

## ***2017 Annual Report and Notice of Annual General Meeting***

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

**The 44th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society will be held on Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 4.30 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 three parking spots at the top of the drive near the road. Robert Willoughby (Ngati Kuta) will be our guest speaker, focusing particularly on local Hapu initiatives around conservation and employment, and plans for a 1080 drop in the Russell Forest.

### **Summary of focus and activities in 2017**

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.

In 2017 the membership remained the same and the EBoIPS is in a very sound financial position. Project Strip continues to be funded by the Lotteries fund plus EBoIPS membership. The EBoIPS made another successful funding application for the Tangatapu Wetland Restoration Project, which will mostly cover weed control.

### **Membership report**

At the end of the financial year (31 October 2017) there were 54 paid-up members (families/individual members). This is the same number as last year which is pleasing, but it would be good if we could increase membership in the future. We 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 for a membership form.

We are not recommending any changes to the membership subscription fees for the 2018 year.

### **Treasurer's report for year ended 31 October 2017 by Jim Frater**

Firstly I would like to thank Bryn Jamieson for his invaluable assistance in all financial and reporting matters, and for being the Reviewer of the Financial Statements. It makes my task so much easier.

Once again, I am pleased to report that the Society is in sound financial position. Our Chairperson, Sandra Scowen, was instrumental in making a further successful application to Foundation North for funding the Tangatapu Wetland Restoration Project, and we have received \$14,000 in October for this purpose.

During the year we spent \$11,789 on the Tangatapu project and \$10,069 on Project Strip, mainly involving trap servicing.

We have ended the financial year with \$70,607 of funds in the bank and on term deposit, of which \$51,200 from both external grants and member donations is allocated to Tangatapu, Project Strip and any other projects that we identify as suitable for our involvement. The balance of \$19,407 is accumulated general reserves.

Your committee is recommending that the annual membership subscription and donation 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% rebate 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](http://www.eboipreservationsociety.org).

## **Pest control**

### ***Predatory pests***

On Project Strip, the cycle of catches of pests (rats, possums and mustelids) has followed the pattern of previous years (highest in late summer/autumn), and overall numbers were about average. But the change in species dominance which has occurred is not only worrying – but also of some national interest.

Experts from the Department of Conservation (DOC) and elsewhere believe that the level of control we have achieved over ship rats has meant that Norway rats have taken over in parts of Project Strip as the major player – and much less is known about controlling Norway rats. Intensive trapping in the Tangatapu wetland has resulted in trap-rates as high as seen anywhere in rural New Zealand. Furthermore, the dozen or more Norway rats caught on the islands this last year have had very strong genetic affinity with the Te Uenga-Tangatapu-Whiorau-Rawhiti area populations. By the time of our AGM, a specialist group meeting will have been convened at the Kerikeri DOC office to review the situation and to recommend ways forward.

### ***Weeds***

After the rainy winter and cool spring, weeds are now growing like crazy. Malcolm Waller, who must be about 93 by now, has kept our roadsides weed-free in Waipiro and Parekura bays for years, but has recently cut back considerably. Now it's up to us to maintain our weed-free roadsides, perhaps by doing a little weed control on our own road boundaries.

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

## **Project Island Song**

Kakariki (native red-crowned parakeet) is the most recent bird to have been released on the islands, in this instance at Mangahawea Bay on Moturua Island. It joins the toutouwai (North Island robin), tīeke (saddleback) and pōpokatea (whitehead) released in previous years.

Fleur Corbett of The Guardians recommends your best bet to see toutouwai, tīeke and kakariki 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.



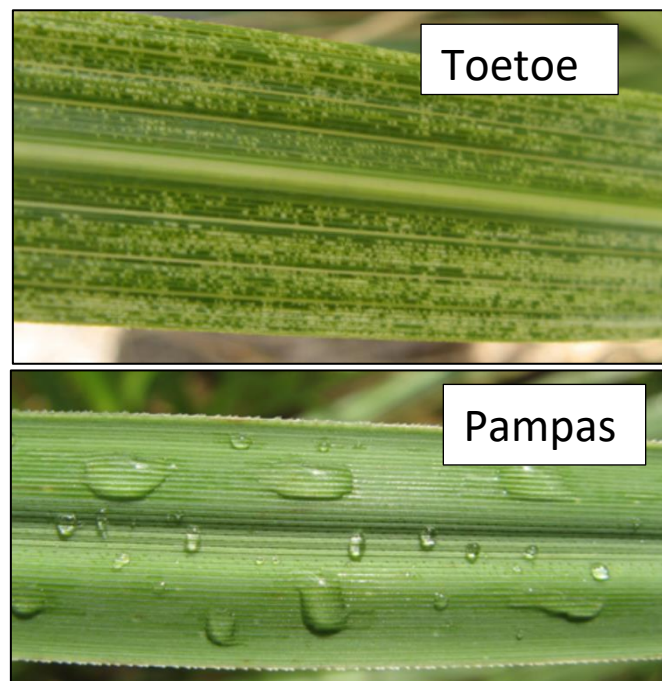
**Walks (purple) most likely to lead to toutouwai, tīeke and kakariki sightings are from Waipaoa to Otopoho bays on Moturua, and Paradise to Cable (inside Round Island) on Urupukapuka.**

## Know your natives

Currently kanuka, tī kōuka (cabbage tree), pohutukawa and toetoe (creamy brown flower) are flowering around the Bay of Islands. Where can you see toetoe growing wild around here? Walking up the Punaruku Stream from the back road, you will first see pampas grass, then - further on - toetoe grows on the edges of the stream. Also there is a small wetland with toetoe about 3 km into the Waikare Road. And the plantings nearest us are in the Tangatapu Wetland – well revealed from the viewing platform at the beginning of the Whangamumu track.

