



June 2021 Newsletter

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Monthly working bees: 2nd Sunday and 4th Tuesday

- Coordinator Sunday: Richard Herbert: herbert.r@xtra.co.nz
- Coordinator Tuesday: Andrew Liley: acfhilley@gmail.com



1. Developments in the Forest of Tawa/Te Ngahere-o-Tawa

a. Background

Following the purchase of the original **Forest of Tane** by WCC in early 2017, a significant amount of clearance and replanting has taken place beyond the Kiwi Crescent entrance. (See FOTBR newsletters August 2019 and August 2020). Further planting occurred in 2020 on the higher slopes.

b. Today

John Burnet reports that WCC are currently funding and arranging for a new **Forest of Tawa** track to be built from the Kiwi Cres entrance to the Meridian Road, linking to the Porirua Landfill, Ohariu Valley Road and the Te Araroa Trail. See <https://www.teararoa.org.nz/the-trail/wellington/>. The existing route (an old farm track) is too steep to be safely shared by walkers and downhill bikers. Therefore, a new shared track is being built with a reduced gradient and more zig zag corners. Mana Cycle Group will build a new bikers-only downhill route on the western side of the bush where there are fewer regenerating native trees. Details of the old and proposed tracks are on page 2 below.



John



Andrew

c. New track



The new track was carefully surveyed and marked out by WCC Parks and Reserves staff to avoid removal of pines and emergent natives such as kahikatea, matai, miro, rimu, tawa and totara. However seedlings of these slow-growing heritage species that were in the path of the digger have been carefully removed by **Andrew Liley** and **John Burnet** and relocated to the sides of the new track.

The new track will still allow walkers to obtain spectacular views of Tawa and glimpses of Duval Grove and Peterhouse St at the southern end of this track.

Currently, the contractor is making good progress on the track and has completed about 80% of the uphill route. For safety reasons, the existing route

will be eventually decommissioned and tree planting and strategic log placement done.



Map of part of Forest of Tawa/Te Ngahere-o-Tawa



In the centre of the map, the red lines indicate the new track being developed by WCC contractors. These lines overlay the yellow lines that indicate the existing, steeper track.

2. Guide to the diets of common native birds

When establishing native tree species in urban areas or reserves, it is useful to know what is the diet of different native bird species as outlined in the table.

Source: Predator Free NZ

Further more detailed information can be sourced at :

<https://predatorfreenz.org/if-our-native-birds-were-gardeners-what-would-they-plant/>

3. Know the native tree species in Tawa reserves

Kanono or *Coprosma autumnalis* (previously named *C. grandifolia*).

This is a common shrub, up to 6m found in shady, damp and sheltered parts of all the native bush reserves in Tawa.

Recognition features of kanono:

- plants are **dioecious** (have separate male and female plants). Male flowers have dangling stamens that produce pollen while female flowers have spiky stigmas to capture pollen as it is transferred by wind.
- very large broad, olive-green leaves are opposite to each other.
- stipules** are present at the base of the stem between the leaf petioles
- domatia** (small pits) are visible on the underside of leaves near the mid-rib and appear as 'bumps' on the upper leaf surface. (See arrows in the photos below).
- ripe orange fruit is eaten by a range of bird species.

Who eats what?
Some common native birds and their diets

Species	Fruit	Foliage	Nectar	Insect	Other
Bellbird	✓		✓	✓	
Fantail				✓	
Grey warbler				✓	
Kākā	✓		✓	✓	Seeds and tree sap
Kererū	✓	✓			Flowers
Kingfisher				✓	Lizards, rodents
Shining cuckoo				✓	
Ruru				✓	Rodents, birds, lizards
Tūi	✓		✓	✓	
Waxeye	✓		✓	✓	

How to identify Kanono



4. New FOTBR nursery in action in May 2021



Thanks to **Ross Denton** who supplied timber for benches and to **James Wright** who constructed them for the new shade-house.

Carol Andrews, Joanne Youthed and James Wright potting up flax seedlings and watering them.





5. Pohutukawa and leaf miner

Pohutukawa trees (*Metrosideros excelsa*) grow naturally on the coast, north of New Plymouth on the west, and north of Gisborne on the east. Although they do not grow naturally in our local bush, they are nevertheless common along the Tawa streets.

Leaves are commonly infested with a tiny insect about 3mm in length, called a leaf miner (*Neomycta rubida*).

This endemic weevil lives in the North and South Islands where its main host plants are medium to large-leaved rata (*Metrosideros*) species. The adult chews young leaves, while the larvae tunnel in leaves. It is regarded as the only insect that forms mines in leaves of *Metrosideros* species. The good news is that the weevil does not have any long-term impact on the health of the tree.



Leaf damage showing the upper side (left photo) and lower side (right photo) of the same leaf.



This specimen was on the tree on the corner of Main Road and Redwood Avenue. See also: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?locale=en&place_id=any&subview=grid&taxon_id=393212

Thanks to Doug Miller for his research and photos.



6. Charles Duncan Reserve

a. Some history



Most of this reserve is secondary growth native bush, mainly through planting done before and after it was officially opened in December 2009 by **Mavis Duncan**. She was the wife of **Rev Ronald Duncan** who was the son of **Stuart Duncan**, the third youngest child of **Charles** and **Catherine Duncan**, after whom the reserve is named. Through the work of FOTBR, about 2000 native trees were planted, including young tawa, miro, rewarewa, matai, nikau, totara, pukatea, rimu and kahikatea trees, that are now thriving under the shelter of the existing and currently dominant 2 to 3m high

mahoe species. Some of the large exotic trees present date back to the time of Charles Duncan.



b. Recent plantings

In July last year, **Denis Rogerson**, surveyed the reserve and has subsequently planted further seedlings of the above species to fill in some gaps. Most are doing well and Denis plans more 'gap filling' this winter. *This is my favourite reserve in Tawa* says Denis, *and in a further 10 years we will have even more mature bush to enjoy.*

c. A further stoat

In his role as Pest Control Coordinator, Denis also reports another stoat capture, but this time in Mexted Reserve, in May 2021. (Refer FOTBR February 2021 newsletter for full details of stoats as predators). This can be accessed from the FOTBR website:

<https://webdesign470598649.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/fotbr-february-2021-newsletter.pdf>



7. Karearea (NZ falcon) spotted on a local Tawa roof

This bird was spotted just a few metres away on the roof a Tawa suburban home in mid-May, while it was in pursuit of a homing pigeon. Aggressive aerial hunters, these predatory birds are becoming more common in Tawa. This is pleasing to see as they are recognised as an endangered NZ species.



**Gil Roper, Editor
FOTBR Committee**

