



'Before & After' photos from Hoddy Estuary Park

2016



2022



The results of our habitat restoration are more evident every year.



Planting Season starting 29th May

We begin our 8th season of community plantings at the end of May, with Sunday planting mornings running every weekend right through to early September. See the full schedule on the last page of this newsletter.

Kathryn & Julie will run the mornings between them. Several planting mornings will be on Rabbit & Rough Islands as part of the *One Billion Trees* funding which is helping to transform these island margins.

For information about the Battle for the Banded Rail please contact
Project Manager, Kathryn Brownlie on 544 4537 or bandedrail@gmail.com
For trapping information or support contact Field Officer, Tracey Murray
on 540 2227 or 027 286 5866 or bandedrail@gmail.com

Trapping Results

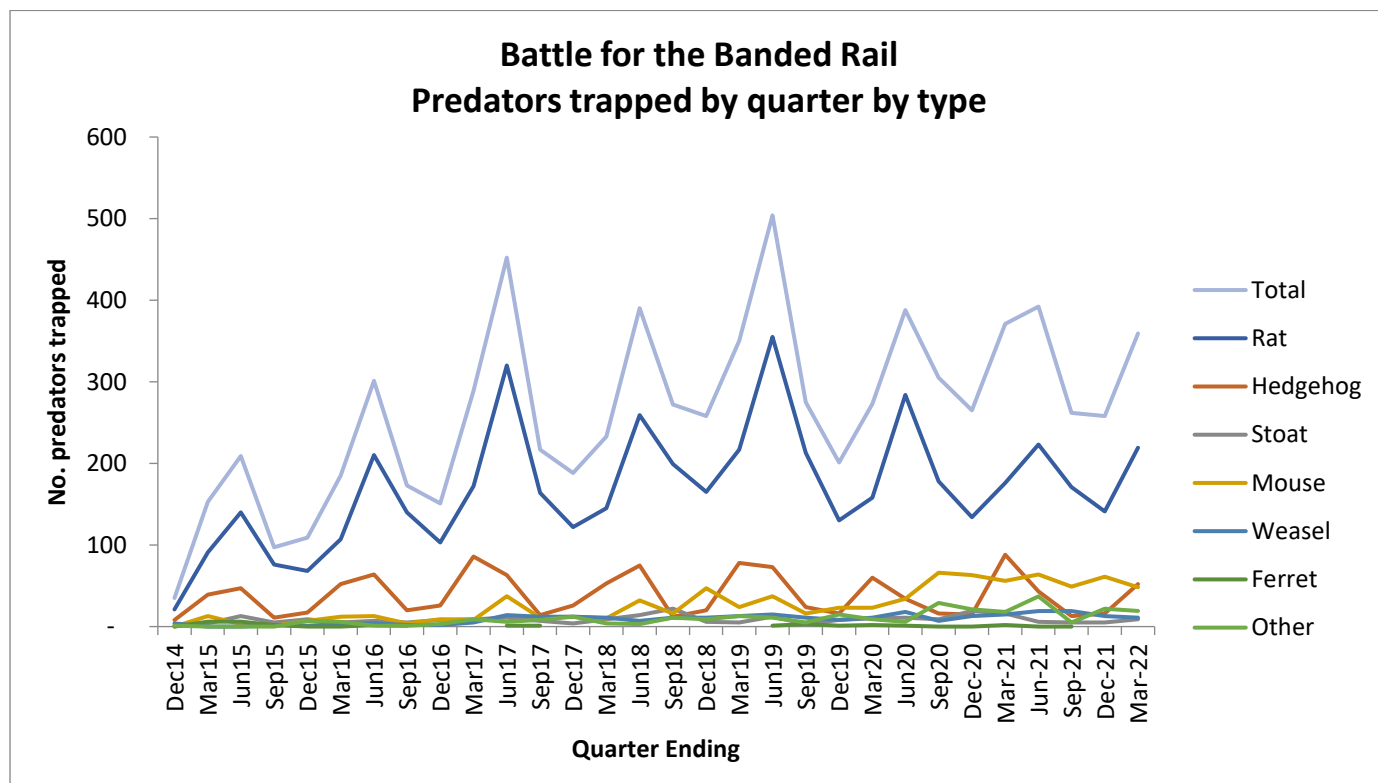
There are 996 traps in operation. The total catch for the March quarter was 359. This compares with 371 for the same quarter last year. Total catches since 2014 is now 7,885. *Stop press* – our trap.nz data is recording **8,001** catches total on 22 April, another milestone reached.

