



# THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

**WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)**

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • [www.wtc.org.nz](http://www.wtc.org.nz)

July 2022



This way or that? Photo by Nicola Guv



# WAIKATO HUT

Your lodge on Mt Ruapehu  
Tongariro National Park



[www.wtc.org.nz](http://www.wtc.org.nz)



Stoa trap monitoring by  
Joanna Greig

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Free to members

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc  
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 839

July 2022

### General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

<b>President:</b> Judith Bogle	027 3810283
<b>Secretary:</b> Dorothy Cawdron	027 7424222
<b>Treasurer:</b> Guy Domett <a href="mailto:treasurer@wtc.org.nz">treasurer@wtc.org.nz</a>	027 2483008
<b>Members:</b> John McArthur (VP Tramp)      Stephen Prendergast (VP Ski)	
Stephen Phillips      Allan Wickens      Lois Rowell      Ashley Hoskin      Mike Barker	
Mike Nightingale	07 8562394

### Tramping Subcommittee

**Tramping email:** [waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com)

<b>Chairperson:</b> John McArthur <a href="mailto:mcArthur@outlook.co.nz">mcArthur@outlook.co.nz</a>	021 2889641
<b>Club Captain:</b> Les Warren	027 8644937
<b>Membership:</b> Lois Rowell <a href="mailto:loiserowell@gmail.com">loiserowell@gmail.com</a>	027 2881148
<b>Member:</b> Selwyn June	027 4978151
Rupert Craggs	027 6811926
<b>Web &amp; Facebook:</b> Rizal Razak	021 2676566
<b>Transport:</b> Ashley Hoskin <a href="mailto:ashley.hoskin@icloud.com">ashley.hoskin@icloud.com</a>	027 4909545
<b>Social convenor:</b> Jacqui Dick	021 1375201

### Ski Subcommittee

<b>Ski email:</b> <a href="mailto:waikatoski@gmail.com">waikatoski@gmail.com</a>	<b>Waikato Hut phone:</b> 07 8923821
<b>Chairperson:</b> Stephen Prendergast	021 466247
<b>Bookings:</b> Stephen Prendergast	021 466247
<b>Finance officer:</b> Michael Barker	021 2463500
<b>Members:</b> Steve Phillips	021 1031436
Ashley Hoskin	027 4909545

<b>Bulletin:</b> Lesley Kuggeleijn	027 4942414
<b>Editor &amp; Club Librarian:</b> Dianne June <a href="mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz">djune@xtra.co.nz</a>	07 8433066

**Waikato Tramping Club account:** 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

## Club night, Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

### Note change of venue for this evening

For the August club night, we will be having more of a social get together since it is mid-winter. We will meet at The Cook Bar, 7 Cook Street, Hamilton East at 7pm. We will have a room to ourselves upstairs so will be able to run through the trip programme and notices plus get a good chance to socialise and have a drink (or two!).

For those of you who would like dinner there first (the menu looks really great!) we will meet at 6pm. Please email Jacqui Dick if you are keen for this so that she can book a table. [jacquimd@me.com](mailto:jacquimd@me.com)  
Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you for the meeting.

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2021/2022

3013	17 Jul	E/M	Natural bridge	John Davies
3014	23/24 Jul	M	Snowcraft 1	Jacqui Dick/Mike Peck
	29 Jul		Film Evening	Graham & Andrea Haines
3015	31 Jul	M	Maungatautari traverse	Les Warren
3016	6-7 Aug	E/M	Tuahu track to Sapphire hot springs	Lois Rowell
3017	14 Aug	M	Pylon peak	Rizal Razak
3018	20/21 Aug	E/M	Taupo cycling & walking	Dianne & Selwyn June
3019	27/28 Aug	E	Trip leader training	Judith Bogle
3020	3 / 4 Sept	M/F	Snowcraft II	Jacqui Dick/Mike Peck
3021	11 Sept	E/M	Botany expedition	Selwyn June
3022	17/18 Sept		Waikaremoana	Judith Bogle
3023	24/25 Sept	F	East ridge Mt. Taranaki	Mike Peck
3024	2 Oct	M	Caving	Jacqui Dick & Andrew Fredrickson

Don't let a lack of equipment deter you from coming on a trip. Talk to the trip leader - who may be able to assist with lending or sharing gear.

### TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

**E** = Easy. Up to 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M.

**E/M** = Easy/Medium. Up to 5-6 hours/day, pace slower than M.

**M** = Medium. Up to 6-7 hours/day, at standard walking pace.

**M/F = Medium/Fit.** Up to 7-8 hours/day, pace faster than M.

**F = Fit.** Over 8 hours/day, pace faster than M/F.

Note that factors such as party size, fitness, weather, terrain and leadership will influence actual times, so the above are estimates only.

**Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the WEDNESDAY before the trip.**

Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

**Departure Point:** Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the car park on the right at the end of the cul de sac. If in doubt contact your trip leader.

**Weekend Trips:** leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated.

**Day Trips:** leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

If someone is concerned because a trip is late back, contact:

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) committee member.

### **Minimum equipment required:**

**Day Trips:** A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water/wind-proof parka outer shell.

Shorts or longjohns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen.

Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

**Weekend Trips:** The above, plus pack with plastic liner bag, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, cooker, billy, plate or bowl, spoon, food, spare dry clothes for evening, towel, toilet gear, light camp shoes. A water purifier can be useful. Plus, in extreme weather or country: additional warm top, over-trousers or woollen/fleece trousers, warm outdoor mittens or gloves, over-mitts, warm hat or balaclava, sunglasses. Ice axe and crampons for snow.

