

# GBI Environmental News

The publication of the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust, whose trustees are:  
John Ogden (Chair), Tony Bourant, Jude Gilbert, David Speir, Liz Westbrook,  
Fenella Christian (Secretary)



## Referendum Results Analysed The Birds of Great Barrier The CRESA Report Where to From Here?

**Mission Statement** Our vision is to protect native species through the eradication of rats and feral cats, to re-introduce species lost to the Island, and to work towards building an ecology-based economic framework for Great Barrier Island.



**Pied Stilt.** This gawky wader is not uncommon in New Zealand, but there are probably only a dozen or so resident birds on Great Barrier. As with most of our other waders, we need to monitor numbers.

Photo by Len Doel

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# The 'GBICT Referendum'

## • a response from the Trust •

What an amazing response to the Great Barrier Island Trust 'referendum' - pink page after pink page unfolded to reveal both "yes" and "no" answers, requests for information, donations, membership forms, and many notes of encouragement and helpful comments.

It was very satisfying for us to know that the vast majority of the 585 forms returned support this small group of locals. It was particularly rewarding to see our membership increase dramatically, and to get some positive comments and generous donations from offshore and overseas respondents. The returned results overwhelmingly speak for themselves:

- **90% yes** to the issue of working towards the elimination of feral cats
- **93% yes** to exploring the ecological and economic benefits of eradicating rats<sup>1</sup>.

keep going. Thank you. The referendum was sent to 'all' residents and ratepayers, both on Island, elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas. We have since become aware that some people who should have received it, didn't. This is in itself a significant finding - there seems to be no fool-proof way of communicating with all concerned. We can only assure those who didn't receive it that we did our best, and we'll be looking into the problem.

We estimate that c. 60% of the private land on Barrier is owned by off-Island ratepayers, and this proportion of our questionnaires went to them. Consequently it was interesting to get 53% of our replies from the 40% of people living on the Island, indicating a very strong level of local support. The responses also included a range of perfectly reasonable questions—some of which we would like to reply to as follows.

**Are we paid?**  
Our funds are raised through

Each response was entered into a data base, hence the need for numbering, and notes made of comments and questions. The huge job for the Trust now is to resource itself to be able to research all the matters relating to an Island wide eradication and communicate this back to the community. The need for a 'referendum', ('questionnaire', call it what you will) was to ask as many residents and ratepayers as possible, what they, as a community, thought about our vision of a feral cat and rat-free Great Barrier Island. We have a clear mandate to

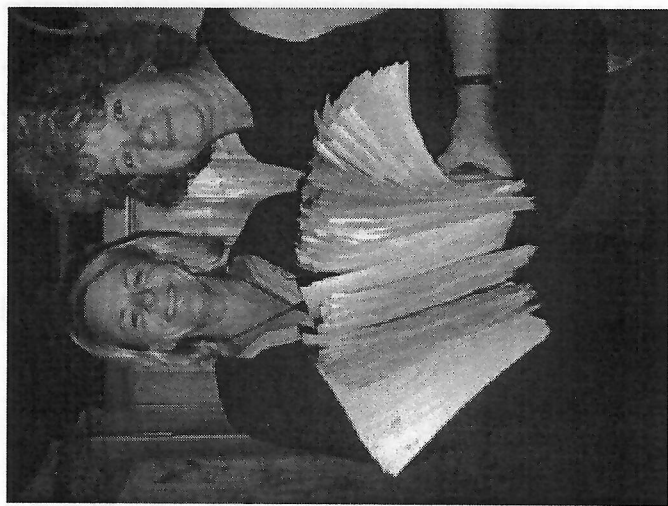
applications to funding organisations and from the membership. Currently all five Trustees contribute most or all of their time on a voluntary basis. The Project Manager (Liz Westbrooke), who is researching the steps needed to achieve eradication, is paid for 8 hours/week from funds we applied for specifically for this role. The Trust secretary (Fenella Christian) is paid for 10 hours per week of her time. One of her main roles is to apply for additional funding to keep us going! It may be that as the jobs get bigger in future we will need to reimburse trustees for their expenses and some of their time, but we will remain an essentially voluntary Charitable Trust composed of mainly resident members of the Great Barrier Is. community.

### Is this a hobby?

For all the Trustees, rat eradication and the benefits derived from it are an interest and a passion perhaps, but a bit too much like hard work to call it a hobby. Most 'hobbies' don't try to halt the waning of New Zealand's biodiversity—listed as one of the top 10 issues facing the country at this time.

