

# megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

Footprint  
SPONSORED BY  
Enterprises

*"That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. That land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known, but latterly forgotten."*

*-Aldo Leopold. March 4, 1948.*

## Editorial Comment.

Well, it's been quite a while since we put out a newsletter, and as you can see, we now have a new format.

"Hochstetter" has been put to sleep and we welcome in "Megaphone".

We hope you like it. It has been created courtesy of GSBI, with Steven Gravelle and his very talented team from Auckland.

It's been a very challenging rollercoaster year, with the huge disappointment of having to drop the Pest Proof Fence project, and the excitement of seeing great conservation gains being made across all our other projects.

For those of you unfamiliar with what happened, a small, vociferous group of landowners carried out a rather nasty campaign to discredit MEG, and the conservation work being done on the northern Coromandel. They felt their personal freedoms were being threatened and property values adversely affected by the proposed fence project, and that the project was "run" by the "agencies" and not MEG. A sad state of affairs made sadder by their refusal to sit down and talk it through, at the same time claiming MEG had done no consultation through the three years of planning:-untrue.

As a result no corporate sponsor in their right mind is going to entertain investing \$5million into a project with this sort of stuff going on.

So for the Committee, and we hope with the support of all our members, we have shelved the project and moved on. The fence was seen as a means to an end, and in our opinion, a way to reduce pests and poison use over time in a cheap, efficient, and sane way. Contrary to the opinions of this anti-fence group would not have cost the ratepayer one red cent.

The alternatives will be costly just to maintain the gains made.

The **Moehau Environment Group** is an incorporated society of just over 170 members established in 2000. The Group aims to improve conservation values in the northern Coromandel by carrying out pest control, species recovery work, by advocacy and education.

May/June 07



The Moehau Environment Group Committee 2007: standing (from left) Tina Morgan (membership), Kathi Parr (secretary + wetlands), Pim de Monchy (kiwi/stoats), Lettecia Williams (chair + rats + fundraising), Yuri Forbes (possums), Diane Prince (treasurer/summer programme), Terry Whitehouse (summer programme). Seated (from left) Wayne Todd (coordinator + wetlands), Erica Doran (website).



**Brown Teal( Pateke)**  
[small endangered native forest duck]

Since translocations began 4 years ago at Pt Charles there has been a marked increase in numbers present in other areas to the south.

This year (February) counts made at Waikawau Bay averaged around twenty birds, up from 5-10 the year before, and less than 5 in previous years.

**Knox Farm: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**  
**Waikato Biodiversity Forum: 29<sup>th</sup> June**  
**Waikawau Wetlands volunteer day:**  
**Every Monday morning-9am.**

## Surprise Result

Our Port Charles Rat Attack project turned up a surprise result in the last monitoring. The monitoring is done with inked floor papers placed in small tunnels with a small amount of bait as an attractant. 60 tunnels in all to catch footprints. While rats are below 5%, and mice hover around 30% presence, the big surprise has been the dramatic increase in weta presence. A whopping 30% of the tunnels had weta footprints! This is good news, as it is known that rats and mice feed on weta, which are high in protein. Good news for the birds also, as they need this protein for egg production and raising their young. This result bodes well for the proposed translocation of North Island Robins, in Spring 2007, into the Rat Attack project area. This project is funded from the DOC Biodiversity Condition Fund.

## Did You Know?

### Archey's Frogs have mokus.

Our smallest and most endangered frog, *leiopelma archeyi*, each have unique and distinctive patterns and colourings. This is now being used to help identify individuals for monitoring purposes. Moehau mountain is one of very few strongholds left for this rare and beautiful frog.



megevents

**Kiwi Monitoring:** 6<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May  
**Global Volunteers staying:** 18<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> May  
**International Student Volunteers staying:** 25<sup>th</sup> May-1<sup>st</sup> June  
**Volunteer day possum control at**

## Kiwi Sanctuary Progress

We set our first trap on the 29<sup>th</sup>, January, 2004 at a ceremony in Waikawau Bay. There are now over 800 traps set across 8200ha, and our contractors check them on a regular basis.

Since that first day our trappers have caught **300+ stoats, 300+ weasels, 19 feral cats, and nearly 2000 rats!**

This is on 130 kms of cut or reopened tracks across all sorts of terrain, from rocky shore, sand dunes and pasture lands to rugged bush and high country terrain. Achieved thanks to our sponsor **Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi Trust.**



**Monitoring** is taking place as this newsletter goes out. This involves volunteers going out to selected listening sites for two hours just on dusk, and recording the number of calls of male and female kiwis. Each has a distinctive call. It is hoped that we will see some increase in call rate from previous years although numbers in the MEG kiwi protection area were not high to begin with and it may be some time before any marked increase is noticed. Watch this space!

## Waikawau Bay Wetlands Project

This is a new project since June 2006 and growing month by month.

Set up to reduce rodent impact on marsh bird species, it covers about 50ha of saltmarsh and wetlands proper. Fernbirds, Banded Rails, Spotless Crakes, and Bitterns are the birds targeted for protection. Seven landowners have given permission for the project to go ahead with support from Environment Waikato, and DOC Funding from NZ Landcare Trust has enabled us to install some 200 rat traps and 150 bait stations.

JOIN MEG AND SUPPORT OUR PROJECTS

### Membership application

Name:

Address:

Ph: