



MOTUORA RESTORATION SOCIETY (INC)

PO Box 100132, North Shore
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BRIDGESTONE NEW ZEALAND LTD

Ongoing support is marvellous

Bridgestone became our principal sponsor in 2013 initially through their relationship with Kay Howe, owner of United Campervans. At the start their input was linked to sales of tyres to United Campervans. UC ceased sponsorship in 2012 however we were delighted when in 2013 Bridgestone became our principal sponsor.

We extend our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful assistance given to the restoration of Motuora both through sponsorship and volunteer hours put in by Bridgestone staff. That contribution has made a positive difference to the survival of New Zealand's natural biodiversity.

TANK MOVERS ON A ROLL

A project to move two water tanks to a new site up the hill so they are in line with water pipes that run between the dam and Home Bay was undertaken in several stages on work trips in July and August. On our first trip an



enthusiastic crew drained the tanks which stood beside the Home Bay track, disconnected the water pipes and tipped the tanks on their side ready for moving.

In preparation the yellow inflatable boat was lifted from its trailer so that, on the second trip the tanks, could be



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Chairperson's Report for the year 2015 to 2016

A year of significant changes for the Society

This year has seen some significant changes for our organisation. Not least of these was the retirement from their posts of two of our long-serving committee members: chairperson Ray Lowe, and honorary secretary Kit Brown. I'd like to formally thank them both for their long and exceptional contributions to our highly successful restoration project. Ray was acclaimed as a Kiwibank Local Hero in recognition of his work for Motuora.

Another important change was associated with the expiry of our Management Agreement with the Department of Conservation. This agreement set out the terms of our joint management and, among other things, committed the Society to the employment of an Island Manager. Your committee debated at great length on the way forward and undertook detailed consultation and negotiation with the Department. We concluded that the risks to the Society associated with employing staff on the Island and the input required for management were not justified for the next period in our development. A new Memorandum of Understanding between ourselves and the Department has been agreed. This sets out the general principles of our joint venture but does not provide any detail on how the Island will be managed or operated. We hope to agree on these details soon, but in the meantime we have been asked by the Department to 'carry on with our restoration work as if the agreement was still in place'. We were delighted to have the Department confirm that they intend to maintain full-time ranger cover on the Island.

Coincident with the expiry of the Management Agreement in November 2015, our contract with Vonny Spray, our Island Manager, also expired. The Department offered Vonny a half-time role to manage the camp site through to April 2016. Vonny accepted this post and the Society was able to offer a top-up by engaging her services for weed control and other duties on a contract to the same date. This arrangement ended early in January 2016 when Vonny achieved a long-term ambition by gaining a position on an Antarctic programme. We wish Vonny every success in this and extend our thanks for the great work she did for us. We have been fortunate in Vonny's replacement, Eliane Lagnaz, who has proved to be a tireless and enthusiastic weeder.

What these changes mean for the restoration project

Your committee is still working through the consequences of these changes including somewhat slow-moving negotiations with the Department of Conservation. Our current plans for how the management and monitoring work will be carried out involve:

- ♦ the identification of team leaders for key projects (weeding, seabirds, nursery, tree planting, reptiles, invertebrates, etc.) who will organise and supervise volunteer teams

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manoeuvred, one at a time, onto the trailer and hauled up the hill. Some pruning was necessary to the foliage on



the sides of the track to get these large and rather unwieldy items to the new site. On the next work trip a busy team prepared a level bed of sand and located the tanks. All those involved, lead by Kevin Hawkins, felt a great



sense of satisfaction to see the tanks in the right place. Water lines will be connected and tanks re-filled. Oh yes, and get the inflatable boat has to be reunited with it's trailer!

The Annual General Meeting of the Motuora Restoration Society was held at Silverdale on 29th May.

John Stewart was formally elected Chairperson and Liz Norquay as Secretary. Roger Harker was newly elected to the committee and Les Buckton, Colin Cordes, Kevin Hawkins, Helen Lindsay, Lakshmanan Nataraj and Bruce Ross were re-elected. John Stewart spoke to the 2015-16 Chairman's Report (which is included in this newsletter).



Once the formal meeting concluded those present enjoyed a talk from guest speaker Dr Manuela Barry about her work with Duvaucel's Gecko.

Stephen Wallace presented the committee with a copy of his thesis "An assessment of Ecological Restoration on Motuora" completed in 2015. He praised the restoration work done on the island saying findings indicated a healthy invertebrate life in both remnant bush and planted areas



Work trip in July gave us blue sky and sunshine from dawn to dusk and the sea was glassy. This picture shows arrival by water-taxi and a short trip to shore on a dingy.



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- ♦ recruitment and, where necessary, training of volunteer teams
- ♦ planning of visits to the Island (day trips, overnights, longer periods as required for the workloads)
- ♦ provision of accommodation for visiting volunteers (probably in our own building as we are unlikely to have the necessary access to the bach or the bunkroom)

We appeal to Society members and volunteers to renew or take out membership and to register your willingness to help as team leaders or project volunteers.