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## **Trip Descriptions**

**REMEMBER: 2 clicks to confirm your booking on the website**

**Trip 3013**

**Natural bridge & Puketutu Pa**

**17 July**

Mangapohue Natural Bridge is a highlight on the scenic drive from Waitomo Village to Marokopa. The 5 min track to the left is even pushchair-friendly and follows a boardwalk through an impressive limestone gorge that brings you underneath a natural bridge. The 17m high limestone arch, which spans the Mangapohue Stream, is all that remains of an ancient cave system. From here the track becomes stepped and passes under the bridge giving a superb view of the ceiling studded with stalactite-like formations and an excellent view back down the gorge. The track continues for about 15 min over farmland.

We will then endeavour to walk across the road and up through a pine forest and native bush to an old pa site. It is possible to see remnants of the pa while ascending the hill on which it is situated. This would be a good family trip.

**Leader:** John Davies

**Ph:** 027 4772209

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$21-35

Senior non-member: \$26-40

**Trip 3014****Snowcraft Course No. 1****23/24<sup>th</sup> July**

This trip is full and there is a waiting list for it. If your booking is already confirmed, make sure you have paid your deposit before you go,

**Leaders:** Mike Peck**Ph:** 021 369 256**Grade:** M

Jacqui Dick

**Ph:** 021 1375201**Cost:** Approximately \$200 – includes transport, food, and hut fees.**Film evening****29<sup>th</sup> July**

**Social Activity:** Come and join us at the Haines' at 11 Alison St, Hamilton for an evening of chatter and listening. Meet there at 6.30pm with your plate to share, your refreshment, and meat to BBQ. We'll start cooking at 7pm, eat our meal then sit back to watch a movie. Andrea will tell us when it's half-time so that means dessert, tea/coffee time. Then it's back to the movie rooms. For more info contact the hosts on 8395932.

**Cost:** \$20**Trip 3015****Maungatautari traverse****31 July**

The plan is to start at the Northern Enclosure end, near the end of Hicks Road. We have to park in front of the Maungatautari Marae, and walk 5min to the end of Hicks Road and the start of the track. Unfortunately, there are no toilets at the Marae. If you really need to go to toilet before starting, there are toilets on the way at Waipuke Park, that we can stop at. Otherwise, there are two toilets just inside the Northern Enclosure entrance (30 to 45min) from carpark. Need to bring own toilet paper. From the end of Hicks Road, a well-formed path takes you up to the entrances. Note: this is a new path which is undulating with a short (50m) steep climb to the entrances (and a short steep descent back down). It is about 20 to 40min thru the farmland to the entrances. For the traverse, we take the (second) Over the Mountain Track entrance gate. From here it is about 800m uphill on a good track before taking the "tramping" track up to Maungatautari (797m). We continue along the tramping track to Pukeatua (753m). This section has several steep ups and downs. It is mainly downhill all the way to the carpark at the Southern Enclosure and Visitor Centre for a hot or cold drink and toilets.

Option A – The traverse. Allow 5 to 6hrs.

Option B – Northern Enclosure to Maungatautari and return. Allow around 3 to 4hrs. This option could return via the Wairere Traverse track, which is well graded and much easier walking.

Option C – Walk up to the Northern Enclosure and walk the track in the Enclosure, which takes about 40min or take a little longer to enjoy the day. In all, allow around 2hrs for this option.

**Transport:** Much will depend on numbers and whether we have enough for a van. If taking cars, we will need to arrange things around leaving a car at the Southern Enclosure.

**Leader:** Les Warren**Ph:** 027 864 4937**Grade:** E or M/F**Email:** warrenlb2017@outlook.com**Transport:** Senior member \$21-35

Senior non-member: \$26-40







Kaitawa Track (5 hours), this goes through to the trig and would need transport from the other end, Aniwhaniwa Valley Track (6 Hours), Ruapani Circuit (6 hours) or even walking up to the Bluff if it is a nice day. There are other options as well, with many short walks to waterfalls and lakes. If people want to spend longer there to do more walks let me know. The idea would be to go on Friday night and come back Sunday. It is a 4-hour drive so I would like to leave as early as possible on the Friday.

**Leader:** Judith Bogle

**Ph:** 027 3810283

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$

Senior non-member: \$

**Accommodation:** tbc

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### *Editorial*

Winter is here with all its' changeable weather conditions – cold/warm, wet/dry, windy/calm, and so on. But being out and about in the outdoors is always refreshing and, more so when you can get to shelter at the end of the day which includes a warm shower and comfortable bed. If you're on a multi-day trip this may mean only the latter. But don't you feel rejuvenated when you get both? Don't let the weather dictate your outdoor activity.

Dianne June

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### *Presidential Blog*

What a great time of year to do winter tramping adventures. With all this rain there will be rivers to practice river crossings and get experience and knowledge of what you can and can't do. Lean to navigate slips, there are few out there to practice on. Work out is your gear water proof, or do you need to do some gear maintenance. Really get to know those weather maps and rain radar diagrams and figure when those opportunities are for getting out there in bush or on the hill. The vegetation and streams look so different and beautiful this time of year. There are some great photos to be had out there. It also provides a great opportunity on the overnight tramps with longer evenings to socialise with your tramping companions. So don't forget those candles or solar lanterns.

Judith Bogle

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### *from the Ski Club...*

Winter rates: For non-ski club members that will mean \$60 pp/night. Ski club members pay \$35. It doesn't take too many trips before you cover the additional membership costs.

Where is winter ? It's been more of the same mild autumnal weather only briefly interrupted by proper Winter. A good covering of snow in June is still grasping on to the basalt at Mt Ruapehu, but in desperate need of a top up. The forecast for the next week provides some of that, but we'll need more of the same for July to develop into its' distant self.

