

Matiu Really Matters

October 2009



Haere mai ki Matiu

Treaty Settlement Formally Settled

In August the Treaty of Waitangi claim by Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika was formally settled with the Crown with the enactment of the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009. This saw the end of a lengthy period of negotiation between iwi and Crown, and the start of a new era for the harbour islands with the return of their ownership to the iwi governance body, the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust.

Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika is the collective group composed of individuals who descend from the iwi of Te Atiawa, Ngāti Tama, Taranaki, Ngāti Ruanui and other recognised iwi from the Taranaki area.

"Te Upoko o Te Ika" is the head of the fish, with Whanganui a Tara (Wellington Harbour) being the open mouth of the fish.

The process of vesting the islands as fee simple estate in the trustees of the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust meant the Reserve status of the islands was revoked, the land vested in the trustees as fee simple and was then classified as Reserve land under the Reserves Act. In this process, Mokopuna Island was changed from a wildlife refuge under the Wildlife Act to Scientific Reserve under the Reserves Act.

Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika will have three positions on the Harbour Island Kaitiaki Board and will chair the Board, with the remaining three positions being appointments made by the Minister of Conservation. One of the first tasks of the Kaitiaki Board will be to develop a new Management Plan for the islands.

The Department remains responsible for managing the islands subject to the Reserves Act and in accordance with the new Management Plan.

Public access to Matiu/Somes Island is not affected by this change in ownership.

This new, formal, partnership builds on the existing relationship Poneke has with iwi, and I look forward to the new energy and strength of purpose that will develop from it.

Rob Stone, Poneke Area Manager

Welcome to this newsletter

This Newsletter is produced by the Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust (a non-profit organisation with one of its purposes being to promote the Island) to let you know what is happening on the Island.

Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust members are Mark Te One, Liz Mellish, Fred Allen, Colin Ryder, Ray Smith, Erini Shepherd, Jan Heine.

News about projects that the Trust has recently funded: a project to provide new water-filters, & carpets for 3 bedrooms in Education House. These are badly needed in this primary accommodation for volunteers.

The Eastbourne Forest Rangers have received new uniforms ready for their summer roster, when they help out with visitors and guided walks.

The Rangers' Ramble – time to get ready for summer

Kia Ora all and Haere Mai

Winter hangs on like wet washing on a line, surrounded by green grinning vegetation, and a bird song that twitters "It's alright". And so it is, the island looks and feels healthy, visitors are returning again in number, and our work programme rolls on.

Some time has passed since our last words on island life, although for those tuned in, you may have caught Jo, the sound of Fluttering Shearwaters and a Giant Weta on TV, or Matt on National Radio inviting Jim Mora to Matiu/Somes.

Movement into summer is well underway (obviously no one told those cold fronts) and with this you will see some new personalities amongst the island team. Our volunteer summer ranger programme, a great benefit over the past two seasons, is begun again on a great note with the welcome inclusion of Brandon Kingi.

We have Pete Russell, weeds man extraordinaire back on deck, and have had a lovely cameo appearance from Alicia Hopkins, who you will remember as the pocket dynamo summer ranger from last season.

While winter does see visitor numbers drop off, on some weekend days over 100 people have enjoyed the island in its cold season clothes. With these numbers, it has been wonderful to have the services of the Eastbourne Forest Rangers right through winter, helping with guests and other island tasks.

Forest and Bird's continued efforts with the planting programme, have given more trees back to the earth, planting in areas where light wells have been opened, giving new homes for Totara, Rata, and Kanuka amongst others.

Some recent highlights for us have been the installation of solar hot water to visitor accommodation and the motel units, and the achievement of a barge run, enabling us to bring on some much needed supplies such as track gravel for an upgrade of the circuit track and concreting materials for Iain Wilson to continue the seawall upgrade.

