



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

February 2019



Selwyn admiring a Spaniard grass on the Waipakihi river Photo by Amanda Collins

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WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB

P. O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

Free to members

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

BULLETIN No 802

February 2019

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Selwyn June	Secretary: Lois Rowell	Treasurer: John Grace
Members: John McArthur (VP tramp)	Mary Reed (VP Ski)	Stephen Phillips
Allan Wickens	Russell King	Stacey Thompson
Mike Nightingale	minean@xtra.co.nz	Doug Pagel
		8562394

Tramping Subcommittee

Tramping email: waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com

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Treasurer: John Grace	jaas@xtra.co.nz	0292004454	
Secretary: Lois Rowell	loiserowell@gmail.com	8565369	
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Assistant captain: Doug Pagel	burtm35@yahoo.co.nz	8582445	
Membership: Margaret Robbins	kandm.robbins@gmail.com	8536921	
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Treasurer: John Davies	cjdavies@xtra.co.nz	8237388	
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**Waikato Tramping Club account:** 03 1555 0091625 02 (& include the trip number)

## CLUB NIGHT: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March

Senior Recreation Ranger Craig Summers is based in the BoP and was involved in the development of the Kaimai Recreation Strategy, and the Conservation Management Strategy in 2017. These are key documents for the park's future. There are over 350 km of walking and tramping tracks in the Kaimais. The Kaimai Ridgeway Trust is working on re-establishing the North-South route and providing a number of new huts along the track. With concerns around Kauri dieback impacting many traditional walking tracks Craig can provide an update on what this means for the Kaimais.

**Note the new start time for our meeting**

Venue: St Stephens Church Hall (corner of Ohaupo Road and Mahoe Street).

Time: Doors open at 7.00pm, programme starts at 7.30pm.

**Cost: \$2**

**Social activity:** come along to a film evening at the Haines' at 11 Alison St on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March. Start time is 6.30pm. Bring along your refreshments, a salad to share, and your meat to BBQ. Dessert and tea/coffee will be served at 'half-time'. The film this time will be an informative one from Peter Jackson's portfolio. Contact the hosts on 8395932 for further information. No need to book

**Cost: \$20**

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2018 - 2019

|      |              |       |                                 |                  |
|------|--------------|-------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 2808 | postponed    | E/M   | River Crossing training         | See trip 2814    |
| 2809 | 23/24 Feb    | E-M   | Exploring Coromandel Part 2     | Allan Wickens    |
| 2810 | 24 Feb-2 Mar | F     | Marks Flat the hard way         | John Davies      |
| 2811 | 24 Feb-1 Mar | E     | Cobb River                      | Colin Jones      |
| 2812 | 3 Mar        | E     | Waihou walkway                  | Club captain     |
| 2813 | 3 – 9 Mar    | E & M | Poulter R./ Arthurs Pass        | Selwyn June      |
|      | 9/10 Mar     | E/M   | Waikato Hut –workparty          | Stephen Phillips |
| 2814 | 9/10 Mar     | E/M   | River crossing                  | Club captain     |
| 2815 | 10-15 Mar    | M     | Travers Sabine                  | John McArthur    |
| 2816 | 17-22 Mar    | F     | Canterbury high country         | John McArthur    |
| 2817 | 17 Mar       | E     | Mokaihaha(Mamaku)               | Doug Pagel       |
| 2818 | 23/24 Mar    | M     | Pirongia(Bell/Mahaukura tracks) | Allan Wickens    |
|      | 29 Mar       |       | Film evening                    | Graham Haines    |
| 2819 | 31 Mar       | M     | Pinnacles/Coromandel            | John McArthur    |
| 2820 | 6/7 Apr      | Var   | Ruapehu                         | John McArthur    |

|      |           |     |                                   |                                |
|------|-----------|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2821 | 14 Apr    | E/M | Maungatautari traverse            | Doug Pagel                     |
| 2822 | 19-22 Apr |     | Great Barrier or Taranaki circuit | Club captain or Damon Crawford |
| 2823 | 28 Apr    | E   | Cycle -Velodrome to Karapiro      | David Cumming                  |
| 2824 | 4/5 May   | E/M | Mt Tarawera pine pulling          | Selwyn June                    |
| 2825 | 12 May    | M   | Waiorongomai - Te Aroha peak      | John Wilson                    |

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.

**Transport:** Juniors will be charged 50% of the senior non-members' rate.

#### 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. DONT FORGET: You can book online from our website too

Bookings and cancellations for all trips must be made by the Monday night prior. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip. *Please give your landline when making a booking.*

Departure Point: Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the McCaw Lewis Chapman car park. 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.

## Trip Descriptions

**Trip 2808** The river crossing trip planned for 17 Feb has been postponed to 10<sup>th</sup> March due to lack of water in the river

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### **Trip 2809**

### **Exploring Coromandel**

**23/24 Feb**

This week-end we will endeavour to complete the trips we had initially planned to do back over Queen's Birthday weekend. On that occasion we were dogged with bad weather but still managed to do about 70% of the planned short walks. This time, over the 2-day week-end, we will head up to the western Coromandel and do walks based at Coromandel. Prominent walks include Castle Rock, Opera Point, Waiiau Waterfalls, Waioumu Kauri Grove, Waitaia Track and New Chums Beach.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens

**Grade:** E-M (short walks only -max 3 hours)

Email: [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)

**Transport:** Senior member \$40- 45                      Senior Non-member \$45-50 Plus one night's accommodation at Coromandel (back-packer plus)

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### **Trip 2810**

### **Marks Flat – the hard way**

**24 Feb-2 Mar**

This is a Fit trip in a Wilderness Area- not for the faint hearted! 8 days / 7 nights with own tents

Meeting place is Hokitika Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, ready to start early Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Paringa River Bridge on the State Highway approx. 3 hrs south of Hokitika

We expect to take 4 days getting to Marks Flat via the Paringa River, McCullaugh River and Saddle Creek. We'll have two nights at Marks Flat giving us a day to explore Mt Hooker before returning over Otoko Pass and head down the Otoko River back to our start point. Then we will drive back to Hokitika and stay night of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

**Leader:** John Davies

**Ph:** 027 4772209

**Grade:** F

**Email:** [cjdavies@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cjdavies@xtra.co.nz)

**Transport:** private arrangements

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### **Trip 2811**

### **Cobb River**

**24 Feb-3 Mar**

I have designed this tramp for every level of fitness and experience. Walking times will be 4-5 hrs/day but with options if your fitness and/or weather permits. We will be staying in huts but as some are only 12 bunks a sleeping mat is essential, preferably also a tent. The Cobb Valley road is still not repaired so we will therefore undertake either a loop, starting at Graham Valley Rd or, if the road is open, up the Cobb Valley. The minibus cost return is \$130/person/return and we need 5 people minimum. I am required to pay for the bus up front so require this amount to be paid into the WTC account with your booking the account number is on the bottom of the front page of the bulletin and the code word is COBB. If the trip doesn't go ahead you will be refunded. We will be on the tops for 3 days so good gear is essential.

