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Training in Freshwater stream monitoring — Jo Ritchie, Dean Medland, Rachel Vlasich, Rose Harland, Judy Gilbert on Little Windy Hill.

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# GBI Environmental News

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



Photo: Geoff Moon courtesy DoC

## How Green are our Candidates? Zero Waste on Rakiura Bird Count 4 • Rats off Windy Hill

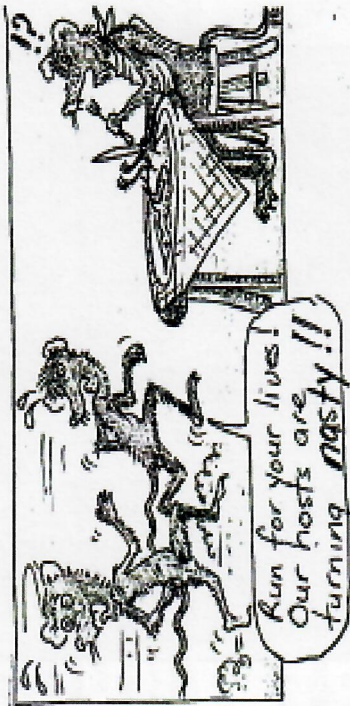
**Vision Statement:** Our vision is to protect native species through the eradication of rats and feral cats, to re-introduce species lost to the Island, and to work towards building an ecology-based economic framework for Great Barrier Island.



The latest in the "Campaign against Rats"  
you are invited to

## "RAT ATTACK" WORKSHOP

Sunday 21st October (Labour Weekend)  
Mulberry Grove School, Tryphena  
10.30am—3.30pm  
Lunch provided 12.30pm



Free "Rat Pack" for each participant (includes: information, traps, covers, bait.)  
Share your ideas and inventions for controlling rats

Sponsored by: Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust, Department of Conservation,  
Auckland Regional Council, Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust.

## Biosecurity Measures at Great Barrier Wharves

The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust, on contract to the Auckland Regional Council, has established 20 rat monitoring tunnels in the environs of the Tryphena and Whangaparapara Wharves. The tunnels are monitored monthly by Dean Medland for the presence of rat and mustelid footprints. This contract is part of the Auckland Regional Council Biosecurity Unit's commitment to keeping Great Barrier Island free of mustelids and Norway rats. It is supported by the Department of Conservation monitoring in the Fitzroy Wharf area and the Auckland City Council's rat control around the rubbish bins at the three wharves.

Thank you for your cooperation in not interfering with the tunnels or bait stations. Any queries or concerns please phone Judy Gilbert on 306.

**COVER PHOTO by Geoff Moon is of a bird heard but not seen on the Barrier for decades. The rare and elusive spotted craiike has been definitely heard in the Awana.**

## Community Board Candidates Quizzed

### GBI Environmental News examines their 'green' credentials

Each candidate was asked this same set of questions:

- Q.1: What is the primary reason you are standing for the CB?  
Q.2: What would you do to support local environmental groups if you were voted onto the Community Board?  
Q.3: What stance do you think the Community Board should take on environmental issues?  
Q.4: How much priority do you give environmental issues in the scheme of things?  
Q.5: Do you think Great Barrier Island would benefit from having no rats?

#### Candidate: Wayne Anderson

Profile: Aged 43, a full-time resident who has lived here for the past thirteen years. He is currently running a charter fishing business, has been involved with the volunteer fire force, and is the present skipper of the Tryphena-based rescue craft.

Q.1: I am a little worried about the way the island is headed. I think that those who live in the community need to be on the board, to be able to 'put their five cents worth in'.

My concerns are with the declining (full-time) population and with the real estate speculation that is going on.

Q.2: I would help them with funding issues which I think is important, and I would attempt to steer (such) environmental initiatives into employing local people.

Q.3: I think consultation is very important, that local community are adequately consulted on any decision that the CB makes. I would need to address each environmental issue separately.

Q.4: Very high.