Our diary shows a busy summer ahead, so the solar hot water will certainly get its fair share of use from all those who share the overnight experience out here with us; from our helpful teacher fellows Shelly and Glenis, to our next summer ranger, and all of you that we may see basking here in the Wellington harbour sunset.

Jo & Matt

Rangers Jo and Matt thank all of you who are involved in the island very much for your time and efforts on this jewel in Te Whanganui-a-Tara.

Volunteer summer ranger

Our Weeds man is back

Lower visitor numbers this winter

More F&B planting

Solar water heating

Lots of bookings

EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE!

To save paper, reduce printing and postage costs, and minimise handling, we would like send this newsletter by e-mail to as many friends as possible. Please help by sending your email address to
rmsmith@xtra.co.nz

Your help will be much appreciated
Thank you

DO YOUR BIT TO REDUCE WASTE

From the Other Matiu Rangers

Hi everyone, remember me?

It's been a while since I've seen some of you after finishing up my summer ranger position with the onset of winter in May, but Matt and Jo have found they can't quite get rid of me. I've been back a few times to help out when they needed cover and now that I've been employed by DOC as a casual ranger I'll be back even more often to say hi!

My latest stint out here was to cover Jo so she could go and have a well-earned holiday back home and, despite the wind and rain, I am extremely glad to be back. We've had a lot of fun in the last three weeks with a police search and rescue team here for a few days training, a bit of storm-loosened rubble on the tracks and a new addition to the sheep flock being born on one of the coldest days so far. That and all the hail storms have made life that little bit more interesting out here, which I really did miss.

The wildlife is just as captivating and amazing as over summer and, thanks to Joakim, the weta study is coming along well and the results so far quite interesting.

On another note, everyone always talks about how things change over the years and I'd just like to point out that many things have changed in just the last few months! There are many more trees that have been planted around the place and nice new doors on the workshop, aviary and fire store. It is good to see the quarantine open for business, and the Barracks building is looking pretty snazzy too. I look forward to seeing what else changes the next time I come back! So until then, have fun all, let's hope the sun decides to come out and I'll see you all next time☺.

Alicia

Matiu through Brandon's eyes

My stay on Matiu Somes consists of Mondays to Wednesdays for 2 months voluntary work. Catching a 9.00am train from Pukerua Bay to Wellington City, I then have a 5 minute walk to Queens Wharf, followed by a 20 minute boat ride on the Dominion Post East by West Ferry out to Matiu Somes Island. A thorough bag search for any unwanted nasties takes place, and a walk up the hill to my motel room to get ready for the day's work.

At first I was kind of unsure of what to expect of island life. Turned out to be a lot more than I first thought with duties ranging from tree planting on Matiu, Makaro and Mokopuna Islands, to meeting and greeting the many daily visitors to even giving the island sheep a good dosing of worm medicine!! Having such a variety of tasks each day definitely makes it go fast. Also to fill in any little bit of space left in the day, there's also the cool, rare wildlife to see, which the island has to offer; Kakariki, Little Blue Penguins, Giant Weta, Tuatara and definitely my favourite, the North Island Robin (Toutouwai). Very inquisitive, interactive and unafraid of people. I would really like to know more about them and why their introduction to Matiu has been relatively unsuccessful.

As an added bonus, the staff and other volunteers I have met on the island are pretty cool too. It is really good to work among like-minded people. I can actually talk environmental stuff out loud without getting grief for being a nerdy tree hugger, haha, who cares, I love it!



Alicia on top of the world

From here I have another 2 more weeks before my 2 months are up, then it's off to Pukaha Mount Bruce for 1 month voluntary work and no doubt a totally different experience from Matiu. From there, I will hopefully be doing the Robin monitoring on Matiu until the next intake for the Rangers course in Nelson in June. Has been a really awesome experience so far...