This year we've seen a reversal from Mt Ruapehu on a few of the changes that were generally disliked including the scramble that was booked parking.

We're back to first in best dressed once more. How does that change things ? It effectively allocates all of the available parking at the start of the weekend when the pressure is on, and then recycles available parks as people depart. No more getting locked out by people who drink lattes and arrive at 9.30 am.

With snowcraft coming up shortly now's a good chance to think about other days that you'll be wanting to have some time down at the hut. I'm going to reinforce that going mid-week offers some great advantages. Easy to park. very small lift queues and plenty of beds to choose from.

We are taking bookings online from our website [www.waikatoskiclub.co.nz](http://www.waikatoskiclub.co.nz) where you can check and book your preferred dates to secure your stay.

Keep an eye on the Ski website for our event calendar and get our weekly updates from facebook or by signing up to Skimail - our email update with the latest news.

Stephen Prendergast, Ski team leader

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### **From Nov 68 bulletin**

Avalanche	Ideal snow conditions for skiing with your mother-in-law
Chalet	French equivalent of 'Charlie'
Christie	A waitress at the Chateau
Pure Christie	What Christie did before she became a waitress
Certified instructor	Almost anyone with a European accent
Conditions excellent	Blizzard not raging at present
Conditions fair	It is pouring with rain
Lift ticket	A pass entitling bearer to join a queue at the chairlift and pass pleasantries with others who have been there all day.
Poma lift	A pommie girls' bra
Race weekend	We are going to have an orgy
Rope tow	A torture device for tearing arms out of their sockets or sleeves from jackets
Sitzmarks	Wet spot on the seat of your ski pants
Ski poles	Polish immigrants who like skiing
Sno-cat	A glamour puss when she meets another female wearing an identical outfit
Snow plough	Furrow made as you roll over and over on a steep slope

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**Did you know:** A bogle is the word for a mythical phantom?  
*(but our leader is for real!)*

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### **Mid-week Walks & Tramps**

We are continuing with the current format, having a walk or tramp on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. The activities have proven to be as varied as the group is and the communication via the Mid-week W & T s Group page on WhatsApp is working well.

If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone & text your request to Isla on 021 209 6539.

# Trip Reports

**Trip 2991**

**Richamond Range revisited**

**9-11 Mar**

Writing this on a blustery winter's day this tramp in the heat of summer seems so far away. We were indeed fortunate to have beautiful bluebird days, so necessary for an exposed alpine range and the views, which are everything.

I will add a 4th 'R' to the title: 'Relieved'. For despite the risks of catching Covid either prior to or on the 6-day tramp, despite possible slip damage on the last day, despite some exposed sections with loose scree and daunting uphill slogs, despite angry wasps and a close encounter with a helicopter, we had a great, injury free tramp.

Day 1 was a steady uphill climb in and out of the Hackett River to Starveall Hut at the bushline.

Day 2 was over the top to Slaty Hut for lunch then onto the evocatively named Old Man Hut. The final 500m downhill seemed to take far too long. We met, among others, Sarah, who as well as walking TA, is an artist in oils and every day she stops along the trail and paints a scene.

Day 3 was the highlight, the crux of the trip with a climb up onto Little Rintoul, a challenging sidle then another tortuous climb up to the top of Mt Rintoul, then rollicking travel to Mt Rintoul Hut for the night.

Day 4 was largely downhill as we re-entered the bush and emerged by a large picture-perfect lake and Tarn Lake Hut. Plenty of time for swimming, washing clothes, telling tales.

Day 5 once again downhill (steeply at times) to Mid Wairoa Hut where the brave had total immersion swims and I had a splash in the frigid water.

Final day, Day 6 exited off the Te Araroa Trail and made our way to civilisation by heading down the Wairoa River to the road's end.

Thanks to John McA, David T, Amanda C, Maureen F and Jim S for joining me. Keith Robbins (leader and scribe).

**Trip 2994**

**Hauhungatahi wilderness**

**19/20 Mar**

It's not often that I get the chance to go out hiking with the WTC. However, the trip through the Pureora forest coincided with a rare weekend away from work, so I quickly put my name down. This was to be a new experience for me as I hadn't been out on a true overnighiter with the club before. On previous trips we managed to access the huts from the road and therefore weight was not an issue, so it took me some time to get my gear together.

What to take and how much to take.... food, water, the big toastie pie machine or the small one? There was a lot to consider.

In no time at all the day of the tramp came, and I was almost ready. The morning dawned and, before I was able to get a coffee, I found myself in a van, piloted by Selwyn and Dianne, meandering through the King Country country roads.

After an uneventful drive we found ourselves at the starting point of our trip. I was waving goodbye to Selwyn & Dianne, they were to meet us 2 days later at the Waihaha hut, when I realised that the others were already kitted up and ready to leave. I reached for my pack and tried to swing it onto my back, but it wouldn't move. I hadn't realised how heavy it was. It seemed much lighter at home when my wife had helped me with it. I finally got it on and scurried along to catch the others. Luckily, they weren't too far ahead of me as they were queueing up to clamber over a stile that bridged a fence. When my turn came, I struggled over it and continued after my new friends, who were already at the next obstacle, the gate of a 2m high fence. I waited my turn to I clamber up the gate. As I went over the weight of my pack caused me to sway to and fro. I got to the top and swung a leg over the gate. My pack was rocking, I was rocking and so too was the gate. The lateral momentum finally proved too much, and I fell off. I landed on my back, my pack holding me down, and my arms and legs were waving in the air. For a time, I couldn't move, I felt like a sunbathing turtle. Eventually I rocked myself over, staggered to my feet and chased after the group who were now halted at a small stream crossing. I was pleased for the rest. It had been a hard 100m, I was hoping that the hut wasn't too far away.

