

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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“Where we do the work, we are winning” –Nicola Toki, Forest & Bird



Our community working together to protect kiwi

With so many groups involved in conservation on the Peninsula, we thought it was time to get everyone together.

So over a weekend in June we hosted a gathering for conservation groups from around the Coromandel. It was a fantastic event, with over 45 people attending.

It was inspiring to hear what others are up to and share all our knowledge and expertise. We are hoping this event will encourage groups to work more closely on common aims such as kiwi protection and predator control.

The weekend was a chance for groups to discuss the draft Kiwi Taxon Plan which aims to provide groups with a strategic overview of how to manage Coromandel brown kiwi. Other topics discussed at the event included how groups can better survey kiwi, limit the threat dogs pose to kiwi, collate and use data, source funding and retain volunteers. There was a practical demonstration of monitoring tools and methods along with a workshop on effective trapping techniques.

The event was held at Te Moata retreat near Tairua. Thanks to Trust Waikato and the Department of Conservation who jointly sponsored the event.

MEG WINS NATIONAL AWARD

See Page 2 for details

Lettecia and Wayne collect the award in Wellington



www.meg.org.nz



Estuary study complete

A two year study on the impact of Saltwater Paspalum (an invasive weed) has just been completed by two MEG members with help from many volunteers.

Research was initially undertaken to find out about the health of the Waikawau Bay estuary and what native species lived there. The good news is that the estuary has an amazing abundance of native wildlife and predator control being undertaken by MEG is seeing annual increases in several rare or endangered bird species.

However research into the impacts of saltwater paspalum brought a very different result. At the current measured rates of spread the weed will change and threaten the estuary and its wildlife significantly within 50 years.

Saltwater Paspalum is spreading in some places upwards of 1.5m per year. Multiply that by 50 around the circumference of the estuary and you've got a big problem for wading birds, fish, fish spawning, and shell fish. This plant tends to build up silt and "suffocates" the ground beneath until nothing else will grow, nor survive-such as invertebrates, which many birds and fish feed on.

The study was funded by Waikato Regional Council, and a report will be presented to them in August. It is hoped the research will prompt some positive action. MEG will continue to monitor the situation.

RECOGNITION OF ALL OUR HARD WORK

On June 5 we won the Green Ribbon Awards in the 'Protecting Our Biodiversity' Category. It's a huge honour to be nationally recognized for our work, and we all feel really proud. So thank you to all our members and supporters. We couldn't have achieved our success without your support. We celebrated in style with a potluck party held up at Waikawau Bay.

MAKING MOVIES

During May three staff from Coromandel BNZ came to help shoot a short film about the work we are doing to protect biodiversity in the Northern Coromandel.

It was part of "Closed for good", a day where BNZ branches all over NZ close so workers can get out of the office and give back to the community.

The film clip will be used for promotion and advocacy. If you haven't had a look yet, go to www.meg.org.nz and check it out. A big thank-you to the BNZ volunteers and award-winning local filmmaker James Muir, for helping direct the day.

Did you know?

MEG gave approx 5300 volunteer hours in 2011, which equates to a contribution of \$106,000 annually towards conservation. Go us!

Keen to volunteer? Email info@meg.org.nz to get involved

All-girl possum gang

hits Waikawau Bay



This winter our all-female possum team has been hard at work killing possums & rodents near Waikawau Bay.

Leo Campbell, Lisa Kearney (both pictured above) and Elizabeth Mitchel have all been employed on the project, which has seen the demise of over 60 possums in the 593ha block.

It has been a challenging year for rodent control. Mice during the autumn months can only be described as "at plague proportions". Trapping was not enough in the end as there was concern for late nesting Fernbird which were seriously at risk of egg and chick predation.

Possom control in the area was followed immediately by toxin for rodents. A follow up monitor showed the worst rodent presence experienced in 5 years. Too many rodents and not enough bait! However, rats were still being maintained at low numbers. Another baiting round has since taken care of the problem for now and trapping numbers have been less than 5% mice caught for the past couple of weeks.

As we go into an early and wet spring here's hoping we have given our little rare feathered friends a bit of breathing space to get on with the business of raising a family!

**moehau
environment
group**



Saltwater Paspalum intrudes into the Waikawau Bay estuary



Kiwi Sanctuary update



LISTENING OUT

FOR KIWI

Our fantastic volunteers have been braving cold wintry nights to help us listen for kiwi.

