



MOTUORA RESTORATION SOCIETY (INC)

PO Box 100132, North Shore
Auckland 0745

www.motuora.org.nz

Newsletter No. 61

April 2016

Diary of returning Pycroft's

Over the last three years we have translocated Pycroft's petrel chicks sourced from Whakau/Red Mercury Island to artificial burrows on Motuora, 73 in 2013, 90 in 2014 and 100 last year. These chicks fledged from Motuora and flew off to the Pacific Ocean and were not expected to return until their third year. The summer of 2015/16 was the earliest likely return date for the first chicks from the 2013 translocation. Unfortunately, many young, inexperienced seabirds die before they get a chance to return to their breeding site so we were anxiously waiting to see how many would make it back. Breeding birds return in September, but the first chicks to return do not breed for another year or two so we weren't sure what time of year they might reappear.

Extracts from 'breaking news' emails as reported by John Stewart.

29 December. Great news! At 11:30 pm last night I found our first re-returning Pycroft's petrel. It was (leg band number) D207311. This bird was originally found on Red Mercury near the Camp site. It was transferred to burrow 52 on Motuora and fledged on the 26 March 2013.

Kay and I were just about to head back to down to Home Bay when I spotted the bird sitting on the ground nearer the cliff. I checked the band number, and popped it into burrow 29. About five minutes later it had left the burrow and was sitting on top of box 50. We didn't disturb it further.

1 January. Vonny put out the night time camera at the site and captured an image of two birds on the ground. She also found 207318 in burrow 19 the next day so already we have a bird staying over, possibly one of the two in the photo. 207318 was originally found by Kay at the Von Luckner's colony on Red Mercury. It was transferred to and fledged from box 66 on Motuora.

13 January. Vonny found two birds in burrow 53, one was 207318 which she had already reported earlier, and the other was 207309, a bird originally found in the Camp sub-colony on Red Mercury by me and transferred to burrow 9 on Motuora.

19 January. After two more nights of fruitless (and wet) searching, Kay and I took the opportunity to quickly check the Pycroft's burrows this morning before our water taxi came to take us off the Island. We found two new birds in burrow 61. 207397 was originally found at Von Luckner's by Morag. It was raised in burrow 54 and 207507 that was found at Von Luckner's by Toby and was transferred to burrow 13 on Motuora. This is now our third and fourth identified birds, with possibly another two seen, and the second burrow to be occupied during the day - this time by two birds. The stick fence (2 small twigs placed at the burrow entrance to show if a bird has entered) was down on burrow 19 (the one Vonny found occupied) but there was no bird there when we checked.

14 February. Eliane found 207307 in burrow 17 during the day. This bird was originally found by Vince Waanders and fledged from burrow 37 on Motuora.

So that's six different birds definitely identified, five of which have stayed through the daytime in a burrow (potentially two pairs).



Six birds identified



Also from John's emails: Fluttering Shearwater

29 December. Our first 2 fluttering shearwater chicks are still going strong. I banded the second chick which had been too small on my previous visit.

19 January. The first fluttering shearwater chick has fledged (we found one of its parents in the box at night, but the chick was gone) and the second one is still in its burrow with a bit of growing to do yet. There were no signs of any further visits to the new nest box sites.



Vonny departed the island in mid-January to work-in Antarctica. She had long held a desire to work there and the Motuora Society wish her all very best in her future endeavours.
Eliane Lagnaz took over from Vonny on a fixed term Contract at the end of January. Her contract splits her time between MRS restoration tasks and for DOC, campground, infrastructure and biosecurity.

From the Island by Vonny Sprey

As my final day on Motuora Island draws near it is a time for reflection. Perhaps you would like to come with me today – so you too can experience the day.

The day starts at 5.30am with a pukeko, quietly but determinedly pecking on the bedroom window. That's all good as I have loos to clean before the slumbering campers rise and make frantic dashes to the ablutions. The dotterel family are already busy with anxious parents chirping a warning to others to stay away from their half-grown youngsters, while their offspring wind their way under and between the campground tent guide ropes.

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TRANSITION TIME

We have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Conservation and finer details are being worked through. The Department continues to support the restoration project and has committed to having a presence on the island (covering campsite and biosecurity duties mostly). There are some changes to the way MRS operates on the Island. The most important and visible change is that MRS will no longer employ an Island Manager so no longer having shore based support for landing on the Island. The nature of the restoration has evolved from needing mass volunteers to plant trees on a regular basis to planting fewer numbers of canopy species which spend more time in the nursery as they have



Anti-clockwise round the table:-
Les Buckton, & Kevin Hawkins (MRS), Christine Cumiskey, Thelma Wilson & Bevan Moir (DOC) Colin Cordes, Kit Brown & John Stewart (MRS)

to be older/larger before they go in the ground and are more time consuming to plant as they need carried through dense bush and a larger hole dug, under trees and amongst roots.

The introduction of new animal species including diving petrel, gannet, fluttering shearwater, Pycroft's petrel, Duvaucel's, common and Pacific gecko, shore skink and wetapunga done over the last few years require regular monitoring. If you have experience in bird, reptile or insect monitoring/handling and have the flexibility with your time to help out please let us know.

We still have a need for volunteers specific tasks but not on a routine monthly basis.

