

Issue 2
Summer 2005



RD1 Great Barrier Island, Ph: (09) 4290 414

GBI Environmental News

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



Robins Breed on Aotea Future Vision • CRESA Report Kiwi Recovery Prospectus

Mission Statement: To sustain and restore the cultural and natural environment of Great Barrier Island in order to enhance the native biodiversity and foster the socio-economic well-being of the people.

Integrated Pest Management – Public Meetings Planned

A RECENT NZ Herald article quoted Jack Crow, the Biosecurity Manager of the Auckland Regional Council and Rob MacCallum the Conservator of the Auckland Department of Conservation as being right behind the idea of eradicating pests from the Island.

At an ARC pest management meeting held on the Island last month Mr Crow commented that the technology was available and he implied that with the community's backing he was assured that the money could be found.

It all hinges on this community initiating a proposal to these organisations that has the fullest possible agreement from residents and landowners.

The Great Barrier Island Trust is committed to building knowledge and support within the community for an integrated pest eradication. In this regard the Trust is to arrange a series of public meetings in the community with guest speakers talking on other successful Island eradications.

Motuihe Sanctuary

THE MINISTER of Conservation's announcement that Motuihe Island will be restored as a pest-free sanctuary and restocked with endangered species including kiwi and saddleback (tieke) is a significant marker for Great Barrier Island's future.

The move points to a growing public awareness of conservation and a demand for access. This plan promises public access to the conservation space and will therefore necessitate quarantine measures to prevent re-invasion of rats, mice, rabbits, possums, cats etc.

Such measures are envisaged for a pest-free Great Barrier Island and their implementation on Motuihe Island will provide valuable lessons.

An Apology

THE Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust has been endeavouring to organise a visit to Little Barrier for some time now. We have had five attempts aborted due to unfavourable weather.

Patience please, the trip is worth the wait and one day the weather will accommodate us. Thanks to DOC staff, especially Simon Stevenson and the Hauturu rangers for their continued patience and assistance.

And on that note the GBICT is organising an autumn trip to Tiritiri Matangi. We will keep you informed.

First robins bred on Aotea in 140 years

by Jude Gilbert

It has been a most successful breeding season for the 9 North Island robins that have remained in the Windy Hill Rosalie Bay area following the release of 30 birds in April 2004. The field managers on the pest management projects at Windy Hill and Benthorn Farm, Kevin Parsons and Dean Medland, have been vigilant with feeding the birds through the winter and monitoring the progress of the pairs through locating nests, observing the chicks, and then banding the young for identification purposes. From four and half pairs (4 females and 5 males) of birds a total of 16 chicks have come through to fledgling stage with only one of these eluding capture for banding. There have been two nests with a total of 9 eggs lost to predation by rats – one in the area managed for pests and one just outside. It has been necessary to surround the area of each nest with extra traps and to also protect above the nests with ferns to lessen predation by hawks and moreporks.

The robins dispersed fairly widely in the month following their release at Windy Hill – several were heard or seen in Tryphena, Medlands, and Cape Barrier. A banded bird was seen this January on the Peachgrove track leading down from Mt Hobson. We are learning a great deal about these birds which were last reported

on Barrier in 1860. None of the original pairs translocated from Tiritiri Matangi have stayed together, the current pairs are all new. One female has raised chicks with both her mate and the single male in an adjacent territory. The birds monitored right through the winter have had 3 or 4 nests a pair and gone from 2 chicks initially to 3 in the following nests. One pair was discovered well into the breeding season so just one of their nests has been seen through to banding the young. These birds had not been seen since the day of release yet came in to the tape-recorded call and fed immediately on the worms given to them. So, we know they have memory.

The adult birds are now starting to moult their tail feathers which signals the end of breeding. Young are now being chased out of the parent's territory and we hope to keep track of them. Birds will continue to be called in over the winter and fed to encourage them to stay in the area and to keep them in condition. From such a successful season we hope that these birds remain in the protected area and begin to form the basis of a viable Aotea robin population.

Special thanks for the assistance received from Tim Lovegrove at A.R.C. and appreciation to Halema Jamieson from the D.O.C. for the initial banding.

