

Matiu Really Matters

April 2014



Rangers' Ramble for early 2014

We have survived another stormy summer, and are now well into a dry autumn. Of course it has started raining now that I have said this. As always we have been busy out here on the rock, keeping volunteers busy, visitors happy and the island in tiptop shape. Many thanks must be said to all those who have joined the island family this summer, the regulars, the one-offs, and the newbies. We had a great contingent of summer staff and long-term volunteers, Tony, Charlie, Fenella, Doris, Julia and Mike. We even twisted Richard Brown's arm to come back from Takaka for a couple of weeks.

Good progress has been made in repainting the quarantine buildings. The animal pens have been set up correctly with the help of Rod Sutherland and a bunch of willing helpers. Weeds pulled, sprayed, tackled by rope on the cliffs and otherwise demolished. Tracks cleared, drains replaced, gravel laid, and water supplied to the urupa.

There has been scandal in the Tuatara world: with Ms Mac being seen with a sprightly young male, who isn't Mr Mac from across the track. Some of the other adults have decided they want a bit of the limelight, and are now being more regularly seen by day visitors. Seventy-seven shearwaters have been transferred and fledged, penguins monitored, and kakariki numbers are back up after taking a knock through the winter storms. Lola the lonely robin is still seen around, forever hoping for a new friend. The good news is the island has become a regular restaurant for the Karearea (NZ Falcon) from Eastbourne.

We have our fingers crossed for two future projects, building the new caretaker's cottage track and enlarging our biosecurity facilities at the wharf. Nationally DOC is moving to a new online accommodation booking system which should be more user friendly and amongst other things allow mid-week specials so, if you haven't stayed overnight in a while, come and join us.

Island Rangers Jo and Emma

Welcome to this newsletter

from the Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust:

Colin Ryder Chair, Mark Te One, Liz Mellish, Fred Allen, Shane Cotter, Erini Shepherd, Jan Heine.

Harbour Islands Kaitiaki Board:

Mark Te One Chair, Liz Mellish, Kura Moeahu, Rob Stone, Dr Nicola Nelson, Sarah Owen.

And from Rangers Jo & Emma, thank all of you who are involved in the island for your time and efforts on this jewel in Te Whanganui a Tara.

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The Amazing Race in Te Reo Māori on Matiu/Somes Island

Sixty first-year Māori language students from Victoria University had their Te Reo skills tested on the island by completing a series of team challenges based on the television programme The Amazing Race, all in Te Reo Māori, at different island locations.

Victoria University Māori Studies staff Kelly Keane-Tuala and Terese Mcleod created the adventure-based assessment to take learning outside the lecture theatre in an innovative fun way, to build the students' team-building skills and for almost the entire class to introduce them to the magic of Matiu Somes Island for the first time.

Each team had their own bandana colour with an island team name such as te roopu kākāriki, te roopu torea, te roopu wētāpunga which played successfully into developing team spirit and friendly rivalry. "Creating and executing these events on the island is a lot of mahi and takes stamina to pull off, however, creating unique opportunities pays off in so many on-going and layered ways", said Kelly and Terese.



Victoria University Māori Studies Taura gather (above), and Te Roopu Torea and Te Roopu Wetapunga (right)



Leadership Learning on Matiu/Somes Island

Wellington Boys College senior Māori students group Te Piringa had their first Island visit recently. Their wānanga was a series of workshops on the topic of leadership which formed most of the day's programme with presenters and boys discussing topics like: who they consider leaders, what are leadership qualities, who makes people leaders and why.

To break up the sessions the boys were inspired by the Victoria University Māori Studies model of *The Amazing Race* so they designed their own version where their activities around the island focussed on more physical challenges such as the haka, push ups, press ups and puzzles to solve at four different island locations.

Island volunteer and Victoria University Māori Studies staff members Terese Mcleod and Brian Tunui, whose son attends Wellington College and is son-in-law of the late Sir Paul Reeves who worked on the Island Treaty settlement, initiated the event with the intention of developing further connections and similar opportunities between the school and Island in the future.