Q.5: Yes I do but I have concerns about 1080 (as a method of eradication) and feel that everyone must be happy before such methods are used. But for the community having no rats would be fantastic. I am sick of rats damaging my house.

Secondly, although I do not see Tourism as the most important industry on the Island, (an eradication of rats) will certainly enhance the eco-island image and make for a more saleable tourism destination.

#### Candidate: Izzy Fordham

Profile: Izzy has had one term as a CB member, is 53 years old, a full time land-owning resident of some 18 years, who manages the Claris Sports Club.

Q.1: Because I believe it is absolutely vital for Great Barrier Island to retain its identity. I'm passionate about this place.

Q.2: I would like to support such community initiatives providing there was transparency and communication. These would be the



prime things I would look for. Once you have this, then you would have both the community and the board on side.

**Q.3:** The Board is able to adopt two positions: it can help initiate ideas; and also act in a supporting role as well. The magic thing is marrying them all together. Once you have a united voice then you have a lot of strength.

**Q.4:** Environmental issues are important to me, that is why I live where I do. But it's not just about flora and fauna, but also about humans and finding a balance that works.

**Q.5:** The obvious answer is yes but we would need people to maintain the programme. We have such a large and diverse population (with many transient persons) that I don't know whether total eradication is possible. I wonder whether that goal is too high and too demanding and perhaps a management approach would be a better initial move. I am a firm believer in setting goals that you can achieve.

**Candidate: Richard Somerville-Ryan**

Profile: Richard is a permanent resident of GBI for the last year, but a landowner since the nineties, who has considerable experience overseas as a consultant.

**Q.1:** I am standing in order to try to get a district plan for Great Barrier which is fair and workable. I am concerned that next year the district plan is coming up for review and that without representatives focused on the needs of the community we may "miss the boat" in a planning sense.

**Q.2:** I would give groups an

opportunity to bring proposals to the community board where they could use that forum to ensure widespread community consultation for their ideas, and avoid the alienation that has occurred over issues in the past.

**Q.3:** I think the community board has to provide above all, a forum where issues can be debated, to ensure no one group proceeds without adequate mandate.

**Q.4:** Personally I give environmental issues an extremely high priority, but I am personally frustrated at the bureaucratic impediments and costs that Auckland City impose on my own environmental initiative here on GBI.

**Q.5:** Visions are easy but here in a population that feels itself threatened, getting collective community buy-in to the technical side of an eradication is another story. Nobody likes rats but nor do I support huge poison drops. Is it possible to have a rat free island — I hope so, How do we get there — I really don't know the answer to that one.

**Candidate: Paul Downie**

Profile: Paul is a permanent resident of GBI, a landowner and immediate past member of the Community Board, a keen scuba diver, fisherman and boater.

**Q.1:** I was prepared to stand for a second term but also needed the support of Geraldine, my wife. She kindly lodged my nomination papers with Council at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. It's a very time consuming task, especially with the new proposed district plan. We are very much under resourced and thin on the ground for representatives to deal with the submission process. This district plan will

define the economic future for the island through to 2020 — it's a huge issue (to deal with).

**Q.2:** At a personal level we have contracted LWHT in the past to undertake predator control on our own properties and since moving to the Island have undertaken this activity ourselves. With our encouragement our neighbouring properties are now doing the same. I would certainly encourage and support others with similar endeavours.

**Q.3:** I think the CB does have a special role — we have groups right throughout the community approaching the CB for support and advocacy. But at the end of the day the CB does not have much political power — it is there in an advocacy role and in representing the interests of this community at large.

**Q.4:** As 70% of the Island is controlled by the Department of Conservation, and realistically without any other initiatives we would see much of the Island reverting to its natural state. There is however a need for this to be balanced against the need for economic activity, not just a one-eyed focus on environmental protection at the expense of people's ability to make a living on the Island.

**Q.5:** That is something that I don't know. With the district plan that is with us at the present time, there are controls and rules that



almost require a resource consent for any activity. That is a very expensive and onerous task that most simply cannot afford. Total eradication of rats may well bring another level of controls and rules on top of that which could make it just about impossible to live here.