The walk continued under a clear sky and through areas of regenerating bush. Juvenile kauri, rimu, miro and many other species of tree were seen. I also saw many bright blue mushrooms, but I put this down to exhaustion. I was so very tired.

After 2 hours of clambering up hills, and sliding down valleys, we came to a nice area and decided to stop for lunch. I was keen for this but I was worried that if I took off my pack that I may not have the energy to put it back on. It was just so very heavy. I was pleased that it was just the small toastie pie machine that I had with me. Judith noticed my discomfort and asked me what the problem was. I told her how I was struggling with the pack, so she asked me what I was carrying. "Just the basics" I replied. I went through my list, sleeping bag, tent, cooker, though I didn't mention the toastie pie machine, "and 6 litres of water" I added. "Hey everyone" Judith called out in a voice that was so loud that I think that she was trying to include the residents of nearby Taumarunui in the conversation. "Graham has 6 litres of water in his pack!" "Is that too much?" I asked, and 6 heads looked at me and nodded in unison. "How much food have you got?" she then asked. And I must admit that as I was telling her what I was carrying, it did seem to be a long list of items. I told her such, and then remembered that I also had a 5-meal pack of lamb stew and mashed potatoes. There was a stunned silence in the group, someone kindly commented that I must have had a reasonable level of fitness to carry such a weight up such a steep climb.

As everyone was too busy eating to talk, and there was also an absence of bird life, lunch continued in silence. I took advantage of this stop to eat as much food as I could, and to also tip out 5 litres of water to make the weight of my pack more manageable.

An hour after lunch we arrived at our destination for the night, the Hauhungaroa hut. It's a cute hut with 6 bunks and a fire inside, a tap and toilet on the outside, and views to the west from the veranda. It was a relief to drop our packs and rest while. As I unpacked, I looked at what I could leave behind in the hut, I decided on my 5 servings of lamb stew and a tin of baked beans. As I no longer had any use for my toastie pie machine I buried it at the bottom of my pack so that it couldn't be seen.

We spent a nice evening chatting and eating and then, as it got dark very early, we retired early. John and Cathy tented, while the rest of us stayed in the hut.

The morning sun rose, and so too did the aptly named Dawn. She was always up early, and always with a bubbly attitude and an enquiring mind.

The morning was clear, but cold, and with a hint of rain. We toggled up in our rain gear and left the hut, and a few kilos of my surplus food, behind. Finally, my pack was a manageable weight, it was bliss. However, I could still see the blue mushrooms so I decided that I still needed to be careful.

We continued in the light rain up a steep ridge surrounded by more regenerating bush and also the occasional giant tree that the loggers had spared from felling. After a time, we stopped to take off our jackets and have something to eat. At this time, I noticed Cathy staring intently into the bush, "I'm doing tree identification" she said. "See that one" she continued, pointing at a small sapling struggling to make its way up through the much bigger trees to get to the sunlight, "that's a small tree". She then gestured at a massive Rimu tree that towered over it, "and that's what we call a really big tree." That conversation occurred nearly 10 days ago, and I'm still not sure if she was joking or serious.

We slowly walked up the ridge, crossing small streams and large fallen trees. We watched our progress on John's GPS and our tiring bodies were pleased to see that the distance to the next hut was now shorter than the distance to the previous hut. Finally, we got the top of our climb and prepared for the descent. John turned to face the group, "it is pretty steep and muddy so please be careful." I tried to heed his advice but I very quickly disappeared from view, sliding down a steep, muddy slope, ripping open my very new, very expensive over trousers in the process.

We continued down, slipping and sliding, until we levelled out and emerged into another world. Here there was bird life a plenty, the bush was populated with chatty tuis and tomfits and waxeyes and other birds. And the bush, where once we saw saplings and juvenile trees, now we saw trees, really, really big trees according to Cathy. Rimu, Kauri, Totara, Miro and Kahikatea that poked holes in the sky.

Epiphytes clung precariously onto the trunks of the tallest trees while fronds of moss hung down in thick green veils to give the forest an eerie southern gothic feel. In the centre of all this life was the Waihaha river, a babbling brook that flowed swiftly in front of us, giving sustenance to everything that we saw. We stood there in silence, yup, even Judith, and took it all in.

Soon after we arrived at the Waihaha hut where Selwyn and Diane were waiting for us. Their commitment to the club, and to local conservation, is enormous. Our



trips, and the ecological landscape of the Waikato and King Country would be poorer without them.

The hut itself was slightly bigger than our previous night's accommodation. It housed 10 beds a big dining table, an inside sink, fire and a large bench space. Outside was another sink and the ubiquitous smelly toilet. John, Cathy and Judith chose to set tents in the camp area while the rest of us stayed indoors. I had been carrying a tent and sleeping mat with me, and was tempted to use them, but once the fire was lit I was easily swayed to sleep indoors.

That evening, before the light dimmed, Anneriek came up to me in the hut and suggested that we try to patch up my overtrousers. From her pack she pulled a roll of very strong duct tape, from my pack I grabbed some very sharp scissors, and together we managed to do a very good job of repairing my pants. It was a really special moment.

It was nice in the hut, the fire was roaring, the campers were chatting, some of them were finishing off books that they were enjoying, while others were finishing off bottles of Tia Maria that they too were enjoying.

The dim Monday morning light came shining through the high window and woke me. I found that somehow Selwyn had slipped on the squab that he was sleeping on and that he was now next to me and we were embraced in a cuddle. I awkwardly lifted his arm off me and got up and went outside. The sun was already warming the campsite and sitting on the veranda, lost in thought and enjoying the relative warmth, was Les. Les and I had walked together for much of the route, but had never really talked. I said good morning to him. He looked up at me and nodded. I said to him "you don't talk much do you Les?" He thought about this for some time and then looked back up at me and said "no." The conversation was over and I went back into the hut.