Future Vision or Future Shock

Opinion by David Speir

The slow pace of life here lends the Barrier an aura of timelessness, an idea made more solid in the insulated collective consciousness. Change is anything but what most Island residents want, apart from sealed roads and a few other amenities. Many would rather freeze time and enjoy those (seemingly unchanging) qualities of island life that attract them here. Unfortunately time is not so mutable.

Property prices have escalated as buying pressure on coastal land has driven prices skyward. The cost of living – rates, food, freight, and fuel has increased steadily whilst incomes have not.

The costs of development – RMA and consent fees, building materials costs and freight margins have escalated. Changes in environmental regulations and land zoning have dramatically changed the development landscape.

The result of these changes are ongoing. There is a significant shift in ownership of private property to non-resident and offshore owners. The ramifications of this change are widespread. There are less full-time residents, less families, less persons to take roles in the voluntary and social organisations of our community. Our falling school roles tell the story – it is not easy for young families to live here

Our community is losing some of

the strengths that sustained it in the past – the kinship of the islanders.

This type of social change has been observed in other small communities in areas popular with visitors. If market forces are allowed free rein then outside interests can push the exploitation of the tourist dollar in ways which have negative effects on the lives of residents. (eg large ferries carrying high volumes of visitors) Some of these effects are already apparent (if only in their seed stages) on GBI: traffic congestion; infrastructure breakdown; rubbish accumulation; unregulated dog and cat entry; crowding and noise.

As residents we have two choices:

- (1) Do nothing and try to survive - and if you own land try to subdivide and sell.
- (2) Embrace change which will empower and stimulate the local community.

Recently through forums on the Island and in newspaper articles (Herald 19.01.05) the head of ARC Biosecurity Jack Crow has challenged us to think about the total eradication of introduced pests on GBI and what that could mean for the Island. The GBI Charitable Trust has this vision as a cornerstone of its deed and is (and has been) actively promoting debate in the community on this very subject.

Why this vision and why now? The basic answer is that we are an island – with a very large moat around

us. GBI already has high status for its absent predators (possums, stoats, ferrets, weasels, Norway rat, hedgehog, wallabies and deer) and the relative health of its environment. Coupled with this is the urgent plight of threatened mainland species (including our iconic kiwi) and the lack of survival spaces available to sustain them. So called Mainland Islands are initially expensive but even more so to maintain. Their predator-free status is guaranteed only by a vulnerable fence. We have the area, the moat and a head start in the game with (luckily) only predators here that technology can deal with.

The two principle parties that are proposing this eradication are an interesting couple. The Department of Conservation is responsible for 61% of GBI territory and 'manages' its own land under the Conservation Act, Wild Animal Control Act etc., including the effects of incursions (eg invasive weeds) from the remainder. They do not have a 'whole island' pest management focus but have been conducting programs of control in some zones to specifically assist species recovery. The Auckland Regional Council has no territory here but administers, on private and other land, animal and plant pests under the "Biosecurity Act". ARC has a stated policy of achieving greater pest control here, an aim proven by its goat eradication program.

Philosophy and practice in pest eradication has shifted from a "tinkering" approach to "comprehensive change" as technology has evolved to allow the latter. We are

lucky that ARC are strongly backing the idea of a pest-free GBI as they have good understanding and practise of community interaction as well as a holistic viewpoint. Together with DOC as an agency of eradication (plus ACC as well) they offer us a whole-island pest eradication solution.

The social results of such an action have yet to be fully explored but they would include:

- (1) Enhanced natural environment for gardeners, orchardists and farmers. No more rats eating the plums on the tree; no more rabbits in the vegetable garden!
- (2) Enhanced natural values (possibly leading to increased property values) and an enhanced value of GBI as a destination. A real dawn chorus would be a delight.
- (3) Raised profile nationally and internationally – government money for infrastructure, locally focussed development projects eg education, roading, schools
- (4) Increased visitor numbers, or more net income per visitor.
- (5) Regulation in areas like pet ownership – dogs and cats, quarantine regulations.
- (6) Job opportunities especially for younger people with possible job training schemes in pest eradication technology and management.

Tourism is a two edged sword – it is our only source of foreign exchange and off-island cash but it is a commodity where everyone shares the negative effects. Ideally more net income per visitor and a control over

Continued over page

peak visitor numbers would be important directions for our visitor industry to follow.

The debate we need to enter into is important because like it or not change will flow over us. Our involvement and responsibility are essential if we are to use this avenue of pest eradication as a means to an end.