Achievements and events from the past year

These included:

- ♦ our fourth translocation of wetapunga (100 new arrivals)
- ♦ the return of our first six Pycroft's petrels three years after they fledged
- ♦ first successful breeding of fluttering shearwaters with two chicks fledging
- ♦ creation of a new target colony site for fluttering shearwaters, moving the loudspeakers and digging in 12 new artificial burrows, one of which has already been visited repeatedly
- ♦ consolidation of our gannet colony with around 12 chicks fledging (two more than last year)
- ♦ provision of 19 new penguin nesting boxes along the shore adjacent to Home Bay
- ♦ infill planting of canopy trees among the pioneer species
- ♦ a poor year for New Zealand dotterel with five pairs raising just one chick and other nests lost to weather, predation and disturbance
- ♦ a bird count was completed by Sharen and Mike Graham
- ♦ three newsletters were published, our website was regularly updated and news was distributed by e-mails
- ♦ new signposts were installed indicating the year of planting of various bush blocks
- ♦ there was a monitoring visit for Raukawa (previously known as Common gecko) and Pacific geckos. The initial feedback for the Raukawa geckos is that a lot of juveniles and a few sub-adults were found plus a few juvenile Duvaucel's geckos. At the Pacific gecko site all four life stages were found along with some Raukawas and possibly shore skinks. All the animals found were in very good condition with good weights.
- ♦ continuation of our weed programme. Maintaining weeds at low levels is a significant on-going project. There is a continuing need for surveillance to find weeds which have blown over from the mainland, or been introduced by birds, before they have time to establish and to continue control of those already present. Although weeds are at lower levels than in the past now that there is so much forest cover, we need to keep up the pressure on species such as climbing asparagus which would otherwise quickly re-establish. Vonny and Eliane have covered a lot of ground over the past year and we are fortunate to have the services of Richard Sharp and his team who return to the Island every season to do the cliff abseiling, and to have Helen Lindsay oversee the weed control programme. We thank all of our contract and volunteer weeders for their vital contributions.

Sponsors and donors

Bridgestone New Zealand Ltd (our principal sponsor)
Greenwood Trust
Pub Charity
Lion Foundation
Simon Chamberlin
Heseltine Trust
Foundation North

We also thank Kawau Cruises for subsidised cost of water taxis and for their reliable and helpful service to and from the Island.

Of course nothing could be achieved without the input of a host of enthusiastic volunteers who give their time and expertise to ensure we continue to be one of the best restoration projects in the Gulf. Congratulations to you all and I hope that you will continue for many years to come as we continue to work towards our goals for a maturing forest alive with native birds, reptiles and insects.

John Stewart, Chairman, Motuora Restoration Society



Sausage sizzle and a cuppa at the potting shed

Team Leaders needed

Can you volunteer your time for a vital role in the continuing success of Motuora? We need help with maintaining some of our most significant projects.

Our main tasks on the Island include weed control, tree nursery and planting, bird monitoring, reptile monitoring, and infrastructure management. Now that we no longer employ an Island Manager we have decided to appoint team leaders for each core programme. Some roles are filled but we would particularly welcome people to lead our efforts on weed control and on the tree nursery and planting.

Team leaders should have some experience and knowledge of their area (though guidance will be provided by one of our committee members) and be confident to organise and work with a small team of volunteers. Leaders need not be present on every working trip they organise, but should be able to attend some of them.

If you have experience in weed control or in nursery management/tree propagation and would like to help, please contact John Stewart to discuss what is involved (09 428 4541 or johnreastewart@gmail.com)

Volunteers needed for core programmes

We intend to organise our work programmes slightly differently from now on. The key programmes include the tree nursery and planting, weed searching and control, bird monitoring, reptile monitoring and infrastructure management.

Depending on the needs of each programme, work parties may go out on day trips or for longer visits including overnight stays (there will be time to relax and fully experience this beautiful island too).

If you'd like to get involved in any of these projects and are not already on our list of active volunteers please contact John.

Working visits to the Island

As spring approaches we are scheduling regular visits to the Island to work on wildlife monitoring (especially seabirds), on the nursery, and on weed control. For seabird monitoring we are hoping to organise regular visits throughout the breeding season commencing in September. Obviously trips are weather dependent, but the plan is to send a boat out on Friday evening or Saturday morning, returning on Sunday afternoon. Longer stays will be possible using the same boat trips, for example Sunday to Friday.

Those taking part will be asked to contribute \$20 per person

Deon and Eva tidied the nursery and did a 'stock-take' of plants on the August work trip



Pic: Philip Moll, *Creative Moments Images*.



travelling towards the cost of the water taxi, or pay \$40 and get a years' membership of Motuora Restoration Society too.

Accommodation on the Island. You may have heard that the bach is currently unavailable for visitors or volunteers. MRS is working hard with the Department of Conservation to come up with alternative accommodation for volunteers staying overnight. In the short term this will probably mean either camping or sleeping in the bunkroom attached to the main house and preparing meals in the potting shed or using the barbecue.

Those who are already volunteers on the seabird group will shortly receive an e-mail inviting them to volunteer for a spell on the Island. If you would like to take part and are not already on the seabird list, please contact John. Most visits will require day-time checking of the gannet colony and the Pycroft's Petrel, little penguin and fluttering shearwater burrows and re-setting stick fences, and night-time checking of Pycroft's and diving petrels. Detailed instructions will be provided. Only trained volunteers may handle adult birds and chicks, but most of the work does not involve handling.

Get in touch if these areas of involvement appeal to you – we'd love to have your input!

Potential dates for trips in 2016/17	
Fri/Sat. to Motuora	Sun. to Sandspit
16/17 Sept	18 Sept
30 Sept/1 Oct	2 Oct
14/15 Oct	16 Oct
28/29 Oct	30 Oct
11/12 Nov	13 Nov
25/26 Nov	27 Nov
2/3 Dec	4 Dec
16/17 Dec	18 Dec
6/7 Jan	8 Jan
20/21 Jan	22 Jan
And continue fortnightly	