Without knowing the extent of those regulations I could not say. For a Community Board representative the issue is primarily trying to balance the competing interests of different parties on the Island. That is the challenge.

**Candidate: Gordon Barrett**

Profile: Age 45, a full time resident and land-owner of Tryphena since 1985.



# Comment from the departing Chair

BY TONY BOUZAID

would be essential for community acceptance.

**Candidate Mickey O'Shea** declined to answer the questions.

**Candidate: Teresa Manion-Wood**  
Teresa has been a teacher and resident and ratepayer on GBI for some 15 years, has had previous experience in hospital administration and local tourism.

**Q.1:** I care about the island strongly, in particular about the people. Being on the community board is one way I can help people and help strengthen the fabric of our community.

**Q.2:** I would listen carefully to their concerns, and keep myself versed with their meeting agendas and minutes so that I could be well informed of their endeavours.

**Q.3:** My understanding is that as people we are part of the natural world, and it is in our interests (and in our future generations' interests) that we care for our environment, as it is the very cocoon that feeds and sustains us.

**Q.4:** I don't think it is a matter of 'taking a stance'. First and foremost is taking care of the Island, and as part of nature people are part of that equation.

**Q.5:** I think the work of the Little Windy Hill Trust is providing an example of the benefits of the removal of rats from the equation. Other groups are also following their example. Any eradication procedures need to be carefully balanced within the food chain and any side effects carefully researched. The community must be allowed to make an informed decision.

**Q.1:** I am concerned for the implementation of a fair and equitable district plan.

**Q.2:** I think environmental incentives should be provided to landowners to create win-win situations rather than implied threats of loss of property rights.

**Q.3:** As a representative of this community, I think there is a need to communicate with special interest groups within the community — pretty much most of the people on this island have conservation views

**Q.4:** Personally I see it as quite a high priority and but I see persons' rights and property rights as paramount.

**Q.5:** I would like to see my property rat-free one day — but it is the methodical (for an eradication) that must be agreed upon by all the landowners on the island.

**Candidate: Christina Spence**  
Profile: Christina is well known for her work with Aotea Family Support Group - aged 38, and a resident of GBI for some 27 years.

**Q.1:** I want to make a difference in this community and be a voice (on the Board) for members of the public.

**Q.2:** This would depend on what they present at the time — it would be on a case by case basis.

**Q.3:** Without jurisdiction or political power in the matter I think they (the CB) should keep their nose out of it, as there are lots of other agencies available but I think the Board definitely has a role to play in Community consultation in such issues.

**Q.4:** Very high.

**Q.5:** Definitely it would. However adequate face to face consultation

IT IS THAT TIME AGAIN, the triennial Local Authority elections. In County Council days it was

common knowledge that if a person wanted to get a development

approved, getting elected to the Council was a sure-fire method.

Thankfully that situation doesn't exist any more as the rules are the same for everyone. However there are other ways that a position on the Board might be used to further a personal agenda. Be sure that the person or persons you vote for have the interests of the island in mind, not some personal advantage. There is no requirement to vote for all 5 Board positions—just vote for those who are due your respect, and ignore the rest—that way your vote really counts.

In the 12 years I have been on the Board I have witnessed occasions when board members have mis-used their position: making statements that ridicule or insult members of the public who have come to the Board representing an organisation with which they have a disagreement. This is grossly unfair and an abuse of position, especially when the person concerned has no opportunity to defend themselves or their organisation. The Board has no mandate to use its position to abuse a perceived transgression.

While the Board is the voice of the public it cannot represent the views of all its community nor can it claim to represent the majority without the necessary research. The voice of minority interests is

often far louder than the majority and has influenced Board members to make inappropriate judgements.

Whether we like it or not Great Barrier Island is a very small part of a large bureaucracy representing as it does .002% of the population of Auckland City. The Community Board has little delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council but it has a strong advocacy role which is not advanced by insulating Councillors or Council officers. Great Barrier Island has done well by Auckland City despite our small population and corresponding small rate take. The Board needs to advocate for the important items that affect the whole island, not act parochially or try to cover every issue.