### Are we experts?

Our Chairperson (John Ogden) has expertise in Ecology, and there are also collective skills in Project Management. Liz Westbrooke in particular has knowledge in that area. Judy Gilbert and



Judy Gilbert (left) and Fenella Christian with the returned referendum forms.

Fenella Christian (Trust secretary) have years of experience in raising funds for employment in conservation projects, and community building. They have a wide network for information gathering. Tony Bouzaid has an understanding of many community related matters through his long-term role on the Community Board, and both he and Judy have first-hand experience of rat and feral cat control on the extensive properties they manage. David Speir has experience in journalism and nature tourism, and he edits the Newsletter. Overall then, we can claim a level of appropriate expertise.<sup>2</sup> This should not be mistaken for arrogance; we are acutely aware that we do not have all the answers and that there are many other points of view to be heard. In particular, we have no effective input

from local Iwi at present. There are also technical aspects of an eradication campaign for which outside expertise will be required. Neither this Trust, nor those outside experts, should make decisions for this community. Exactly how such a community-led decision with regard to rat/feral cat eradication can be arrived at, is one of the main questions currently facing the Trust, and on which we need feedback. We are certainly not experts on that!

#### **Are we anti-pet?**

The referendum was about eradication of pests not pets! Most of the Trustees have treasured pets and we are all aware of the importance of them, particularly for anyone who lives here alone or in an isolated situation. While we have such high densities of rats, a house cat assists with keeping their numbers down. Our vision is for a feral cat free Island. To avoid pet cats going feral we would need biosecurity measures. The first step would be to de-sex pet cats, because without this no-one could be persuaded to put any support into feral cat elimination. However, we recognise that this is something that the community must first agree to. This is an inhabited island and a balance between the needs of human and native species will be worked towards. There were many respondents, mainly locals, who commented negatively on the numbers of un-managed pets, and visiting domestic cats and dogs. The issue of micro-chipping them was also much commented on. Whether or not animals are micro-chipped will be the subject of

investigation and information-sharing with the community before the Trust has any clear opinion on this.

#### **Can feral cats be used to control rats and rabbits?**

There are many hundreds of feral cats living in the bush. Their diet is unknown, but they probably feed mainly on rats and young rabbits. If rats were eradicated many feral cats would also die, but others would 'prey-switch' to birds. This could be disastrous for some species – such as brown teal. To avoid this, feral cats must be targetted at the same time as rats. There were a number of suggestions that feral cats be used to control the rabbits and rats.

Predators of course never eliminate their prey – as a rule of thumb any given weight (biomass) of prey can support only 10% that weight of predators. On average one cat weighs as much as 18 rats, which means that to support one feral cat requires a permanent rat population at least 180 times greater than the number of cats. Many other factors control both cat and rat numbers, but this simple calculation serves to point out that pest control by predators is not an option. (New Zealand tried this with stoats and weasles and what a disaster that has been!). Apart from a few managed areas on both private and Department of Conservation land, the bulk of this Island is not managed for pests at all, leaving the cats to do their thing. The problem with leaving the feral cats is thus that they also like eating more than rats; lizards, ground nesting shore and bush birds, and insects. The

rabbit issue is a whole other problem which requires more research and more information to be given to the community before a consensus can be reached. Rabbits however are not such a problem for our native birds. Currently they may be sustaining the feral cat population.

#### **Are we self appointed?**

The Trust evolved from the Great Barrier Island Private Conservation Initiatives – a group of locals who got together in 2001/2 to share our conservation activities. There are currently four founding Great Barrier Island Trust Trustees and one nominated. Although we get most of our funding from government organisations, we also have growing membership support, and we strongly maintain our autonomy as a *community group*.

