



Mahinepua - Radar Hill Landcare Group.

Charities Commission Reg. 42272

The Radar Rattler

Newsletter #164 August 23

Kia Ora, everyone 😊

There is a lot of news in this instalment, which makes for a long edition!!

Firstly, an important message from Brian, our Charman regarding ...

Funding for our trapper

Members will recall that for the past 20 years of our Landcare group's existence we have been funded from various sources but mainly from DOC's community grant and from Save the Kiwi grants. This year our applications to both funders have been declined. This is a major disappointment for our group because this funding over 20 years has allowed our trapper to manage predators and pests that kill Kiwi and their chicks and allow Kiwi to thrive in the Mahinepua Radar Hill rohe.

The success of Kiwi care over the last decade in Tai Tokerau has lowered the risk status of Kiwi from endangered to conservation dependant. While this seems trivial, it has had a detrimental impact of Landcare group funding in the north. We're suffering from our own great efforts and slow success.

Previously, this funding has allowed us to monitor two male Kiwi with transmitters for over five years. Our current pair, Graham and Terry are the only Kiwi being monitored north of Whangarei Heads. The information from this voluntary surveillance is very valuable to the Tai Tokerau Kiwi data base. Fortunately, the group's careful money management over the past 5 years has allowed us to hold a reserve of funds that will allow us to keep our trapper on the job for another year.

We need to find other funding sources urgently, so if you have any contact with benefactors or environmental funders, please let us know (email - admin@radarhill.org.nz).



Brian, kindly took time out of his busy schedule to attend this year's National Kiwi Hui on our behalf. As promised in the last newsletter, his report follows....

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL KIWI HUI 2023

FROM BRIAN PUTT:

**CHAIR - MAHINEPUA RADAR HILL LANDCARE
GROUP INC.**

7-9 June 2023

The hui was held at the Muru-Raupatu Marae, Sentry Hill, New Plymouth. There were 150 attendees with just as many interested people turned away because of the limitations of the venue.

1. Dr Kevin Trenberth – Novel Prize Winner & Climate Change Scientist

Having an address from a Novel prize winner was a great experience. Dr Trenberth had been the Chair of the International Panel on Climate Change under the auspices of the United Nations. He is a physicist specialising in oceans and weather patterns. He has retired from a professorial chair at the University of Colorado. Now lives in Auckland.

Some interesting observations from him were:

- 80% of atmospheric heat is absorbed by the oceans.
- NZ is located in an ocean hemisphere.
- The volume of rain received from any weather event is calculated as 4 times the radius of the storm area. Accordingly, as storms become bigger in scale the rain volume increases at that rate.
- The sea temperature is at present running at the highest levels ever recorded and with most ocean in the Southern Hemisphere we can expect to experience the most severe weather events.
- Activity in the tropics is driving the rainfall increases.

- He notes that in NZ less than 50% of our climate change effects are coming from agriculture.

Effects on Kiwis of Climate Change

- There will be habitat effects that are variable across NZ. His prediction that the changing habitat conditions will lead to predator increases which therefore means greater vigilance in predator control. It is also likely that food availability will decrease which will have an impact on reproduction levels.
- On energy alternatives he presented interesting ideas on the use of biogenic energy sources and the increasing use of pumped hydro power systems like the Lake Onslow project. They are regarded as being 85% efficient.

2. John Bissell – Predator Control Advisor, Save the Kiwi

Presented on ferrets, differentiated from stoats. While we are lucky not to have a ferret problem, their behaviour and danger as a predator is rampant in many parts of the country, particularly in the South Island. He noted that:

- Ferrets are not climbers.
- They are not as intelligent as stoats.
- They can only be trapped with ground-based traps.
- They are extremely fussy.
- They have a very short attention span.
- They hunt 80% through scent compared to stoats who are 50/50 visual and scent-based in their hunting practice.
- Ferrets live mainly on rabbit and are very attracted to blood. This is why they will kill kiwi and not eat them.
- Ferrets enjoy living in clusters.
- He recommends the DoC 250 trap for ferrets.

3. Dr Kim King – Retired Professor - Waikato University

Dr King is a world expert on stoats and their management. Her knowledge was extraordinary and detailed.

4. Other Observations

- Our neighbours at Honeymoon Valley employ six contractors with a budget of \$1M over 5 years. They maintain 10 trail cameras.
- Great success with predator control on Ponui Island, Hauraki Gulf, where they have achieved one kiwi per hectare.

- There is a database for transponder kiwi records operated through DoC.
- Browning Cameras were the favoured ones for trail camera locations. The advice was to use ridges and spurs as they are the best habitats for ferrets and stoats.
- The trapping technique is to use fresh bait flesh trailed along the ground for ferrets to follow. There is a lot of success in using dead stoats as bait for both feral cats and ferrets.
- There is huge Regional Council involvement in Taranaki giving assistance to the preparation of farm plans, and biodiversity reporting on private land which we do not enjoy in Tai Tokerau. Taranaki Regional Council does have a significant income from the petrochemical industry.
- Noted that Save the Kiwi undertakes sub-regional plans in parts of the country. We could gain some advantage by working with them to achieve such a plan for our area.