It grieves me to see, in the only regular media, the negative attitude that simmers in the Barrier pot incited by heavily biased reporting and misleading statements — such practice obviously destined to split and polarize the community. We deserve better than that, privileged as we are to live on this magic island—even if it means putting up with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

## Electoral Note

GBI ratepayers resident in Greater Auckland (not Ak. Central), who are on a different electoral rolls (eg North Shore, Waitakere etc), can vote for the GBI Community Board as well by registering as a ratepayer elector on GBI. They can get the form ('Enrolment form for rate-payer Electors') by phoning 09 379 2023 (or 09 307 7211) or Email: [electoralservices@aucklandcity.govt.nz](mailto:electoralservices@aucklandcity.govt.nz).



# Zero Waste on Rakiura

The Stewart Island/Rakiura Community and Environment Trust profile provides valuable insight into effective community relationship-building. The level of sponsorship and volunteer hours shown for the Trust's initiatives clearly indicates the success of their programmes. Their Environment Centre and school workshop initiatives into waste minimisation and composting involve students and adults alike in practical experience, familiarity and information transfer. In this article, edited by David Speir, we look specifically at their community involvement programmes

Halfmoon Bay is the gateway to Stewart Island/ Rakiura, and the only site of permanent residence. The community is comprised mainly of retirees, tourism operators and accommodation providers, people in the fishing industry, the Department of Conservation staff and those providing services to the local and visiting community. The Island also receives around 60,000 visitors each year.

The township is situated on the edge, and in some cases amongst the native bush environment for which Stewart Island is known. The Island itself is cut off from some of the developments, conveniences and introduced pest threats of mainland New Zealand, by the Foveaux Strait. Regular transport is available via sea and air, and most Islanders have telephone or Internet connections.

Thus, there are many areas of potential environmental achievement, and many potential issues, which are unique to the location.

Stewart Island is, visually, a site under less human impact than many other inhabited places around the country. Many visitors

to the Island find the natural environment a highlight of their visit.

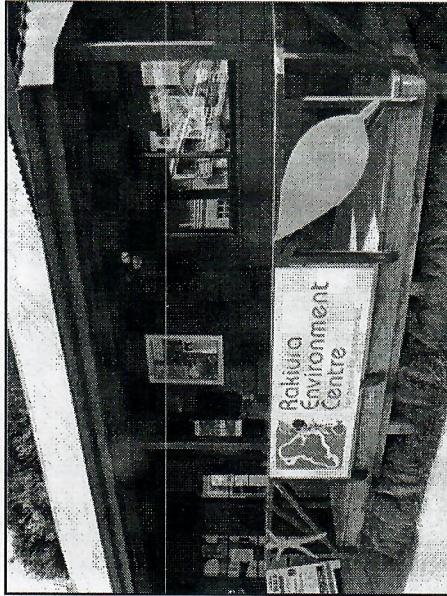
Despite their solitary status, Halfmoon Bay is still in danger of waste pollutants, deliberate or accidental pest invasions, and over use of resources.

## Rakiura Environment Centre

The Rakiura Environment Centre (REC), in the heart of Halfmoon Bay, provides a central location, through which positive, environmental information, advice, workshops and projects can be shared and promoted amongst the local and visiting community. The vision for the center is to provide a focus for community-driven environmental education and environmental protection. Some visitors in the past have remarked on the limit to activity options on the Island during poor weather. The REC provides a dry, welcoming environment in both fine and stormy weather.

SIRCET's Objectives in creating the Rakiura Environmental Centre are multiple:

- To communicate information to, and involve the community in



Rakiura Environment Centre, Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island.  
Photo by Kari Beavan

positive, relevant environmental activities.

- To liaise and inform the community about the SIRCET work on an ongoing basis.

- To help our community feel proud of its local environmental and support environmental protection of that environment.

- To help local children and adults learn about the environment, pest control and resource recovery.

- To promote positive environmental projects undertaken in the local community, and to encourage support of these projects.