If we can start at Cobb Valley then we begin at day 2. Otherwise starting point is Graham Valley road, day 1.

Day 1: Trilobite Hut.

Day 2: Fenella Hut

Day 3: Back to Trilobite Hut

Day 4: either Balloon Hut or Salisbury Lodge.

Day 5: Options are: 1) a day trip to Gordon Pyramid; 2) Dry Rock Shelter; 3) continue to Mt Arthur Hut; 4) do a day trip to Mt Arthur (12 hour return).

Day 6: Return to our bus.

It is essential that everyone is on Nelson on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> in time to start the next day at 9am. We will return to Nelson on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

I am awaiting confirmation of YHA accommodation options and will arrange for gas if required. Contact the leader for more information

**Leader:** Colin Jones      **Ph:** 021 972500      **Grade:** as above

**Email:** [colin@cicl.co.nz](mailto:colin@cicl.co.nz)

**Transport:** private arrangements + \$130 for return transfer.

**Accommodation:** TBA

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**Trip 2812**      **Waihou Walkway**      **3 Mar**

This interesting and historical walk is on the upper reaches of the Waihou River, near Putaruru. Water in this section of the Waihou Stream is totally spring fed. It originally comes from the Mamaku Plateau and takes anywhere between 50-100 years to reach the Blue Spring. This water is blue because it is of high optical purity. Our walk is about 10 kms in length and takes 3 hours. While we are in the area we will also do a one-hour walk at Jim Barnett Reserve, west of Putaruru. This Reserve is managed by a combination of groups including Forest and Bird. The large totara and rimu are remnants of the original Waiotu Bush.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens      **Ph:** 027 950 9546      **Grade:** E

**Email:** [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)

**Transport :** Senior member \$25-30      Senior Non-member \$30-35

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**Trip 2813**      **Poulter Valley/Arthurs Pass NP**      **3-9 Mar**

Easy walking up a wide, beech forest-clad Canterbury valley on the eastern edge of the National Park. The route will be from Andrews Shelter over Casey Saddle to the Poulter River and thence up river to Poulter Hut. A day will be spent on side trips to Lake Minchin and Minchin Pass. Return down the Poulter and across Binsler Saddle. Up to 6 hours walking per day. Tenting is required, otherwise it would be long days. A further day will be spent on day trip at Arthurs Pass, e.g. to Temple Basin.

Sunday: leave Christchurch at 9 am; 2 hours travel to Andrews Shelter. Walk to Hallelujah Flats (7.3 km, 2½ hrs) or to site of old Casey Hut (14.8 km, 5½ hrs).

Camping. Steady climb from 600m to 900m asl over Casey Saddle and then down to 600m again at the Poulter River.

Monday: Casey Hut site to Poulter Hut along the Poulter valley. 8.5 km about 3 hrs. Poulter Hut sleeps 10.

Tuesday: day walks from Poulter Hut, such as Lake Minchin (1 hr) and/or Minchin Pass (3 hrs).

Wednesday: Poulter Hut, down river to Aeroplane Flat 14.1 km 5 hrs.

Thursday: Aeroplane Flat to Pete Stream then over Binsler Saddle (1200 m) to Andrews Shelter. 16.5 km, 6 hrs. Camp at Shelter or go to Arthurs Pass village accommodation.

Friday: day walks at Arthurs Pass e.g. Temple Basin and return to Christchurch by 5 pm.

**Leader:** Selwyn June      **Ph:** 07 843 3066 or 0274 978151      **Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Transport cost for hired minibus may be up to \$100 pp (unless private cars are available or we use a bus dropoff). We may get a friend in Christchurch to drive the minibus to the Park and then pick us up.

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**Trip 2814** **River crossing training** **10 Mar**

The annual river crossing course is a popular event within the Club training roster and for good reason. After leaving Hamilton we travel to Rangitoto Station at the foot of the Pureora Range. There is an hour's walk across farmland and down a 4WD track to the upper reaches of the Waipa River. Here we practice our river crossing techniques. This includes how and where to cross a river, the pitfalls and dangers of river crossings and techniques used. We end the day practicing "pack floating", a handy way of recovering from a mishap while crossing a river. Finally we walk back out to the van and head back to Hamilton.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens **Email:** [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com) **Grade:** E/M

**Transport :** Senior member \$25-30 Senior Non-member \$30-35

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**Trip 2815** **Travers-Sabine** **10-16 Mar**

This is a well known tramp of the Nelson Lakes with a few options for extending the scope, depending on the fitness and speed of the party. The plan is to gather in Nelson on the 10<sup>th</sup> and shuttle up to St Arnaud for the start on 11<sup>th</sup>. And then:

Day 1: (11<sup>th</sup>) starts with the shuttle trip to St Arnaud, then a beautiful walk up the shores of Lake Rotoiti, about 8km to Lakehead Hut.

Day 2: Is a longer day uphill to Upper Travers Hut – about 16km. There is an option to branch off up to the Cupola Hut set at the bush edge in a rugged mountain valley, for an extra 6km return and 500m climb.

Day 3: is up-and-over the Travers Saddle (1787m), a climb of about 500m altitude (2km walk) into dramatic high tops. Then down and down we go into the East Branch of the Sabine river to West Sabine Hut (~6km total). That doesn't sound like much of a day so we could then trot off up the Sabine to Blue Lake Hut, approximately 7 km to a fabulous spot and the pristine Blue Lake (no swimming!!).

Day 4: will either be a long 20 km downhill from Blue Lake Hut, or 13 km from West Sabine hut, along the beautiful Sabine River to the Sabine Hut.

Day 5: starts with a grunty uphill climb of 1100m on the Mt Cedric Track to the top of Mt Cedric and on to the Angelus Hut, or not the Angelus hut. This is not only one of the popular places for Kiwi Trampers, but also on the Te Araroa trail – so it will be busy and we will find somewhere nice to camp. Only about 7km but worth camping in the tops.

Day 6: and we are on our way out, along the Robert Ridge about 11km to the carpark and shuttle back to Nelson accommodation, restaurant and bar.

Plan to go home on day 7. As noted, this is very popular country and we won't be alone – bring tents. There are alternatives and distractions so the final plan may be a little different.

**Leader:** John McArthur

**Ph:** 021 2889641

**Grade:** M/F

**Email:** [mcarthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcarthur@outlook.co.nz)

**Transport:** personal arrangements

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**Trip 2816** **Rangitata, Macaulay, & Godley rivers** **17-22 Mar**

This is Canterbury high country. The plan so far is to gather in Christchurch or Geraldine on the 17<sup>th</sup> March. Monday 18<sup>th</sup> we shuttle up the Rangitata River beyond Mesopotamia, then walk up to Growler Hut.

Tuesday: up The Growler and over Balaclava Saddle sidling around to get down into Toms Stream. From there down Toms Stream into the Macaulay River valley and across to the palatial Macaulay Hut. (Hot bath under the stars?).

