

BRING BACK KOKAKO

For more about bringing back Kokako to GBI,
see our website: <http://www.gbiet.org/kokako>

Predator Free Great Barrier??

by Alison Walker

Have you walked the tracks on Hiramakimata in recent years and wondered where all the birds are?

For some time GBI Environmental Trust have been concerned that feral cats and rats were endangering the Black Petrel habitat above Windy Canyon. All other bird species on the mountain are presumably affected. DOC on Great Barrier with reduced staff and budget have had to reduce their role in predator management to a minimum.

The Trust received a grant from the Local Board towards a project to gauge rat abundance on the mountain relative to lower down. This should reveal the first real evidence of rodent numbers in the Black Petrel habitat. Funding will cover Good Nature traps but we need a small group of fit volunteers to set up four sites and collect data. This will involve four trips to each of the four sites and is planned for November, December 2016 and April, May 2017.

The resulting data should strengthen our case for intense predator control in this area. If you are interested in joining **Friends of Hiramakimata** as a volunteer or sponsor Contact Alison (walkeralison5@gmail.com) or text 021 225 9976. Funding may cover transport costs.



**NATURAL
HABITATS**

Major Sponsor of the
GBI Environmental
Trust

BROWN TEAL / PATEKE

by John Ogden

The Department of Conservation does an annual count of Pateke at 'flock sites' all around Great Barrier every year in March. This year's figures are not yet 'published' but the rumour is that numbers are well down. That certainly accords with my observations at Awana and Kaitoke – it would be interesting to know what others think.

A recently published review of Pateke numbers from 2000 to 2015 indicates an overall increase, especially in sites trapped for predators. However the Northland populations have increased much more rapidly than those on Great Barrier, where the very slow recovery (if indeed there is one!) is puzzling. We will be reviewing this paper, and hopefully presenting the most recent (2016) figures too, in the next issue of Environmental News. (See: Watts et al. NZ Journal of Zoology. Published online: 24 May 2016).



Photo: K Stowell



**BUSH
TELEGRAPH**

Issue 18: Sept 2016

FREE

Mulberry Grove Pest Control Project Goes Remote

It's finally up and running. Or, more importantly the rats are no longer running. They're snapped. And we know when and where a trap has been triggered, as the recently installed Econodes (a remote sensing device installed on a trap) instantly sends a message to our database to let us know (and whoever else would like to know via your phone or computer). This means traps can be reset as soon as possible to catch their next victim. No

pointless downtime waiting until the next 'monitoring' run and conversely, no need to check your trap unless the trap has sprung. Traps can be revisited on a needs basis, potentially increasing the rate of capture and effectiveness of the trapping network.

We are currently installing Econodes at the existing Mulberry Grove Pest Control Project to participants keen to trial the devices on their traps. Cathy Scott is coordinating the Mulberry Grove Pest Control Project, which

Continued inside.....



Econode network
at Mulberry
Grove. Circles
denote traps with
econode devices
and red triangles
indicate devices
that have been
triggered,
hopefully
snapping a rat.

Mulberry Grove Pest Control Project Goes Remote continued from front page.

involves regularly checking traps within the neighbourhood, collating the results and reporting back to Auckland Council. The Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust (GBIET) received funding from the Great Barrier Local Board to trial the Econode system which was developed by locals, Gian Badraun, Scott Sambell and Matt Way. The Mulberry Grove site was chosen as it is easily accessible and provided an existing local network of traps to trial the technology.

In the future, a similar system could operate in more remote, less accessible areas, providing pest control in a far more efficient and economic manner than is currently possible. This type of remote sensing has the potential to change the way we do pest control in New Zealand, as it will enable devices (traps, tracking tunnels etc.) to be monitored from afar, reducing the need for tedious on-ground monitoring, and focussing this effort on actual responses to pests. In fact, DOC GBI has just begun a trail of Econodes on the existing cat monitoring network operating in Okiwi basin. These are currently being cross checked manually, but could replace manual monitoring in the future, enabling



precious conservation dollars and staff capacity to be more efficiently utilised.