Brandon



Brandon's robin

Penguin Ponderings – 8-10 September 2009

Three regular members, Graeme Taylor, Brent Tandy and Reg, and two visitors, David Thompson and Isle Corkery, travelled to Matiu Somes Island. Our intention was to cover the whole of the Island and go across to Mokopuna Leper Island. We managed to accomplish all of this! Brent and Reg started with a trip to the West Coast area and then finished the Lower Lighthouse area. Joined by Graeme, Isle and David we completed the top of the Lighthouse, then along the West Circuit Track where we found two new nest sites. Brent then returned to Wellington city. The evening was spent at the Wharf where we found a small number of penguins.

Next day we were taken to Mokopuna where we visited 31 nest sites and found 18 penguins with quite a number of them (7) in the North Eastern Cāve. Mallow and other weeds were dealt with as we found them. On our return Graeme and David visited North Point while Isle and Reg completed the Quarantine, Nursery and part of the Wharf areas.

The Wharf area proved to be quiet in the evening.

Thursday morning saw Graeme and David returning to Wellington on the morning ferry. Isle and Reg finished the Workshop area and the rest of the Wharf area. They also completed Cable Bay and the Monument areas.

Highlights

- P30815 – one of the penguins caught last season with algae on its back and flippers was recaptured. However this time it showed no sign of the algae.
- P44136 – the “mottled” penguin was not recaptured this time.
- The first 2 chicks of the season hatched in NA1 (Nursery Area).
- A large number of **non**-banded and **non**-transponded penguins caught.



Photos: top Bex Woolfe (November 2008); below Brent Tandy (September 09)

Results of our mid September trip

Total nests visited	240
Total penguins caught	160

We transponded and banded	7
We re-captured (banded)	70
We re-captured (transponded)	27
We caught no-band/transponder	37
We transponded	19

Next trip is planned for early November 2009, weather permitting!

Members of the team were:

Graeme Taylor, Brent Tandy (DOC), Reg Cotter (OSNZ), David Thompson (NIWA), and Isle Corkery (VUW).

David (NIWA) was on the Island to find out how to insert transponders in penguins. His study is involved in Rock Hopper Penguins on Campbell Island.

Isle Corkery (VUW) was on the Island to learn how to transpond penguins. Her study, for her PhD, is exploring the relationship of Fairy Prions and Tuatara on Stephens Island. Her work involves using transponders on Fairy Prions to record their comings and goings.

Thanks again to Jo and Matt (DOC – Matiu-Somes) for their continued help.

Reg Cotter, Team Leader

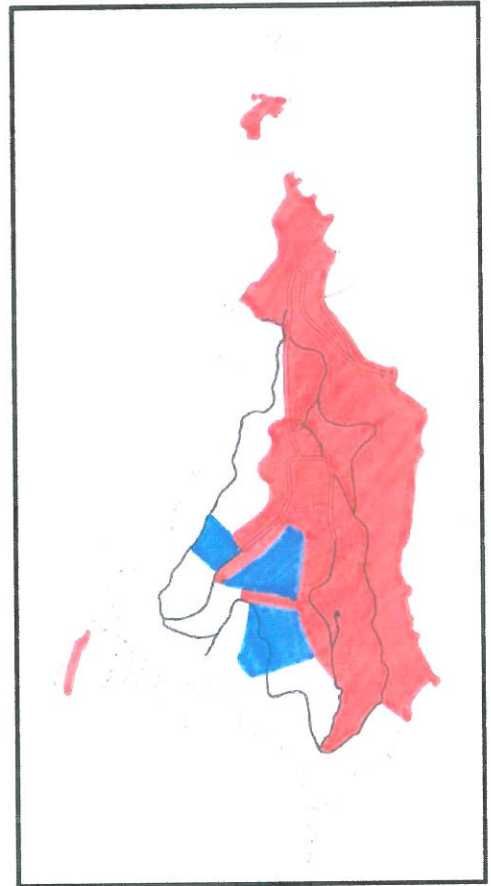
The War on Weeds continues (October 2009)

I have returned to Matiu for a third season to continue waging war on weeds. This work is critical if we are to restore Matiu to anything like what is was before humans arrived. It is very satisfying for me to follow up on the work I have done previously and, of course, it is particularly valuable to have staff continuity when dealing with weeds.

