

## Newsletter August 2014

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**Mission:** To enrich the community through the restoration and guardianship of an indigenous Marlborough Sounds wildlife sanctuary, in which the natural ecosystems, native flora and fauna flourish in a predator-free environment that can be appreciated by all.

### Chairman's Comment

Barry Maister



Your Committee was pleased with both the turnout, and the feedback generated from the recent AGM.

The opportunity to give feedback on the issues highlighted was eagerly accepted by the members present, and provided a basis for extensive discussion at the first committee meeting of your new Committee a week later. It was very clear that members place a high value on our newsletters, which is a credit to our coordinator Jenny Keene who compiles them with flair and interest. And a list of suggestions emerged for possible future content which will certainly be taken on board. There was also an acceptance that our moves to encourage distribution of future newsletters by email rather than printing and posting was the sensible way to go.

Also the option of distributing them at publicised place around Picton and Blenheim, was a positive outcome. However, we will continue to send hard copies to those who cannot access them by email.





Membership feedback was also valuable. The name 'Friends of Kaipupu Sanctuary' was strongly supported, and that while 'member benefits' could be a good thing that regular communications, informative newsletters and our public lecture series and the like were the most meaningful benefits expected.



Feedback on the Festival was more diverse, but was generally supportive of keeping it going, if not annually, while exploring the waterfront location. This will be further discussed by the committee and I would need to see assurance of a broadened base of volunteer support before committing to a repeat version of the current format. There was also feedback on other various issues raised which were valued and appreciated. Thank you.

I know that the focus for the year ahead will be on advancing the ecological value of the Sanctuary (which can only occur if we are pest free), educating children and their parents on what we are all about, maintaining an active presence and profile in the local community, and ensuring that the visitor

experience is enhanced. All of this can be achieved only if we continue to generate the income required, and we will develop a plan to advance that. Looks like a full on year ahead, but be assured your Committee is up to the task!

The Committee presented a 4 year Strategic Plan at the AGM which is always available to any member or interested party on request, or can be picked up from the Kaipupu Sanctuary Information Centre.

## Origins of the Pest Team

*One of our wonderful volunteers **James Wilson** takes a moment to bring us up to date on the creation of the volunteer pest work on the Sanctuary:*

After 5 years of significant work in fencing, tracking and establishing facilities, including a jetty and landing spot, in the last 12 months effort has been fully concentrated on ridding Kaipupu Sanctuary of pests. While over the past years significant work was put in by volunteers to reduce numbers of predators of native flora and fauna, it became obvious that if the re-introduction of native species was to go ahead, a much more focussed effort was required. Spreading brodifacoum poison bait by helicopter over the peninsula in November 2012 was the start of the effort. This was followed up in 2013 with the set-up of the volunteer pest management programme, starting with fundraising for equipment, the accumulation of a large number of volunteers to set up the grid of around 400 monitoring stations on a schedule of checking every 3 days. Whenever a pest was identified in an area, a SWAT team would go out and place sufficient traps in the vicinity to kill it promptly. Months of intensive monitoring and

SWAT activity led to the virtual elimination of all possums, rats and stoats from the reserve, but left a large population of mice. A targeted poisoning programme was implemented to deal with the mice and a significant reduction was achieved by Christmas last year.

After a break over summer to evaluate how the Sanctuary responded after several months without active monitoring and trapping, the spike in mice numbers (as there were no rats to deter them) meant targeted poisoning was continued. Numbers are now dropping significantly with a new strategy initiated of 450 mouse traps to deal with the remaining mice. See photos below of the mouse trap set-up workshop.



While it is a huge job to eliminate mice from the Kaipupu peninsula, there is an esprit-de-corps about the volunteers, who have been walking the multiple tracks every 3 days for more than 12 months, and there is no intention to stop now.