Think about planting toetoe in a damp area of your property. Pampas grass (which looks like toetoe, but is an invasive pest) grows prolifically everywhere from damp to dry conditions, and flowers (white/pink) in autumn, rather than in spring. Large areas of pampas can be seen along the roadside just south of Taupiri Bay, and on some of the hillsides in Waipiro Bay.

When not in flower, you can distinguish toetoe from pampas by examining the leaves (below).



**Toetoe leaves (upper) have a primary midrib, and significant other ribs, whereas pampas (lower) has only the primary midrib. (Images purloined)**





**Flowering toetoe on Sandra Scowen's property. (Photo by Sandra Scowen)**

## **Fish Forever**

*Fish Forever* remains committed to the notion of up to 10% of the waters of the Bay of Islands being set aside as no-take marine reserves, in so doing capturing both representative and rare ecosystems in the sea in exactly the same manner as we do on land. Increasingly it is becoming clear how ecosystems free from fishing are much more than a nice-to-have: healthy native ecosystems, with their inbuilt complexity, are at the heart of human resilience and well-being. But lack of any real progress in this has led to a new approach: *Fish Forever* now equally supports other sorts of marine conservation in the Bay of Islands (and elsewhere), such as rahui and mataitai, dolphin protection zones, and so on.

## **Tangatapu**

The weather gods have been kind to us this year with no major rain or wind storms. Even the pukeko have left the plantings alone. Trees planted in 2016 alongside the walkway are already 2 m high and the *Carex secta* sedges near the gate look magnificent.



**The carex and umbrella sedges at the beginning of the Whangamumu Track are presently in fine flowering form. (Photo by Sandra Scowen)**

With only a small 2017 planting of around 2300 plants, weed control remains the main focus for Tangatapu. REP NZ (Viki and Rana's team) have been doing a great job with weed eaters and niwashi cutting tools to release the plants, including rediscovering buried plants (below).



**REPNZ contractors in late November 2017 releasing the 2016 plantings from the galloping weed growth that had taken place during September-November. (Photo by Viki Heta)**

You will notice the plants in the red area (above) are small; they have struggled with wetness over the winter. Above and beyond the red area you will notice some brown trees from the 2014 planting that have died due to wetness. It's very hard to get the hydrology right, so we have had to replant with wetter plant species in some areas.

This winter Polly Hall kindly provided a special type of weaving flax (muka, with black edges) to plant in the wetland. She also gave us root cuttings of the native reed kuta, which John Booth planted in the deepest pond using metal stakes to hold them in place. These are not only steadily establishing, but some are even flowering – and are certainly worth a look-see.

Both the kuta and flax will be eventually available for weaving projects by locals, as Polly decides.



**Kuta reeds with flower heads can now be seen in the backwater just below and before the first major bluff on the Whangamumu track. (Photos by Sandra Scowen)**

The EBoIPS has again secured funding from Foundation North. With only 1100 plants planned for 2018, most of the money will go to weed control and plant maintenance, together with interpretive signs for the viewing platform.

The aggressive nature of pukeko are making it hard for pateke (brown teal ducks) to fledge their offspring on the islands and at Tangatapu, but forest birds and fern birds are flourishing in the wetland.

### **The new Regional Plan**

In November Northland Regional Council called for follow-up submissions on their proposed 10-Year Regional Plan for Northland, which incorporates the Regional Coastal Plan and the previous Plans on Water, Air and Land. Your Committee made submissions on the parts of the Plan relating to the west side of Waipiro Bay being set aside as a storm anchorage zone; and others parts related to sedimentation and to the types of structures (viewing hides, board walks etc.) that can be built within significant wetlands. The new Plan is scheduled to become operative in 2018.

### **Around the traps**

Last summer, a major archaeological excavation (University of Otago, DOC and Heritage New Zealand, with Hapu oversight) at Mangahawea Bay on Moturua Island revealed an important site of early settlement, with charcoal datings to AD 1320  $\pm$  ~15 years. Such sites are among the earliest East Polynesian settlements in the country, and part of a wave of colonisation in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10963-017-9110-y>)

A recent publication from the Ministry for Primary Industries and written by John Booth highlights the dire state of the shallow-reef kelp in the main basin of the Bay of Islands. This has resulted from prolonged overfishing of keystone predators like large snapper and large rock lobsters. (<http://fs.fish.govt.nz/Doc/24501/AEBR-186-Characterising-marine-fisheries-of-the-Bay-of-Islands.pdf.ashx>)

### **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 and Louise Dews