The “Clean Sweep” for all weeds, which started at the north end of Matiu in February 2008, has progressed almost to the south end of the east coast. Together with areas planted since 1997 this means northern, central and eastern parts of the island are now relatively “weed free” (exceptions include the “containment area” of pohutukawa adjacent to the nursery, and boxthorn and karo requiring rope access). The Clean Sweep will now be extended westwards along southern parts of the island. Mokopuna should be swept pretty well clean after another few visits and a wider diversity of natives is being planted there which will enhance the resistance of the vegetation to further weed invasion.

In addition to the Clean Sweep approach, scattered populations of *rare* weed species are also being removed *throughout* Matiu. Although some follow-up will be required in future years, enough progress is being made on rare weeds that I am able to concentrate more on the Clean Sweep as time goes by. I am currently spraying Tangier pea so you should see much less of its purpley-pink flowers on Matiu this Spring. I am using a spray that does not generally harm natives and am targeting areas dominated by short vegetation because Tangier pea is not shade tolerant and will soon be out-competed in areas dominated by forest. Tangier pea appears to have short-lived seeds so we hope to make rapid progress controlling this weed, provided it stops raining long enough for me to spray it! A small patch of Tangier pea was removed from Mokopuna a few months ago. This was the first time it had been recorded on Mokopuna and may have reached the island as seed in the sole of a boot – a reminder that all workers need to treat visits to Mokopuna from Matiu the same as visits to Matiu from the mainland with regard to biosecurity.

We were recently asked to provide a list of the weeds that we are reasonably confident have been eradicated from Matiu and Mokopuna. Of course, it is often difficult to know when the last plant has been removed, but most of these weeds were originally only represented by one or a few individuals and have not been seen for three or more years. Reinvasion in the near future generally seems unlikely as most, if not all, of the seedlings of most species appear to arise near parent plants on the island. However, with many weeds spreading rapidly throughout the surrounding mainland and under-cover (weed dispersal) agents such as kereru recovering, I dread what the future may bring. Some of these plants were only thought to present a minor problem, but have gone wild elsewhere in New Zealand and required little effort to eradicate as a precaution.



Areas involved in the “Clean Sweep” on Matiu and Mokopuna to date (red), and relatively weed-free areas planted since 1997 (blue) (if you have colour)



Tangier pea on Matiu

Eradicated from Matiu:

African clubmoss (*Selaginella kraussiana*)
American agave (*Agave americanum*)
Bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.)
Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*)
Buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*)
Common barberry (*Berberis glaucocarpa*)
Dahlia (*Dahlia coccinea* x *D. pinnata*)
English ivy (*Hedera helix* subsp. *helix*)
Fig (*Ficus carica*)
Gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Horned poppy (*Glaucium flavum*)
Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*)
Hypericum (*Hypericum* sp.)
Ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*)
Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)
Redcurrant (*Ribes rubrum*)
Rock spray (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*)
Stonecrop (*Sedum acre*)
Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
Tiger lily (*Lilium formosanum*)
Tradescantia zebrina (related to wandering Willy, *T. fluminensis*)
Wattle (*Racosperma melanoxylon*)

Pohutukawa-rata hybridisation

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, one of the problems posed by releasing a plant in an area outside its natural range is that it may interbreed with closely related natives and out-compete them. Unfortunately a large proportion of the 'rata' seedlings previously brought to Matiu turned out to be hybrids between northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) and pohutukawa (*M. excelsa*), thanks to rata trees being sneakily pollinated by nearby pohutukawa trees. Pohutukawa genes are so dominant that the resulting plants always take the form of pure pohutukawa (and are, for all intensive purposes, pohutukawa). However, as rata and hybrid seedlings often look very similar when small many of them have been planted on Matiu. Their removal is necessary to prevent the further spread of pohutukawa and to enable rata to re-establish on Matiu.

