



# BRING BACK KOKAKO

For more about bringing back Kokako to GBI, see our website: <http://www.gbiet.org/kokako>

## Coastal Cleanup

Today it was the coastal clean-up and my team was Zephyr, Arlo, Sue, Sam and I and we had to clean Smokehouse Bay from this random rocky bay in the middle of nowhere.

First off Brett picked us up from the wharf and then he took us to the random bay. Then we started looking for rubbish and one of the first things we found was an old squid bait bag. Later we found a blown up ball that was next to a whiskey bottle. The ball was all discoloured from being in the ocean for too long.

After that we came to a really tricky bit but we made it past. Then there was a super hard bit so Sam got a boatie to take us across the bay to where it was all sandy, he had to make two trips because his rubber ducky was too small. When Sam was coming over in the boat we put all the rubbish that we found on that beach into a separate bag until Sam came over because she had the recording sheet with her.

Then Brett took us back to the wharf and we had some burgers that mom cooked. After that Connor and I went swimming at the boat pontoon. I tried to double backflip off the wharf but I backslapped.

Just a comment to boaties out there. We need you to stop littering and people that work on the mussel farm, please try and keep the lanyards at the mussel farm because I had to pick up heaps. Even so I had a great day.

by Magnus



## Marine Mammal Strandings and How to Help



Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May a female bottlenose dolphin was found stranded on the beach at Okupu. Thanks go to all the community members involved with contacting DOC and helping by uprighting the dolphin, staying with her and keeping her wet. Sadly, the dolphin (who was regularly sighted around the coast of Great Barrier) was too weak and injured for a refloat to be attempted.

What to do if you find stranded marine animals.

Call 0800 DOC HOT (0800 362 468) or the local DOC office (09 4290 044) as soon as possible if you come across any marine life, dead or alive, on the beach.

Whales and dolphins; alive and on their side, try to upright the dolphin by digging a shallow trench parallel to the stomach and gently rolling the dolphin in. Ideally use 4-6 people for this, and only if it is safe to do so. Keep the flippers tucked downwards into the sides, and once the dolphin or whale is upright, dig small holes for the flippers to hang freely into. Cover the animal with wet sheets and gently bucket water onto them. Do not cover the blowhole with water (to prevent this, wait until the animal has taken a breath before pouring). Stay clear of the tail as this can cause injury. Wait for DOC staff to arrive before attempting to refloat the animal.

Seals; remain at least 20 m away, don't get between the seal and the sea. Do not disturb any seals and keep dogs away. It is quite normal behaviour for seals to come ashore and rest. However, if a seal appears injured, specify this when you call DOC.

Sick or injured turtles; DOC will respond and arrange for them to be transported to Kelly Tarltons for rehabilitation.

Your efforts are greatly appreciated by DOC. Many marine animals are saved with the help of the public, contributing to their conservation.



## My (stupid) trip to Hauturu, Little Barrier Island,

by Milly the Rat Dog



Recently my human friend Scott and I went to the most boring island in the world and spent 2 weeks hiking around having a very dull time.

Along the way we had to put up with sharing the bush with a lot of stupid noisy birds like kokako, bellbirds, kaka, stitchbirds, robins, saddlebacks and thousands and thousands of very annoying cooks petrels (as if I hadn't had enough of avoiding them at Glenfern!) Oh and there were these massive lizards that were nearly as big as me which was kind of weird but also boring.

But not one rat on the whole island – and trust me I looked really, really hard every day. What a waste of

*Day One. Ready to search everywhere in hope of finding nothing. Day Two was a wee bit wet underfoot. My human friend says he may have to get me some stilts?*



*Hauturu is a Jurassic Park with actual real live dinosaurs in the wild.*



two weeks. I can't wait to get back home to Great Barrier Island where we have lots of rats and cats and cool things to hunt (and less stupid birds). The end.



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## Okupu Beach Birds

In a recent conversation with a friend about Okupu beach we were surprised at the variety of birds we could see over the year.