- To highlight the activities and benefits of Rakiura Resource Recovery and other recycling opportunities.

The Rakiura Environment Centre (REC) was opened in 2004/05 and has been available since then for both the local community and visitors to the Island to use daily. The centre itself is not manned, as it is intended to be self-

guiding. Information panels contain eye-catching, relevant information and guide visitors towards folders with more in-depth information about each topic.

Visitors can sit and read information at their leisure, whilst looking out towards Halfmoon Bay and the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project area. This is especially designed for visitors on wet days and activity between walks.

## Information Displays

Inside the centre five rear lighted display panels provide a warm, welcoming environment which is attractive to visitors from outside the centre. Up-to-date information about the community, environment and positive community projects is currently displayed on the panels, with reference to locally assembled information folders about each topic for further reading.

## Live nest camera link

Work is under way to link a nest camera set-up to a monitor in the REC so that visitors and locals can monitor the progress of local nests inside the restoration area. Observations from nests not only provide an opportunity to see images which are normally hidden from the general public, they provide a unique learning opportunity and a strong point of advocacy for the protection of our vulnerable native wildlife.

**Environmental Education Opportunities for the Community**  
SIRCET run workshops for the extended community and the HMB



school on an average of two workshops per year. Workshop topics include waste recycling, zero waste, weeds workshop (how to identify and deal to major weeds), backyard pest control and rat trapping.

#### **Halfmoon Bay Senior School: Composting**

A unit on Composting, designed by the Wastebusters Trust, Canterbury, was carried out with the senior students at the Halfmoon Bay School. Students participated in the exercises enthusiastically, searching for invertebrates in samples of dirt and completed compost, answering quizzes relating to the topic and setting up their own, school compost bin. The children now maintain the compost bin as a part of their weekly roster system, with all junior students supervised by a senior school student.

#### **Halfmoon Bay Junior School: Zero Waste**

Zero Waste is a goal to which we can all relate, but only once we know and understand how much waste our daily activities produces. A unit on Zero Waste, designed by the Wastebusters Trust, Canterbury, was carried out with the junior students at the Halfmoon Bay School. Students learnt about ways in which their daily choices can benefit or harm their environment and thus their future. Examples of products relevant to their age bracket and interests, which use recycled and recyclable materials were shown and compared with similar products made from non-recycled materials.

Through the exercise of a "lunchbox challenge" students learned how to choose items and

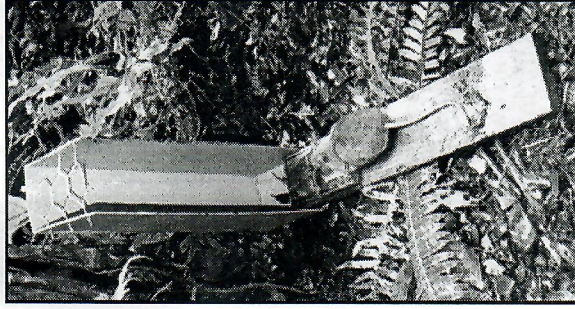
packaging for their daily lunches which left no "waste" products after lunch was finished. Feedback from parents showed that this activity was a remarkably powerful tool, as students explained to them their preferences for a cleaner New Zealand.

#### **Increasing Biodiversity in the Backyard**

The workshop was carried out across two days, fitting in with a week-long focus on the outdoor environment. The first morning in the classroom looked at what makes something 'native' and developing interest and care amongst the students for native birds, lizards, insects and frogs. Using groups and moving around a variety of quizzes in different parts of the room, the children were given the chance to identify and learn about different species and to think about choosing a favourite bird, lizard or insect.

The older students later looked at food chains and food webs, considering the ways in which our endemic species worked together and how this was disrupted on many levels when introduced species invaded an area. The younger students took part in a game which helped demonstrate the risks to trees from several pest types and how this increases as pest numbers became higher. The game then demonstrates the compounding benefits of local people controlling these pests.