Wednesday: up the Tindill Stream into the Tindill Basin and over into the Godley River North Branch. Down this river and through the little gorgy end piece will get us into the Godley river, and depending on our progress we will camp here or see if we can get to the Red Stag Hut – a very small 6 berth.

Thursday: on up the Godley to the historic Godley Hut – well worth the effort.

Friday: a day of exploring the glacier country at the head of the Godley.

Saturday: walk out to the junction of the Godley and Macaulay for pick-up at the road end. Unfortunately a long slog down this typical braided Canterbury river. Saturday night in Tekapo, travelling home on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>.

Still some details of shuttle and hut accommodation to work out.

**Leader:** John McArthur **Ph:** 021 2889641 **Grade:** F

**Email:** [mcArthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcArthur@outlook.co.nz)

**Transport:** personal arrangements to get to meeting point.

Shuttle at start approx. \$60. Shuttle at end approx. \$120 (tbc)

**Accommodation:** tba

**Trip 2817** **Mokaihaha (Mamaku)** **17 Mar**

Head to Paradise Springs Rd to walk to the summit of Mt Ngongotaha early in the day before it becomes too warm. On the way we will detour to check out the 40m rata tree on the loop track. From there we will head off to Mamaku and head in a SE direction to find the start to the Mokaihaha track which takes us to Lake Rotohokakoha. This is a most unusual lake in that it is completely surrounded by native forest and possibly not well seen from above because of the proximity of the surrounding forest. An interesting trip and in the shade during this hot summer. It is also an area where kokako are to be heard. The day is an easy one and plenty of time for chatting. Come along and explore two different places the club doesn't often visit.

**Leader:** Doug Pagel **Ph:** 8582445 or 027 3463844 **Grade:** E

Transport : Senior member \$20-30 Senior Non-member \$25-35

**Trip 2818** **Pirongia (Bell/Mahaukura tracks)** **23/24 Mar**

This trip covers two lesser used tracks on Mount Pirongia. Both are quite different in nature. The Bell track is the longest way to get to Pahautea Hut and takes about 7 hours. Starting at Kaniwhaniwha via Blue Bell Stream, the first and longest part traverses some long relatively flat sections before the final climb up to The Cone at 953 metres. The hut is not far past this point. We stay Saturday night at the hut. As it may be full we will have to carry tents and a fly sheet as back-ups. On Sunday, there is about a 4-5 hour descent to Grey Road, via the summit of Pirongia (959 metres) We will travel down the Mahaukura Ridge which has several bumps to negotiate.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens **Ph:** 027 950 9546 **Grade:** M

**Email:** [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)

**Transport :** Senior member \$25-35

Senior Non-member \$40-50

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**Trip 2819**

**Pinnacles/Coromandel**

**31 Mar**

This day trip will start with the drive to the Kauaeranga valley behind Thames. The track is one of the most popular in the Coromandel so it is fully bridged and you won't get your feet wet. The track winds up the Kauaeranga river and Webb Creek before getting up onto the hillside and climbing to the Pinnacles Hut site. This is a rise of about 400m but slow / lengthy. We will inspect the hut, for those of you who haven't been there, and then carry on up the last ridge of about 170m rise, to the spectacular outcrop of rocks which we perch on to view the magnificent scenery of the Bay of Plenty, the mountain range and off west to the Thames valley.

The way home is down hill, obviously, and therefore we will be so fast and energetic that we may go back via the Billygoat walk, where I have been lost before. If we get out, we can stop somewhere for an ice-cream.

It's a good length of a day with about 600m climb so it is a medium fitness.

**Leader:** John McArthur

**Ph:** 021 2889641

**Grade:** M

**Email:** [mcArthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcArthur@outlook.co.nz)

**Transport :** Senior member \$25-30

Senior Non-member \$30-35

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**Trip 2820**

**Ruapehu**

**6/7 Mar**

We do not have a specific walking plan for this trip as yet, so I'll say that this weekend is in OUR hut on the mountain, where we will be walkin', talkin', eatin', drinkin', laughin' and generally chillin'. If you have a particular interest, such as seriously climbin' the big hill at the back, let me know.

**Leader:** John McArthur

**Ph:** 021 2889641

**Email:** [mcArthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcArthur@outlook.co.nz)

**Grade:** anything from Sloth to Ludicrously Fit

**Transport:** Senior member \$45-60

Senior Non-member \$50-65

**Hut Fees:** Senior member \$25/night

Senior Non-member \$30/night

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**Trip 2821**

**Maungatautari traverse**

**14 Apr**

This is usually an up and over sort of trip but access to the northern side of the mountain has been restricted or denied so further investigations are necessary before confirming exactly what we can do. Watch for more details in the next bulletin. However, the bird life is well worth going to listen to anyway and perhaps the coffee stop at the end will be a pleasant stop too.

**Leader:** Doug Pagel

**Ph:** 8582445 or 027 3463844

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport :** Senior member \$20-25

Senior Non-member \$25-30

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**Waikato Ski Club**

You can stay at the Lodge during summer, a great base for doing tramping in the Ruapehu area, day walks to Tama Lakes or the Waterfalls or Silica rapid. Or do the Tongariro crossing, or up to Crater Lake. You could also use it before and after longer tramps such as around the mountain, or the northern circuit. Or for other trips round the central plateau or just a place to relax and catch up with family, how about taking the kids for a few days in the holidays?

Our members' rates for summer (valid for tramping and skiing members) are \$15 for a child and \$25 for adult, with good non-members rates at \$30 for adult or \$21 for a child. Or book the Hut for a weekend for a family, social or work group - \$600 for the whole lot. You do need to book beforehand and open and close the Hut – i.e. putting on electricity & water –but this is straight forward and there is an easily followed list as a guide. Contact [waikatoski@gmail.com](mailto:waikatoski@gmail.com) to make bookings. Note at present you can't do online bookings -you have to go to the booking officer.

### Working Party:

To keep the building in good condition and to keep us all toasty in winter we have working parties during the summer.

9-10<sup>th</sup> of March – Other maintenance.

April working party if needed – TBC.

Accommodation at the Hut is free for the weekend for those on the working party, and we provide food for the weekend. Bring your own snacks and drinks. Transport – car sharing unless a club trip is organised.

Contact Stephen for more details 0211031436 or email [waikatoski@gmail.com](mailto:waikatoski@gmail.com).

## Editorial

Recently I had the need to contact a member and was using their landline number. It didn't work as it had been disconnected. If you no longer have a landline, please let the membership officer know so the database can be updated. With our 70<sup>th</sup> reunion coming up next year up to date information will make our work much easier.

We had such fun on the Pureora track maintenance weekend that if/when we run another one (maybe next year), do put your name down to join it. Read the trip report later in the bulletin. And on another tangent, I was reading about those bits of biodegradable stuff we toss into the bush at snack and mealtimes. Orange peel, banana skins, apple cores, crumbs, nuts, uneaten sandwiches etc all provide food for animals – and that means we are feeding those rats and possums too. Perhaps we should be thinking about taking absolutely every piece of rubbish out with us these days.