Fortunately the removal of hybrids, which are easily distinguished from pure rata by the time they are 1m tall, often benefits young rata which have been planted close by. My most interesting recent find was what appears to be a planted hybrid between rata and Kermadec pohutukawa (*M. kermadecensis*), a smaller-leaved and smaller-flowered species from the Kermadec Islands. Seed collection from more isolated rata trees has only produced pure rata seedlings.

Eradicated from Mokopuna:

Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.)
English ivy (*Hedera helix* subsp. *helix*)

We look forward to adding many weeds to these lists in the near future!

Pohutukawa-rata hybrid (left) and pure rata (right) on Matiu



Some of you may have noticed gorse spider mites on Matiu. As many of you will know, gorse is not a major problem on Matiu because it is not shade tolerant and will assist with forest regeneration by providing shelter for native seedlings. However, in environments such as farmland, riverbeds and sand dunes gorse is indeed a major weed. This has led to the release of several 'biological control agents' in an attempt to help with control efforts. One of these is the gorse spider mite, a tiny, red arachnid brought to New Zealand from parts of its natural range in England, Spain and Portugal in 1988 and 1993.

Wind helps to disperse the mites and they are now widespread throughout New Zealand. Their large patches of webbing are a common sight on gorse bushes in late summer. The mites appear to only feed on gorse plants (and not related natives) stunting growth, killing shoots and decreasing the density of plants. They are not likely to make much difference to forest regeneration on Matiu, but are an interesting, if temporary, passenger to have acquired along the way!

Your comments are welcome!

Peter Russell prussell@doc.govt.nz

How fare the Eastbourne Forest Rangers?

The generally miserable weather for the past three months or so has seen the volunteer rangers, well wrapped up, dutifully attending on the island each weekend but visitor numbers have been light and there hasn't been a great deal of work to do. Some help has been given to Jo or Matt on other projects.

Our 'end of season' BBQ, which gives us the opportunity to get together as a group and get updates on what's happening on the island as well as being well fed, was twice postponed because the weather was so bad that ferry sailings were cancelled! We finally managed to hold it on Mid-Winters' Day and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all who were able to come. We discussed many items of common interest and Paulette (the 'Historic Ranger') took us through the old Recreation Hall and the Maximum Security Quarantine Station and brought us up to date on future plans for those buildings. Thanks, Paulette.

These get-togethers are very important because our volunteer rangers are on duty either on their own (winter) or with only one other (summer), so we go for long periods without seeing all the members of the team. Thank you, Jo and Matt for your very warm hospitality.

An exciting development has been the acquisition of new uniform shirts and jackets in dark green with a gold logo. These are being distributed now and are beginning to appear on the island as EFR rangers carry out their duties. The shirts and jackets carry the EFR logo with the words 'MATIU SOMES VOLUNTEER' underneath. There have been a few instances of people being puzzled at our presence on the island but the new logo should make our position clear. Thanks to Jo for initiating this project.

A few people have had to pull out but new recruits, warmly welcomed, have brought our numbers up again to 23 rangers for the summer season.

Ray Smith (the 'Pre-Historic' Ranger)



Gorse spider mite

Gorse spider mite webs



2009 – a busy time for things historic

The last few months have been a busy time for historic, with locations all over Wellington opened to the public on Sunday 13 September, as part of DOC's Conservation Week 09. The historic open day gave visitors the opportunity to tour old Government Buildings, enjoy high tea and jazz at Turnbull House, and view historic film footage and architecture at the Dominion Observatory and Gardens Battery in the Botanic Gardens.

On Matiu/Somes Island, visitors could try their hand at geocaching, there was a display of historic building plans in the Barracks, self-guided tours of the state of the art 1968 Maximum Security Animal Quarantine Station, and circuit tours of the island were given by Eastbourne Forest Rangers.