The following afternoon, the students were taken on a 'field trip' in the project area. They were guided off the gravel track into the native bush. They saw nesting burrows and cavities, understand-



Shuprat (*trattus norvegicus*) in a SIRCET trap. Photo by Brent Beavan

of local fauna.

Participants then walked through an area of the project, identifying Chilean Flame Creeper and Darwin's Barberry. This was aimed at increasing awareness and interest, for volunteers to keep an eye on areas they 'adopt' in future. A small group stayed to hand-pull all seedlings in the area whilst the remainder moved down to begin a replanting project. The day was a great success with people of all ages, plus families becoming involved. A barbeque was held at the end of the day to thank everyone who had been a part of the project.

As well as this, open days invite the community to be a part of the habitat restoration project, or to come along and find out more about what we are doing.

#### **Community Concerns**

A "drop-in" day is being planned, inviting the community to speak with Brent Beaven at the REC. Brent is writing a scoping document for eradicating rats from Stewart Island/ Rakiura, as an employee of DOC on behalf of SIRCET. He has invited the community to talk with him about any concerns they may have, discuss concepts he will need to consider and to ask how he is addressing areas of particular interest to themselves.

There are many lessons to be learned from the cohesive and inclusive methods that SIRCET use to maintain a strong support base for their activities. They have excellent sponsorship and log high volunteer hours but it is their work with students that will pay generous dividends in the future.

ing why they are at risk from introduced predators but protected from native ones, pointed out the abundant flowers, fruits and insects available for food and saw traps which local adults and families have 'adopted' to protect these precious elements. The day also incorporated elements of bush safety and safety around traps.

#### **Weeds Workshop**

A further grant from the Biodiversity Advice fund was approved to support a workshop in the 2006/ 07 year. In January 2007, a workshop aimed at identifying and managing major weeds risks in Halfmoon Bay was held, followed by an afternoon of field work and a barbeque. Mary Chittenden, working alongside SIRCET as a part of the Department of Internal Affairs "Community Internship Programme" held a workshop demonstrating how easily weeds colonise an area and how damaging this can be to the health



# What's happening up at Windy Hill?

BY JUDE GILBERT

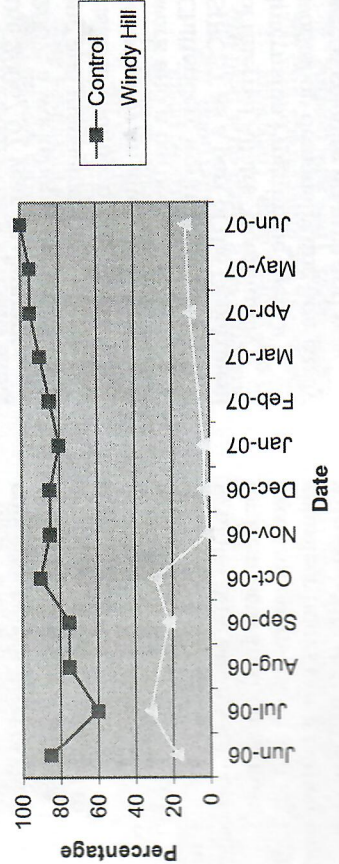
Can you imagine the size of a pile of 27,000 dead rats? Or 300 dead feral cats? That's how many pests have been taken out of our 'sanctuary' area over the last seven years in the Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment area. Imagine how many seeds, weta, lizards, paua slugs, birds eggs, and chicks those rats and cats would have eaten over that time.

The improvement in the biodiversity at Windy Hill and Benthorn Farm since integrated pest management began in 1999 is now really starting to show. To get to grips with what sort of difference our 3000 rats traps and 80 cats traps spread over 450 hectares was making, last year we set up a monitoring programme on land in the same area but not managed for pests as a comparison. In other words, a Control project. Over the year we monitored birds, rats, lizards, weta, and seedlings in the managed and

unmanaged control area at the same time and in the same way. Rat presence is measured using rat tracking tunnels—overnight pre-inked cards are placed inside 150 plastic tunnels set out at 50 metre spacings. A percentage is then calculated from the number of tunnels with rat prints versus the number without. In the managed area at Windy Hill the annual average indication of rat presence was 15% whilst the un-managed area recorded an average of 86%, topping at 100% in June. A huge difference.

