charles Kelly and Giles Boundy.