Area staff worked hard to put the event together, and thanks must also go out to the many volunteers who assisted us – like the Eastbourne Forest Rangers. The historic open day was also a time to welcome back ex-Matiu/Somes Summer Ranger, Alicia Hopkins. Alicia was the key historical technician of the day, and played a central role in making the day the success it was.

Now a few of you might be wondering what 'geocaching' is. The simplest way to describe it is: a treasure hunt using a GPS (global positioning system). Containers are hidden – called caches – and listed online along with their GPS coordinates and additional location clues. Once a cache is published, anyone who has registered on *geocaching.com* can download its co-ordinates and go and find it. Once you have found a cache you can log your find on the cache's webpage.

On Matiu/Somes Island a multi-cache (there are 6 containers located at historic sites around the island), challenges geocachers to solve clues about the history of the island to find the caches. The feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive, in particular from the geocaching community

Geocaching has until recently been relatively low-key in New Zealand, but it has actually been around since 2000. This was when the US government decided to improve the accuracy of GPS technology available to domestic GPS users. It might sound like a whole bunch of people running around with a GPS furtively looking in crevices, cracks and behind trees, but it is in fact a well monitored sport where compliance and sensitive cache placement is paramount. In addition to encouraging people to get outdoors and have fun, it provides a great opportunity for DOC to connect with people with conservation values.

The 6 caches will remain in place on the island and we expect geocachers to bring their own GPS. However, the clues start from the Whare Kiore, so visitors can also give geocaching a go without having visited the geocache website. We will be monitoring how this new initiative goes and may consider purchasing some GPS units for the island if there is popular demand. If you would like to find out more about Geocaching on Matiu/Somes Island do give me a call (04) 470 8439 or email pwallace@doc.govt.nz. Otherwise ask one of the rangers next time you're out on the island.

Finally visit

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/historic/by-region/wellington/poneke-area/matiu-somes-island/>

to see the updated historic information on DOC's website, on the European history of Matiu/Somes Island.

Here are some of the comments from the public who have participated in this geocaching event:

"Congratulations on the Somes Island Cache placement. It's great to see geocaching bringing people to our special places. Thank you for making it possible"

"Well done - caching is all about sharing the treasures of your backyard with others!"

"Wow this is a good concept! 1st in NZ actually involving DOC personnel I believe. Hope it goes well"

"Had a lot of fun touring the island again and learning a bit more about the history. Quite a well designed cache. We really enjoyed this one!"



No reira, noho ora mai ra

Paulette

Swapping the Classroom for Field Work On Matiu/Somes Island

\$23.00 10 Jul 1:14 pm montycosmo (1379)
 \$17.50 10 Jul 1:14 pm andrea321 (32) 17 August 2009

Banding penguins on Matiu/Somes Island is a long way from Shelley Holmes' and Glenis Weaver's Upper Hutt Primary School classrooms, yet this is just one of the opportunities they have faced as they spend the next four months working with DOC in their Poneke Area Office.

Glenis and Shelley have become one of 20 Primary Science Teacher Fellow recipients nationwide as a result of The New Zealand Sciences Mathematics and Technology Teacher Fellowship Scheme, funded by the New Zealand Government, and administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand which is seeking to develop the teaching of science in primary schools. "Working with DOC is giving us the opportunity to learn more about the nature of science from a conservation, diversity and sustainability perspective – something we both consider important and is a part of the new school curriculum due to be implemented from 2010," Shelley explained.

Spending two days and nights on Matiu/Somes Island in the first few weeks of August was a "magical experience" the two teachers said. "We spent two long days working from around 8.30am to 10.00pm moving round the island checking burrows and boxes to find the shy blue penguins and when we did find them, boy were they stroppy."

The blue penguins are being monitored as part of a DOC research programme. When caught each penguin has to be weighed, checked for a transponder and/or a band, and then in some cases have their beaks and wings measured. "Cute as they look they have a rather nasty habit of pecking and biting if they get a chance, so you soon learn to be quick and to hold them carefully," laughed Glenis.