Our final day was to be an easy 3-hour walk, mainly downhill, and under a clear, warm sky. Now that my pack was the weight that it should have been on day 1, I was really looking forward to it. The walk started under the shelter of not so big trees, but it soon opened up and we could admire the surrounding countryside. We saw a sign that said "Bill's resting place". Whether it was his occasional resting place, or his final one, we did not know. After an hour or so we came across a side path that took us down some steep, slippery boulders. At the end of the path was a view of the river valley way down below us. A solid granite bed that was pockmarked with rock pools and rivulets. It was stunning to see, absolutely amazing, it was something that I'd fly around the globe to see. A bit more walking downhill and we were now level with the river. We were able to walk out on a wide expanse of granite and view from close up a smaller version of what we had seen before.

And suddenly it was over, we were at the van taking off our packs and putting on comfy shoes. I thought about the trip, how it had started so badly for me and ended up being an amazing experience with some lovely people. And I had learnt so

much. I knew now to weigh my packs, and maybe next time I won't take a family size tube of toothpaste.

But my biggest pearl of wisdom came from John MacArthur.

When I told him that I was worried that I might snore in the hut, he told me "if you're not snoring, you're not really sleeping." Graham C (scribe).

### Trip 3008

### Rotorua walks

12 June

With Selwyn leading and Dianne driving we arrived at the Envirocentre in Pirongia township (the headquarters of the Pirongia Restoration Society) for a debrief on the predator control methods we would be involved with today.

After watching much rain forecast for Sunday morning all week, the storm luckily blew itself out overnight and there was perfect cool sunny tramping weather for us. Starting at O'Shea Road we walked up Wharauoa track checking the twelve double DOC 200 traps every 75m. The eggs were replaced and two rats and a stoat were removed.



A weasel is weasily recognisable and a stoat is stoatally different! Actually, the stoat is longer and heavier than the

The best goal one can have

All photos by Joanna Greig

weasel with a longer tail and a black tuft on the end. The white belly has a more distinct straight line with the brown coat. Stoats are hugely destructive to native species, even birds larger than themselves.



The lunch stop with a view



Weasels are rarer than stoats due to type of food source but still destructive to smaller native species. We climbed up the quite challenging steep track to the junction of Mahakura track where we had beautiful views and lunch in the sun.

The rain did leave us with a bit of a muddy slippery track and there were a couple of kerphlumps coming down including my chin plant into a prickly fern! Grateful for the handy chains on the steepest rocky parts. Christopher checked his trap line on the way back down this track to Grey Road. Volunteers are always gratefully welcomed to help in any way in the many predator control groups around the country and it's a good meaningful way to be in the bush. An enjoyable tramp with nice chatty company seeing the good works being done to protect our vulnerable native wildlife.

Thanks also to Dianne for driving.



Julia, Les, Selwyn, John, Amanda, Barb, Maureen, Christopher, Rizal, Sandra, Dianne. Photographer/scribe: Joanna G

That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it. Andy Rooney

## **Trip 3010**

## **Matariki Weekend at Mt Ruapehu**

**24-26 June**

This tramping weekend was all about FUN, FOOD and FESTIVITIES.

Fifteen keen trampers arrived at Waikato Hut on Friday to celebrate Matariki and take advantage of what the mountain had to offer. From National Park onwards we were rewarded with beautiful clear views of the snow-capped mountains. In the afternoon three adventurous trampers who had crampons set off up Ruapehu to explore. The remainder of us headed away from snow and ice to walk the Silica Rapids Track; a pleasant two hour walk over volcanic rocks to the silica rapids. The loop track followed a stream through beech forest back to Whakapapa village. Back at the Hut we walked in to find a glowing log fire and warm lounge. An array of cheeses, crackers and nibbles set the scene for a very pleasant evening by the fire. Peter as usual kept us entertained.

Saturday's weather was wet as predicted so the obvious choice was the Taranaki Falls. The track into the falls was on the muddy side due to recent rain but we were rewarded with a great volume of water cascading down the falls. Very spectacular! Jacqui and Nicola found the best vantage point for their photos while others ate lunch. The well-maintained return loop track took us through forest and bush which provided shelter from the chilly mountain wind.

Jacqui produced a splendid traditional New Zealand meal that evening to round off the day. On the menu were predinner snacks of salmon pate, smoked kahawai, crackers and of course, mulled wine. Then came roast lamb, lots of roast vegetables, broccoli and pavlova, whipped cream, and kiwifruit, all cooked to perfection. After dinner we had the formal part of Matariki where Ron explained the significance of the Māori New Year, with support from Jodi. We each were given a small booklet outlining the meaning, ceremonies and traditional foods associated with Matariki. An illustration of the stars along with their Māori names was included. Jodi said that Matariki could be likened to the US Thanksgiving celebrations and was all about Whanau and togetherness. A karakia to finish was led by Jodi.

Jodi suggested we play charades. There was some initial reluctance as many of us had not played for years. Before long we were all getting into the swing of things and enjoying the challenge of guessing the titles of films, books, and songs. It turned out to be a lot of fun with heaps of laughter. Our group had a diverse age range thus providing film titles from recent to golden oldie classics. Good on you for coming up with this idea Jodi.

Early Sunday morning was forecast to be cloudy so the chance of seeing Matariki (The Pleiades) were slim. This did not stop Jacqui from getting up at 4am with her camera. Unfortunately, by 5am when these stars would be appearing in the sky the cloud had come over. However, the rest of us woke to a clear view of Ruapehu so out came the cameras before breakfast. The hut was cleaned in good time so we could head to the mountain. A ride on the gondola to Knoll Ridge Café gave excellent views. Just fabulous. Coffee and food and views, what else could we ask for?