Seedlings were counted and measured in eight one metre square plots—four in the managed and four in the un-managed area. In November 06 a total of 49 seedlings were recorded in the plots in the Control site and 87 in the plots at Windy Hill. Following a very dry summer when the count was undertaken again in April 07 both the control and the sites at Windy

Control v Windy Hill Tracking Tunnels 06-07

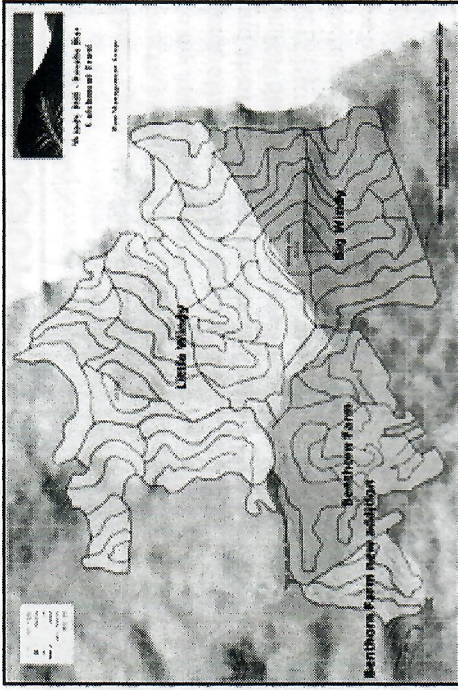


Hill had much reduced seedling totals —18 in the Control site and 47 at Windy Hill. Still a much higher number recorded in the managed site. Rats are quite selective with the seeds they enjoy so over a long period of time their consumption can really change the composition of a forest.

The difference with wetas and lizards was also marked between the managed and control site. Only 1 weta occupied one 'motel' for a single observation in the control area over the year with six weta motels occupied regularly in the managed area, with a total count of 40 weta. There were 17 ornate skink recorded in the lizard 'motels' in the managed area over the year and not one in the control site.

Bird densities need longer to assess for differences to emerge, however the second of the bird monitoring showed slightly higher densities in the managed area. The Control project is to be carried over for another year to further gauge the differences. What the control has shown to date, however, is that lower densities of rats improve the abundance of seedlings, weta, and lizards.

The size of the area we manage intensively for pests has continued to grow. What began as a twenty hectare site on one landholding in 1999 now involves twelve landown-



Pest management project areas and tracking system

ers working cooperatively with our Trust to manage 450 hectares. There are three project areas (as seen in the map below) which have over 60 kilometres of tracks with a rat trap every 12 or 25 metres—it takes three full time field workers, a volunteer, and a part time worker to manage the traps, maintain them and the tracks, monitor species, and protect the North Island robins which were re-introduced in 2004.

The goal is to manage an area of 1000 hectares and in the long term, of course, to rid the Barrier of rats and feral cats..

As our expertise grows we are asked to trial equipment for manufacturers, to have Masters students (three to date) carry out their research here, and for organisations to set up species research within the project area. Currently Landcare Research has over 200 rubber covers stapled to a wide range of trees to monitor for aboreal (tree dwelling) lizards. Little is

**Continued on page 14**



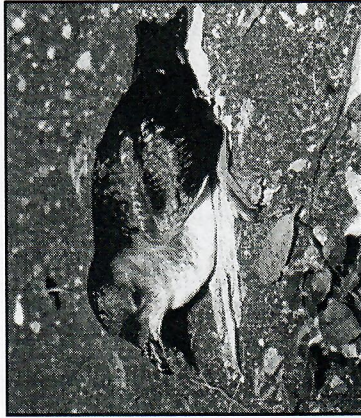
## BIRD COUNT 4.

FROM JOHN OGDEN.

