



**Tāwharanui**  
Open Sanctuary  
Society Inc

## Newsletter 93 Spring 2025

### In this issue

The fence's defences	2
TOSSI progress	2
Wētāpunga monitoring	3
Nursery report	4
Wetland planting	5
Aerial views	6
Sand ladder saga	7
Odds and Ends	8

### Mark the date:

#### October 5

*Sunday in the Park Work Day*

All welcome

#### November 2

*Sunday in the Park Work Day*

All welcome

#### December 7

*Sunday in the Park Work Day  
and Christmas Lunch*

All welcome

Tauhou/silvereve nest Photo: Alison Stanes

### Support TOSSI

To volunteer, join and/or  
make a donation, go to  
<https://www.tossi.org.nz>

### From the Chair

We had our AGM after September's *Sunday in the Park*. It always seems a bit awkward having it on Fathers' Day but we still managed a good turn-out. Thanks again to those who attended. The new constitution was ratified and is in the process of being submitted to the Charities Commission.

We bade farewell to Karyn Hoksbergen from the Committee and thanked her for eleven years of service, including time spent as treasurer, secretary and more recently co-ordinating the new constitution. Karyn will still be involved at Tāwharanui as she helps with Duvaucel's gecko monitoring and checking trail camera cards for predator monitoring. Along with other things, I'm sure.

I invented a new award — top volunteer of the year — and I awarded it to Mark Atkinson who has put in an astounding 1200 hours voluntary labour over the past year. I don't know whether this award will continue next year but it seemed like a good idea at the time! We all need to record our hours as it helps when applying for grants. I know I'm not very good at keeping track of hours spent on TOSSI matters when off the Park, but we do need to send our totals to Ranger Larissa at the end of each month.

I feel that winter is on the way out and spring is just around the corner. There's lots to be involved in at Tāwharanui. Please get in touch with your offers.

**Sally Richardson**



TOSSI Committee members, from left:  
John Ronald (Treasurer),  
Susan Gibbings, Justine Sanderson,  
Raewyn Morrison (Secretary),  
Mark Atkinson (Deputy Chair),  
Sally Richardson (Chair) and  
Caryn Smith.  
(Absent: Peter Beekman)

**Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary is a joint project with Auckland Council**





Karyn Hoksbergen was given a pounamu (made by artist and TOSSI member Peter Sadler) and a whaupaku (pseudopanax) with thanks for her service.

In his report to the AGM, Senior Ranger Matt Maitland spoke about the sections of the predator-proof fence that have been replaced. Several hundred metres of the fence and most of the koru at West End were replaced, including the hood, netting, brackets, flashings and screws, as shown below. Both ends of the fence which are close to the sea were the most damaged by salty sea-spray and sand blown against it by strong wind. Parts of these sections were replaced around 10 years ago, but the sections in the central area of the Park have held up well over 20+ years.





Below, this new timeline board records the recent progress made by TOSSI and Auckland Council. The many achievements illustrate the huge commitment, energy and effort that volunteers give to Tāwharanui. This board hangs next to the first progress board on the woolshed wall where the many volunteers can see them while they have lunch after their morning mahi on the first Sunday of every month.


## Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary's Progress

We are making a difference!

- 2013 Bird hide constructed at lagoon
- 2014 Takahē introduced
- 2014 Gannet colony with models and sound system set up
- 2015 Myrtle rust outbreak and response
- 2015 Translocated pōpokatea/whitehead to Shakespear Open Sanctuary
- 2015 First Christmas luncheon
- 2016 Duvaucel's geckos introduced
- 2017 Giant kōkopu introduced
- 2018 Education trailer constructed
- 2018 Translocated tīeke to Shakespear Open Sanctuary
- 2021 Tītī/Cook's petrel fledged – first on mainland in over a century
- 2022 TOSSI video produced
- 2022 TOSSI's 20 year anniversary celebrated
- 2022 Wētāpunga introduced
- 2023 300,000<sup>th</sup> tree produced and planted on site
- 2024 Tunnel house at nursery erected
- 2024/5 Translocated kiwi to Mt Tāmahunga
- 2025 Wetlands restoration launched











### **Wētāpunga Monitoring**

On 5 June a group of 16 TOSSI volunteers along with staff from Butterfly Creek went out to search for wētāpunga (above). It involved some intense searching in challenging places (right).

The evening was very enjoyable and successful with eight wētāpunga spotted.

This was evidence that previously released wētāpunga are successfully reproducing and confirming that their translocation to Tāwharanui has been a success.

**Justine Sanderson**

Photos: Shaun Lee and Justine Sanderson



### ***IMPORTANT NOTICE***

Tāwharanui Regional Park will be closed to the public from 14-19 September for intensive rabbit control.



## Nursery Report

It is always a relief when the planting season is over and the Nursery is empty, ready for the next year's trees.

This season 14,250 plants have been planted. On the June and July public planting days 3,245 and 3063 trees respectively, mostly kanuka, totara, mahoe and karamu were planted on hilly sites. In August we planted 6,000 trees and grasses in our first wetland planting. Meanwhile the Nursery volunteers planted over 1,500 trees as infill planting consisting of kanuka, karo, kahikatea, kowhai, karaka, totara, tawapou, horoeka and nīkau. We raised pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia*) from seed or cuttings (as shown in the photo below) and 432 plants were planted at Jones Bay and Anchor Bay during our September *Sunday in the Park*.