Our final excursion was a short walk into the Tawhai Falls just ten minutes off the Bruce Road about three kilometres below the Chateau. This location was used for filming scenes from Lord of the Rings, (Gollum's Pool). The first viewing platform is at the top of the falls. The track then continues down to the bottom which enables access to boulders and rocks giving a great view of the cascading water.

Thank you, Jacqui and Ron for making this a magical long weekend.

Participants: Jacqui, Ron, Peter, Les, Nicola, Amanda, Beatrix, Margaret, Nathan, Basil, Prativa, Jim, Josh, Jodi, Lois (scribe).

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### **Trip 3011**

### **Rotorua walks**

**3 July**

On a very foggy morning a full van load of 12 left Hamilton to head to the Rotorua area for 2 reasonably easy tramps, we drove to the Mamaku Plateau and through the very small township where we hit a very bumpy, holed filled gravel road with the van at times having a rough ride ! We were surprised once at the start of the Mokaihaha Track (south end road) that there was a very misty rain falling so we all got out our jackets & warm woollen hats on to start the walk, Sharon S arrived from Rotorua & we made our way into the bush. We made good progress on a reasonably good track, with many spotting amazing fungi with different colours & shapes. At some point we stopped and was visited by a Robin who was not afraid of humans & bounced its way very close to our boots while helping itself to some tasty worms. We came to Lake Rotohokahoka which was a photographers dream with many of us taking amazing photos, it was quite eerie with the misty rain. We came across extensive mixed podocarp-tawa-kamahia forest which was amazing & we also stumbled across a very old hut. This tramp took longer than anticipated & we came out onto South Road a 15min walk back to the South End carpark. We then drove into Rotorua to the Redwoods main car parking area (Whakarewarewa Forest) where we all had lunch, even though it was chilly there was no misty rain - it was very busy with many walkers & mountain bikers out enjoying themselves. After lunch & with Sharon S leaving us, we took the Tokorangi Pa Track which is two thirds of the walk through the amazing Redwoods then we climbed up through the bush (only seeing 2 lots of hardy mountain bikers) to see some viewpoints of the city. We reached the fortification trenches of an old pa site & due to the lateness of the 1<sup>st</sup> tramp we decided to head back down the way we came & not do the whole 11.4km loop track. We arrived at the carpark around 4pm & headed back to Hamilton arriving at approx 6pm. It was a very enjoyable day with many possibilities of further tramps/bike rides in this area & to return to complete the Tokorangi Pa Loop track. Many thanks to Selwyn for leading this trip & for Dianne for getting us back safely. Fellow trampers were: Selwyn & Dianne J, Becs, Tracey, John & Jean W, Jeanette D, Maureen F, David V, Mariann L, & scribe Nette

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*Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt." - John Muir*



## *From the committee table:*

**New members:** Anneriek de Jong, Julia Lile, David Villacorta, Amanda Singh, Alana Rowe and welcome back to Max Greer

**Membership:** We have 185 tramping members this month. Your FMC cards will be coming to you now. Watch for your FMC booklet with it stapled to the front cover.

**From the transport officer:** The club has recently been advised that the pricing schedule for CCR is changing and this will mean that our departure times for many future trips will need to be given much more consideration. e.g. can we leave earlier on Saturday morning and make full use of the costs of the van for a weekend, rather than leave on Friday night and still be required to pay for the whole day on Friday even though we would have used the vehicle for the evening period only. Or do we travel at earlier times on Friday or add the cost of the extra day to the fare?

The Hertz company charges us from the time the key is picked up so collecting the key on Saturday morning before their offices close means we start paying on Saturday even though we may not actually take the vehicle from their yard until Sunday morning. It seems that if we collect the key from the BP station on Sunday morning the contract is deemed to start on Sunday. i.e. we pay for the time we actually use the vehicle.”

**From the Pirongia Restoration Society:** The team leader (Richard Still) for the mustelid programme that the Pirongia Restoration Society operates on Mt. Pirongia would like to say a very grateful thanks to those who went on trip 3008, 19<sup>th</sup> June for their assistance with monitoring the stoat traps along the Wharauroa track. During the past year the whole operation has been able to remove 245 rats, 47 hedgehogs, 32 stoats, and 86 others such as kittens or identifiable pests. This work is giving the bird life a real helping hand. It is hoped that by the time you are reading this a further 10 kōkako will have been released near the Grey road shelter. It will put the number of released kōkako at 50, and the total number identified on the maunga at approximately 75. Great work team.

If you are interested in helping with construction of 100 more traps, putting them out in the field, or just regularly monitoring a stoat line please contact Dianne & Selwyn June 0274978151 for more information. Your help would be welcomed.

Over the weekend of August 13/14<sup>th</sup>, the Pirongia Society is running a camp primarily to introduce a new group of University students to the conservation work the Society does in the Okahukura valley. Seasonal conditions dictate that the ‘camp’ will actually be at the Lions Lodge there. (But don’t forget Rizal is leading a trip up the Pylon track on the Sunday as part of the tramping club’s programme). The aim is to visit another block of the valley and re-nail all the bait stations in it, then learn how to do 5 minute bird counts (so start learning how to recognise bird calls if you can), pre-1080 drop. If we have time and the resources,

we'll construct something around the dactylanthus plants near the lodge that are in danger of being uprooted by pigs. The seeds for the plants were scattered there some 12-15 years ago so having them succeed in growing is quite a triumph for the plants' survival. The weekend will be a BYO food & drink, and private transport affair. Those with prior experience of this work welcome to enjoy this lovely forest and do a bit of work at the same time. Enquiries to Dianne and Selwyn June, 0274978151.

