



# MOTUORA RESTORATION SOCIETY (INC)

PO Box 100-132, NSMC, Auckland 0745.

Newsletter No. 34

April 2007

## Lizard Update

*Dylan van Winkel and Ben Barr are part of the Ecology & Conservation Group, Institute of Natural Resources, Massey University. Below is Dylan's report on the lizards released on Motuora in December 2006.*

### **So how are the skinks and geckos doing? Very well!!!**

I shall start with the geckos. Since the release in December 2006, the Duvaucel's geckos have not dispersed far from their original release site (the 'Pa'). The backpack transmitters have proved successful and have provided some interesting information on the locations and home ranges of these little critters. During the day many of the geckos are taking refuge high up in the canopy of Karo trees, while others prefer the safety of the flax or spikey, nasty gorse (much to my annoyance!!!). However, spotlight searching has shown that the Duvi's seem to be moving down from the tree tops to the ground at night, probably to rummage through the leaf litter for tasty invertebrates.. I have recently run tracking tunnels, baited with banana, which have picked up numerous footprint tracks from both skinks and Duvaucel's in the area. This is great news and further confirms the numbers of geckos surviving in the area. Even more exciting is the fact that many of the female Duvi's are heavily gravid (or pregnant)! They generally give birth to two live young between March and May and we can expect some tiny nippers on Motuora in the very near future.

Now for the shore skinks, who were released at Pohutukawa Bay. A week of pitfall trapping followed the release and five different shore skinks were caught. However, subsequent visits and pitfall trapping, throughout January - March, have not caught any shore skinks, even



Dylan with Ray Lowe and Kit Brown and one Duvaucel's Gecko, complete with radio transmitter 'back pack', about to be released into its new home . (December 06)

though many copper skinks were caught. Similar results have been observed on Tiritiri Matangi. We suspected that immediately after the release, the skinks moved around a lot familiarising themselves with their new home and establishing territories and were therefore more likely to be caught. The skinks have probably become more sedentary now and are not venturing out so far. All is not lost however as we have been finding skinks while actively searching for them, including three baby skinks, indicating that the females have begun giving birth on the island. Skinks have been found at the southern end of Pohutukawa Bay in the rocks and it is entirely possible that they are moving into the beaches between Pohutukawa Bay and Still Bay. It is very unlikely that the skinks will reach Still Bay as the high tide mark presents an obstacle.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR PLANTING DAYS! PLEASE JOIN US FOR PLANTING DAYS! PLEASE JOIN US FOR PLANTING DAYS!**

FORTNIGHTLY TRIPS PLANNED FOR JUNE AND JULY. SEE PAGE 4 FOR THIS YEAR'S DATES.

## 150th Kiwi released to Motuora "Crèche"

April 2<sup>nd</sup> saw the arrival on Motuora of the 150<sup>th</sup> North Island brown kiwi chick raised by the Auckland Zoo's NZ Fauna Unit. The transfer was treated as a celebration, with representatives from DOC, the BNZ as sponsors of the Operation Nest Egg kiwi recovery programme, Ngati Wai, MRS and of course the Zoo, present, plus photographers and reporters from both the Herald and TV1 to record the event. The chick, which glories in the name Tepapepaetanga o te Rangi (meaning "the pinnacle", to reflect the achievement of 150 successful incubations) was quite unfazed by all the attention, and when the time came, shuffled unconcernedly into the artificial burrow prepared for it by Island Manager Dave Jenkins.



## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The Motuora Restoration Society Annual General Meeting Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2007 on Motuora Island (MRS Potting Shed)

**Start time - 1.30 p.m.**

If the planting trip that day is cancelled due to bad weather, meeting at **22 Settlers Grove, Orewa.**

### AGENDA

1. Minutes of the May 2006 AGM
2. Matters arising from the Minutes
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Chairperson's Annual Report
5. Election of Officers and Committee Members
6. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
7. Subscriptions for the 2007/2008 year
8. Any other business

The officers of the Society comprise the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, and the Constitution calls for at least two other committee members. Nominations for all these positions will be accepted by mail and at the meeting. Nominations sent by mail are to be received by the Secretary at PO Box 100-132, North Shore Mail Centre by Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007. All nominees, proposers and seconders must be financial members of the Society.



**Note:** Further involvement in specific projects by individuals (beyond planting) is welcome. As a "team member" you would not be required to attend committee meetings, but would take on some aspect of work involved in the restoration project. Please contact Ray Lowe MRS Chairman if you are keen.

Is there anyone who could donate funds for planters welfare for the coming season?  
(tea, coffee, milk, etc.)  
\$50 - \$100

Please contact Ray Lowe or any committee member

## Motuora Restoration Society (Inc)

The Society is undertaking the restoration of native forest prior to establishing endangered species on the island.

Membership costs \$25 per year for individuals or families, and \$5 for students.

