



News Letter April 2009

Waikanae Estuary Care Group

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Chairman's Report

If you have walked through the estuary recently you will have noticed how strong and healthy our plants are looking. They have put on a significant amount of growth over summer, with few losses – courtesy of a slightly cooler summer, just enough rain, and the biggest effort we have had so far on weeding/releasing by Department of Conservation (DoC) contractors and our working bees. And we have been applying extra fertiliser too so, barring any winter calamities, next spring we should really see the bush coming back to the beach.

In a few weeks we will be starting our winter planting season, and look forward to your help in getting approximately 8000 more plants into the estuary.

We also look forward to seeing you at our **Open Day** on Saturday 23 May (9am at the node 2, Manly Street entrance) and our **AGM** on Monday 22 June (7pm at the Paraparaumu Library meeting room). We have great speakers and surprises organised for both events, and would really appreciate if you can diarize these dates and be there!

And finally, we have just been advised that we were successful in our Community Conservation Funding application - \$16,600 over two years for site preparation, which will free up other resources for the ever increasing task of weeding/releasing. Many thanks to DoC for such fantastic support.

Jeff Eaton

Saturday Work Schedule

Saturday 18th April, we meet at RPS02 (Manly Street entrance to the board walk and beach)

Saturday 2nd May, at RPS08 (The Otaihanga oxbow)

Saturday 16th May, at RPS14 (Waikanae side) Accessible from Queens Road).

These working days we will be undertaking releasing and weeding.

Saturday 23rd May – 1st planting day and our opening day. We plan to hold a barbeque lunch to welcome new members and explain what our objectives are. See you there at planting node 2 at 9.00

Mike Hardiman

Bits and Pieces

Trailer;

Has anyone out there got a **trailer** that they are prepared to lend for an hour or so? Here's the situation, the Saturday morning before a scheduled planting morning, we have to get the plants from the shade house to the planting site. This may take up to two or more trips with a trailer but forever using a car boot. If you are able to help, please contact Mike Hardiman ph.298 8436.

Publicity;

Kerryn has scored some poster space on the local commuter trains. She has spoken to the contact person regarding snap frames on the Kapiti trains and he has assured us that he will do what it takes to get our A3 sized posters onto the trains the week or two leading up to the open day. As you will no doubt agree this will provide a pretty fabulous advertising opportunity... free of charge!

Good one Kerryn.

Bird of the Month

Royal Spoonbill: *Platalea regia*,



Spoonbills are large white heron like birds, the differences are the long dark spatulate bill that gives them their name, and the

neck extended when flying. Spoonbills are widespread in Australia and migrated from there to the west coast over fifty years ago and are now well established over all New Zealand. Their habitat is coastal and estuarine; they wade in the shallow water moving the head from side to side in a sweeping action with the bill slightly open, catching small fish, crustaceans and worms, sifting the food from the mud and water.

Royal Spoonbills nest high in swamp trees where they lay three to four white eggs lightly

marked with brown which they incubate for 24-25 days. Both parents share in the house keeping and feeding duties. At one month, the young leave the nest and rest nearby, a month later and they can be seen copying their parents in the feeding manoeuvre. It takes another three or four years for them to reach maturity.

Unfortunately, with the advent of residential development and the installation of street lights in the vicinity of the Oxbow, the bird's flight pattern has been disrupted; at least four of these birds, along with swans and geese have died by flying into the power lines that run between the lights and the Oxbow. KCDC have agreed to turn off the offending lights as there are no houses in the street, yet! I wonder if we can get the power company to place the lines underground?

Pat Menzies

An Interesting Endeavour

Monitoring Pest Animals

Are you interested in assisting Department of Conservation to learn more about the presence/absence of pest animals in the estuary?

The Waikanae Estuary Care Group is looking for keen individuals to learn how to monitor animals such as stoats and rats. As the Care Group goes about planting more native plants we need to ensure that we're not just feeding the pest animals. By monitoring what is living in the estuary with tools such as tracking tunnels and traps, we can establish whether or not we have a problem.

Monitoring would take place regularly throughout the year but would not be an onerous task in terms of time or energy. The most important aspect of monitoring is to ensure that those people doing the work are well trained and consistent in their collection of information.

Want to learn more? Come along to an information evening on Monday 4 May and hear **Colin Giddy** from Department of Conservation tell us what we need to know about monitoring pest animals in our estuary reserve.

For a show of interest, please contact Kerryn Penny, Ph 04-801 1029, or e-mail kerryn.penny@gw.govt.nz

Then turn up to the

**Monitoring Pest Animals
Information Meeting**

Monday 4 May, 7pm

**Community Meeting Room
Paraparaumu Library**