Due to finish with DOC on 18 December, Glenis and Shelley are eagerly looking forward to spending more time on Matiu/Somes Island learning about weed control, counting robin populations, and participating in a range of other activities with the help of the island rangers. 2010 will see them returning to school to share their experiences and knowledge with the rest of their teaching staff.

For more information please contact
Shelley Holmes 04 970 5765 or
Glenis Weaver 04 871 6887

"They tend to wriggle when you weigh them" Glenis commented.



"You have to hold their heads firmly or they will bite", warns Shelley.



A blue penguin warming her egg. The penguins generally lay between one to two eggs in the breeding season – this one has nested fairly early.



Forest & Bird doings

Following the presentation of a DOC paper, "Recommendations for secondary planting under (planted) forest and shrub land canopies on Matiu/Somes", in November last, DOC have taken over the overall details of implementing the planting programme. This has involved the ordering of seedlings to be raised and planted in selected sites. The Branch has undertaken to maintain the nursery and to assist during the planting season.

With the initial plant cover now complete, fewer plants need to be raised each year. As a result the overall demand for volunteer planters is less. However, interest of members remains high. Since last February on ten Mondays an average of 13 members have been busy in the nursery bagging on seedlings, helping with tree release, and preparation of sites for planting. In addition a total of 34 volunteers have been involved in planting on three Sundays.

There is still sufficient interest and support for fortnightly work parties as long as work continues to be available in the nursery and on sites around the island.

Alex Kettles

Hidden depths trawled for history of Whanganui-o-Tara

Helen Kettles, DOC marine ecologist, has compiled the Wellington Marine Information CD, which costs \$10 and is available from DOC's Visitor Centre, Manners Street.

As reported in the Dominion Post recently, working on this project she felt she was on an archaeological dig, peeling away layers of more and more information.

This resource brings together information from over a century of research in relation to the Wellington coastal marine area from Manawatu River on the west coast to Cape Turnagain on the east coast. The database contains 1,380 reports that can be searched by location or keyword. It has 150 maps and nearly 200 images that can be accessed easily.

Helen says that its use includes

- Assessment of environmental effects associated with resource consent applications.
- Identifying information gaps, opportunities for research or reviews.
- Accessing of information by members of the community for interest, project or submissions.

For details you can access the DOC website:
www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/marine-and-coastal/wellington-marine-information-cd/

Karobusters

a volunteer group removing karo and other undesirable species on Matiu, and doing a range of tasks to assist DOC – visits the Island about three times a year.

New volunteers are sought as changes in members' lives mean some can no longer attend. So a few spaces in the group have opened up. If you are interested or would like to find out more, contact Dave Cox:

coxfamily@paradise.net.nz

Next work parties are:

Nov 28th & 29th, 2009
Feb 6th & 7th, 2010
March 27th & 28th, 2010

The people's potter, Dame Doreen Blumhardt, ONZ, DNZM, CBE

This talented ceramicist well-known and loved for her dedication to her art, had connections with Matiu/Somes Island though not with the warm fuzzies we may have about it and its native flora and fauna. Her name Blumhardt is that of her German parents, who had lived in New Zealand for 50 years and farmed north of Whangarei.

Despite this long time in New Zealand, her father had connections with Germany at the time of World War II and was interned on Somes Island, along with other so-called "enemy aliens".

This made the 1940s a difficult time personally for Dame Doreen as she had been invited by Clarence Beeby to overhaul teaching of art in schools. As quoted from friend Brian Carmody in her obituary in the Dominion Post ... "She was always frightened that if she went to see him, they'd catch her too." Obviously that did not happen and Dame Doreen continued to teach at the Wellington Teachers' College (now Wellington College of Education), training teachers in art and craft for 21 years. Many of these teachers will now be remembering her for her work and enthusiasm, and people involved in Matiu/Somes today will also be interested in her connections with the Island.