## Presidents' Blog

**The joy of it:** Three days into a walk in the Kaimanawas; sunny and warm, but not too hot. Shallow river crossings to keep the feet cool; green, deep water pools. Grassy flats and terraces of beech forest for easy walking. Distant mountain ridges. Not surprising one of our tramping party kept saying, with a smile on his face, "I'm enjoying every minute of this".

**A happy work party:** Firewood hauling the old fashioned way seems to be a great drawcard. A large pile of wood at the bottom of the hill had to be packed up to Waikato Hut, but it didn't take long for kids and adults alike to get it all done, fuelled by Dianne's scones and Christine and Stacey's cooking. A number of other small jobs were done and everyone seemed satisfied with their efforts.

**Time to introduce your friends to tramping:** Being the time of year for putting new year resolutions into action, why not persuade your friends to join in one of our

outings. Make it one of the easy ones and show them what sort of footwear, clothing and gear they need.

**Running the club: committee positions:** At our AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, the eleven positions on the **General Committee** will come up for renewal. These are for the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Presidents for Ski and Tramp as well as six people to represent the skiing and tramping sections.

Nominations are now called for these positions. Nomination forms are available from the President or Secretary. The completed forms can be handed to Lois, mailed to The Secretary, Waikato Tramping Club, P O Box 685, Hamilton 3240, or scanned and emailed to Lois before 14th March. Nominations close on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March, but if there are no nominations received for any specific positions before the AGM, nominations will also be accepted at the AGM.

Positions on the tramping and skiing **subcommittees** are filled by those committees, rather than at the AGM. I'm sure John McArthur and Mary Reed would like to hear from any volunteers willing to help with the running of the club. It's always good to have new ideas from new people on how the club is run. And many hands make light work!

**70 years!:**Next year, 2020 or May 2020 to be precise, will be the 70th anniversary of the club. To celebrate and commemorate this special milestone, what should we do? Something of interest to present members as well as oldies from the past: an outing to the site of the very first tramp (Wairere Falls); a nosh-up dinner; the usual displays of past exploits; a history of the past 10 years. I will be looking for ideas, outrageous or otherwise, and also for a keen group to help with organising events, chasing up past members and preparing a publication. So please get in touch with me.  
Selwyn June

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Trip reports

Trip 2790

Bushcraft

Oct 28th

Talk about good luck! The weather both days on either side of the bushcraft course was abysmal. But on the day that really mattered ,as the saying goes "it turned out to be a cracker". Which was just as well really as the programme was rather full and relied on good timing along with fair weather.

On arrival at Grey Road Pirongia, marquees were erected, seating put in place and equipment sorted. Along with the great weather we couldn't have picked a lovelier spot to hold such a course, in the small clearing adjacent to the toilets. With birds flying around the course started with introductions all round, followed by John Mac's demonstration that focussed on gear packing, clothing and communications. A highlight was John Wilson's demonstration of an improvised bivvy bag using a large FMC pack liner(see the attached picture and you'll see what we mean).

After morning tea Allan spoke about what to do when you needed Search and Rescue, among other things.

Next was map reading and navigation, the latter mostly comprising an exercise in the bush getting from point A to B successfully. Amazingly the youngest trainee, 9 year old Kayden proved very accurate and hit his "target" destination with perfection.



Map reading

Photo by Allan Wickens

After lunch John Wilson demonstrated several tents and improvised shelters he had erected in the clearing and then we all went into the bush to make emergency shelters. We only had about 15 minutes to complete our shelters from the available vegetation, logs etc. All were then judged by John and any weaknesses or strengths were pointed out.

The final exercise involved a short river crossing demonstration led by Allan in the forest loop stream.

All-in-all a very successful and thought-provoking day all round. As Allan said before the course, the trainees would not be challenged physically so much as mentally, with much to think about. Two people on the course are about to embark on the Te Araroa Trail while several people who had a reasonable amount of tramping under their belts had still not done a formal bushcraft course until this day. As there were 26 trainees from all over the greater Waikato and even as far away as Tauranga, there are too many names to mention here. Suffice to say that many of them will probably want to do the river crossing course next - in February.

The instructors were: John Mac, John Wilson, Selwyn June, Allan Wickens (Co-ordinator and scribe for this article)

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**Trip 2794**

**Devious Tongariro - that wasn't**

**Nov 24/25<sup>th</sup>**

Some things were not meant to be. This year's planned "Devious Tongariro" was one such event. After cancelling the trip in April due to very bad weather, we tried again in November. John Wilson was all set to take a group on the truly "devious Tongariro Crossing", in which he intended avoiding the main track at all costs. Saturday night

was to be an adventure camping out and carrying on out to the Ketetahi road-end via the Te Maari crater. Others in the group had less ambitious plans.

All-in-all a total of 33 people put their names down for the week-ends activities. With the bad weather forecast this was reduced to 20 by Friday night. All was not lost however, and the plan was to have a relaxing week-end at the Club hut, doing as little as possible for some people and as much as possible for others.

On Friday night, we made our way to the hut by a slightly different route. The Top Of The Bruce and above is now one big construction zone, in place for the installation of the fancy new gondola.

Saturday's weather was not as bad as was forecast so the majority of the group had a lovely walk, on a combination of snow and rock, to the NZ Alpine Club Hut. This is the highest inhabitable hut on the Whakapapa side. Rizal and his 5 school-mates from Malaysia were all in this group. They are all 49, having been long-time ex school friends (33 years). They had a short visit but were fortunate enough to be with our group in the snow and with excellent views thrown in.

On the way back we practiced walking on snow using only snow poles. In the afternoon, a group including the Malaysians went to Tama Lakes in deteriorating weather.

As intended, the rest of the day and into the evening, it was fun and joviality. Dianne made a superb dinner with a leg of ham, asparagus and baked vegetables followed by lashings of pavlova and strawberries with cream. Many thanks Dianne - your meal was excellent. That night we had several members show photos on the Club projector and some people stayed up quite late in spite of having had an active day. On Sunday, the weather again socked in but we still managed to do short walks before heading home.

It just shows you can make a very memorable week-end even when there is adverse weather. Keep an eye out for "Devious Tongariro - Take 3!"

Those who went were: Allan Wickens, Lesley K, Alan W, Helen M, Selwyn J, Dianne J, Les W, Lois R, Jean W, John W, John Mac, John D, Jocelyn W, Rizal R and his 5 friends.

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Trip 2796 Mt Edgecumbe (Putauaki) & Otanewainuku peaks Dec 8/9th

This was another trip planned to do what we failed to achieve earlier in the year. Back in August we were intent on climbing Mount Edgecumbe/Putauaki but were unable to do so as we put the application for the permit in too late with the Maori trust who administer the area. Allan was determined not to have the application process upset this time so he applied early and even had the registration number of the rental van pre-determined as required in the permit. As luck would have it the van we were meant to get broke down at the last minute and Allan had to scurry around sorting out the alternative van's registration number for the permit..