When asked about her role with connecting individuals, Iwi, a diverse range of groups and businesses, Terese said, "I started as a karo-buster/labourer Island volunteer for quite a number of years and it was the best introduction and learning I could have had to the Island by working directly with the whenua. My volunteer roles developed and changed over time but once I got familiar with the Island everything seems to have centred around connecting a wide range of diverse communities with conservation kaupapa and conversations based on the Island. I've noticed we talk and listen better in our island environment and have different conversations we might not have in the city, kind of like old campfire conversations".

Asked about her biggest island passion, she says "It's my Waiwhetu whanau, the taiaha wananga and especially watching our children engage and learn on their Island is my greatest island passion, it's those children that have inspired me to work at creating a Kaitiaki Kids programme".

Asked about her biggest island disappointment, she says "For a small island there are a lot complex relationships to navigate that can be at times hōhā, and sometimes I yearn for the karo-busting days where I just turned up and worked with the whenua".

Terese Mcleod

Below: Wellington Boys College Senior Māori students on Matiu/Somes Island



EFR – 80 not out!

The role of the Eastbourne Forest Rangers (EFR) Volunteer group on Matiu/Somes Island is to assist the resident Department of Conservation (DOC) rangers with tasks related to visitors. Two EFR now go to the Island every weekend and public holiday throughout the year to meet the ferries and undertake the biosecurity check and briefing of visitors in the Whare Kiore, thus releasing the DOC Rangers from the necessity of stopping whatever work they were involved in to go down to the Wharf, several times a day. Casual marine visitors such as kayakers and yachties and, indeed, occasional swimmers, are also checked.

Our volunteer service began in 1997, following discussions between Stan Hunt of EFR and Richard Anderson, the then resident DOC Ranger on Matiu/Somes Island. Initially one EFR went to the Island each weekend day and public holiday during the Summer to patrol the Island, keeping a lookout for fires and for illegal landings. From 1998 EFR involvement gradually increased. Two Rangers now go to the Island every weekend and public holiday throughout the year, weather permitting!

From 2005 EFR began to conduct guided tours of the Island telling stories about the many facets of the Island's thousand-year history and showing visitors where they can see some of the special taonga such as tuatara and giant weta. More members were recruited via the DOC website. We now have 21 members from Eastbourne, Petone, Lower Hutt and Wellington of whom 15 act as tour guides as well as carrying out the Whare Kiore checks and briefings. Most of the tours, especially the school tours, of which there are now a large number, take place during the week so the Guides are usually the older, retired members. New members able to take on this commitment would be welcomed.

The EFR Matiu/Somes Volunteers operate under the umbrella of the Eastbourne Forest Rangers, a group that has been active in the Eastbourne area for over 80 years. In the early 1930s a Chief Ranger was appointed to oversee the "foot soldier" rangers who were involved in patrolling the Eastbourne Domain (now the Northern Forest Block of the East Harbour Regional Park), looking out for bush fires, upholding the local by-laws and generally keeping an eye on things. Later they became involved in track maintenance, bridge building, firearm monitoring, fire-fighting and search and rescue. Later some of these functions were taken over by specialist organisations such as the Bush Fire Service.

In 2004 the Greater Wellington Regional Council took over the management of the bush area from the Lower Hutt Council and it became part of the Regional Park. The EFR became side-lined as the Council took over their work. The result was a reduction in the number of active members and today only a

small group still carry out "weed busting" on the Kowhai Track. Our major role is now our ongoing and successful involvement with Matiu/Somes Island.

So we really are 80, and not out!

Ray Smith & Derek Sole

Guiding News

It's been a really good summer with some great feedback from our clients (guests) who have enjoyed the informative trips laid on by Eastbourne Ranger Guides. And now for the news that Motu Matiu is now in the Lonely Planet Guide:

LONELY PLANET REVIEW

In the middle of Wellington harbour, Matiu Somes is a DOC-managed reserve where you might see weta, tuatara, kakariki and little blue penguins, among other critters. The island is rich in history, having once been a prisoner-of-war camp and quarantine station. Take a picnic lunch, or even stay overnight in the campsite (adult/child \$10/5) or in the DOC house – book online at www.doc.govt.nz or at Wellington's DOC visitor centre. It's a 20- to 30-minute chug across the harbour. There are 6 sailings on weekdays, 13 on weekends (return fare adult/child \$23/11.50).