Catches for Quarter 1 2022 Sector by Pest Type

| Sector | Rat | Hedgehog | Stoat | Weasel | Mouse | Ferret | Other* | Total for Quarter | Total since 2015 |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| Mapua to Bronte | 39 | 31 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 89 | 1,975 |
| Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula | 51 | 6 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 61 | 2,302 |
| Waimea West/ Appleby Hills | 25 | 7 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 3 | 39 | 1,842 |
| Waimea Delta to Monaco | 104 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 41 | - | 9 | 170 | 1,766 |
| Total | 216 | 52 | 9 | 11 | 48 | 1 | 19 | 359 | 7,885 |

* includes rabbits, birds and unspecified catches from Goodnature A24 traps where the species caught is unknown

The following graph illustrates the annual pattern of catches since trapping began in late 2014.



Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

Plant Releasing & Maintenance on Friday mornings

Our schedule for the coming weeks is:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Friday 29 th April | Mapua (access from 126 Aranui Rd) |
| Friday 6 th May | Rough Island Wetland |
| Friday 13 th May | Hunter Brown, Rough Island |
| Friday 20 th May | Manuka Island |
| Friday 27 th May | Bronte Peninsula (92 Bronte Rd East) |

Bring drinking water and gardening gloves and a weeding tool if you have one you like to use. We also have tools available for you to use. If you are interested in joining us at one or more of these mornings, you can let me know or just turn up.

I send out an email earlier in the week to confirm the Friday location to our 'Weeding Group'. If you would like to be added to this distribution list, please let me know.



A banded rail in a Mapua garden?

I recently received this email from Hilary Clifton, a Mapua resident which gave me a few laughs. I thought you might enjoy it too!

"I'd like to report a possible banded rail sighting last Thursday evening 17th February in our garden on Mapua Drive at about 5.45pm. Our son Ben spotted it as we were sitting at the dining room table. The bird moved along the edge of the lawn into the garden and disappeared (chased by a mad lady with an iPhone!)"

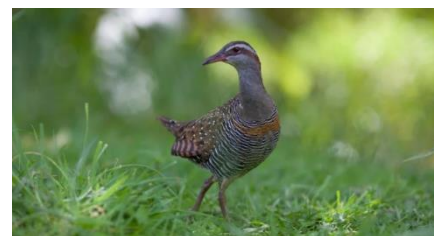


Image from DOC website

We decided it must be a female pheasant and had to time to discuss why we thought it was female rather than a male before I decided to get my iPhone and try to be David Attenborough. Had we realised what we were looking at, I wouldn't have been so cavalier in my approach! I was puzzled by the red feathers on the side of its breast and particularly noticed it's reddish beak but since I've never been close to a female pheasant, I really had nothing to go on. It definitely wasn't a weka or a pukeko (as some sceptics have suggested).

It was only the next day when I read the Waimea Weekly article that I realised what we'd seen. Ben immediately corroborated by opinion.

I'm quite excited and would love for it to be proved genuine by another sighting and a photo . . . time will tell. My eyes are glued"

Banded Rail report near Rough Island

"On 11th April we had an outing to Rough Island, hoping to spot Banded Rail. We struck it lucky, seeing a rail dashing around, apparently catching crabs or similar on the salt marsh flats on the western side of the road, just before the Rabbit Island bridge. Later we saw a second bird dart across a gap close to the road. I managed to get photos which appear to show the adult bird catching something and then I speculate that it is taking it to a chick hidden in the rushes.

Regards, Trevor Lewis"



Image credit Trevor Lewis

Wetland being Enhanced for Endangered Marsh Birds from Tasman District Council

Important earthworks in the first stage of a wetland creation project designed to enhance the ecological value of Waimea Delta, in Tasman District, have been completed.

The multi-stage project encompasses the creation of freshwater wetland areas in a low-lying arm of the Waimea River, just east of Pearl Creek. The site is adjacent to salt marsh and downstream from the cycle bridge along Tasman's Great Taste Trail.