It is evident that as a community:

- We can negotiate for social outcomes of this pest eradication process that would be desirable and beneficial
- We would have the political opportunity to regain more local government control.
- We could regain influence on how outside monies were spent here. Used wisely this could counter the dis-integrating processes acting on our community.
- We could gain jobs from the on-island employment component of this eradication and its ongoing management.

Without a clear majority of support the big agencies involved will not proceed. Already there are other island communities (eg. Stewart Island) thinking along these lines so there will be competition for a limited pool of funds. It is timely then to consider this future vision.

The process of building a shared vision for Great Barrier Island has already been initiated through the work by the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment. (CRESA).

DON ARMITAGE presents a brief report on the results available to date.

On-Island CRESA report appears

Questionnaires to both on-island residents and off-island land-owners regarding the building of a shared vision for Great Barrier Island (as part of a wider programme of work called *Integrated planning and management of natural areas for tourism-related development* was undertaken by the Centre for Research, Evaluation & Social Assessment, otherwise known as CRESA, an independent research organisation based in Wellington. The analysis of the on-island questionnaire (prepared by Julie Warren), has now been published, the off-island property-owners questionnaire analysis having been prepared and published back in September 2004.

129 people responded to the on-island questionnaire of 500 sent out, partly because many people simply never received the questionnaire and related papers. Auckland City are currently talking to NZ Post at a high level, and some official announcement will presumably be made, it being of no value whatsoever speculating on the reason(s) for the failure of the mail-out process. A cloud of a size hard to calculate therefore presently hangs over the value of the on-island report. Auckland City Council planners will be keeping a keen interest in the results of the project because issues and concerns that are identified

Table 5.1: Overall vision for the future for Great Barrier Island

Future vision cases (n=129)

Preserve community character	69%
Sustainable, planned development	67%
The development of the island as a valued tourism destination	62%
A restored and pest free natural environment	60%
Improved infrastructure and services	56%
Economic development and job opportunities	50%
The availability of a range of recreational opportunities	48%
Increase in population	44%
Other	23%

through the shared vision process can be incorporated into planning.

Although to what extent the on-island analysis can be trusted is open to question, the off-island property owners questionnaire analysis report prepared by Luke Procter of CRESA was based on a 19% response by 125 people from a mail-out to over 650 property owners.

Appreciation for the Barrier's natural character seemed to come through again and again in both on and off-shore analyses.

The Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust's vision of 'a pest-free island attracting national and international visitors with an interest in the unique biotic and cultural heritage of NZ' would certainly seem to have some potential consistency with various of the concerns and aspirations as expressed in the CRESA analysis. See the analysis tabulated above.

The methodology by which this vision-building exercise has been carried out is certainly impressive,

and the mailout failure regrettable. However, the process demonstrates that it is possible to tease out the concerns and aspirations of a group of people such as have an interest in the Barrier.

If a pest-free Great Barrier is ultimately what a significant number of concerned Barrier residents and off-shore landowners want, then three things are apparent from the CRESA vision-building exercises—

1. The widespread existing recognition in both reports for the Barrier's natural values.
2. The impressive methodology of the vision-building exercise run by CRESA, which could be emulated at any future stage by the GBICT as a very useful tool.
3. The GBICT stands out as the ideal vehicle to become a part of and support for those residents and off-island landowners who can see potential in the concept of a pest-free Great Barrier and who want to do something concrete about it.

Prospectus for the Introduction of Kiwi for Great Barrier Island

by John Ogden

Submission from: The Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust
On: Kiwi Recovery Plan 2006-2016
– Discussion Document

THE ADVANTAGES of Great Barrier Island as a Kiwi Sanctuary:

1. The absence of Mustelids and Possums.
2. The presence of extensive areas of suitable habitat over a range of elevations on Hirikimata and elsewhere.
3. The strong likelihood of Iwi support and active cooperation.
4. The existing infra-structure: the Department of Conservation (DoC) already manages c. 60% of the Island.
5. The growing and strong terrestrial conservation ethic within the local community.
6. The presence of supportive community organizations (eg. GBIT, Little Windy Hill-Rosalie Bay Trust, Glenfern Sanctuary, Biocare Aotea Ltd., Awana Catchment Trust) currently employing people on pest control and working actively for habitat restoration.
7. The possibility of controlling dogs through council by-laws. There is already a requirement for bird-aversion training. Auckland City and Regional Councils are supportive of biosecurity control on Great Barrier Island.