The pleasures for the volunteers include walking around some beautiful bush, hearing a wonderful increase in bird song and anticipating the reward as the Sanctuary is re-populated with more native species. Seaport Scene have offered to publish the volunteer roster for the pest management team each fortnight, as a service to the volunteers and as a prompt for you to join up to help with this essential project. Thank you Seaport Scene for this generous donation. Call Trudy on 027 898 2517, James on 021 945 589 or email [kaipupupestmonitoring@gmail.com](mailto:kaipupupestmonitoring@gmail.com)

## Mud House Wine - New Rimu Sponsor

Mud House Wine and Kaipupu Point Wildlife Sanctuary are delighted to announce their new Rimu status sponsorship. Since their involvement with the Picton Festival, in March this year (the donated bar and beanbags were a huge hit), Mud House has been keen to become more involved in supporting Kaipupu Sanctuary. The new sponsorship was announced at the AGM and the finer details of their involvement are now being discussed. Watch this space for information on 'Friends of Kaipupu Sanctuary' discount on wine purchased from the Mud House website, and other initiatives in the future.



## Support for the Pest Team



Trudy Nicholas has been head down getting all sorts of things done supporting volunteers, but we managed to 'trap' her for a second so she could kick off her regular newsletter column.

### Hello everyone!

The Committee asked me to introduce myself, so in between field data entry, rosters and gathering field equipment, here I am! I look forward to keeping everyone up to date each newsletter with our work on the Sanctuary.

The pest team office is now fully set up at the Kaipupu Sanctuary Information Site. The best way to get in touch with me is through the Sanctuary phone number and/or email. We've been delighted to see the upgrade to track C (around the coastal margin) and this is thanks to the RNZAF group who came out from Woodbourne Base last month and set-to with vigour. This is our first line of defence onto the Sanctuary and it was previously a very difficult track to negotiate. And we have added a new track (track N) to the monitoring network. This new track is on the eastern side of the peninsula. DOC 200 traps were installed around the main track thanks to a great working bee (see photo above in our refreshment phase). 1 possum was trapped in July – and we got him 3 days after the sighting. So we are onto it – well done team! Mice numbers are plummeting as seen by the % of bait taken and mice caught in traps. Some of the best news of all is that the new software that will be helping us with our recording of results and planning for the future is now active. Data is being entered and I will tell you more next time.



Anyone who has recently been on the Sanctuary may have spotted fungi popping up.

Colourful and a stand-out in the bush, we are looking for a keen mycologist to help us identify these new and unusual fungi.

Trudy Nicholas



Photos courtesy of Gerald Harper

## And who knows what else we might find on Kaipupu Sanctuary...

A Te Papa arachnologist identified the spider pictured right as from the native *stanwellia* species which are similar to the trapdoor spider, only they burrow under the ground. This spider was unearthed by Matt Charlton who found it crawling across pine cones as he cleared a road through Pongaroa bush.

These spiders are common to New Zealand and can be found anywhere in the country said arachnologist Phil Sirvid from Te Papa. "They are everywhere and they are not found anywhere else in the world."



However, it's not often people come across the open-mouthed burrowing spiders, as they live underground, he said. They can have a body size around 20mm and legs as long as 15cm. No, they are not poisonous but can leave a good bite.

**You just never know....**Source: NZ Herald 11 August 2014

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[www.facebook.com/KaipupuPoint](https://www.facebook.com/KaipupuPoint)

## Heard a Ruru on the Sanctuary?



Often heard in the forest at dusk and throughout the night, the morepork is known for its haunting, melancholic call. Its Maori name, ruru, reflects this call.

The much larger NZ laughing owl became extinct in the 20th century. The German or little owl is a smaller owl species often found on open and lightly wooded farmland. It was introduced to New Zealand between 1906 and 1910 to try to control smaller introduced birds. Morepork are commonly found in forests throughout mainland New Zealand. They are classified as not threatened. With speckled brown plumage and yellow eyes set in a dark facial mask, and a short tail, they have a distinctive look. The females are bigger than the males. Head to tail they measure around 29cm and the average weight is about 175g. They have acute hearing and are sensitive to light. They almost have eyes in the back of their head as they can turn their head through 270 degrees!

Morepork are nocturnal, hunting at night for large invertebrates including beetles, weta, moths and spiders, but will also take small birds, rats and mice. They are experts at silent flight, as they have soft fringes on the edge of the wing feathers, and catch prey using large sharp talons or their beak. By day they are hard to spot and

they roost in the cavities of trees or in thick vegetation.