In preparation for the August public planting in Workshop Paddock, alongside the Mangatawhiri Wetland, the kikuyu was sprayed and the rushes mown. Winter rains revealed standing water, boggy patches and drier patches.

On put-out day (the Friday before planting day), with the help of Fulton Hogan volunteers, we set about creating a mosaic with manuka, kahikatea, kowhai and mahoe on the higher areas, ti kouka and toi toi in the middle with harakeke and upoko tangata (giant umbrella sedge) nearest the water. It was very easy planting on the flat!

For our future wetlands we are learning new skills to be able to raise wetland grasses which include toi toi (*fulvida*), wiwi/knobby clubrush (*Ficinia nodosa*), oioi (*Apodasmia similis*), upoko tangata (*Cyperus ustulatus*) and mapere (*Gahnia xanthocarpa*). We won't need to worry about propagating saline species including saltmarsh ribbonwood (*Plagianthus divaricatus*), glasswort (*Salicornia quinqueflora*) and searush *Juncus kraussii*. The tide will bring in the seeds so the plants will establish on their own! It is exciting to begin this chapter of wetland planting at Tāwharanui.



### Susan Gibbings



Above, pohuehue was planted on the eroded narrow strip of ground between the high tide line and the road at Jones Bay. As the pohuehue gets established, they will help hold the soil in tact, reducing further erosion from sea surges.

Left, pohuehue was also planted on the top edge of the dunes at Anchor Bay. The plants will help hold the fragile sand against erosion.



## First Wetland Planting Day

Gumboots were compulsory footwear for this planting day on August 3rd. Although the flat terrain was a pleasant change for volunteers, the boggy conditions were a challenge. This first section of the wetland restoration project was opposite the lagoon, alongside the Mangatawhiri Wetland.





The transformation of Tāwharanui is clearly seen in the difference between these two satellite images, taken twenty years apart.



Similarly, the two aerial photos below of Takatu Point before and after planting.





## Sand Ladder Saga

Senior Ranger Matt Maitland reports that some of the Anchor Bay sand ladders have been re-engineered after many years of posing ankle injury hazards, as we fight against shifting sands from storms and heavy foot traffic. Removal of the fence post ladder rungs on access ways with suitable gradient, leaves a gentle sand chute to walk through. Narrowing of the walkway and elimination of corner-cutting at beach terminus leaves the access way to self-repair. This eliminates the maintenance of hard infrastructure, and the injury risk to visitors where that maintenance can't keep pace with movement of sand and people. Steeper access ways to the campground will retain the ladders for now as they are more stable than those at Anchor Bay, and the shifting



sand makes climbing without a step aid, such as ropes between posts, very difficult.

All will be supported by winter plantings of dune grasses (see photo below).

Matt explains that this shift in approach reflects change in best practice nationally and regionally.

Left, sea surges have undermined the sand ladders and eroded the sand holding the posts that provide step aid.

Right, a team of rangers did the hard mahi to remove the ladders and posts.

Below, dune grasses were planted by volunteers at the September *Sunday in the Park*.



## Thanks for Donation

TOSSI is dependant on membership subscriptions, philanthropic grants and donations to cover the costs of supporting Auckland Council with the maintenance of the Sanctuary.

TOSSI is very grateful to an Auckland business *Net Q/Network Security Solutions* which has donated \$1000 over the past two years. Thanks also to one of its employees Craig Rook, who is a TOSSI member, for recommending TOSSI as a worthy cause.

## Odds and Ends



Left, the lagoon was like a mirror on a very still winter's day, creating a perfect reflection of a shag on a rock in the centre of this photo.

Photo: Sally Richardson

Right, two kiwi mating, seen on a wildlife camera in Tāwharanui in August.

30 North Island brown kiwi have been translocated from Tāwharanui to Mount Tamahunga over the past two years.

*Tamahunga Trappers* reports that three of the kiwi males on the maunga were sitting on eggs in August. Only a few of the males have transmitters, so if those numbers are extrapolated to all the male kiwi released onto Tamahunga there could have been up to 15 males incubating eggs. As females can lay two eggs in one season, there could be up to 30 eggs laid.

It can be assumed that kiwi from Tāwharanui are thriving on Tamahunga.



As we wander in the bush we are not likely to be thinking about the small creatures beneath our feet. But there are many and of those, many are microscopic. Amongst these are microsnails (Gastropoda) measuring 5mm or less, of which there are hundreds of species and sometimes in vast numbers. Examples can easily be found inside fallen nīkau frond bases or under logs.

The populations at Tāwharanui have been studied for a long time and in the early years of the Sanctuary Kerry McGee made collections from a wide range of habitats, sending them to experts in Wellington who have the knowledge and equipment to name them. All the shells are spiral, ranging from flat to steeply conical and some have very fine spines on the outside of the shell while some have attractive ridging and colours. The samples sent to Wellington contain only snails that have passed through a kitchen sieve. Those that do not are still tiny, as seen on my finger tip, left.

Microsnails seen from a narrow human viewpoint may seem of little importance but as they munch their way through the decomposing fallen leaves and other edibles in their habitat they are playing an important part in the constant recycling that supports biodiversity and us.

Mike Lusk

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