After leaving London Street on Saturday morning we drove to Kawerau. It was here that Allan read the fine print on the permit. We were only allowed to use the 4WD road on the eastern side for access at week-ends. We had intended doing a traverse from the west to the east as in the past. As luck would have it this turned out to be fortuitous as the weather was quite hot. To have climbed up via the eastern track

would have meant a very hot walk indeed! The 4WD trail is quite lovely to walk up, albeit rather steep at times. With plenty of trees and over-hanging ferns it meant we had lots of shade. Once on top at 821 metres, we had excellent views all round, with Mounts Tarawera, Hikurangi and Ruapehu clearly visible. From the summit we descended slightly to the communications buildings where we had lunch. Thus ended the first part of day one... In the afternoon we travelled to the Tarawera River trail-head and then walked up to just past the last rapids. Everyone agreed that this is a superb walk with excellent cascades throughout. Several of the group had a swim in the relatively warm river, before we all headed back to the van.

From here we travelled through to Tauranga and stayed at a motel for the night. On Sunday, we drove to the trail head of Otanewainuku Forest, south-west of Tauranga. This is a popular place for local BOP people and for good reason. The large block of native forest was protected from felling in an inspired move by the land-owner last century. Consequently there are some large trees in the area, including the largest Rimu some of us had seen so far. The kiwi restoration group who are doing similar work to that at Pirongia and Pureora, had arrived at the car-park before we did and were all heading out to do work relating to their role of bringing the Kiwi back.

At first we did short walk up to the viewing area of Otanewainuku Peak (640 metres). This was on a gentle gradient through native forest, with many other people doing the walk. From the summit we could gain have fine views, this time including Mount Tarawera from a different angle. The second walk was a loop track, past the large trees, to a lovely waterfall where again the more intrepid in the group had a swim in the cold stream below the falls.

Once back to the van we had a leisurely drive back to Hamilton. Yet another rewarding "combo" trip.

Those who went were: Allan Wickens, Michael N, David T, Damon C, Merlyn W, Dale H, Lesley K, Richard F, Marion F, Jacob H. many thanks to Michael for driving.

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**Trip 2801                      Track maintenance in Pureora                      Jan 12/13<sup>th</sup>**

This trip has been placed in the "Trip Section" for WTC as we are trying to encourage members and the general public to not just get out there to see our amazing country, but to get actively involved in the care and regeneration of both the Flora and the Fauna that we all so much enjoy.

Members of the Waikato Tramping Club have participated in a number of "non-tramping" activities for many years and in this particular case, Dianne and Selwyn June have headed work on behalf of the Pirongia Restoration Society to help bring back kokako to Pirongia Mountain.

There are two adjoining blocks of native bush in the Northern Pureora Forest where this conservation work is being undertaken. The first block in the Mangatutu valley is managed separately by Howick Tramping club and was set up over 20 years ago. About 4 years ago the census showed 193 pairs of Kokako. Birds from the DoC-managed Waipapa block to the east of the Okahukura valley were released in 2017 & 2018 on Pirongia. The area that the Pirongia Restoration Society manages – Okahukura Block, is a more recent project starting in 2015 and is reported to have

around 45 pairs of Kokako and growing. They are spill-overs from Mangatutu and Waipapa. Once the numbers in Okahukura increase, it too will be a source for future kokako redistribution.

Okahukura Block is split in to four sections, with each section having a number of bait lines, and each line having a number of bait stations totalling 952. The toxin is aimed primarily at the rat population, which are the highest risk to native bird life, but it also attracts possums. The normal baiting programme is to insert bait in plastic bags into each station in September, then in October we inspect each station to “top up” those that have been visited. A final trip in February removes all remaining bait. The stations remain empty until the following September. Periodically, there are maintenance trips to walk each bait line, clearing fallen branches/trees and growth, as well as re-marking the trails.

A fantastic point to note is that prior to this years' baiting programme, rat number calculations put their numbers at 14%, which is a low number to start a year with. When monitoring stations were read after baiting, the number was 0%!!! It certainly does not mean there are no rats there now, but the numbers are very low. The justification for all the hard work.

Our trip started with a 6.30 p.m. departure from Hamilton with twelve volunteers making their way to the Pureora Lions Lodge in the Northern Pureora Forest – NW of Lake Taupo. Stopping in Te Kuiti for dinner, it was a leisurely drive down. Because we were staying in a lodge with bunk beds, there was no need for tents and the accommodations were very comfortable with great kitchen facilities and hot showers. A very social and relaxing setting.

The plan of attack was to leave around 7.30 in the morning, driving up to the base of operations (about 40 minutes), where we would pair up and head off to our own trap lines. Our numbers were bolstered by locals Jeff and Rob who regularly join us in these operations. With secateurs, loppers, hand saws and rolls of pink marker tape in hand, we set off on a beautiful sunny morning.

There was no hurry and with lunch packed, we agreed to meet back at base at 4.00 p.m. The lines are a mixture of short and long, and lightly undulating to hand over foot scrambles up and down steep banks. Something for all fitness levels and lines are allocated accordingly.

At this point, we all had very differing adventures. For some, it was trimming the odd overhanging branch or fern, clearing the path of larger debris, and putting up new pink marker tape. For others it was re-routing the path around freshly fallen trees, fighting the good fight through a nasty patch of Bush Lawyer, hacking out clumps of pampas or cutty grass, and negotiating particularly boggy sections of track.



Ready to head off into the field

Photo by Dave White

Even doing some investigative work trying to find bait stations that were not where they were supposed to be, and finding track signage that had gone amiss. Actually, a lot of fun mixed up with getting down and dirty.

And to top it off, the wildly diverse range of Flora and Fauna. These are not heavily travelled tramping tracks...this is native bush, travelled mainly by the volunteers who come in here, and a few hunters. We sat down on Sunday and listed the native birds we actually saw – rifleman, kaka, longtailed cuckoo, robin, kingfisher, tui, fantail, whitehead, chaffinch, kereru, quail, tomtit, silvereye, kakariki and morepork. That's fifteen species! We probably saw others that we didn't recognise. Now, if you are paying attention, you will note that I did not mention the kokako. There is usually someone on the trip who will see them, but not this time. Some of us did however hear them. Dave and Debbie sat and listened to one for 15 minutes before they had to move on. And at the dawn chorus, a group of us heard some sporadic song in the distance from the Lodge. The bellbird was also heard.

This is a very rich resource and the work that we are undertaking now is only going to improve this 10-fold in the future. It is extremely rewarding and I would encourage any of you who see this programme advertised in the future to come and join us.

And that was just Saturday...

Sunday, Dianne gave us the day off. An offer of a lie in and late start resulted in most of us being up at 6.00, or just after, listening to the dawn chorus.