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*Snippets from here and there...*

- There is a 1080drop planned by DoC Pureora within the period of August 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of November. An aerial drop of pre-feed will be carried out 2 weeks before the 1080-laced bait is dropped. The weather will play an integral role as to when any activity begins.
- Recently your editor received a request from an Auckland-based bookdealer wanting to purchase some copies of our 70<sup>th</sup> reunion booklet we published last year. They were duly despatched but it left us with no copies for our archives so your editor duly approached the Hamilton Print & graphics company who did the original printing. Fortunately, they still had a digital copy of the booklet on file and were able to print more copies. The best thing is that we have been charged at the same rate as when last years' copies were printed. This means a big thankyou is due the company and we hope you can support them with your future printing requirements too,

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**OBITUARIES**

It was with sadness that we noted the passing of 2 of our earliest club members.

**Margaret Brown** is the sister of life member Annette Kidd (formerly King) and aunty to our King family members. Margaret was aged 90 when she died on March 19<sup>th</sup> in Hamilton

**Doris Cecily (Dorrie) Lee** joined the club in February 1951, just 8 months after the club began. By June of 1951 she became the treasurer, the secretary from 1952-54, and as was often the case for the ladies (and occasional men) of the day was lined up to look after the supper at the clubs' August meeting. On Oct 5<sup>th</sup>, 1952 she led a trip up Mt. Pirongia, in 1953 a trip up Karioi, and a working party to Waikato Hut in 1960.

Dorrie was 95 when she died on June 6<sup>th</sup> in Hamilton

...from the DoC website....

➤ DoC is closing a cave in the Ōparara Basin in Kahurangi National Park for a year to protect rare spiders which live in it. Crazy Paving Cave is home to the rare and unusual Nelson cave spider/*Spelungulae cavernicola*. With a leg span of 13cm and a 3cm long body it's New Zealand's largest spider.



Nelson cave spider Photo by Richard Rossiter

spider population's response to the removal of human visitors." Nelson cave spiders are also found in Golden Bay. They are protected by the Wildlife Act 1953.

They live near cave entrances rather than deep in caves and dine mostly on cave wētā finding their prey by vibration. The young are born and raised in egg sacs which hang from the cave ceiling of the cave almost like small golf balls. Each sac can contain up to 50 small spiders.

Nelson cave spiders are thought to be directly descended from the earliest true spiders and may be the missing link between primitive spiders - from the time of Gondwana 350 million years ago - and modern spiders.

Scientists have estimated that baby Nelson cave spiders take two to three years to mature. Most other spiders complete their entire life cycle in a year.

Crazy Paving Cave will close for visitors from 1 June 2022 for 12 months.

➤ Rat invasion on Ulva island. DoC will consult with the Rakiura/Stewart Island community on plans to deal with a rat incursion on predator-free Ulva

Senior Biodiversity Ranger Scott Freeman says surveys have shown spider egg sac numbers decreasing in the cave which may be due to the number of human visitors. "The number of spiders seen have actually increased from about 2019 onwards, possibly due to a decrease in visitor numbers associated with egg sac has been seen since 2018. COVID. However, only one egg sac has been seen since 2018.

Breeding is the real long-term driver of the population so we want to close the cave to see if this will allow breeding to improve. Closing the cave means we can monitor the

Island/Te Wharawhara. An incursion response after a rat was detected in February, has failed to remove all rats, which have now spread to other parts of the island. Ulva Island is within Paterson Inlet, 800 m off Rakiura/Stewart Island – an easy swimming distance for rats. It first achieved predator-free status in 1997 and has since become a sanctuary for many native species, including brown kiwi/tokoeka, kākā, kākārīki, yellowhead/mohua, tieke/South Island Saddleback, and many more. DoC Rakiura Operations Manager Ren Leppens says it's disappointing intensive efforts to stamp out the incursion have failed, and the priority now is to make a plan with the Rakiura community. DoC will be working with local iwi, the community, landowners and Ulva Island tourism operators, to come up with a strategy to deal with the rats and protect precious wildlife on the island. Some possible options include ongoing trapping to maintain lower rat numbers, or once again eradicating rats using ground-based or aerial toxins. Until rats are eradicated from the Rakiura mainland, Ulva Island will need to be continuously defended, Despite ongoing trapping efforts, at least one rat/year has infiltrated the island since 2012, most likely swimming over, although they may also have arrived on visitors' boats or stowed away in gear. The issue with ongoing rat invasions on Ulva Island highlights the benefits of a Predator Free Rakiura, as once rats have been eradicated from the Rakiura mainland, Ulva Island will be significantly more secure as a sanctuary for our treasured biodiversity. Rats have reinvaded Ulva Island more than 20 times since 1997, with most incursions successfully thwarted. In 2010 an incursion resulted in a breeding population on the island and an eradication operation was undertaken to restore its predator-free status.

➤ Smeagol the 'gravel maggot' leaves its' rare mark on the remote West Coast. An extremely rare species of sea slug or 'gravel maggot' has been detected for the first time on a remote beach in South Westland. In late January, a team of three scientists from the University of Canterbury (UoC) Marine Ecology Research Group and two Māhaki ki Taiao rangers travelled to Hautai Marine Reserve, 85km south of Haast. Hautai holds the title of New Zealand's most remote mainland marine reserve. The trip was a great success, despite COVID and some wild weather complicating trip planning. "We saw a large storm system approaching and managed to squeeze this work into a tight weather window, and get helicoptered out shortly before it hit," says UoC researcher Shawn Gerrity. This trip is part of DoC's marine monitoring work. It was repeating monitoring work last done in 2017 to see if any changes have occurred. Aside from repeating the previous monitoring, this team also employed a new and growing technology for detecting the presence of species: eDNA.

eDNA works by passing a litre of seawater through a very fine filter. DNA fragments are left in the water by plants and animals that have been in the area recently. These fragments collected in the filter are sent to Wilderlab in Wellington to be analysed. About 500 different species were detected from the eDNA samples from Hautai Marine Reserve, ranging from bacteria to dolphins.

