

BRING BACK KOKAKO

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

GBIET Achievements over the past 14 months

Projects

The Mulberry Grove Community Rodent Control Project (remote sensing) was completed but will continue into 2017. This was a great opportunity to progress the Econode system and its application in a community project and has had positive feedback. The importance of Hirakimata cat control was highlighted with a RENH Grant Project for cat control during the taiko breeding period and a submission to the Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee.

Community Engagement

Movies

Four environmental movies were shown to the community during the year to broaden peoples understanding and appreciation of our environment. They were; "River Dog", "Predator Free NZ", "The Bee Movie" and "The Last Ocean".

GBI Community Restoration Videos. In 2016 the GBIET launched a series of short videos documenting various local environmental 'heros' and their respective conservation projects to encourage more restoration activity on the island. These were very well received and have encouraged membership and interest in our island's environmental activities. See <http://www.gbiet.org/>

Newsletters

The Bush Telegraph and Environmental News continue to be published during the year and distributed to the community to advise them of current environmental news and events.



Participation at Events

The 2016 and 2017 New Year's picnic and Family Fun Day at Port FitzRoy. The Easter Fair stall with a rat tale competition. Children were invited to write a ratting story with the winning entry published in our newsletter. John Ogden presented at the GBI Business Association "Love Our Birds" event and Scott Sambell provided an interpretive walk at Glenfern. Matt Way attended many events to provide information on Econode and possibilities with rodent control for communities.

Advocacy/Relationships

Kate Waterhouse was appointed as a trustee on the Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee and a submission was made to this committee on Hirakimata/black petrels. June Brookes followed up with the Auckland Conservation Board regarding prioritisation of GBI protected areas. June also progressed the historic Awana stream dam (blockage to fish passage) with a positive outcome. NIWA will remove the dam in 2017.

Emma Cronin provided a summary of the GBIET to Paul Downie for Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee. Emma Cronin, Kate and Emma Waterhouse met with NEXT. Emma Waterhouse met with Paul McArthur, the new manager at DOC. The trustees attended Local Board Environment Committee meetings.

Newsletters are supported by funding from the GBI Local Board.



Issue 18: March 2017

FREE

BUSH TELEGRAPH

Barrier's Jewel

It is possible, when we live on Great Barrier, to take for granted some of the island's unique features. It is easy to admire the mountain profiles from afar, from your car or a boat or if you are lucky out your kitchen window.

I have probably been to the top of Hirakimata (Mt Hobson) a dozen times or more over a couple of decades and when one reaches the top it is always so satisfying.

This summer I have walked up the mountain twice checking Good Nature automated rodent traps and suddenly I am seeing a whole lot more. The trips have been leisurely. Lots of tree identification from ecology guru John Ogden. In the upper region of the mountain which clearly has its own special eco-climate there are several species that generally grow in the South Island. One example is the Southern Rata commonly found on the west coast of the South Island and rarely found this far north. Kaka, tui and bellbirds visit rata to take advantage of the abundant nectar.

Another tree to look out for is the relatively uncommon tree Manoa or Kirk's Pine. Juvenile leaves are long, narrow and spreading while adult leaves are scale-like.

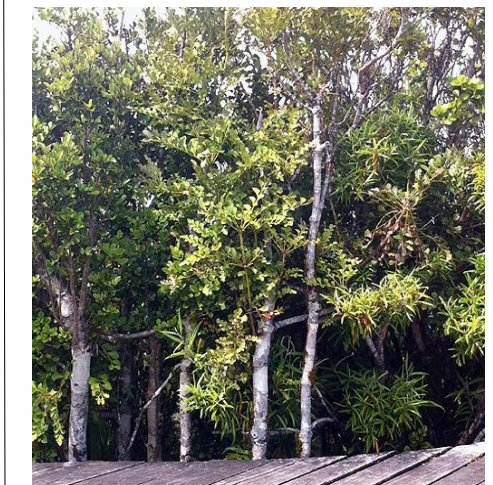
Also look for Pseudopanax Discolor with its striking bronze leaves and serrated edges. It occurs from Northland forests to a few places on the Coromandel, but not further south.