Listening to the dawn chorus

Photo by Dave White

Hmphhh! TRAMPERS!!! Breakfast and a quick clean up of the lodge had us on our way to a series of short local walks – Firstly, a walk that is signposted 30 minutes from the Lodge itself took well over an hour. So much to see and discuss. From dactylanthus flowers to bird life. And fungi to “what is that???”. There is a wealth of knowledge in the club to share. Then a short drive to Pouakani, the worlds’ biggest totara tree. Then down a gorgeous sun-dappled tree-lined avenue to the Forest Tower, a 12 metre structure to get you up in the canopy of the trees (or part way up because the trees around there are HUGE!). Finally, the totara walk, a loop track that has a wide range of sign posted flora.

Time to leave. As much as we would like to stay, we all have to come back to the real world, but I’ll be back...

Participants: Selwyn and Dianne, Allan and Pamela, Dave and Debbie, Ashley, Amanda, Isla, Greg, Dale, Adriana. Scribes D’n’D.

On the humorous side, there are usually a few incidents, glitches, goofs, call them what you will. But they are funny, and memorable, and define the people that you spend time with. They are the things that make you want to come back and do it all again.

Although there may be some small degree of exaggeration utilised, no harm is meant by the following snippets and no animals required medical treatment...

Isla, the Ragwort Queen...not one was left standing.

Dianne and Selwyn, with so much to organise and bring, something had to get forgotten – like the keys to get in the gate. Oh, and food.

Greg brought a bottle of red for Saturday night, but actually was sick before the bottle was opened.

Dale was so keen travelling from Papakura, the furthest away, she arrived before everyone else.

Ashley wrapped the forest in pink. One roll of marker tape is just not enough.

Rob and Adrianna also liked the pink tape. So much so that if the existing tape looked a little mouldy “orf it came”! Very diligent.

Pamela had a lot to say, problem was it didn’t make much sense. Being asleep at the time might have had something to do with it. And Allan’s snoring was very dignified.

Mmmm, subtle...

Debbie had a crack at breaking and entering. I can still see her legs disappearing through the top window of the Lodge to open an accidentally locked cabin door.

Bugger, forgot to take a photo.

Dave, trying very hard to get his bird whistling imitations going...yes, trying, that’s our Dave, very trying...

And finally Amanda. What can we say, we poked, and prodded, but she held her cool. Nothing embarrassing...yet. But we’re watching you, we’re watching...

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Camping: where you spend a small fortune to live like a homeless person!

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**Trip 2802**

**Aotea to Kawhia Harbours**

**Jan 20<sup>th</sup>** A good

& large crew of trampers turned up on a misty & wet morning in Hamilton – we had a full van & also a full car heading to the start of the walk at Aotea on the windy west coast. We hit quite heavy rain at Ngahinapouri but once we started to drive the very winding road to Kawhia the weather cleared up. We arrived at Aotea to find the tide was in & was not going out until 10.00am, with van driver Ron Dick heading to Kawhia for a coffee & pie the rest of the group headed south along the coastal walk. We didn’t go far when we realised that the tide was too high for us to walk along the beach so plan B was to put into place & we made the steep climb up in the pine trees until we got to the top. After a quick break Jacqui D lead us into the trees where we hit a forestry track & followed this until we came out into the open by a farm fence (with the bulls surprised to see humans !)with great views of the sea and coast line. We then followed this farm fence down onto the beach – Well done to Jacqui !!! we made our way south along the beach, the sea was quite rough & it was very windy but the weather had come good with beautiful blue skies...a few of us spotted the famous dotterel birds.

We met up with Ron & continued to walk south where we stopped for lunch on the sand – yummy nothing like eating your lunch with sand included !! It took us a good 45mins or so to reach Te Puia springs & it was noted that we did not see any rubbish on the beach. We all put our feet in the water & the 2 keen swimmers Jacqui & Pam got in for a dip to cool off. We then headed into Kawhia township for the traditional ice cream although an order of hot chips was also included ! A group of us then walked along a cool little walkway looking at some of the homes & also out into the Kawhia harbour – we had a very relaxed drive back to Hamilton. Thanks to Jacqui &

Ron Dick for leading & driving, it was much appreciated by all & we all had a really enjoyable day at the beach!

Scribe Nette, Ron & Jacqui, Fiona, Kathy, Susan, Amanda, Jocelyn, Alan & Pam, Hamish, Jeanette, Margaret, Jan, Lisa

**Trip 2803B**

**Waipakihi circuit**

**Jan 25-27<sup>th</sup>**

Our group of eleven trampers and one driver set off from Hamilton promptly at 6.30pm and most of us were glad to be leaving the hot humid city for the fresh, clean air of the Kaimanawas. After a brief dinner/refreshment stop in Tokoroa we arrived at our chosen campsite shortly after 9pm where we found the others from the A group all set up and chatting. Tents were quickly erected and most retired straight away to get away from the myriad of flying bugs attracted to our head lights!

We were packed up and ready to leave by 8am the next morning and Dianne kindly dropped us off at the start of the Umakarikari track where we departed around 8.30am.



Up to Umakarikari peak

Photo by Dave White



It was a gradual ascent of 800m or so through beech forest to the tops but fortunately it remained cool and we had lovely views of the mountains, Lake Taupo and Lake Rotoaira as the morning cloud cleared making way for a lovely and much hotter afternoon! After a steep drop down to the river we reached the Waipakihi Hut around 4pm. Wet tents were erected around the hut and once organized we all enjoyed a very social afternoon with the other hut occupants including a group of six from the Hamilton club.

Down to Waipakihi Hut

Photo by Anne Macindoe

More people arrived that evening and we ended up with around 27 people who stayed at the hut that night.

Next morning dawned cloudy and the wind started to pick up around 7am making it pleasantly cool but there seemed no likelihood of the drizzle which had been forecast. Leaving the hut at 8.15am we descended to the river and began what was to become the pattern for the next couple of days: walking down the river when practical and trying to find a way through the scratchy bush/scrub on the river banks when this seemed the better option. Alan Wilson claims to have been the first person to stumble and enjoy a quick dip, but several others followed although no-one sustained any injuries (that I know of any way!)



Through the riverside tussocks

Photo by Dave White

Dave and Selwyn assumed the role of 'track scouts', going on ahead to ascertain if /where the river bank tracks were. They had a pretty good success rate bar one instance on the final day when we bush bashed through what we believed to be a short-cut only to come out at the top of a fairly steep bank with a swift flowing section of river directly below! Thank goodness for Allan Wickens' river crossing training!

We arrived at the Urchin Track junction at around 4pm and found a campsite about 200m further down the river from the one at the junction which was already occupied with several tents from a second Hamilton club group. The day was still very warm so most of the group enjoyed a refreshing swim before congregating at 6pm for dinner and a chat before those pesky, repellent-resistant bugs drove us all to our tents.