To reproduce morepork choose to nest in tree cavities, in clumps of epiphytes or among rocks and roots. The female can lay up to 3 eggs, but generally 2, usually between September and November. The female alone incubates the eggs for about 20 to 30 days during which time the male brings in food for her. Once the chicks hatch, the female stays mainly on the nest until the owlets are fully feathered and fledge around 37-42 days. Source Department of Conservation.

**In Maori tradition the morepork was seen as a watchful guardian. It belonged to the spirit world of the Maori as it is a bird of the night.**

## And while speaking of owls...

Did you know the barn owl is considered a New Zealand native bird? In the past 60 years barn owls have been spotted all over northern New Zealand. But it is only relatively recently they have been given the status of being “native”.

**So why are they called “native” birds now?**

**To be called native, an animal has to breed here.** It's only when a couple of barn owls were found in Kaitaia in 2008 with a couple of chicks that the barn owl was declared a native bird.



**To be native, an animal has to have come here by itself.** Scientists think these barn owls came over here on their own steam – they didn't hitch a ride on boat and they weren't brought over here by humans. They somehow got here all by themselves. That's quite a trip for a poor long-distance flier. Perhaps an up-draught from a bushfire helped them? Barn owls are a bird of prey like Ruru. They also hunt at night and they're well designed for this with their moon-like eyes, large talons and silent flight.

Information courtesy of Kiwi Conservation Club

Email: [info@kaipupupoint.co.nz](mailto:info@kaipupupoint.co.nz)

Ph 027-8982517

[www.facebook.com/KaipupuPoint](https://www.facebook.com/KaipupuPoint)

## Getting to know those friendly faces: Trudy Nicholas



*We heard at the AGM that members are keen get to know each other better, and that we could include profiles of other 'Friends' in our newsletter. Here's the first of many (be prepared when you answer the phone, because it could be you next time!)*

I was born in Christchurch but shifted to Picton when I was 11 a whole 32 years ago (which makes me 21 years of age for those who are adding it up:)) I have lived in Picton, the surrounding area or the Sounds for all that time. As a young adult my husband and I along with my parents ran a 640ha farming enterprise at Cape Jackson in the outer Queen Charlotte Sound. We also started a fledgling tourism lodge out there which is now the mainstay of Cape Jackson and is called Queen Charlotte Wilderness Park which my parents run. Due to farming not being as economical as it once was, and our increasing awareness of conservation, the farming was

stopped, the tourism side developed and most of the farm was allowed to return to regenerating bush. It is now under the carbon credit scheme with 600ha being actively returned to natural flora and resulting natural fauna.

This process gave me experience and interest in managing areas for native forest restoration and gave me an appreciation for the importance of pest eradication. To me the more areas we can get back into their natural state the better the world will be. And that is personally important as I have a 5 year old son Aaron who I want to grow up and learn in a world that is increasing its biodiversity not eliminating it. Kaipupu Point Sounds Wildlife Sanctuary is part of that ideal and wouldn't be able to be without first eradicating the pests that threaten regenerating forest and the creatures that call and will call it home.

Due to a health scare in my younger years I learnt life could be very short and enjoying each day as it comes was important. Of course this is an ideal thought, and everyone gets caught up in their lives now and then, but I feel it is important to appreciate where we live and the natural environment we are in and what better place than Picton and the Marlborough Sounds for giving you chance to appreciate nature and the natural environment. I love the fact you can leave Picton on a boat and not long after that be in an area sparsely populated catching enough fish for tea, enjoying dolphins on your boat wake and listening to the native birds singing in the forest. My idea of heaven. Which is why if I'm not in Picton, I am out enjoying the Sounds with an occasional family holiday to the West Coast of the South Island thrown in.

The quote I live by? 'What doesn't kill you makes you strong'. It has helped me at times and helps me keep things in perspective.

### **Trudy's 5 reasons for volunteering for the Pest Monitoring Team:**

1. Help protect the beautiful environment on the peninsula
2. Increase the flora-fauna, more flora-more fauna cycle
3. Meet great like-minded passionate people
4. Enjoy the sense of community
5. Have Fun!



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