Disadvantages:

1. The presence of some endangered species (skinks) which might be detrimentally influenced by kiwi.
2. The lack of evidence that Kiwi were present during historic times.

Discussion of advantages and disadvantages

The absence of significant predators (Mustelids) and the possibility of controlling cats and dogs provides a unique opportunity for the Dept. of Conservation to create a new Kiwi Reserve on Great Barrier Island. The Department itself manages some of the prime potential kiwi habitat on Mt Hirikimata. The Little Windy Hill and Glenfern Sanctuary areas also contain potential kiwi habitat, which could be intensively managed by the relevant community groups. Kaikoura Island, recently acquired by DoC, might also be considered. The geographical separation of these areas provides possibilities for introducing kiwi from different populations and/or other experimental manipulations. The effectiveness of community groups in managing such projects is already proven.

The vegetation of extensive areas is suitable for brown kiwi, which are quite adaptable. Even the drier manuka-kanuka scrub, which covers ridges formerly covered by kauri or broadleaf forest, is rapidly reverting to tall forest. Swamps and damp

gullies provide moist soils throughout. A description of the altitudinal sequence of forest types (with photographs) can be found in Armitage (2001) Chapter 4. Although some species present in the Moehau kiwi sanctuary are absent from Great Barrier, the main canopy, sub-canopy and ground-cover species are the same, providing very similar plant communities and potential kiwi habitat.

The above considerations imply that the Department of Conservation estate, and the private conservation properties on Great Barrier Island could fulfil the proposed new Recovery Plan goal of “*maintaining all kiwi species and sub-species as functioning parts of extensive protected ecosystems*”. This aligns also with the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (2000), which under Objective 1.5, implies that viable kiwi populations should be established to enhance distributional ranges and maintain populations in ecosystems important for indigenous biodiversity. In view of this (at least in the first instance,) introductions to the significant montane habitats on Great Barrier should be confined to brown kiwi (*Apteryx australis sensu lato*).

Ecotourism appears to be the most significant future development on Great Barrier Island (see recent reports by Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA). Of the results in so far (from 125 off-island property owners) the most frequently identified valuable feature of the island was



The North Island brown kiwi
Apteryx australis

given as “the natural environment”. The GBIT is working to promote the vision of a pest-free Island attracting national and international visitors with an interest in the unique biotic and cultural heritage of New Zealand. As the country’s icon, the presence of kiwi would enhance that vision and further the cause of conservation. If the Island was actively promoted as a kiwi refuge the community would readily support this because they would see the potential economic advantages through increased tourism. The Island could become the most accessible wild kiwi population close to Auckland.

The presence of chevron skink on Great Barrier Island might be seen as a disadvantage. It would be interesting to experiment with the interactions between these two species, perhaps at the Auckland Zoo, prior to any extensive release on Great Barrier. However, the large size of Great Barrier would ensure that any negative kiwi-skink interactions would not be immediate and could be

Continued over

relatively easily monitored and managed. The lack of evidence for the former presence of kiwi is a purely esoteric consideration, and might be seen as an advantage rather than the opposite. However, kiwi were presumably present during the last glacial (22 – 10 thousand years ago) when sea-level was much lower and the birds could have walked to Rosalie Bay from Te Moehau. There is a local Iwi tradition that kiwi were formerly present. Leg bones (and gizzard stones) of Moa have been found on the island in association with an early Maori habitation site.

Summary

The advantages of Great Barrier Island as a kiwi refuge in future far outweigh any possible disadvantages. The main advantages are (1) absence of Mustelids, (2) presence of extensive areas of suitable habitat, and (3) an existing supportive infrastructure. The latter comprises the Department of Conservation, the Auckland City and Regional Councils and several active community groups. The future benefit to the local community through ecotourism would ensure strong community support.

References

Armitage, D. (editor). 2001. Great Barrier Island. Canterbury University Press.

Appendices

Submission to NZ Kiwi Recovery Plan from Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Trust. Great Barrier Island – The Last chance for Kiwi? (Tony Bouzaid. Glenfern Sanctuary)

Notes from the Field

NEW Zealand Dotterels at Awana:

This summer there were usually five adult dotterels in residence at Awana including one breeding pair, the female banded White/Orange on its left leg.