<i>Chairperson</i> Ray Lowe	09 420 4816	<i>Deputy Chair</i> Robin Gardner-Gee	09 378 9548
<i>Secretary</i> Kit Brown	09 446 0618	<i>Treasurer</i> Gillian Thomas	09 426 1481
Les Buckton	09 425 5040	Helen Lindsay	027 2847357
Simon Chamberlin	09 422 7217	Eilene Lamb	09 427 8911
Kevin Hawkins	09 424 7444	Liz Norquay	09 424 7444

Contact any Committee member listed here to obtain a membership brochure.

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Over the next few months I shall continue monitoring the geckos' movements and begin looking at birds (e.g. kingfishers, moreporks, and pukekos) as potential predators of lizards on the island. Ben will be back next summer when the skinks resume their summer activities, and hopefully become easier to catch.

Thanks to everyone for their help and support, and a big thanks to Dave for putting up with us and letting us borrow his kayak to get scollies!



## NEWS FROM THE ISLAND

Motuora has had a great summer, especially if the number of people making use of the campground is anything to go by. From Boxing Day through to the end of the school holidays, there were good numbers camping. This year, on 11<sup>th</sup> January, two young and one adult dolphin allowed campers to swim with them for a few hours on a warm drizzly morning. I, for the first time joined them, snorkel and face mask allowing me to see them clearly under water. Always just out of reach they circle around as if fascinated by these strange human creatures in their environment. I felt very clumsy watching their smooth graceful movements.

Once again the nursery is full with 30,000 plants ready for planting as soon as the soil is moist enough in April or May.

Don't be surprised, the next time you look towards Motuora over the next few months, to see a large brown patch appear. The stock were removed a year ago and because of this, the kikuyu grass has grown thick. To manage this we are using the services of Skywork Helicopters Ltd to spray a large area in the middle of the island. The total area is for planting this year, next year, and an area to be left as open space.

Helen Lindsay and abseiler Richard Sharp have spent many days working on the steep cliffs around Motuora, targeting invasive plants such as Climbing Asparagus, Pampas, Periwinkle and Mexican Daisy. It is slow and demanding work to reach those isolated plants but if they are not removed they will become the seed source for a new generation of weeds. Great work has been achieved by Helen and her weed team in bringing these very invasive plants down to manageable levels. Helen was joined this year by, Liz Whitwell from Little Barrier Island and Shelly Heiss-Dunlop in the search for weeds. The fight against these weeds is ongoing, for any lapse will allow plants to fruit and re-infest the island.

All we need now is rain, to take the pressure off our water needs and satisfy the thirsty plants.  
*(written before the March end storm! Ed.)*

**David Jenkins, Island Manager**



**Annual Camp Weekend in February** was enjoyed by forty-four people including fifteen children. Excellent! An afternoon's work in the hot sun saw a change on the foreshore. The cattle race was removed together with a section of the old jetty to allow a clear walk along the beach. Fence removal, seed collection and bone seed removal were other tasks taken on.

## You are invited to be involved in the reforestation of Motuora

The Motuora Restoration Society has taken on the reforestation of on this DOC administered recreation reserve between Kawau Island and Whangaparaoa planting native bush to create habitat for endangered species. So far, over half of the island has been planted. (approx. 200,000 plants). Tracks are formed, weeds are being controlled, and 2006 saw the first animal translocation. We have 30,200 plants to go in the ground this year. Please join us, particularly for planting trips:-

### Trips to the island on the following dates:-

#### Tree Planting

29<sup>th</sup> April  
27<sup>th</sup> May & AGM  
10<sup>th</sup> June  
24<sup>th</sup> June  
8<sup>th</sup> July  
29<sup>th</sup> July

#### General Tasks

26<sup>th</sup> August  
30<sup>th</sup> September  
28<sup>th</sup> October  
25<sup>th</sup> November

#### How to get there:

Contact one of the people listed below for more information and to book.

Ferry departs Sandspit 8.00 am and returns to Sandspit at 4.00 pm.

Fare: Adults \$16, Children 5-12 yrs \$8, under 5 yrs free. (*Adult must accompany children.*)

Parking for the day \$5.

#### What to bring:

Boots or stout shoes, raincoat, warm clothes, garden gloves, sunscreen, hat, snacks and drinks for your morning break. Sausage sizzle and cuppa provided at lunchtime.

Eilene Lamb (09) 427 8911 Hibiscus Coast or Robin Gardner-Gee (09) 378 9548 Auckland

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**United Campervans** for ongoing sponsorship.

**Yates NZ** for ongoing support with supplies.

**The Mad Butcher** for continued support with sausages for our BBQ lunches.

**NuFarm** for sponsorship for several years' supplies of herbicides.

**Coastguard** for discount on RYA powerboat training course.

**Miles Purchase** for donation.

**Derek Lamb** for donation.

**Haseltine Trust** for donation.

**Downer Connect** for power cable and timer switch.

*The Motuora Restoration  
Society Newsletter  
is produced  
three times a year  
by Liz Norquay.*



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RESTORATION SOCIETY (INC)  
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