5. Conclusions

- Overall, it was interesting to note that of 150 people, there were 5 present like me who are not on the payroll of a major collective, a Council or DoC.
- There are clearly many groups around the country with substantial budgets from public funds who are working at large-scale including aerial delivery of poisons over significant areas.
- There was no fear of using 1080-based poison, particularly built into a bait sausage which was extremely effective with feral cats and stoats. The science had proven that it had no kiwi attraction.
- While our efforts at MRHLCG might seem meagre, our results stack up against any of the larger well-funded organizations.

Jen and Jo have had a few wet, cold nights outside trying to locate our monitored kiwi and are getting better at working the technology, obtaining good signals and guessing their movement patterns. Recently Terry has been active for between 10.5 to 11.5 hours on average each night. Obviously out on the town living life up. Meanwhile Graham's hours were on the decline. Initially they thought it may be due to bad weather, but can confirm that he is nesting and has reduced his night time activity to just 2.5 hours. Possibly we will be able to put cameras out to watch the nest shortly.

Our two monitored kiwi provide us with invaluable data. We now know that they emerge and become active at dusk, much earlier than previously thought! Please be careful driving home and take your dogs 🐕 out on lead to ensure our kiwis' safety 🙏

They may not be calling, but they are out of their burrows. Sadly, Northland Kiwi have made news headlines recently for all the wrong reasons in that so many have been discovered deceased 😞 It is devastating, not only for the species, but for people who have spent so much time trying to provide Kiwi with a safe habitat. One thoughtless action can undo all those years of work and dedication.



One very happy Hunter, pleased to have his dogs certified by Lesley, so that they can join him out hunting!



Next came a **“thank you” morning tea** for all those who participated in this year’s Kiwi Listening. Once again, the committee would like to thank everyone who took part and Rebekah for coordinating so

much(even the morning tea).Lilly received her certificate to confirm that she has completed “kiwi call count monitoring training”. Lilly is currently our youngest trained listener.

Jo reports that despite the weather, we managed to listen on most of our sites either by physical listening or using recorders. Recorders are extremely helpful, although it takes a human roughly one hour to interpret two hours of recording. However, over all, our call count numbers are dramatically down from 2022 (and 2021) for all sites. We do not know the reason at this stage. It could be that the Kiwi are calling later in the evening. People are reporting hearing them later at night. Whatever the reason (we may never know), we cannot afford to stop or slow down in our attempts to protect them. Everything that everyone does all helps to make a difference.

And next came....**The Northern Regional Council 2023 Environmental Awards**

Brian, Jen and Casey travelled to Whangarei as our representatives. They had an enjoyable evening, made connections and networked. We were proud to be awarded as follows....

Environmental action to protect native life - This award recognises individuals or groups who are working to control pest animals, pest plants, and/or diseases to help our native life flourish.

We were "Highly Commended" for working towards a pest-free environment and ensuring a sustainable future for the whenua.

Photo credit Dawn Dutton



Environmental action in the community -

This award recognises individuals or groups who are working collaboratively within their community to protect and improve Northland's environment.

We were "Highly Commended" for inspiring community commitment to the environment, protecting native birdlife and taonga species and preserving the whenua around Whangaroa.

Photo credit Dawn Dutton



Trapper, Lyndon has been as busy as ever. May was a good month for weasels – 2 in one trap was a first for him! He is catching quite a few possums with joeys – two for the price of one! Neighbours report that they have had a glut of lemons this season – another sign that Lyndon's efforts are reducing possum numbers.

As always...

Voluntary effort helps the group funding applications without doubt. We would be so grateful if you could please record and report on the following :-

Your Possum (and other pest) Kills.

Your volunteer hours and time spent on the removal of noxious weeds etc.

Any revegetation done on private land (for any reason). Number of native plants and area covered.

Now that the North Island brown kiwi is no longer regarded as endangered nationally (it is however, a good indicator species), the presence of other endangered fauna and flora in the Landcare area can be used for funding application purposes where our members are making considerable effort towards achieving sustainable protection of those endangered species.

**Please report information regularly to admin@radarhill.org.nz
Attention Casey**

Follow and like us on our Facebook Page – Mahinepua Radar Hill Landcare Group

<https://www.facebook.com/Mahinepua-Radar-Hill-Landcare-Group-116005128097984>

Remember to keep checking the MRHLGC website.

<https://www.radarhill.org.nz/>

Lots of tools to keep in touch, engage and communicate with our members. Take a look, so much information about the group.

The new Constitution is now on our website. Many thanks to Maxine for finalising and updating the Charities Commission & Incorporated Societies websites and getting the Constitution registered.

If you would like to pay a subscription or make any donation, please direct credit our bank account **02-0352-0132664-000 - BNZ MRHLG Inc**

Any contribution is greatly appreciated and helps us so much!

Best regards,

Lynne Lucas

Editor, The Radar Rattler

Ps.



Still missing!!

Has anyone seen this Burmese cat, missing from Mahinepua since late December. His owner, Beks (+64221985295) is desperate for any information be it good or bad news.



Also missing!!

A Ragdoll cat from Mahinepua. Please contact Micki (+64212582995) with any information.

Two healthy cats have mysteriously disappeared 😞

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