#### **What is our stand on the current Marine Reserve proposal?**

Our Trust deed has a clause that states one of our objectives as: "Promotion of and support for integrated planning and management of the marine environment around *all* the coastal areas of Great Barrier Island, which may include marine reserved areas, mataitai, partial take areas and Taiapure." However, we are not, at this stage, seeking to represent the community in this area. Our current focus is on the eradication of rats and feral cats, which in itself is a huge task, never before attempted on such a large inhabited island. The Trust has made no submissions or statements regarding the Marine Reserve Proposal, nor could it now do so, unless

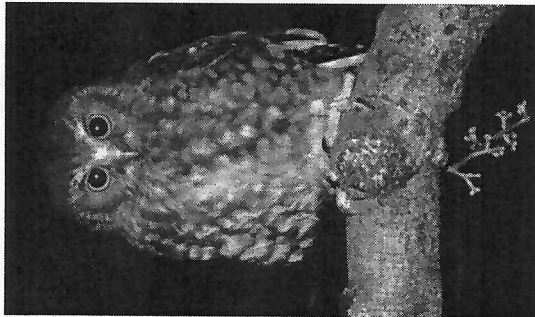


Photo by Len Doel

*Morepoke. We all love to hear them, and they may be put at risk during rat eradication. Consequently we need to know how many are present on GBI now.*

specifically invited by the Minister of Fisheries. Some trustees made individual submissions, but these were clearly made on their own behalf.

#### **Do we think feral cat and rat eradication is really possible?**

Yes to both! Thank you for the great level of support, the thought provoking comment and questions, and for such a clear indication that the majority support this Trust exploring further the vision of a rat and feral cat-free Great Barrier Island.

*John Ogden Judy Gilbert  
Tony Bouzaid David Speir  
Liz Westbrook Fenella Christian*

<sup>1</sup> The forms have been independently checked and the form counts verified by Angela Wright, Accountant, Puriri Bay.

<sup>2</sup> We will post brief biographies of the Trust members, including their relevant qualifications and experience, on our website ([www.gbict.co.nz](http://www.gbict.co.nz)) in the near future, for those who may be interested in these details.

# CATS – NZ based research reveals the individuality of predation by domestic cats

University of Otago researcher Dr. Yolanda van Heezik has collected data on about 200 domestic cats around Dunedin: what prey they bring back; how far they roam. The study started up last August and will run until this spring to cover the four seasons. She reports as follows:

SO FAR ABOUT 1000 prey items have been reported by the cat-owners involved in the study. Out of 208 cats in the study we have received records of prey brought home by 99—so apparently nearly half the domestic cats do go off hunting. Considering the prey items caught we get the following breakdown:

- 42 different prey items caught.
- mice most frequently caught (237 items, 23%)
- rats only 8%
- blackbirds and sparrow most commonly caught birds (10%)
- exotic birds (12 species, 20%)
- native birds (waxeyes, fantail, tui, bellbird, 6%)
- lizard (common skink—11%)
- 19 types of invertebrate reported (26%)
- remaining—stoats, rabbits, a frog.

Birds comprise 26% of the prey. Waxeyes are the most abundant native bird caught and they are also the most abundant in the environment. Although mice are a major item they are caught slightly less frequently than birds. Rats are infrequent in the diet of these Dunedin cats.

Considering the results from the point of view of the cats, rather than the prey, we discover

York cats mainly brought back small mammals.

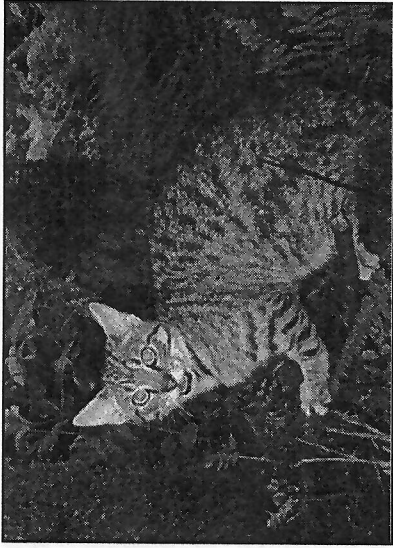
It is important to note that usually only a few individuals bring back most of the prey. Cats seem to be opportunistic, catching the locally abundant species. Rodents, especially mice, are most frequently caught. However, a minority of cats seem to be specialists. A proportion of cats occasionally bring back native birds. To assess the impact of this predation on bird populations you would have to extrapolate up to estimate how many cats lived in the urban area, and what proportion of that total were catching native species. Then you'd have to have estimates of the bird populations to assess whether the estimated number of native birds caught was large enough to have a significant impact on them.

I have carried out counts of birds in various urban habitats, and the data collection was designed so that I should be able to estimate the densities of the more abundant species. I haven't started to do that yet.

As you must be aware, the study has a number of biases. People with cats that regularly catch prey may have been more likely to join the study. People whose cats catch more are more likely to remain interested and keep recording and sending in data, while some people might be less likely to report the capture of a native species. We are assuming

that what a cat brings back is representative of what it catches! Bells on collars do not seem to prevent cats from catching prey - although my opinion is based on anecdotal evidence. Cats wearing the GPS collar, which is quite bulky and weighs 125g, were able to catch prey. Certainly, being fed doesn't stop cats from catching prey.