On any given day you would probably see two pairs of NZ Dotterels, a pair of Variable Oyster Catchers and a pair of Caspian terns. They will often have a juvenile with them. Then there might be a Red Billed Gull or three and maybe a couple of Black Backed Gulls. They are also some times in the company of a juvenile bird. Maybe there will be a White Faced Heron or two poking around in the rock pools.

If you are really lucky you will spot the secretive Reef Heron skulking along the shore line.

You can see over a dozen Pateke [depending on the time of the year] waddling down to the low tide mark or just relaxing up by the creek. There you will also see some of the Mallard ducks that gather a little further up the creek. From time to time a Grey duck has been spotted there. You may encounter the NZ Banded Rail making a be-line for the under



Variable Oyster Catcher & juveniles. Photographer: K. Stowell

growth up the banks. The Paradise Shelduck pair are often at the northern end where the other creeks come in. They and the Spurwing Plovers will certainly let all the other wildlife on the beach know that you are there with their loud calls.

Round the sand dune area you will see small flocks of Green Finches feeding on the seeding beach plants. Even the odd Starling can be



Kingfisher - Photographer: K. Stowell

seen. Swallows can be seen swooping round after insects and a bit further down the beach the Kingfishers hang out on a convenient perch, on the lookout for a meal. In the nesting season you may be exposed to the fright of your life by the screaming and near parting of your hair if you get too close to the nest site.

On days the fish are schooling out in the bay you will see Gannets diving for their tucker. Shags can be seen in the melee too. The Shags come from nesting sites around closer to the wharf. The White fronted terns make an appearance in small flocks late summer.

Over the winter this season we had up to eight Banded Dotterel spend several weeks in the bay.

On top of all this and keeping a very good eye on things is Kahu the Australian Harrier Hawk. We were fortunate to have five NZ Dotterels grow to maturity in the 2015/16 summer season. Let's hope we have as good a luck this 2016/17 summer.

Twenty two bird species. Not bad for our little beach is it?

Sponsored by funding from Auckland Council the Environmental Trust is offering **FREE Cat Neutering** for island residents. Contact the local Vet, Anne Kernohan, on 463 to book an appointment.



## Who Lost their Pet Rat?

That was my first thought as I came across this pure white rat caught squarely in a snap-e trap on the carport bench. Was someone playing a joke on me? In fact it turned out to be an Albino ship rat, slender face and a tail longer than its head and body.

The test for a true albino is that the eye must be pink as albinos produce no pigments anywhere in their body. This tells the difference between a true albino and a white rat which are common as pets and in lab test situations.

Rodent numbers have been at a peak during March and April. A few were caught in the New Year. A mild winter last year meant a higher rodent population able to breed and produce a higher summer peak level. We certainly need those cold snaps to put the brakes on. We trapped 92 rats on a 33ha property in one month so imagine the numbers out there.

On a more positive note the dawn chorus continues to improve. Kaka and Kereru perch in nearby cabbage trees and tui, grey warblers, ruru and fantails breed and rear their young. The Taiko (black petrel) breed nearby on Hiramakimata. It was exciting to find ten petrel burrows on our property this year so it's not all about rats.



## Fresh Water Turtle

Alerted to presence of species of fresh water turtle on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February Biosecurity Officer Jeremy Warden was alerted to the presence of what appeared to be a fresh water turtle which was photographed on a newly constructed drain culvert crossing on Kaitoke Lane, opposite Kaitoke School. One of the owners uses the access way periodically to get the block of land they are developing at the back. The owners speculation was that it was a Reeves turtle.



## Myrtle Rust

Be vigilant, this fungus could have a serious effect on our NZ native plants such as Pohutukawa, Rata, Manuka/Kanuka. It attacks new leaves and mature leaves. Do not touch it. It is transported on clothing and equipment. For more information contact DOC or if you see it phone the MPI hotline 0800 80 99 66 immediately. [www.mpi.govt.nz/alerts](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/alerts) or [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)



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