***Please register your interest in helping out on Motuora.
Visit our website www.motuora.org.nz or call one of the committee.***

Motuora Restoration Society The Society is undertaking the restoration of native forest to create habitat for endangered and absent common species on the island, and translocating such fauna and flora. Membership is \$25 per year for individuals or families, and \$5 for students.	Chairperson John Stewart 09 428 4541		Bruce Ross 09 445 1140	
	Secretary (vacant)		Helen Lindsay 03 528 4020	
<div>Charities Commission Registration Number CC 10250</div>	Treasurer Nattu Nataraj 09 624 6247		Liz Norquay 09 424 7444	
	Les Buckton 09 425 9619		Ray Lowe 09 426 6900	
	Kevin Hawkins 09 424 7444		Colin Cordes 09 638 7726	
	Kit Brown 09 446 0618		DOC Island Manager 0274 053-352	

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Next it's time to check the native plant nursery and peer hopefully for any new germinations. Things are looking good. Make a mental note to move some of the Puriri and Titoki to PB3 bags. Spot the resident moko skinks that resides between the trays of seedlings.

Time to don the running shoes for a slow jog around a 5km circuit of the island tracks. The whiteheads providing an on-going commentary on my progress. Waken a family of morepork who sit with puzzled expression.

A quick trip down to Still Bay, to check for illicit campers, any rubbish and check on the just arrived dotterel chicks. Head back via Macrocarpa Bay where a couple of oystercatchers have this year actually started brooding oystercatcher eggs and are not sitting on abandoned dotterel eggs, round stones or pinecones as they have in past years! Well done guys.

On the return jog along the beach back to Home Bay, I see that the banded dotterel has returned and with his partner has started brooding a clutch in the sand bank hollow.

At a lizard refuge several juvenile Duvaucels geckos appear to be playing big brother to a number of baby (30mm) common geckos. Further



along the beach a gravid (pregnant) shore skink peeks out from under some sandy vegetation.

A final duck up the bank to check on planted spinifex.

Back in time for the morning radio schedule with Warkworth office and camp check on departures and arrivals before heading out to continue the 'battle of the weeds'. Dealing to hedge parsley, wild carrot and outlying patches of Indian doab. Patches seem to be popping up around every corner and the endeavour is to deal with them before the flowering umbels go to seed.



Stop at the water tanks to check the water level. Then stop by the Pycrofts petrel site where night vision cameras are set up to see if more have made any returns - all very exciting! And yes one of the returnees is slumbering in borrow number 19.

The fluttering shearwater borrows containing the first two recorded chicks are just up the hill from the gannet colony. The older of the two is showing a good number of feathers

though its breast still looks like it is wrapped in a light grey feather boa.

Completed another few hours of attacking weeds before heading back down the hill via the Australasian Gannet colony where there are currently 15 chicks.



(One pair still brooding an egg but suspect it is infertile). Looks like squid on the menu from the tentacles lingering on the beaks of some of the youngsters.

I find one of the little blue penguin pair are back in a disused nest box at the top of the hill, no doubt having a well deserved sleep/rest before the long walk down to get dinner.

It's after 4pm and time to head back down the hill to check on campers. It can be amusing to watch once-a-year-campers trying to recall how to erect their tents. Others relax and read that once-a-year book.

Time to check on the emails, write up the daily records on the flora and fauna, camper and day visitor numbers and it's time for the afternoon radio sched. Lastly, the evening campground check and a general "howdy" to residents.

A final farewell to Motuora - thanks for the experience it has been great.

**NOTICE OF
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Motuora Restoration Society's
Annual General Meeting
will be held on Sunday, 29th May 2016
At 1.30 p.m.
St. John Ambulance Hall, Silverdale Street,
Silverdale**

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the May 2015 AGM
2. Matters arising from the Minutes
3. Financial Report
4. Chairperson's Annual Report
5. Election of Officers and Committee Members*
6. Subscriptions for the 2016/2017 year
7. Any other business

*The officers of the Society comprise the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, and the Constitution calls for at least two other committee members. Nominations for all these positions will be accepted by mail, to be received by the Secretary at PO Box 100132 North Shore, Auckland 0745, by Thursday 26 May 2016. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting. All nominees, proposers and seconders must be financial members of the Society.

**WORK TRIPS TO THE ISLAND WILL
CONTINUE IN 2016**

The ground is likely to be moist enough for planting in June or July or August. We will circulate the request for planters closer to the time.

Visit our website and record your interest to be involved in on-going volunteer work in the following areas -

- nursery work
- tree planting
- weed control
- bird monitoring
- lizard monitoring
- administration

Appeal for Members

If you are not already a member, please consider supporting MRS through the annual subscription of \$25.00. For those who are current members, renewal requests will come out to you in July.

Donations welcome

Financial contributions in the form of tax deductible donations help preserve and advance the work already underway on weed control, reforestation and species translocation and monitoring. Contact any member of the Committee to discuss how you can contribute.

Newsletter - changing to circulation by e-mail

The Society wants to reduce expenses and therefore will not be printing and posting future editions of our Newsletter. It will instead be sent by e-mail.

However if you are a paid up member and require a printed copy we would be happy to print and post. Please indicate if you want it posted. Call Committee member/Editor Liz Norquay.

THANK YOU

Bridgestone Ltd. for sponsorship.

Terranova Planning for sponsorship.

Agpro NZ Ltd for herbicides.

Yates NZ for ongoing support with propagation supplies.

Kawau Cruises for support with transport costs.

Foundation North (formerly the ASB Community Trust) for support with operating costs.



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Address Block

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