**COMMENT by David Speir**  
I'd like to stress that the GBH Trust are not a crowd of pet-haters! But we think we should know what our pets are doing. Of course many domestic cats will catch some wild birds, and that probably has only a minor impact on the birds. But it's likely to be the good hunters and the travellers that easily go feral, or have litters which go feral. Then they can start to specialise on easy dinners—on brown teal or Cook's petrels for example. This is why neutering of domestic cats will be a pre-requisite before the elimination of the feral cats. We want to do that job once only!



Feral tabby in the flash. Photo: Rex Williams,

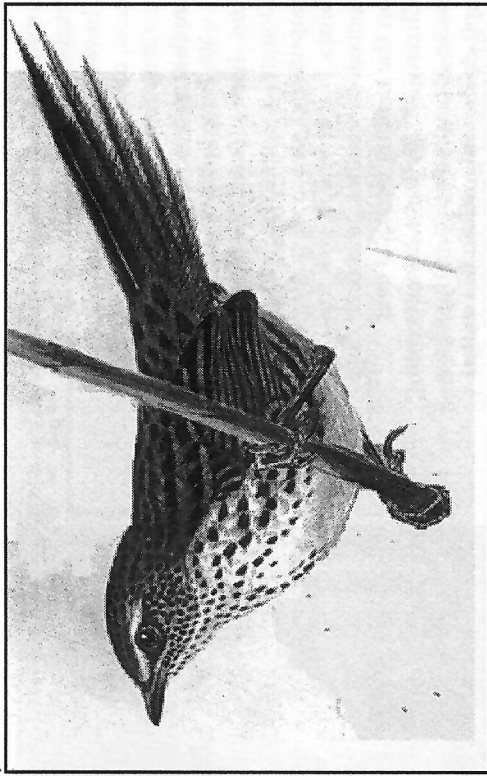
# The Birds of Great Barrier Island

Many of the referendum forms highlighted the need for more information on Great Barrier Island's endemic birds. John Ogdan, Associate Professor of Ecology at Tamaki Campus (AU) illuminates the subject and invites those of you interested in 'hands on' ecology to participate...

The Trust has recently received some funding to gather baseline data on the birds of Great Barrier. While there is detailed information for some species, such as brown teal and black petrel, for the majority of species nothing is known about their current population sizes, nesting success or trends over time. Moreover, much of the available data are hidden in Department of Conservation Reports, or obscure publications, so that getting an overview picture is difficult. The excellent general account by Tim Lovegrove in "Great Barrier Island" (Armitage 2001) does not discuss numerical aspects. Recent events, such as the influx of bell-birds following rat eradication on Little Barrier, and the recent introduction of robins to two locations on the island, have highlighted the need to better integrate the information available

and to set up a system for monitoring change.

Before outlining the Trust's proposals, I'll provide some background. The total species checklist for Great Barrier stands at 111 species. This includes some species no longer found here, and some marine species only occurring on land as 'beach wrecks'. Eighty-two of these are currently present, or at least are known to be occasional visitors to the Island. This can be compared with 328 species known from the whole of the New Zealand region since 1995 —we have about a quarter of the total! Of the difference between the 111 which have been recorded, and the 82 now present, 11 are known to have gone extinct on the Island since 1868, when Hutton visited the Island and made a list. The remaining 18 are very rare visitors or of uncertain status. If



*Fernbird. The tiny secretive fernbird has one of its North Island strongholds on Kaitoke Swamp, Great Barrier Island.*

the birds are divided according to main habitats we get the results in the table opposite.

Since Hutton's list was made in 1868 the Island has lost eleven bird species, predominantly from forest habitats. Stitchbird, saddleback, kokako and others can now be seen on the restored Tiritiri Matangi Island, but not on Great Barrier. Over the same time period the Island has gained 25 introduced species. These are predominantly generalist European birds, such as sparrows and starlings, associated with people and inhabiting open areas. Clearly the shift in the landscape, from the forest of Hutton's day, to the more open farmed landscape this century has resulted in massive changes in bird populations. In percentage terms we have lost 33% of our forest bird species, and many of those remaining, such as pigeon and kakariki, are in much smaller numbers than formerly. Mean-

while we have gained 74% of our farmland birds, flooding into the new man-made habitats.