How wonderful to wake up the next day with dry tents! Once again we set off just after 8am for a further 54 river crossings, following on from the 34 the previous day, another quick swim by most of the group, and a gruelling walk up a steep hill in the very hot late afternoon sun we were back at the van by around 5.15pm. We later found out that the A group had been back in Hamilton almost an hour by this stage! What a wonderful weekend it was: great tramping country, good company and lots of birds spotted or heard including tui, rifleman, robins, whio, shags and long tailed cuckoo. Special thanks to Selwyn and Dianne for arranging the trip and helping with transport.

Participants: Selwyn, Dave and Debbie, Katrina and Sarah, Alan and Lesley, Amanda, Les, Helen and Anne (scribe)



**Waikato Tramping Club**  
and  
**Waikato Ski Club**

Have a look at the club facebook site for more pictures and comments.

**FITNESS WALK / FUN / FLAGSTAFF**

Every Tuesday morning we meet at Flagstaff Shopping Centre ready for a 7.30 start. We head north into the new subdivisions using the extensive pathways along the gully systems. Pace is fast but not so fast that you can't discuss the week's events. One hour later we're back near the start and toilets. If you need to get away, now's your chance. Usually we walk for another hour and return to the carpark by 9.30am. No need to book, just turn up, but if it's your first time please phone Margaret on 8536921 or Colin on 849 4420 the night before so we know you are coming.

**From the committee table:**

**New Members:** Barbara Cahalane, Susan Jenkins, Kim Toxward, Natasha Macartney. Welcome to you all.

**Resignations:** Joanna Job, Daphne Houghton, Catherine & Daiki Nakajima, Sue Truman, Trina Boggs, David Kinghorn, Debbie Hogan, Matthew Sutherland, Tom Brough, Gert Meeusen.

**Membership:** We have 182 tramping members. You will have been sent a notice that your annual subscription is now due. A reminder will follow later this month.

**From the transport Coordinator:** Our new coordinator is Ashley Hoskin.

**From the tramping Vice President:** A letter was sent to Colin Hancock at Trek 'n Travel thanking him for the donation of 5 Tatonka travel bags. These were auctioned within the club membership and raised \$434. Thank you to the successful bidders for your support too.

**From the editor:** A FREE GIFT for you. Kauri Dieback Boot Bag. Oops sorry – again I forgot to bring the last of the boot bags to the club night. If you would like one please contact me and we can make arrangements to meet. One comment raised so far is that they all look alike in the back of the bus but some smart cookies have used a felt pen to write their name on them and others have tied a coloured ribbon to the drawstring. What other imaginative ideas can you come up with?

**Congratulations:** On Jan 11<sup>th</sup> 50 years ago Jean and John Wilson got married. This tramping club romance began on a club day trip (!) to Kawau island on the day of John's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Congratulations to you both on 2 counts – a long-lasting marriage to each other and to the tramping club.

**Condolences:** It is with sadness that we advise of the passing of the wife of a former very active member of our club, Alan Cox, while they were on holiday this summer. Our condolences go to the family.

**Misplaced:** Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). One of the club's PLBs has gone missing after a trip and we need this back as soon as possible. It is small enough to slip under the pack liner, or may be in your cupboard or tramping drawer, or an old day pack. Please search your tramping gear and get this back to the Club Captain or his assistant.

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*Snippets from here 'n there....*

- Before you visit Mt Pirongia from now on, check out the Thundermaps website and download the **kokako app** to your mobile phone. When you hear or see a kokako you can use the app to record your GPS location and a message is sent to the app provider to advise the Pirongia Restoration Society of the location. If you can spot the bands, make a note of them – left leg first, band closest to the body, then the lower band (i.e. top to bottom) and then the same for the right leg. It has been a bumper breeding season for the kokako on the mountain this summer. Some pairs are on to their second clutches. Sadly there were a few infertile eggs in the first round but let's dwell on the positives. 28 of the 44 birds released in 2017 and 2018 have been found. 8 of the latest ones were found because someone reported that they had heard kokako on the Bell track. A nest was found here too. This proves how helpful your reporting can be. Most male/female pairs (there are male/male pairs) will establish a territory and once we know where that is we will start looking at expanding the pest control area to cover them.
- **Wanted for free:** Do you have any old weekend backpacks that you would be willing to donate to the Pirongia Restoration Society for volunteers to use as part of the pest control programme? Please contact Dianne or Selwyn
- **WANTED:** When you are in the bush lots of you are fascinated by the many Ganoderma fungi – those bracket fungi you see on dead trees. Well, it seems there is a rare unnamed one on Mt. Pirongia or in the Awaroa valley and only a 3 specimens exist in the archives. It is most likely to be found on Pukatea.



Example of a Ganoderma

The species to look out for is reddish-brown, perhaps a bit shiny on the upper surface, and cream to light brown on the underside.

If you think you have come across it, please photograph it, take note of the location (use your GPS on your phone), and notify Peter Buchanan at Landcare Research for followup.



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

- The new strategic plan for 2018-2022 has been published. Copies of this will be available at the next club night or you can look it up on the FMC archives link on their website.
- 2 Resources consent applications had been filed with the Queenstown Lakes District Council to develop a heliport in the lower Rees valley, and a luxury Lodge (aka small tourist village of 11 buildings) opposite Kea basin higher up the valley. FMC wants these applications to be publicly notified.
- The swingbridge ( replaced 2013) over the Lambert river has been damaged again and will be removed (if it hasn't already been done). If you wish to visit the Lambert tops and Garden of Eden from the Wanganui river (in the south island) then you will need to seek alternative routes to the ice plateaus of the Adams Wilderness.
- It is time for the review of the 10year plan developed in 2008 of the Walking Access Act by the Walking Access Commission. You can check out the FMC website for the document and further information.
- There are some new categories for the FMC photo competition. Have a look as they might suit some of you brilliant photographers amongst us.
- No more heli-hiking on Mt. Titiroa. Following FMC's investigation and complaints to DoC all concessionaires have agreed to cease the activity here.

..... from the DoC website.....

- About 50 white-faced storm petrel chicks from the Chatham Islands have been translocated by a volunteer conservation group to predator-free Mana Island. It is the first stage of a 3-year project to bring back the birds to the DoC managed island. A successful first year will mean a further 200 chicks will be translocated over the next two summers, with a total of 250. The birds used to live on Mana Island before any people inhabited the island. A few have been sighted there over recent years. The

translocation is part of the ongoing restoration of Mana's original ecosystem based on a plan developed by DOC in 1999. Volunteers will hand feed the chicks sardine smoothies and monitor their growth. The journey to reach their new home on Mana Island has involved many forms of transport - a fishing boat from their island colony to the main Chatham Island, a plane to Wellington, a van across the airport, and a helicopter ride to Mana Island. It is estimated that about 60 % of the birds that fledge from Mana Island will survive their first year at sea. Petrel chicks need to learn to feed on their own and the first year weeds out a lot of birds. To have a good chance of establishing a new colony on the Island we need a critical mass of at least 10 breeding pairs.