Be prepared for an influx of 'guests'!



PENGUIN PONDERINGS 2014-01

Little Penguin Study Stage Two:
Matiu/Somes Island

March 2014

We decided to broaden our coverage of things 'penguin', instead of maintaining our traditional focus on the results of each monthly survey.

In line with that new approach, our first PP for the year provides an update on two key activities:

- Survey dates for 2014
- Our nest box construction and distribution project

Survey Dates

We can confirm our tentative dates for the five surveys in 2014:

- 14-15 August
- 11-12 September
- 9-10 October
- 6-7 November
- 4-5 December

As with previous years, there may be a need for up to two one-day trips to check on selected nests and mark chicks that are close to fledging. We will not know until closer to the date if these supplementary trips are required.

Ros Batcheler and Mike Rumble will continue to work together on planning and organising each trip. Ros will be responsible for organising the teams, passing on details for each trip to the participants, and organising food. Mike will continue looking after the survey books, equipment needs, collecting, collating and analysing survey data, and preparing the yearly survey report the team submits to DOC.

Nest Box Project

Last year's PPs included reports on our big nest box building project. We can now confirm 73 boxes were built by teams of volunteers using the timber donated by Wellington Zoo, and installed at pre-selected sites by a very big team of volunteers (42 of them!).

Over the weekend 8-9 March volunteers set up the boxes in their selected sites. At the same time they recorded the GPS co-ordinates for ALL known natural nests and ALL nest boxes on Matiu Somes, Makaro Ward, and Mokopuna islands.

Thanks to the efforts of this small team of very willing helpers both these major tasks were completed in two days!

The final step in this big project involves the production of new site maps!

There are now over 329 known nest sites on the three islands (275 nest boxes and 54 natural nests).

Japanese Internees on Matiu Somes

Various accounts record the fact that 45 Japanese men were interned on the Island during the 2nd World War. Several had been living in New Zealand for many years but most had been brought from Samoa and Tonga.

Thanks to a book entitled "Tact and Tenacity – New Zealand women in policing" by Valerie P Redshaw, there is information about some of them.

Seven of the men were employees of a Japanese company named Banno who were island traders in Tonga. They were regarded as "enemy aliens" and were deported to New Zealand in 1941 with their families. The women were sent to the Pokeno Internment Camp and the men to Somes Island.

Jessie Banno of Scottish/ Tongan descent and married to a Japanese man, Gonkichi Banno, recalled visiting her husband on Somes Island together with her son Goni. The couple had to sit facing each other across a table under eyes of armed guards. They were only allowed 30 minutes. The men asked for permission to write to their wives in Japanese but this was refused presumably because of a perceived security threat.

In 1942 under an international agreement, Nationals who wished could return to their own countries. After several false starts some of the families were to be flown to Australia on a converted Liberator bomber. The plane took off from Whenuapai but crashed in a nearby mangrove swamp and caught fire. 14 people died including five of the Japanese women and four of their children. The rest of the internees, including Jessie Banno were finally sent to Australia on the MV Wahine on 4th November 1943.

Jessie Banno, then aged 94, visited Wellington in 2006 and was given a presentation for the work she did in caring for the Japanese families.



Ranger Reg Cotter keeps school groups happy



Matiu Somes – a place for watching the sky

EFRangers always welcome Recruits

The Rangers aim to provide one Guide for each 15 persons on Guided parties. But we are stretched to provide this number of Guides at times.

As the number of tours continues to increase, we will be stretched even more and we need to recruit Rangers to act as Guides, especially those available mid-week.

As you see from the photo (left), it is an enjoyable and rewarding job.

Anyone interested should contact Jerry Wellington at matiuguiding@gmail.com

Jerry Wellington

2014 & a successful translocation

Amiria, Andre, Brooke, Charlie and I travelled out to Long Island on Tuesday 7th January to begin the collection phase of the final year of this exciting project. None of the others had been to Long Island before, so first seeing the colony at 8am, they got to see just how steep the site is. Everyone was very excited as well as a little concerned as the weather for our three days there was not flash with wind and rain predicted.