In contrast, marine and coastal environments appear to have suffered little change. This however may not be quite as it seems, because we have almost no data on some species. Mostly they're only identified for sure when they're washed up dead on a beach. As with many off-shore Islands it is likely that Great Barrier once had huge nesting colonies of marine birds. Although many of these may have been exterminated before European contact, their loss may still be having its influence on other aspects of the ecology of the Island through the loss of many tons of nitrates and phosphates formerly deposited as guano annually into the soil of the Island. With the elimination of rats and cats from Little Barrier I anticipate that we'll start to get more nocturnal visits

Table 1. Summary of Birds of Great Barrier Island by Habitat.

Main Habitat	No. of species	Extinct <sup>(1)</sup>	Introduced <sup>(2)</sup>
Marine	27	0	0
Coastal	22	1	1
Fresh water wetland	16	1	5
Forest and scrub	24	8	2
Open and general	22	1	17
Totals	111	11	25

Notes: <sup>(1)</sup> Extinct from GBI since Hutton's 1868 list.

<sup>(2)</sup> Includes naturally introduced species, spreading from the mainland.

from Cook's petrels and other seabirds looking for nesting sites. However, unless we also eliminate cats, all we'll see of them will be their disembodied wings on our bush tracks.

We have lost one coastal bird—the shore plover. The New Zealand Dotterel seems to be holding its population steady at c. 40–50 birds, but is still at risk from increased visitors, and their dogs, on the nesting beaches over Christmas. We have an interesting suite of waders visiting the Okiwi spit during migration: bar-tailed godwits and Pacific golden plover, and occasionally rarities such as whimbrel and large sand dotterel. Some of these species migrate to and from Siberia each year. In addition we have South Island visitors such as wrybills, banded dotterel and pied oystercatcher. Even our resident dotterels and variable oystercatchers seem to mostly go to Whangapoua for their winter holidays.

We are fortunate in still having one large wetland—Kaitoke Swamp—but unfortunately it, like the others, is inhabited by rats, cats and pigs. Despite that, it is the key site for fern-birds in the Auckland region. Other wetlands, such as those formerly behind the dunes at Awana, Claris and Medlands, have been drained and their native birds have been replaced by the introduced generalists. We still have banded rail; spotless crane is probably, and marsh crane possibly, still present. Bitterns turn up occasionally, but seem to be nesting no longer. Brown teal are hanging on due to intensive management at Okiwi, but grey



Photo by Len Doel

*M.L. Robin – recently re-introduced but struggling with rat predation.*

duck may have been totally replaced by mallard. The Great Barrier Island Trust proposed a monitoring plan, and has received funding for it from the Dept. of Conservation (Advice Fund) to produce an annotated checklist. We'll carry out counts of selected species over one weekend every three months. This will require a team of observers, scattered at key locations across the Island and coordinating their counts. If you'd like to be involved or want to get more information contact John Ogden (09 4290 980) Email: [j.ogden@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:j.ogden@auckland.ac.nz) or the Trust secretary Fenella Christian ([Fenella@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Fenella@xtra.co.nz)). You don't need to be a whiz ornithologist to do this. If you have a pair of binoculars it will certainly help, but counting sparrows, kingfisher nest holes in roadside banks or morepokes calling at night, is not rocket science. The main requisite is enthusiasm!

**More images Page 14.**

# So where do we go to from here?

By Liz Westbrooke

NOW WE HAVE the support from our referendum we can get on with our plans. The main objectives that the Trust has for the next twelve months can be summarised as follows:

- Prepare an Economic Feasibility Report (how the island functions now economically and how this would change if it became feral cat and rat free);

- Carry out Baseline Bird Counts of indicator bird species i.e. count a selection of the native birds already present on the island both for knowledge now and comparison later - we will be looking for volunteers at some point this year so if you are interested in participating please register with Fenella on 09 4290 940;

- Continue the Quarterly Newsletters (and see this newsletter for details of the *Winter Programme* which includes some video nights at the Curragh);

- Continue the Tiritiri Matangi Trips when weather permits and meet with as many interest groups as possible including iwi, business people, women's groups etc—if your group would like a short presentation at one of their meetings this year, please phone Fenella on 09 4290 940 and discuss a date;

- Undertake Research and Provide Information on the issues raised in the 'referendum' - almost equal votes were cast for the top four topics: birds already on the island, birds suitable for re-introduction, eco-tourism and methods of eradication.