“We were incredibly shocked and delighted that the results came back confirming the presence of *Smeagol* within the sample that was taken” says Don Neale, Marine Ranger for the West Coast.

The gravel maggot’s scientific name, *Smeagol*, comes from the mysterious pale-skinned character in *The Lord of the Rings*. “The gravel maggot has a similar lifestyle, living up to 30cm down under the gravel beach surface. That makes it very hard to find and study, but the eDNA method is one way to do that.”

“It has previously only been found in two places – a small beach on the south coast of Wellington, which was thought to be its only home, until it was discovered that a genetically-distinct population also exists in Kaikōura. It’s not yet known whether this new population at Hautai Marine Reserve is its own species or related to one of the two known populations, which are 750km and 950km away, respectively.”

“To figure this out would be a pretty major undertaking,” says Don. “We would need to go back in to Hautai and spend some time digging carefully around gravel or under boulders to see if we can find any live gravel maggots there.” This may not be likely any time soon, considering access to the study area requires a helicopter or a two-day walk from the nearest road end. But Don hopes there will be an opportunity to do some searching the next time monitoring is done around the Hautai Marine Reserve.

Little is known about the *Smeagol* sea slug or its ecological role. “Although they’re very small and inconspicuous, coastal animals like *Smeagol* likely have some role to play in recycling nutrients from beach-cast kelp back into the thriving ecosystems of the surrounding oceans. Their name, ecology, and threat status all give *Smeagol* a bit of an iconic status. And it goes to show how much more there is to learn about our marine environments, with dozens of new species discovered in New Zealand every year.”

➤ DoC ecologist Brian Rance believes he’s found a **new plant species** high in the Livingstone Mountains of Southland and is thrilled by the implications of the rare find. The discovery was made during an expedition at the end of January, when Brian was assisting Te Papa scientist Heidi Meudt in surveying for forget-me-not (*Myosotis*) species. Brian first came across the unusual plant in 1995, suspecting then that it might be unique. Returning to the Livingstone Mountains nearly three decades later, he was pleased to see it was still there and to have a chance to study and photograph it.

The plant is a small rosette-forming herbaceous plant 5–8 cm in diameter with a strong taproot. It has been given a temporary tag name of *Chaerophyllum* sp. ‘Livingstone.’ He says it is distinctive from other *Chaerophyllum* species because it is growing in a very exposed, alpine gravel habitat on ultramafic or serpentine geology, which is unusual for that group of plants. It has relatively robust leaves, a stout tap root and large seeds. Its flower and fruit characteristics confirm that it is a *Chaerophyllum* species, which is a member of the carrot family – though this



plant may not be edible. The ‘new’ plant will need additional research to rigorously compare it to its close relatives before being formally considered a new species. This research could take some time, but if it turns out the population is a new species, then its threat status would need to be determined. It is likely to have a threat status because of its small population size and very limited geographical extent. And if it does turn out to be a new species, why is finding such a tiny plant exciting for New Zealand? “Who knows what special chemicals or properties it may have – for all we know a new plant could hold the cure to a disease Any new discovery is a taonga of New Zealand. Our flora is part of what makes New Zealand such a distinctive and special place and is part of our national identity. It is exciting to think that there are still plants out there that have not previously been seen or recognised as distinctive. The world would be a sadder and less interesting place if species went extinct before they were even recognised or named. It was ironic that this field trip was being undertaken to collect additional information to support the naming or description of some new species of forget-me-not”.

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.... *from the FMC website*....

➤ Proposed land classifications for West Coast stewardship land announced. Reclassification recommendations for stewardship land on the West Coast have been announced. The West Coast is the first region to go through this process, and recommendations include reclassifying approximately 77,000 hectares (12%) as National Park, 347,000 hectares (54%) as Conservation Park and 182,000 hectares (28%) as Historic Reserve. The recommendations and Conservation Value Reports for each area can be found at [www.doc.govt.nz/stewardship-land-documents](http://www.doc.govt.nz/stewardship-land-documents). The recommendations have been made by independent panels, which were set up last year to reclassify stewardship land. FMC commends the Minister of Conservation, the Department of Conservation, and the panels for their intent and mahi. Public notification will close on 26 July. The reports and recommendations are detailed and thorough, and FMC will be submitting on the recommendations.

➤ Recreation and conservation in the Lindis are the winners in the Dunstan Downs Crown pastoral lease’s tenure review, with 99% of the property to become public conservation land. The tenure review agreement for the 12,351.4 hectare property, which spans Canterbury and Otago, was announced recently by LINZ. Dunstan Downs stretches from the Ahuriri River in the north to Lindis Pass in the west, and to Mt St Bathans in the south. Approximately 80% of the area is sparsely vegetated or rocky high country with little to no value for grazing, but the land is of high landscape and ecological importance and has strong conservation and recreation values.

LINZ Head of Crown Property Sonya Wikitera says under the agreement for Dunstan Downs around 12,250 hectares will become public conservation land. This is significantly higher than the 9,500 hectares proposed under the preliminary proposal.



Now what shall I have?

Photo by Jacqui Dick





Silica Rapids Falls

photo by Nicola Guy



Scenes from Matariki weekend

photos Jacqui Dick





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