Over three weeks beginning in late February, work focused on creating ponds alongside the existing channel to increase the area of open water.

The work was undertaken by experienced operators from both Downer and Tasman District Council. The Delta project is part of the Waimea Inlet Enhancement Project, funded by the Ministry for the Environment and Tasman District Council.

Project manager George Daly said the site has been selected as having huge potential for restoring habitat for marsh birds such as Matuku (Australasian Bittern).

It will also provide a beneficial habitat for other species, including īnanga, kōkopu, eels and everything that feeds on them.

"There are limited freshwater wetland sites left that are adjacent to salt marsh, particularly in Tasman Bay. This makes this site an important opportunity for building ecological linkages. River delta systems are known worldwide to have some of the richest biodiversity," George says.

Terrestrial planting around the area is planned over winter, followed by further wetland planting in spring.

Phase two of the earthworks will take place in early 2023. The broader work plan includes widening channels and creating new swamps and marsh to create diverse wildlife habitats and enhance habitat connectivity.



Before & after the earthworks. Images TDC

What this means for *Battle for the Banded Rail*

This is exciting news as we already know that banded rail, marsh crake, fernbird and Australasian bittern have all been present in this area at times.

We are already trapping in this area and have six Goodnature A24 traps installed. 10 DOC 200 traps are to be added to the wetland development.

We look forward to the possibility of holding a community planting here next year. Keep an eye on the progress as you cycle around the estuary past the old blue airport radio beacon building.



Tracey & Kathryn on a site visit to the wetland

Image credit Gillian Bishop



Plant Patch

Cabbage tree

tī kōuka

Cordyline australis

Conservation status: not threatened

In Latin australis means 'southern', and cordyline comes from the Greek word kordyle meaning club, which is reference to the enlarged underground stems or rhizomes.

British navigator James Cook bestowed the name 'cabbage tree' on this plant because the young leaves are edible and his naming has stuck!

The cabbage tree grows up to 1000 metres above sea level in anything from wet swampy ground to dry windy hill slopes. It has lovely scented flowers in early summer which turn into bluish-white berries that birds love to eat. As the plant gets old, the stems may die but new shoots grow from any part of the trunk. The bark is thick and tough like cork, and a huge fleshy taproot anchors the tree firmly into the ground. This strong root system helps stop soil erosion and makes them a useful species to plant along stream banks with their tolerance of wet soil.

Maori used cabbage trees as a food, fibre and medicine. The root, stem and top are all edible – a good source of starch and sugar. The leaves were woven into baskets, sandals, rope and rain capes.

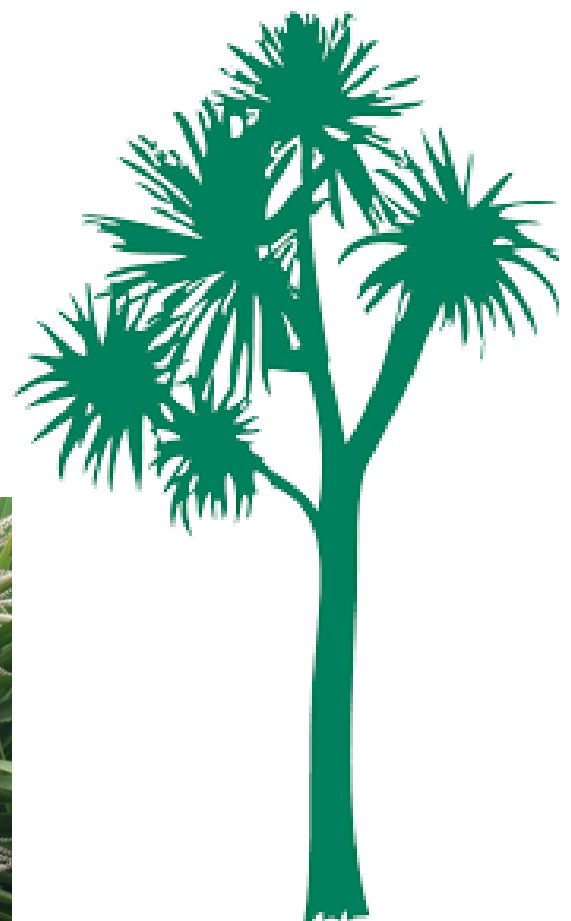


Some other facts about tī kōuka are:

- The trunk is so fire-resistant that early European settlers used it to make chimneys for their huts.
- In 1987 a mystery disease started to kill off cabbage trees in the North Island. Scientists later found that the cause was a parasitic organism called a phytoplasma most likely transferred from tree to tree by the passion vine hopper.
- The phytoplasma contributed to the collapse of the flourishing flax fibre industry in the Manawatu early last century.
- *Battle for the Banded Rail* has planted over 2,000 tī kōuka as part of its habitat restoration to date



Cabbage tree flower



Celebrating Our Volunteers: Kathy & Brian Chandler

Interviewed by Anne Hilson

Kathy and Brian moved from Auckland to Motueka two and a half years ago and are now involved in a profusion of conservation projects. They've met and made friends with a lot of like-minded people while helping sustain the environment. They are keen planters and weeders for *Battle for the Banded Rail*.

Brian traps predators at the McKee Reserve and at the Motueka golf course; his biggest catches (all of them rats) are on the golf course, where he also notes falcons, fernbirds and a nest of little owls. And yes, he also plays golf there.

On Mondays, Kathy heads to the DOC Nursery in Motueka to help grow locally-sourced seeds of natives to a size where they are returned to the Abel Tasman National Park and other reserves, when about five years old. She helps prepare for these plantings by weeding along the beaches in the Park; young gorse, fleabane, African veldt grass, and others are removed from near huts and campsites and replaced with natives. She says the beaches are now fairly well under control.

As Aucklanders Kathy and Brian were hard at work on Tiritiri Matangi Island, 220 hectares in size and 3 kilometres from Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Brian was Chair of the Supporters Group which co-managed the island with DOC. Much of his work involved planning for infrastructure such as tracks and buildings. Kathy was part of the Education Advisory Group responsible for school trips. Both were also guides for the many visiting school groups and tourists, and often helped visiting scientists with their research.

Tiritiri Matangi is considered one of the most successful conservation projects in the world. It has been transformed into massive plantings of native trees, covering sixty percent of the island, after a period of farming, and is now home to a substantial number of native birds and other species.

One of its biggest advantages is that it hasn't had the predators that mainland New Zealand projects contend with. When the island was given scientific reserve status the only mammalian predator was the kiore rat, which was subsequently eradicated. The island wasn't reinfested as the current is too swift for swimming. The only way predators can visit is by hitching a ride on a boat, and if they do there is a system set up to alert DOC to their presence. In 2018 one ship rat was detected. A specialist team working for several weeks, one hundred additional traps, a spend of \$50,000, and that rat was history. Luckily it was a female that had not bred.

The emphasis is on restoring the ecosystem, to what it probably was like several hundred years ago. DOC and the Supporters Group have worked as a team, with support from iwi, to achieve this. There is minimum use of chemicals for weed control, handweeding wherever possible. Chemical control leaves the way open for new and different weeds to colonise, whereas mechanical weedkilling is a more consistent approach that gets rid of seed sources and encourages the valuable insects and reptiles in the ecosystem.

Once the trees were established birds began to flourish. And twelve endemic bird species were introduced by translocation from other islands and the mainland eg. Takahe, little spotted kiwi, Hiihi (stitchbird), Tieke (North Island Saddleback), whitehead, fernbirds, Kokako, rifleman, tomtit. Tuatara, at least two types of lizard, and giant weta were also introduced and are now thriving.

Translocation now helps improve the gene pools of some of the species on the island. Individuals of species such as takahe and kokako, can be moved to other safe places, and in return others moved to Tiritiri Matangi as just one part of the Island's Diversity Plan.

I'm pretty sure we can pick up a few ideas from people who come in with experiences such as Brian and Kathy have had. And thank you both for all the work you are doing over so many projects.





Mapua Dawn Chorus is holding a trapping workshop at the Māpua Community Hall on Tuesday 7th June at 7pm. Come and find out what trapping is all about and help add to the backyard trapping project to protect our birdlife. Traps will be available to purchase. Māpua Dawn Chorus is an urban trapping project established in 2017 as part of the goal to be a Predator Free NZ in 2050. We want safe habitat for our native species to thrive.