The original plan was to have the fourth bird count in April, but, due to my impending departure overseas, other people being busy too, and the Harataonga road being "off limits" due to the Castaways activity, I postponed it. So, the sixteen observers turned out instead on September 8<sup>th</sup>, over a year since the first count. It is most encouraging to see the level of support and enthusiasm being sustained—thank you all—especially the DoC contingent who again devoted spare weekend time to this community-based initiative. To those past participants who were not contacted I offer my apologies —I have all sorts of genuine excuses.

The 'five minute counts' all went much as usual, and the results will be summarised in the report. Although giant geese (moas?) have recently been reported from Tryphena by Peter Edmonds (better known by his cartoons), nothing spectacular occurred in the counts! As I have said before, the value of these data lies in their quantitative and objective nature — they will form a basis for comparison long into the future—rather than in the specific birds seen or heard at any one place. After an early start, hearty breakfasts were eaten (by some) at Claris Texas. However, the day was noteworthy for another reason.

Jenni Ogden went to count the Dotterels and Oystercatchers on



The diving petrel

Photo: Dick Vetch courtesy DoC.

Awana beach. It turned out to be a scene of carnage—with dead seabirds scattered along the beach—many of them missing their heads. I later counted the mortality: 13 fluttering shearwaters; 2 penguins, a white-faced storm petrel, a gannet and a little shearwater. Twelve of the 13 fluttering shearwaters were headless. No signs of heads or beaks anywhere. Breasts, feathers and meat, were mostly intact. After much cogitation I have discounted my first theory of a head-hunting beach-combing cat, and concluded that the decapitation must have occurred at sea—in which case dolphins seem the most likely culprits. However, I'd really like to hear from anyone who can comment on this!

The little shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis*) was an important find, as this bird was recorded as abundant by Hutton in 1868, but apparently has not been seen on Great Barrier since then. Hutton's identification was questioned by Ogle in 1981. In the hand, little shearwaters are readily identified by their lilac-blue feet, although the smaller diving

petrel also has blue feet. Little shearwaters nest on the Mokohinaus, Hen and Chickens, Poor Knights and the Mercury Group, but the birds usually stay well offshore. Being the smallest of the shearwaters they are very susceptible to predation by rats and cats, so although Hutton may well have been correct, it is unlikely to breed anywhere on Great Barrier now.

Other observations of interest since the last count include the confirmation of spotless crake at Awana (Amanda Yates, Emma Hunt and myself), long-tailed cuckoo at Awana in March (Alan Gray), Bittern at Claris in August (Peter Edmonds, Christina Spence) and Reef Heron at Okupu (Emily Pratt).

The spring will soon be heralded by the first shining cuckoo (make a note of the date!) and then it'll be nesting time for Oystercatchers and Dotterels. I hope you'll all encourage your guests and associates to refrain from taking dogs onto the beaches to give these birds a better chance. Even when dogs are controlled, unfortunately the birds don't know that, and they still leave the eggs, often unprotected and cooking in the hot sun.

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known about lizards preferred habitat and this research hopes to see if an artificial 'home' might be preferred by lizards so they can be more easily studied.

To ensure we are achieving our goal of sustaining and enhancing biodiversity we constantly monitor. Last year we added monitoring for freshwater species to our programme. In our streams we find koura (freshwater crayfish), kokopu (native trout), shrimps, eels, and red finned bullies. Our results are sent off to NIWA who keep records of stream monitoring from all over NZ—the presence of native species indicates how healthy streams are and what species are surviving.

In 2005, following a review of the effectiveness of our trapping-only based programme we introduced a twice yearly pulse (a short hit) of toxins. With trapping alone it was not possible to get the rat tracking tunnel percentages below 30%; with toxin pulses the percentages have been as low as 1%. Rat numbers still rise and fall seasonally but since 2005 these averages have dropped considerably.

The pest projects managed by the Trust have provided a working model of conservation on private land and the conservation gains made through reducing rat and feral cat densities. Socially and economically the gain is the community's—sustained full time employment and nearly \$90k per year coming in wages. It is this same triple benefit—environmental, social, and economic—that the Great Barrier Island Trust sees as the result of achieving their vision of a rat and feral cat-free Great Barrier.