In early December Maaka McCandless and Reuben Kendal, working for the Awana Catchment Trust, put a tape fence around a dotterel nest with three eggs situated on the high sand in the middle of the beach. About the 13th the eggs disappeared. On the 15th a single chick was spotted. There were a few other possible sightings, but the beach was heavily populated by campers and surfers over the Christmas-New Year period, and we feared the worst. However, it seems that the parents were hiding their three chicks up in the dunes. By mid January they were feeding in the estuary, by January 27th all three chicks were flying, and by the 30th, they (plus parents) had gone - presumably to join the post-breeding flock on Whangapoua estuary.

Despite total breeding failures over the last two summers, since (and including) 1999/2000 a total of 11 NZ Dotterel chicks are known to have fledged from Awana. This can be compared with 7 between 1991 and 1998. While this looks encouraging, the figures equate to only 1.0 fledged chick per pair per year in the 1990s and 1.2 this millennium. The GBI population seems to be just holding its own, but nesting in summer on the beach means that they will remain endangered until we all make an effort to share their space respectfully.

John Ogden.

Motu Kaikoura Trust – Progress report

IT'S OFFICIAL - the Motu Kaikoura Trust is now a registered charitable trust. You'll hear a lot more about this trust in the future - One of their very first jobs is to apply to the Minister of Conservation to take over the administration of the island. Steering the process up until now has been the job of an interim board from the Native Forest Restoration Trust. A very good start has been made on the beginning.

The new board of the Motu Kaikoura Trust is made up of about a dozen trustees drawn from the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust, Ngati Rehua, the Native Forest Restoration Trust, as well as several well-known youth education groups such as Outward Bound.

It seems like there are no cats, rabbits, kiore or mice there. What is there, however, are fallow deer, pigs and ship rats. Interestingly, all three sub-species of ship rat exist on the island. Progress on obtaining funding for an eradication of these species will determine whether the island is treated (at least for the main priority - rats) this winter or next... but don't be surprised if it occurs this winter.

If you think this sounds good, then it gets even better. Very good support from Ngati Rehua and adjacent landowners has meant a total of around 1000 hectares (including Kaikoura

Island) will be eradicated. This includes Motuhaku and Nelson Islands off the NW tip of Kaikoura Island, and those islands that make up the Grey and Broken Island Groups. Some headlands on private property on the main Barrier island adjacent to Kaikoura Island will also be treated. It is indeed heart-warming to hear of such co-operation.

Already work has begun on tracks along some of the main ridges, and as time goes on, these will advance down secondary ridges, across clifftops and valleys to form loop tracks. Conservation groups from the mainland have been hard at work.

Will Scarlet is now the interim caretaker living on the island. He is contactable on 021-1158729. Vodaphone very kindly sponsored the phone.

Whereas Tiritiri-Matangi has concentrated on bird re-introductions, it is thought that the initial priorities for Kaikoura after a rat eradication could be on gekkos, skinks, and a range of invertebrates (animals without backbones) such as wetas, as well as brown teal and kakas.

Botanical surveys have shown a promising diversity of native plant species. Surveys are on-going and no doubt more will be discovered over time.

The future of Kaikoura and its adjacent islands and headlands looks good.

Don Armitage

The GBI Environmental News is the publication of the GBI Charitable Trust. Contributions are welcome provided they are supplied as E-Mail or as Microsoft RTF or ASCII files. All material published should be regarded as being protected by copyright legislation and cannot be reproduced without the prior consent of the publisher. The Trust reserves the right to publish and/or edit material and takes no responsibility for errors or omissions in transcription. Address to gbitrustnews@xtra.co.nz, indicating content of file attachments and providing a contact telephone or E-mail address.



Photo: John Speir

Membership Fees

Ordinary Subscriber:	\$25.00
Senior Subscriber:	\$20.00
Family Subscriber;	\$35.00
Life	
Life Subscriber - Senior:	\$200.00
Life Subscriber	\$ 250
Corporate Subscriber negotiable	

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Phone No. **Fax:**

Email:

Type of Membership:(Please circle relevant type)

Student / Ordinary / Senior / Family / Life (senior) / Life / Corporate

Please post to: Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust

C/- Fenella Christian, R.D.1. Gt. Barrier Island