Waimea Inlet Forum

E waimea.inlet@gmail.com
www.waimeainlet.wordpress.com

Waimea Inlet Forum was formed in 2010 when the Waimea Inlet Management Strategy was developed for TDC, NCC, DOC, Fish & Game and community representative group - Waimea Inlet Forum. The Waimea Inlet Forum meets quarterly to catch up on the wonderful mahi being done for Waimea Inlet, share concerns and plans for the Inlet, and develop feedback to Councils and other organisations. Meetings are face to face or by zoom.

We are looking for new members and those who are involved in Battle for the Banded Rail would be welcome! It's important that the community has a say in plans for the Inlet. Look what we have achieved to date and there is more to come!

At our last meeting George Daly TDC presented before and after photos of the Waimea Delta developments to create habitat for Bittern and marsh birds and Julie Newell, Tasman Environmental Trust, described the plantings around the Inlet.

Please email us and join the group. Our next meeting will be 20th June 4.00 – 6.00pm. Venue to be advised.



Battle for the Banded Rail is just one of Tasman Environmental Trust's current projects. Here is another project working with its local community in our region.

Farmers for Whio

Motueka Valley locals are trapping predators to protect the whio/blue duck in their catchment. Before the arrival of Europeans, whio/blue duck were common on the Motueka River but now they are in trouble.

Whio are found only in New Zealand, and their numbers are very low—without active protection they would likely become extinct in the wild. They live in swift-flowing rivers and need clean water with plenty of insect life. They are very vulnerable to predators, especially stoats.

In recent years whio numbers have been increasing in Kahurangi National Park and are beginning to spill over into nearby tributaries of the Motueka River.





Come and join us at a Community Planting Day on the Waimea Inlet in 2022

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|---|
| Sunday 29 th May | 9am – 1pm | Moreland Place Reserve, Mapua Access from Moreland Place or Rana Place |
| Sunday 5 th June | 9am – 1pm | Rabbit Island, Boat Ramp Bay Peninsula Access from end of Boat Ramp Rd, on right after 98 Ken Beck Drive |
| Sunday 12 th June | 9am – 1pm | Maisey Embayment Parking and access from 372 The Coastal Highway, near Westdale Rd |
| Sunday 19 th June | 9am – 1pm | Bronte Peninsula on Stringer Embayment Access from 92 Bronte Rd East. Park on Bronte Road |
| Sunday 26 th June | 9am – 1pm | Cardno Way, Bronte Peninsula Parking on Cardno Way, off Bronte Rd East |
| Sunday 3 rd July | 10am – 2pm | Rabbit Island, Ferry Landing Free ferry from Mapua Wharf, 1 st crossing 10am |
| Sunday 10 th July | 9am – 1pm | Research Orchard Road Reserve |
| Sunday 17 th July | 9am – 1pm | Bronte Peninsula Access from 8 Bronte Rd East |
| Sunday 24 th July | 10am – 2pm | Rabbit Island, Ferry Landing Free ferry from Mapua Wharf, 1 st crossing 10am |
| Sunday 31 st July | 9am – 1pm | Hoddy Estuary Park |
| Sunday 7 th August | 9am - 1pm | Rabbit Island, Boat Ramp Bay Peninsula |
| Sunday 14 th August | 9am - 1pm | Estuary Place, Richmond Access from Lower Queen St or from the cycleway |
| Sunday 21 st August | 9am - 1pm | Greenslade Park, Rough Island |
| Sunday 28 th August | 9am - 1pm | Rabbit Island, Boat Ramp Bay |
| Sunday 4 th September | 9am - 1pm | Greenslade Park, Rough Island |

Please bring gloves, spade and drinking water. Wear solid footwear and clothes suitable for the weather conditions. Morning tea will be provided.

Battle for the Banded Rail is a project working with local communities to increase the number of banded rail and other estuarine birds on the margins of the Waimea Inlet by restoring habitat and trapping predators.

For more information email us at bandedrail@gmail.com or phone Kathryn 544 4537




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 **Te Uru Rākau**
Forestry New Zealand

 **Department of Conservation**
Te Papa Atawhai