

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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"The most important relationship humans have with any other living thing is with trees: we breathe out, they breathe in - they breathe out, we breathe in." K.P. of K Bay.

PROPOSED TOUTOUWAI RELEASE

Return of the North Island Robin

It is proposed that Toutouwai (North Island Robin) will be released into the Port Charles Rat Attack area on either the 8th or 9th April this year.

The release is the next phase of the Rat Attack Project; the translocation of Toutouwai is a joint initiative with MEG and DoC Hauraki, with a second release site within the DoC rat control area at Stony Bay.

While a draft translocation proposal is yet to be signed off much of the logistics for the release are being put into place.

Lettecia Williams (MEG) together with Steve Bolton and Rob Chappell (DoC Coromandel) visited Pureora as part of a scoping exercise.

A research team from Waikato University are planning to undertake work on Sound Anchoring. The simultaneous release at two very similar sites is ideal for such work.

The project is dependent on enough birds being captured. Thirty birds into each site. Weather could affect catching. Birds will undergo disease screening as part of the translocation.

Teams of MEG volunteers and DoC staff are being assembled to assist with the training of birds with meal worms, the capture and the monitoring.

We require up to 14 volunteers to assist with the monitoring, as part of the sound anchoring research, for 20 days immediately after release at both sites.

Ongoing monitoring will continue after that initial intense period that will lead onto the identification of nest sites and fledgling rates in the breeding season.

If you are interested in assisting contact Lettecia ASAP on 07 8666626.

Volunteers are encouraged to be part of this exciting project. Some accommodation will be available.

An official release will be arranged for the Stony Bay site. Look out for further detail on the web site.

Once again volunteers are sought to assist with the catering and the official function. It is an opportunity for volunteers to be involved at many levels.

Well done to the Port Charles Rat Attack Team in ensuring the project has been a success to date. Returning Toutouwai to Moehau is a culmination of the huge effort gone into the Rat Attack project to date.

"Thanks to all involved" - Lettecia Williams.



Toutouwai coming to a mountain near you - Te Moehau April 09.

STOP KIWI GOING TO THE DOGS!

The human population usually resident on the Coromandel peninsula is about 26,000. Over the Christmas holiday period it peaks at around 140,000. 90% of resident dogs in the northern peninsula are kiwi aversion trained. Carol Nanning of Thames Coast Kiwi Care and MEG decided to target summer visitors to the peninsula with a hard hitting awareness campaign about the risks dogs pose to kiwi.

With assistance from BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust, The Hauraki Herald and Coromandel FM we ran a sustained campaign of advertisements and editorial between December 23rd and January 10th. To drive the message home holiday makers were greeted at the Kopu Bridge by an 8x2m billboard (photo inside). Bookings for kiwi aversion training have been well up since.

Cheers

Jonty Rutherford

MEG Coordinator

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Carol Nanning of Thames Coast Kiwi Care Putting Up the Summer Dog Campaign Billboard at Kopu.

moehau environment group Presents **REAL KIWI COUNTRY DANCE** 

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY: Environment Waikato REGIONAL COUNCIL

7:30 til LATE

SHUTTLE AVAILABLE Call 866 6669 to book a ride

PEPPERTREE WORLD FAMOUS BBQ PORK RIBS

BEERTENT MONTEITH'S BREWING CO.

Colville Hall Sat 14th March

FEATURING **BRENDON HAM** **BACK II BASIX** 

ALL PROCEEDS TO KIWI HABITAT PROTECTION ON THE COROMANDEL

THE MEG ECOBASE IS FOR HIRE

The MEG HQ at Waikawau Bay is a self contained three bedroom house that sleeps up to 12, with two bathrooms and large living area with a deck. Expansive sea views towards Mercury and Cuvier Islands and an easy walk to Waikawau beach make it an idyllic getaway.

For rates, availability and bookings call Terry and Dawn on 07 866 6903 or go to: <http://www.holidayhouses.co.nz/properties/13409.asp>



The MEG Ecobase Waikawau

♣ **TICKETS** ♥
Available from
The Star & Garter
and
White Star Station
Colville



WAIKAWAU BAY WETLANDS AND ESTUARY RESEARCH.

Since our last issue of the "MEGaphone" the Waikawau Bay wetlands and estuary has seen: - the eradication of the salt marsh mosquito completed; the White Heron moving on; and the nasty weed - saltwater paspalum - moving inexorably further and further into the open flats of the estuary and along the river banks. There has been an intensification of rodent control, cat and mustelid trapping, and an explosion in the Fernbird population. We've also managed to plant about 500 shrubs and wetland plants to begin enhancement work and provide some windbreak shelter for wildlife and stock. This is thanks to the many volunteers and the Honda Tree Fund for providing the trees.