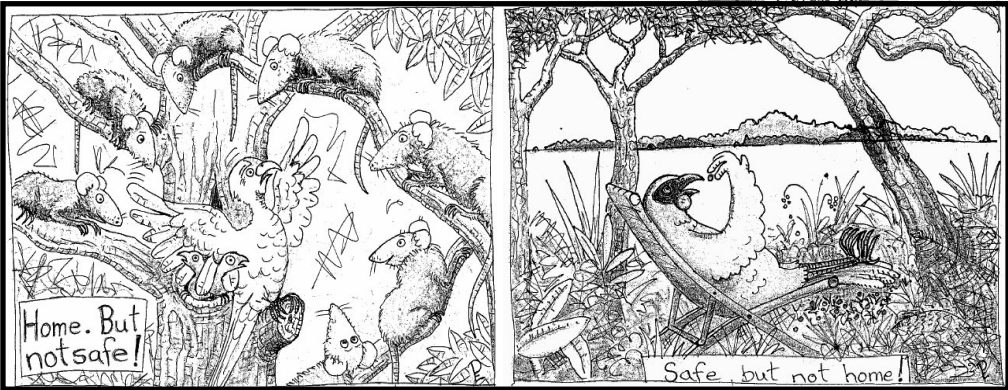
Interested? Want to be part of this community project?

The GBIET has a few Econodes available to any residents interested in being part of the trial. Initially the area covered by the receiving antennae was quite limited, however the area now extends from the Garden Road to the sea shed at Mulberry Grove, so if your property is in this area Econode will work. No poisons are used (the lure is peanut butter). Matt or Scott will visit and set up the Econode on your existing or new trap. You can opt for receiving notifications of what happens, or not. It's up to you. Please contact either Kathy on (4290 082) or Emma (emma.cronin2000@gmail.com) if you would like to have an Econode installed at your property, as we will need your consent prior to installation. We are initially trialling the system for one year but hope to continue it if it is successful.

New Bird Species for GBI

by John Ogden

On 26th April I found a dead Pycroft's petrel on Whangapoua beach. Not quite like seeing a live one, but as far as I am aware it is a new record for the Island. Pycroft's is a rare endemic species almost indistinguishable from the commoner Cook's petrel, and can only be reliably distinguished in the hand: it is slightly smaller, darker, and has a shorter beak. This species now breeds only on the Mercury group and some of the Chickens islands. It was formerly declining but it is now recovering in numbers due to rat eradication on these Islands. When DOC finally eradicates rats from Rakitu, Pycroft's petrel could be in the queue to recolonize!



KANUKA

by Emma Cronin

One of my favourite plant species is the prostrate kanuka, or *Kunzea sinclairii* also known as *Leptospermum sinclairii* – a sprawling shrub-like kanuka with white or pinky-red flowers, which



Photo: K Stowell

is endemic to Great Barrier Island. There's a lovely specimen of *Kunzea sinclairii* behind FitzRoy House at Glenfern Sanctuary. Apparently they are quite easy to propagate from

seed, however do not appreciate being transplanted.

The confusion over the species name arises as kanuka were all grouped as manuka or *Leptospermum* until 1983. The genus *Leptospermum* includes 87 species, which predominantly occur in Australia, however a few species also occur in Malaysia and Indonesia. Kanuka are represented by 10 species, with *Kunzea robusta* the most common. In New Zealand the main manuka species is *Leptospermum*

scoparium, a very familiar tree on Great Barrier Island as it is one of the first colonisers or trees to establish on cleared or disturbed ground. Both kanuka and manuka provide an important first cover for other tree species to establish below – provided a seedsource is present. To tell them apart look for smoother, less messy and pale grey bark, much smaller flowers and more flowing foliage in kanuka in comparison to redder more scraggly bark and larger flowers of Manuka.

A comprehensive article on Manuka & Kanuka is available in Environmental News Vol22, <http://www.greatbarrirenvironews.nz>

**The Great Kererū Count
16th-25th September**

The Great Kereru Count was set up to provide a better understanding of **kererū** numbers and distribution across New Zealand. The humble **kererū** is one of New Zealand's most valuable assets when it comes to our native forests as they are the only bird left in New Zealand that are able to swallow and disperse the seeds from our largest native trees such as **tawa**, **taraire**, **pūriri** and **matai**. For information and to participate go to; www.greatkererucount.nz

Trust Contact Details

PO Box 35, Okiwi, Gt Barrier Island, 0960

Phone: 02 234 GBIET (022 34 42438)

FB: Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust

Twitter: GBIET@GBITrust