Next year we will use the newsletter to report the results of the economic analysis back to the community. We will also then seek your endorsement via another 'referendum' to commission a Technical Feasibility Study (we envisage this study being done using DOC and other experts involved in successful eradications elsewhere, but with the Trust handling the communication and issues requiring resolution with the community).

As you will understand with a project of this size and nature, we are continuing to find out new facts and uncover new issues. Thus the scope continues to change slightly as time goes by. While we have done our best to describe here the next year's activities, changes of direction may still happen.

Et Barrier as a rat and feral cat free island is a target well worth pursuing—but it is a highly complex undertaking too so we need to take it slowly. Let's all give it our best shot!

# THE CRESA REPORT

By Liz Westbrooke

The Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA) recently worked with the community to develop a shared vision for Great Barrier Island. Their objectives were to define the values of the island (natural, social, cultural and recreational); to identify stakeholders' aspirations for the island; and to define principles for development.

They carried this out in a very comprehensive manner.

CRESA included an analysis of census statistics and past reports, interviews with on-island residents and off-island property owners, focus groups and workshops with various interest groups both on and off the island, and interviews and meetings with local and central government officers in DOC, the ARC and Auckland City. They sent out surveys to both on-island residents and off-island ratepayers and distributed three reports for comment. Finally they put together a draft Vision Statement and invited the community to drop-in sessions to view this and discuss any points with them. This then went to the key agencies for comment and inclusion in their planning processes, and the final Vision Statement is now available.

So what are the results? Here are some quotes from the **Island Values** (section 3):

**"The community:** The community is valued for its diversity, independence, resourcefulness and people's care for one another...

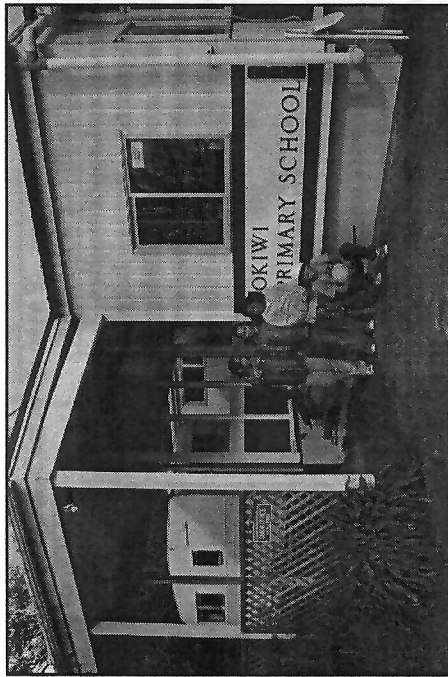
**The natural environment:** The island's natural environment

is highly valued for its island status, the existing ecological values, the diversity of landscape and scenic beauty, the island's freedom from possums and its potential to be pest free. The island's substantial size adds to its special significance ...large scale protection programmes are possible, providing lessons for mainland activities...

**Cultural heritage:** Culture and heritage values on the island range from early Maori history, to early European economic activity and settlement, to ecological heritage values... Specific heritage values include signs of Ngati Rehua's association with GBI over many centuries. These include numerous archaeological sites such as pa (with defensive and habitation features), agricultural and settlement sites (with still visible terracing, storage pit depressions and deposits of food waste or 'middens'), and stone-working sites...

**Recreational opportunities:** The island's natural marine and land-based environment provides many recreational opportunities, including boating, diving, fishing, bush walking and trampng, hunting and, of course, swimming and other beach activities...

Okiwi School, North Barrier has at present 14 children on its role. In 1995 the school role was double that.



**Current Trends** are outlined in Section 4. It will come as no surprise that 'population decline' is the major of these and is seen by the community as 'possibly leading to contraction in the local economy, loss of services and stalling of infrastructure development'. The other main topic here is 'growth in the visitor industry'. That is viewed as positive if managed to benefit the island and maintain island lifestyles but not if it impacts on the GBI lifestyle, the number of vacant houses and has effects on living costs.

So how does the island view itself in the future? Just what do people envisage for themselves? The vision is covered in detail in section 5 titled: **Where do we want to be in the future?** Here is the full text on the first point, a stable population base:

**"A stable population base:** Great Barrier Island will attract permanent residents because the local community:

- is vibrant and diverse
- supports and values a re-

sourceful arts and culture sector (including events)

- invests time and resources into integrated community development
- has access to a reasonable infrastructure and range of services.

The size and composition of the permanent resident population is sufficient to support the development and maintenance of reasonable services and infrastructure. That population size (i.e. a stable population) is estimated to be around 1,500."

The entire list of desirable attributes sought by the community is:

- A stable population base
- Infrastructure / services / information meets the needs of local residents and visitors
- A viable economy and job opportunities
- Protection of the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment:
- Protection of heritage and cultural values
- Preservation of the existing

community character

- Availability of a range of recreational opportunities

Again no surprises here (it is a bit like 'motherhood' and 'apple pie', no one will disagree with these) but the detail is interesting. So here is a sampling from some of the other points:

**"Infrastructure / services / information meets the needs of local residents and visitors**

includes an innovative education environment that includes on-island secondary schooling options, a state-of-the-art distance education system, a minimum of three primary schools, a Kohanga Reo and a range of pre-schools; an information network that establishes the island as an innovative IT user and provides the platform for distance learning and distance working...

**A viable economy and job opportunities** includes the development of Great Barrier Island as a high value destination for domestic and international visitors; assessment of the economic value of conferring a special status on some of the island (e.g. like a world heritage area) to protect the values that residents and others prize; development of a range of tourism products and amenities sympathetic to the natural environment...

**Protection of the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment:**

One step is a restored and pest free natural environment. Total pest eradication, particularly of feral cats and rats, will further enhance the benefits that the island's current possum free

status gives to bush cover and the viability of some species. The pest free status will also enable the island to be marketed as a unique eco-tourism destination, as pest-free islands of the size of GBI are a rarity internationally and could provide research and education possibilities...

**Preservation of the existing community character:** The community, although considerably larger, retains the characteristics that local people and others value: independence, self-reliance, resourcefulness, diversity and optimism. Other characteristics, like 'community care for their own', are also evident. ....parochialism and non-cooperativeness, are overcome to the extent that the local community works together and with others to achieve the economic growth and infra-structural development they desire and protection of island characteristics they value."

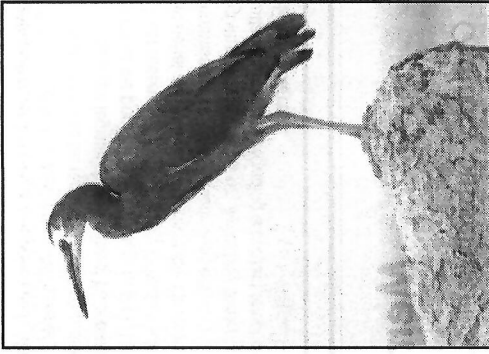
The full document is too long to reprint here so you can download it as a .pdf file (this is a quick format for download) off the CRESA web site [www.cresa.co.nz](http://www.cresa.co.nz) or go and look at a paper copy at the Auckland City centre in Claris.

The GBI Community Board is at present looking at the feasibility of picking this work up and developing the next stage, an action plan. This would be a great outcome and mean that an impressive survey of islander, rate-payer and agency opinion and knowledge does not just sit on the shelf - it results in realisation of at least some of the community's ideas.

## Birds of the Barrier (Cont. from page 9)



**Marsh Crake.** According to the Reader's Digest Book of New Zealand Birds "nowhere in the world has the marsh crake been adequately studied". This is the most secretive of swampland birds; from hearing calls we think it may be present on Kaitake Swamp but no-one has actually seen it! Photo by L.G. Chandler



**White faced Heron.** This bird is a relatively recent arrival in New Zealand from Australia. The less common Reef Heron is smaller and darker coloured, and sometimes seen on coastal rocks around Great Barrier. These are easy species to identify and count, but we currently have no idea how many are present on the Island. Photo by Len Doel.

## PUBLIC LECTURE

John Ogden will be giving a public talk entitled:

**"The Ecology of the Birds of Great Barrier Island"**

@ The Curragh (Tryphena)  
5.00 PM

Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup>

If you're interested in participating in the study this will be a good chance to meet the team and get involved.

Supper provided

## COVER PHOTOGRAPH

**Variable Oystercatcher.** This is one of New Zealand's threatened shore birds, but still fairly common here. But how many are there? And how threatened are they by increased use of their nesting beaches by visitors, cats and dogs? In many mainland beaches their small populations have disappeared as their breeding areas have been overrun by beachgoers and their pets.

Photo by Len Doel