



## June 2022 Newsletter

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Secretary: Geoff Mills [secretary@tawabush.org.nz](mailto:secretary@tawabush.org.nz)

Monthly working bees: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday

- Coordinator Sunday: Richard Herbert: [herbert.r@xtra.co.nz](mailto:herbert.r@xtra.co.nz)
- Coordinator Tuesday: Andrew Liley: [acfhilley@gmail.com](mailto:acfhilley@gmail.com)

FOTBR website: <https://tawabush.org.nz>



### 1. FOTBR AGM Wednesday 11 May 2022

This year, we were privileged to have 3 speakers present an update on predator control in the wider Wellington region, with the intent of re-introducing kiwi to part of Wellington's West Coast within the next 12 months. Yes, within 12 months! **Paul**

**Ward** and **Jeff Hall** from Capital Kiwi and **Henk Louw**, Biosecurity Specialist, WCC gave us an informative and enthusiastic visual presentation which identified the intense stoat trapping programme in place to enable this planning to become a reality.



### FOTBR committee for 2022:

The following people were elected: **Gary Beecroft** (Chairman), **John Burnet** (Deputy Chairman), **Geoff Mills** (Secretary), **Chris Paice** (Treasurer), **Richard Herbert**, **Denis Rogerson**, **Gil Roper** and **Andrew Liley**. Extended committee members: **Fiona Drummond** and **Damian Hewett**

### Tawa Community Civic Awards from 2021

At the meeting, on behalf of the Tawa Community Board, **Richard Herbert** presented certificates to FOTBR (received by **Gary Beecroft**) and the Willowbank Reserve Care Group (received by **Fiona Drummond**). Richard also presented an individual civic award to **Damian Hewett** for the Education and Child/Youth Development category for his extensive work undertaken in this area.

### 2. Correction to FOTBR February 2022 newsletter article about māhoe



We are grateful for the communication received pointing out that the white spots commonly found on māhoe leaves are not caused by a fungus, but rather '*Cephaleuros* algal leaf spot' which is an epiphytic alga.

### 3. Karearea (native falcon) more common in Tawa

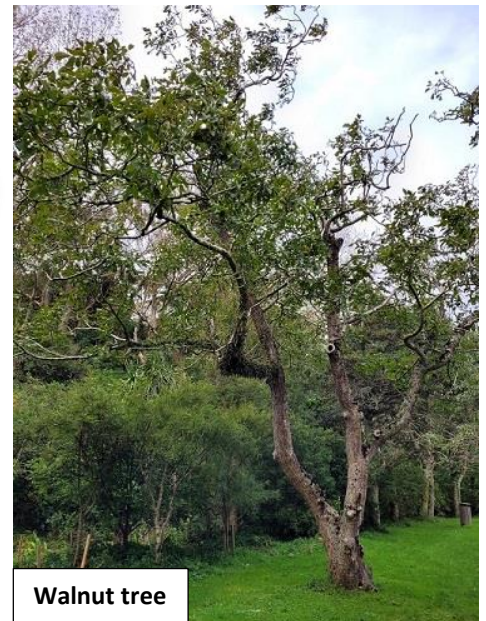
More and more people are reporting seeing these birds in and around the Tawa Reserves. This one was spotted opposite the BP station in April after consuming a bird. Thanks to **Damian Hewett** for the photo.



#### 4. Willowbank Reserve

Among the heritage pear and apple trees in this reserve, there is also a mature walnut tree. Thanks to **Helen Challands** for drawing this to our attention.

*Tradescantia* proves to be an ongoing weed pest in this and other Tawa reserves and requires persistence to keep it at bay. A useful means of helping in its decomposition, is to place pieces in sealed black plastic bags. Over time, the rotting process is enhanced.



Walnut tree

#### 5. Trail cameras proving their worth

The use of these cameras close to the bait station lines in Redwood Bush has provided more specific details of the actual animals present at different times. Thanks to **Damian Hewett** for these.



#### 6. Kohekohe trees in flower

At this time of year, kohekohe trees are at their peak of flowering in all the reserves. If you haven't walked in the reserves recently, now is the time to do this to view these magnificent trees.



Kohekohe trees flowering.

In places, amongst the leaf litter below the kohekohe trees, there are hundreds of orange-coloured seed from the enclosed green/brown/black fruit. These have matured from last year and fallen to the ground.



Kohekohe fruit and seed in the leaf litter.



### 7. Do you recognise these podocarp seedlings?

Podocarps are conifers that reproduce by bearing cones and fruit. The nursery is in full production with podocarp seedlings at various stages of development. These have all been sourced locally from seed or young seedlings that have been subsequently potted on.

What are the following young podocarp seedlings?



1.



2.



3.

### 8. 'Beating the Bounds' in Tawa - Tararua Tramping Club hold day walk in Tawa reserves

On Wednesday 18 May, a group from the Tararua Tramping Club undertook a walk, circumnavigating Tawa using the various reserves. The sunny weather enabled the group to enjoy the great views as well as the vibrant flora and fauna.

Leader **John Allard**, a resident of Tawa for over 30 years, had the concept in mind for a while and carried out some exploratory walks to establish the links to create a five-to-six hour circular walk of 13.3km.

The group started at the Bucket Tree, crossed Willowbank Reserve to near the State Highway interchange linking to Takapu Road. Woodburn Reserve was reached via the connection at 68 – 78 Bing Lucas Drive with the group enjoying the regenerating bush before emerging near the top of Bing Lucas and dropping down into Wilf Mexted Reserve.