*Based on Katie Chapman's Obituary to Dame Doreen on p.B3,
The Dominion Post, Saturday, October 24, 2009.*

Maximum security animal quarantine station on Matiu now open to the public

Animal Quarantine was a feature of Matiu/Somes Island from 1889 right up until 1995.

In the mid 1960s it was decided that the existing old dilapidated quarantine sheds were not up to standard. Maintenance had long since been a matter of patching up the old wooden buildings, and if New Zealand was to keep up with the livestock developments in other countries, it needed to get serious about its animal quarantine procedures.

By the time work started on the new quarantine station in 1968, New Zealand had only ever imported livestock from Britain, Australia and Canada. The idea of a maximum security animal station was to enable New Zealand to import livestock from outside of the 'safe' countries.

The new quarantine station was designed so that scientists and geneticists could study breeds of livestock not indigenous to New Zealand in order to assess the desirability of importing these particular breeds into the New Zealand herd and flock.

When the station received its first shipment of animals in March 1972, it was the most sophisticated facility of its kind in the world.

So why not retrace the steps of the quarantine officers who used to work there?



A Doreen Blumhardt teapot

And here's what you will do:
Go through the Staff Entrance by the Fly Lock space;
Pass the Vet's Office;
Go through the Hygiene lock and strip off, shower, through the footbath, put on MAF overalls & gumboots;
Pass the Staff room for your breaks, and the Lab where checks were made on animal health;
Animal loading Bay;
Feeding boxes; Mucking out;
Pens & exercise yards;
Steam-injection boiler;
Diesel-fired furnace;
Pig/ deer pens;
Emergency exit; or
Return and do all in reverse, taking off MAF gear, shower, dress in dayclothes and go round to your house, unless you were on duty that night.

Overnight stays for Friends

We now have a variety of overnight accommodation available for Friends of Matiu. If interested check out the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz for information and bookings.

Forest and Bird Members can get a 25% discount on any Island accommodation contact the DOC Wellington Visitors Centre wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz
04 384 7770

The next Karobusters trips are on

Nov 28th & 29th 2009

Feb 6th & 7th, 2010

March 27th & 28th, 2010

So for further information please contact Dave Cox: coxfamily@paradise.net.nz

Guided Walks

Interested? check out the doc website www.doc.govt.nz or email Matt and Jo at matiusomes@doc.govt.nz

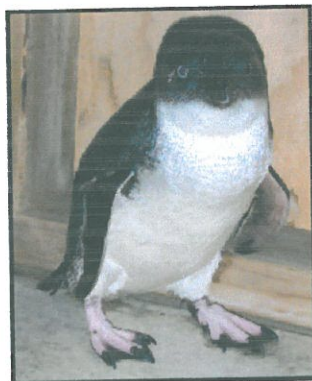
Matiu Really Matters* – Newsletter

Issued c.3 times a year, and as required

*Name based on that used in Wellington Botanical Society Newsletter, by kind permission of Stan Butcher, Lower Hutt Branch Forest & Bird, Wellington Botanical Society

Thank you to all contributors – without your input it would not be the interesting read it is. And thanks to the team on Matiu/Somes of Jo & Matt.

Next issue is next year 2010:
Deadline due 01/02/10



Would you like to help with projects on Matiu/Somes Island

Please give us details of your name, email address, and phone number and we will send you notices and news of projects and events. If you do not have email but would like to contribute to conservation projects on the Island, please give your postal address and we will send you newsletters from time to time (about 3 times a year).

Then we can invite you to:

- take part in hands-on conservation projects
- work with like-minded people on Island projects
- receive newsletters
- stay overnight as part of a 'work' weekend

Name:

Email address:

Telephone:

Postal address:

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Your donation will help the Trust initiate projects on the Island

Donation

Please send to:
Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust
C/- PO Box 536
Wellington

Do you want to help the Trust?

Why not fill in this form?