So next time you plan a work-out climbing Hirakimata, take your time, look around you and linger on the top platform. Don't just look

at that awesome view of Port FitzRoy harbour but gaze on the mini-forest which forms a back-drop to the viewing platform.



Pseudopanax discolor



Summit backdrop

Easter Orchids

In recent years while track making at the Walker property near the Rakitu Look-out I have come across two Epiphytic Orchids, one flowering in March so called the Easter Orchid. -- Earina Autumnalis. -- Raupeka. It has an amazing scent and white and yellow flowers to be smelt 100m away growing up a Nikau.

The other also on a Nikau, flowers in January with long beautiful cream white and orange flowers, namely Earina Mucronata – Peka-a-waka. Just a beautiful surprise. Epiphytes are plants that grow on other plants.

After a wetter than usual winter in the north Barrier we have had a long dry summer recently broken by some heavy rainfall which has refreshed the bush.

We have 180 bait stations around our steep 33ha property. In the past year we have trapped 285 rodents which maybe doesn't seem a lot. Ship rats have 3 litters per year and an average litter size of 5-8. So with no predator control we might have 4000 potential rats. Seedling survival and more bird life tell us that pest management does pay off.

Stuart Farquhar



The birds don't know that your dog is harmless!

There is lots of evidence showing that dogs on beaches disrupt the nesting activities of endangered beach birds such as New Zealand dotterels. These birds attempt to nest on all the GBI east coast beaches, which is one of the reasons for dog control. Even happy controlled dogs frighten the birds, which leave their eggs, which then get fried in the sun. Or else the chicks run off in panic and don't get to feed as and when they should. They don't know your dog is lovely any more than you'd know a pet tiger was lovely if someone walked onto the beach with one. Auckland Council has just gone through a long process of consultation about these laws and everyone on the Barrier has had a chance to participate. A reasonable compromise has been reached between responsible dog owners and the rights of other beach users. Yet we still have people defacing the signs showing where and when dogs may be exercised. The GBIET has published data on the effects of dog presence on nesting beaches in an earlier issue of Environmental News (No. 29, 2012), and we'll be reviewing how some other jurisdictions are keeping wildlife safe on beaches in more populated areas.

John Ogden

Which was here first?

New Zealand Dotterel, Unattended dog on a GBI beach



Hirakimata Rat Monitoring – Phase 1.

The first phase of GBIET's pilot rat monitoring program on Hirakimata is now completed. We will do another phase in March and April, when rat numbers are expected to be higher.

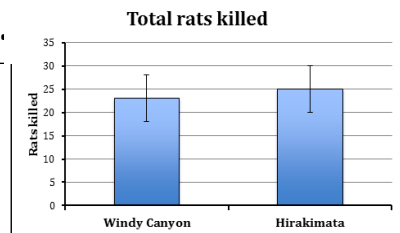
If you'd like to be involved please call 022 344 2438 or email (contact.gbiet@gmail.com). Rats on Hirakimata are a serious threat to the small populations of tom-tit, robins and kakariki on the mountain, and also to nesting Cook's and Black Petrels.

The results establish clearly that ship rats are just as abundant on Hirakimata summit – in the black petrel nesting area – as they are at Windy Canyon and elsewhere in the bush on Great Barrier.

John Ogden.



Great Barrier visitors Ash and Leo Perry assisting with a test of a Goodnature A24 rat trap on Hirakimata.



Easter Rat Tale Competitions

Write a Tale

Two categories. 8-15 year olds and Adults. Entries will be judged on how well the tale demonstrates the effect these predators have on our island environment and our wildlife.

Draw or paint a picture

Show a rat or rats stalking our native birds. (Under 8 years old).

Entries must be received BEFORE 31st March. No late entries will be accepted.

Email: contact.gbiet@gmail.com for more information.

Membership

Annual Subscription: \$25

Senior \$20, Family \$35, Student \$15

Life Subscription: \$250, Senior \$200

Direct Credit to: 12-3110-0058231-00

Please advise by email/letter giving your contact details so we can send you the Bush Telegraph by email or post and the Environmental News by post.



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