Members of the group were impressed with the mature trees, noting especially the abundant flowering of kohekohe. Various urban parks and

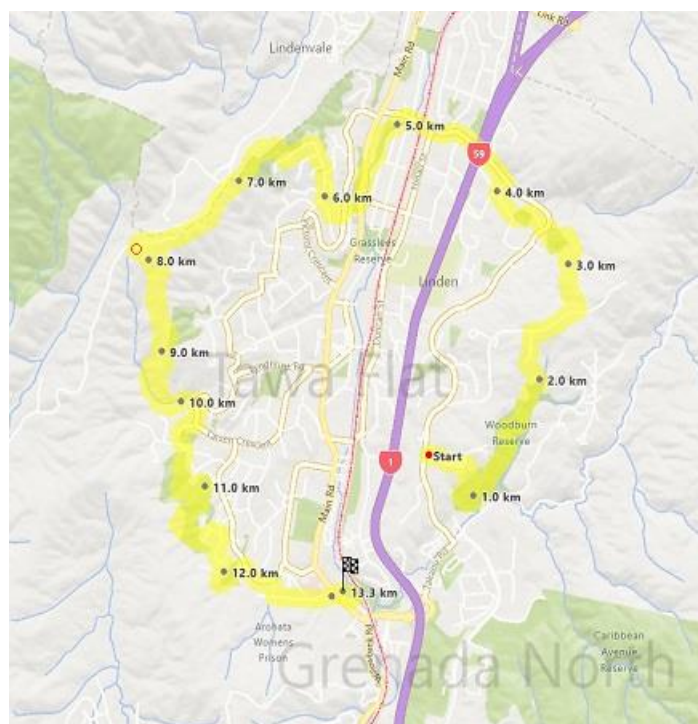


Photo of map showing circuit taken: Christine Whiteford.



roads led down to the valley bottom and up again to pass through the Spicer Forest Scenic Reserve and on to Broken Hill Road. Descent through Te Ngahere-o-Tawa/Forest of Tawa through the recently well-developed track to Kiwi Crescent was appreciated, as well as the increasing volume from the birds. Larsen Reserve provided the link to Redwood Bush with an even more obvious bird presence. Finally, the group crossed St Annes Reserve and down Sunrise Boulevard back to the Bucket Tree.

Comments after the walk included: *thank you for an interesting trip. I know little about Tawa and I was impressed with the bush and bird life, the interesting views, the varied terrain, real treats of trees and the outstanding birdsong during the afternoon.*



Kohekohe tree flowering.

John is planning to repeat the walk every couple of years, hoping that the distance on roads can be reduced with more tracks accessible through the reserves.

Thanks to John Allard, Jim Gibbons and Christine Whiteford for the article and the photos.



## 9. Knowing the native trees in the Tawa reserves

***Myrsine australis*, red matipo, māpou, māpau**

**Source of name:**

‘Ma’ = free of tapu, ‘pou’ = stick. Young plants are used for ceremonial purposes such as karakia. Special features of māpou:

- an endemic shrub growing up to 6m tall, they are very obvious because of their young reddish-brown stems that bear pale green leaves that have a leathery texture and wavy edges
- leaves are alternate on stems with leaf blades covered in round, translucent glands
- small white to purple flowers grow in clusters directly on the stem
- oval fruit, are initially green, but become dark brown to black. At this stage they are eaten by kererū, tūī, tauhou (silveryeye) and korimako (bellbird). These birds also naturally disperse the seeds once digestion has occurred.



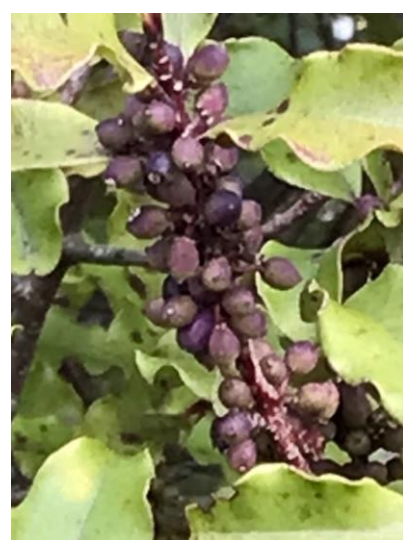
Distinctive leaves and branches of māpou tree.



Flowers and fruit.



Leaves and stems.



Maturing fruit.

### Uses by Māori

In Māori tradition, it is rākau tapu (sacred tree), and its main use was ceremonial. Māori also boiled leaves as a general tonic, as a tea infusion for treating toothache, and to relieve arthritic problems, as well as a remedy for skin disease. Hard woody branches were also used as digging sticks and for adze handle sockets. Early Europeans also used the hard timber for building.

## 10. IMPORTANT

### Special FOTBR meeting on pest control in the Tawa reserves

Everyone is very welcome to attend this meeting.

**Henk Louw**, Pest Animal-Biosecurity Specialist from WCC will give a short presentation and then other local people will outline details about bait stations and trapping undertaken, their locations, and where the information is recorded.

**Date:** Wednesday 8 June, 2022 at 7:30pm.

**Venue:** Tawa Union Church, 6 Elena Place, Tawa, in the ground floor lounge.

Coffee/tea and light refreshments will be provided.

### Answers to 7. Podocarp seedlings. Which is which?

1. Tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*)
2. Mataī (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*)
3. Kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*).

Did you get these correct?

Gil Roper, Editor  
FOTBR Committee