After getting all the gear ashore and setting up camp, the real work of checking the colony for chicks suitable for transfer began. By late afternoon on day one, it was raining and the wind had increased to 30 knots. Day two dawned fine with lighter winds (20 knots). However with the day dry, we were able to get most of the colony searching completed. We raced back to camp 5 minutes before the rain arrived.

The colony search for suitable chicks for transfer was completed by 10.30am Thursday morning. Four then walked the length of the Island looking for other birds and animals.

During the search phase, we managed to band 170 fluttering shearwater chicks of which 82 were probably suitable for transfer. On collection day (the only day without a gale warning for Cook Strait), 77 were suitable with correct wing and body weights, so they were transferred via boat and then helicopter to Matiu/Somes Island. Our goal was 80 chicks so 77 is an excellent effort. All chicks had settled in well, were healthy and transitioning well to their new diet and daily feeding. Thanks to everyone who helped throughout this initial stage.

On Long Island, we also caught 3 tuatara, found a NZ Falcon nest with 4 eggs, two kiwi burrows (no birds in them though), heard kiwis calling, saw plenty of saddlebacks, bellbirds, robins, pigeons, a reef heron and one weka.

This year is the last year of transferring chicks from Long Island to Matiu/Somes Island. To keep you updated on a more regular basis we have established a temporary blog site <http://matiusomestrust.weebly.com/fluttering-shearwater.html> as our website is still in development. Please feel free to share this site with others who may be interested and leave your comments etc on the site when visiting. We are very interested in feedback to add to the development of our final website which is currently in construction.

All 77 chicks fledged successfully with 2 later found on the mainland, one at Tawa which died at the Zoo, and one at the Southern Cross Bar in Abel Smith Street which was later returned to the island and fledged again. Now the wait begins. Another (the third 2008 Mana Island chick) was caught at the Matiu/Somes colony in March.

At this early stage, this season is looking as successful as previous years. This is not luck but a reflection of all the hard

work everyone involved has put into this project. I and the Trust, thank you for your efforts.

Shane Cotter

Forest & Bird Report

The F&B nursery support team continues with trips to the island and interest in the work remains high so there has been no difficulty in maintaining a regular team.

Alex Kettles

Commonsense Organics

Seventy **Commonsense Organics** staff from the Wellington region enjoyed Wellington Anniversary day on the Island. Hosted by island volunteer **Terese Mcleod** who created a pirate limmerick treasure hunt and other activities to maximise their enjoyment and learning time on the island.

The Giant Cook Straight Weta were stars of the Island's Anniversary day, staff and volunteers had collected half a dozen female weta the night before. Island visitors made a gold coin donation for the privilege of an upclose encounter on anniversary day. In all, the on-duty weta staff made \$100 for their 2-hour appearance.

Commonsense Organics is a business dedicated to sustainability and green ethics so it makes sense to connect them with the island and its relevance to the DOC drive to create a range of business relationships, said **Terese**.

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

Karobusters for 2014

For 2014 trips to come, please contact Dave Cox: dave08.cox@gmail.com

Guided Walks

Interested? Check out the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz or email Jo or Emma at matiusomes@doc.govt.nz

Matiu Really Matters* – Newsletter

Issued c.2-3 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, Emma & all.

To have your say, why not email janheine@xtra.co.nz

Jan Heine NL compiler



**Next issue is later this year 2014:
Deadline due 01/09/14 or about then**

Would you like to be a member of Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust & help with projects on the Island?

If so, send in your

Name:

Email address:

Postal address:

.....

Phone :

and please tick the appropriate boxes:

Annual Membership

	Life individual	\$200
	Individual	\$20
	Family	\$30
	Unwaged	\$10
	Organisation	\$100
	Donation (Tax deductible)	\$
	TOTAL	\$

Method of payment:

	Please send me an invoice
	I have paid by direct credit into MSICT bank account (01-0542-0011679-00)
	Cheque enclosed
	Yes, I would like a receipt

Please send this form to:

Treasurer

Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust

PO Box 39 294

Wellington Mail Centre

We will send you notices and news of projects and events, by email, and newsletters from time to time. 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