In other words, just a "fad" busy!!

The World Wildlife Habitat Protection funding is now complemented with funding from Environment Waikato, and allows a small group of us to carry out baseline surveys of the flora and fauna of both the wetlands and the estuary- an area of about 65ha. We've also been helped by groups of overseas volunteers with the monitoring work required, to get some sort of handle on what is there and begin to assess the impact if any of this salt water paspalum. We're hoping to understand a little of the dynamics of the estuary and wetlands system and the life that exists in it. Everything from shellfish counts to insect surveys; bird species identification and plants; to trapping fish species, both freshwater and saltwater dwellers, to mapping mud, sand, and silted areas. Some of the lands behind the estuary are retired from farming and silt movements during floods are reduced. However, this weed traps silt moving downstream and raises the floor of the estuary. Not only do land plants then begin to colonise, but the pasturelands behind the



estuary are more prone to flooding and salt water invasion, as water is not able to escape so easily out through estuary and river mouth channels. Results of surveys so far suggest that there are very healthy numbers of bird and fish species present and the cockle beds have as many as 500-750 per sq metre! We're also blessed with a reasonable number of the rarer birds such as: Pateke (Brown Teal), Fernbirds, NZ Dotterels, Banded Rails, and Bitterns. Measurements are also beginning to show that the weed is colonizing at an alarming rate. Now we just have to try to understand how serious the impact of this weed problem is. Watch this space!

Wayne Todd



Global Volunteers carrying out cockle counts-February 2009

megevents

COLVILLE: REAL KIWI COUNTRY DANCE SATURDAY 14 MARCH.

The Northern Coromandel is the most successful kiwi recovery area on the mainland of NZ with the highest percentage chick survival rate since kiwi recovery projects started throughout the country nine years ago. We plan to celebrate this achievement on Saturday March 14th to coincide with NZ's largest mountain bike race -The Kona Colville Connection.

The Moehau Environment group (MEG) Marquee will be next to the Colville Hall for the day with a BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust display and info on our conservation projects around the district. From midday a beer & BBQ tent will be open, staffed by volunteers from MEG, Coromandel's Peppertree restaurant and our local BNZ branch.

That night we are hosting a fund raising dance at the Colville hall. Tickets are available at the Star & Garter in Coromandel and from the White Star Station in Colville (or call me on 021410040). Tickets are limited so be in quick we would love to see you there!

Please tell your friends and if you can make it bring your cheque book as we'll be auctioning a beautiful painting of Te Moehau by local artist Leo Campbell.

RETURN OF THE NORTH ISLAND ROBIN TO STONY BAY & PORT CHARLES – 8th or 9th of April. (TBC)

If you are interested in assisting in this historic event please contact Lettecia Williams on 07 8666626.



MEG thanks BNZ Save the Kiwi and Fortress Fasteners for their ongoing support and 360 Discovery Cruises for their support of The MEG Summer Programme.

MEG SUBS ARE DUE - PRETTY PLEASE

Thanks to all those members who have paid their subscription for 2009. And to those who haven't, a friendly reminder that subs became due on January 1 this year.

Subscriptions remain at \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$50 for company membership.

Please send to Tina Morgan Membership co-ordinator 1659 Port Charles Road RD4 Coromandel 3584 OR pay direct into BNZ account 020304 0342229 02. If you choose this option please email Tina on t.morgan@colville.org.nz and let her know.

For new memberships please download the form at www.meg.org.nz/pdf/2707_Meg_Brochure_Member.pdf.

Donations will, of course, be willingly accepted at any time!

Thanks for your support.



I GOT A WETA FOR MY BIRTHDAY!

And it led to a whole new way of raising funds for MEG! My weta was made of wood, with its various parts prestamped neatly into a postcard size piece of balsa. A sticky backing prevented the pieces falling out. When mine arrived through the mail I couldn't WAIT to put it together. You'll see the end result in the accompanying photographs.

I was so tickled with my unusual gift that I took it to a MEG committee meeting. Soon after, contact was made with the makers, and a prompt response brought a colourful catalogue, showing quite a range of these wonderful little models.

We now stock 3 different models, the weta, the tuatara, and a fantail. We may soon have tui as well. We are selling these 3D cards at \$12 each. Each one comes with an envelope for posting, and full instructions. They are easy to assemble, needing no glue or pins – though small kids might need some guidance.

If you would like to order 3Dcards, contact Tina Morgan at t.morgan@colville.org.nz, or 1659 Port Charles Road RD4 Coromandel. I'm prepared to bet you'll love them!