➤ The Acheron Road through Molesworth Station will close on Sunday 10 February due to extreme fire risk. No public access through the Acheron Road will be permitted from this date.

➤ DoC has paused its' review of two national park management plans while it works through the implications of the Supreme Court's decision relating to Ngāi Tai. Public feedback has been sought on the draft Aoraki/Mount Cook and Westland Tai Poutini national park management plans which outline how land, water, species, aircraft and visitors could be managed over the next 10 years. Both national parks are in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā and are of immense significance to the iwi. DoC's Director Planning, Permissions and Land says that following discussion with Ngāi Tahu recently, DoC decided to pause the current process so the implications of the landmark Ngāi Tai decision can be worked through. The Auckland iwi (Ngāi Tai) had argued that DoC did not properly give effect to section 4 of the Conservation Act, which relates to principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, when granting concessions for commercial activities on Motutapu and Rangitoto. Last December, the Supreme Court found that decisions to grant concessions to third parties would need to include asking whether the concession opportunities should be preserved for the economic benefit of Ngāi Tai and whether there was any basis for the preferential grant of concessions to Ngāi Tai.

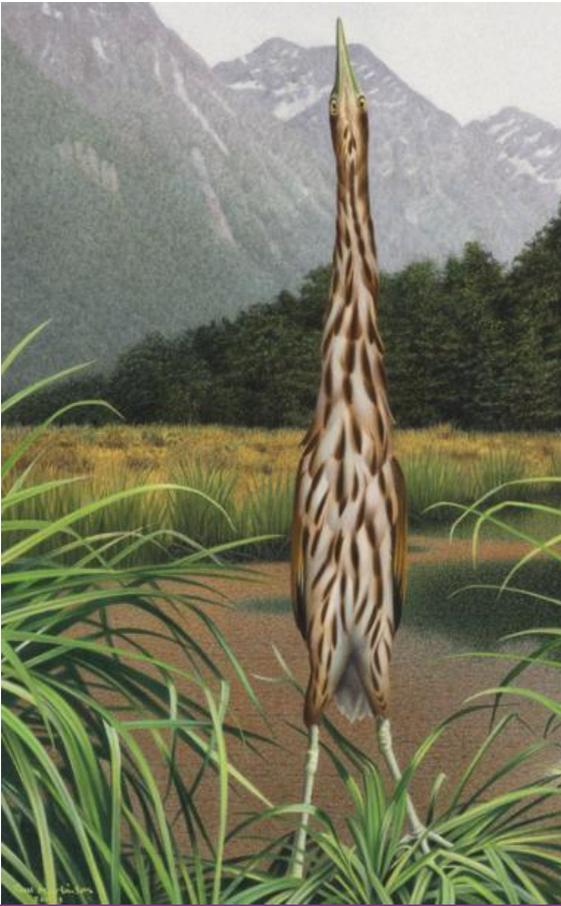
➤ At the beginning of February the first 2 kākāpō chicks of the season hatched, heralding the start of what's hoped to be the biggest boost to the critically endangered population on record. DoC kākāpō operations manager Deidre Vercoe says 2019 is predicted to be the biggest kākāpō breeding season on record with almost every breeding-age female expected to lay eggs. "So far, things have got off to a great start with the birds mating earlier than expected resulting in a record 136 eggs to date. Unfortunately, fertility has been particularly poor this year, potentially due to the number of young males breeding for the first time. Less than half of these eggs will hatch into a kākāpō chick, and not every hatched chick will make it to adulthood. However, we're still hoping for anywhere between 30 to 50 chicks. With a population of 147 adults, this will be a huge boost for this taonga." Due to the birds beginning breeding so early, the team are moving eggs and chicks will be hand-reared in an effort to encourage "double clutching" – meaning they could nest twice in one season. DoC's Kākāpō Recovery Programme, with the support of Ngāi Tahu, has been working on innovative new approaches to improve the breeding success of the critically endangered kākāpō. Assisted Breeding is essentially a helping hand for

kākāpō to ensure they're getting the most out of the breeding season. It involves semen collection, sperm analysis and artificial insemination. This is part of our efforts to ensure that all founders are genetically represented, and also to increase fertility, since multiple matings greatly increases the likelihood that a female will have fertile eggs. AB allows us to replicate this with females who don't choose to mate multiple times themselves." AB efforts will focus mainly on any second clutches. Smart Eggs are 3D printed eggs that mimic the sounds that would come from a real kākāpō egg just prior to hatching, which helps kākāpō mums better prepare for the arrival of their chick, thus improving the care they get in those critical first days.

➤ GPS tracking of matuku/bittern has, for the first time, revealed that this threatened swamp dweller flies more than 300 km between wetlands in the eastern South Island as well as large distances between North Island wetland sites. Previously it was thought bittern ranged only small distances from their home wetlands. The DoC-led study shows that bittern rely on a network of wetlands, to feed and breed in. It also means matuku/bittern may be rarer than previously thought as birds have probably been double-counted in local counts in different parts of the country. "Bittern are secretive birds that use a freeze pose to hide among wetland vegetation and are expert at evading people. The GPS tracking has given new insights into their behaviour and habitat requirements," Eugenie Sage says. In a study male bittern were tracked flying 330 km from Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere in Canterbury to wetlands near Blenheim during the breeding season last spring. They also flew 117 km from Whangamarino wetland in north Waikato to south Kaipara and from Whangamarino to Kaituna in the Bay of Plenty.

It's estimated there are less than 1000 birds in New Zealand and a similar number in Australia, where bittern are also found. Bittern has the highest threat status of 'nationally critical'.

As well as habitat loss, the ground-nesting matuku/bittern is vulnerable to predators such as stoats, ferrets and feral cats. Bittern eat small eels and fish as well as insects and poor water quality can affect their food supply. Climate change also poses uncertainties with the risk that coastal inundation could affect freshwater wetlands, limiting plants like raupō that bittern prefer to nest in.



DoC's bittern research is part of its Arawai Kākāriki freshwater programme and is supported by organisations such as Environment Canterbury, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, BirdsNZ, Ducks Unlimited and Hawkes Bay Forest & Bird. World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February to raise global awareness about the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet. It also marks the adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international agreement to recognise wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) and encourage the wise management of all wetlands.

The theme for World Wetlands Day (Feb 2nd) this year set by the Ramsar Secretariat is wetlands and climate change.

[The Ramsar Convention](#) (external site) which was established in 1971 includes 170 countries. In total there are 2,339 Ramsar sites. The New Zealand Government became a signatory to the Convention in 1976, and currently has 6 Ramsar sites, our nearest being Firth of Thames, Whangamarino wetland, and Kopuatai Peat Dome.

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**Note the change of date!!!** Your editor wants to get the bulletin sorted before she goes tramping down south. Email your contributions to the editor by **Wednesday, Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 2019.**

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Some of the Mountain Madness team – story to follow soon



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