I spent a magic night near Port Charles helping our Chair, Lettecia Williams, at one of her kiwi listening sites. For the first hour all we heard were weta and rowdy moreporks. But then the kiwi started up. We heard 12 kiwi in total, and Lettecia told me how at the same spot earlier that week, a kiwi had almost walked into her as it came ambling down the track!!

Our annual kiwi listening surveys are an important tool to monitor how our kiwi population is faring.

This year, we're also trialling the use of Bioacoustic recorders in our Coromandel Area School Kiwi Project. The recorders allow data to be collected over a much longer period, with considerably less man-hours required than using volunteers to listen for Kiwi.

During June we ran the recorders for 2 weeks in four sites in the bush above Coromandel, recording for six hours each night. Once we've analysed the data, it should give us a good indication of kiwi density around Coromandel Town.

KIWI NEED YOUR HELP

This year, our Kiwi Sanctuary has received significantly less funding from BNZ Save the Kiwi trust than in past years (due to a particularly tight funding round).

We *urgently* need to source more funding to ensure trapping can continue. If you would like to help protect kiwi, please donate. All funds will go directly to mustelid control within our sanctuary.

Since 2005 these traps have caught over 862 stoats, 576 weasels & 6343 rats making a huge difference to the breeding success of resident Kiwi. In fact, kiwi have more than doubled in the area in the last 10 years.

Donate online or by direct debit at www.meg.org.nz/support-us/donations/

NEW TRAPS ARRIVE FOR KIWI SANCTUARY

Thanks to funding from the Lou and Iris Fisher Charitable Trust, our new traps have arrived!



We have purchased 112 stainless steel DoC 200 traps which will help us upgrade old stoat traps in our Kiwi Sanctuary.



Volunteers help listen for kiwi on a winters night at Port Charles

megaevents

FREE KIWI AVOIDANCE DOG TRAINING

We are planning on running free Kiwi Avoidance Training sessions for dogs over Labour Weekend (Sat 20th October). Any dog can kill kiwi. Get your dogs trained to avoid kiwi in the bush. Call **07 868 3054** to book.



Find us on Facebook

Like Moehau Environment Group to help spread the word!

A big thank-you to...

- 🐿 **Waikato Regional Council** for a \$5000 grant from their Small Scale Initiative Fund.
- 🐿 **The Lou and Iris Fisher Charitable Trust** for a \$5000 grant for the upgrade of stoat traps.
- 🐿 **BNZ Save the Kiwi** for ongoing support of our Kiwi Project.
- 🐿 **Fortress Fasteners** for hardware to build trap boxes and save kiwi.
- 🐿 **Lois & Warren Agnew from Gotcha Traps** - corporate members & sponsors supplying tracking papers.
- 🐿 **Print House** for sponsoring the Megaphone. Printed using Forest Stewardship Council certified paper. To find mindful print solutions see: www.phprint.co.nz



New Online Shop

Our online **Shop** raises funds to support conservation projects in the Northern Coromandel. Every cent of profit from any items purchased goes directly towards protecting biodiversity.

Our shop has a range of items, such as T-shirts, key rings and gift cards.

Among the treasures we have for sale, check out these neat native bird key rings. Only \$6



For more bargains look online at www.meg.org.nz

Support our work

By becoming a **member** of Moehau Environment Group you are directly helping to protect the unique species and ecosystems on the Northern Coromandel Peninsula.

2012 Members **Subs** were due in January. If you have already paid, many thanks. If not, please do, as we really need your support! Subs remain at only \$10 per person, \$20 per family or \$50 Corporate.

We can't do this without your **support**, so thank you. If you would like to make a secure credit card donation go to our website, www.meg.org.nz Or **donate** online through internet banking. Our BNZ account is 02-0304-0342229-02

Thanks Waikato Regional Council!

Waikato Regional Council's Small Scale Initiative Fund has granted \$3000 towards our Coast to Coast possum control project. This money will be put towards the purchase of cyanide and "prefeed" bait for possum control this summer.

We have also been granted \$2000 from the same fund for weed and rodent control in the Port Charles Rat Attack Project. This will be used to buy pesticides and bait for rat trapping.

