



# MOTUORA RESTORATION SOCIETY (INC)

PO Box 100-132, NSMC, Auckland 0745.

Newsletter No. 36 November 2007

## Farewell and thanks

At the celebratory lunch on the island on 30<sup>th</sup> September Dave was the Department of Conservation Manager. Dave leaves us to take up the Department of Conservation Chairman Ray Lowe spoke on Dave's three and a half years of superb effort and taken a lot of worry off the shoulders of those who had had to deal with vastly differing situations - from injured trees, from camp and bach bookings to official parties and Helen Clark). Dave had tackled all aspects of the job and the project.



Dave remembered his arrival when he started the job, saying 'Items were unloaded and loaded and the same barge left with the departing manager and his family. After a day of furious activity - there he was - alone on the island and in charge! That was his introduction to the island. He had enjoyed his time very much and was a little disappointed not to 'finish off things he had planned'. However when the job on Tiri came up he had jumped at the opportunity. He said he would always remember the friends he had made and would take with him lots of wonderful memories.

Ray went on to say that the celebration lunch that day was also to mark the end of the planting season in which 30,000 trees were planted. Dave was the only person so far who had managed such a major planting programme. The winter had had many windy Sundays causing frustration to those wanting to come on planting trips which several times had had to be cancelled. Ah .... the joys of travelling by sea!

Extended the planting season  
The MRS Committee want to say a very special thanks to planters who persevered through unsettled weather and disrupted plans to help make this years' planting a success. In an effort to maintain the  
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## Northern Diving Petrel

### Translocation on track for the end of November

The first seabird transfer to Motuora is taking place very soon. In late November about 40 diving petrel chicks will be transported from Wooded Island (off Tiritiri Matangi) to Motuora where they will be housed in specially prepared artificial burrows. The chicks will be hand fed daily until they have developed their first coat of feathers and are ready to leave their burrows and take up an independent life at sea. When breeding season comes round next year, these young birds will start returning to the site they fledged from (Motuora) and will begin to dig themselves burrows. Breeding doesn't get underway until the birds are two or three years old but, if all goes well, the chicks we transfer this year will form the nucleus of a new colony on Motuora. Additional transfers will be carried out in 2008 and 2009 to ensure the new colony gets off to a strong start. Other seabird species will be also transferred to Motuora in the future: more details can be found in the Motuora Native Species Restoration

## ANNOUNCEMENT

New Island Managers have been appointed. Andrea Ravenscroft & Deane Williams will job share. They have spent a number of years as hut wardens for DoC at Glenorchy and have a wide skill base.

Starting mid November they will be straight into a busy time with kiwi capture, annual weeding, kiwi release, and heaps of pricking out, not to mention approaching peak summer usage for campground and bach.

**Welcome aboard Dean and Andrea !**

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## Weekend Camp on Motuora – 23/24 February 2008

Join us on the annual family camp weekend – summer is just around the corner !  
Departing Sandspit Saturday morning, return Sunday afternoon. There will be time to relax and play but work (a little) on the Restoration Project if you choose. Fully catered (except Sat lunch). Bring a tent, bedding and lunch for Saturday. Make sure there are no ants or mice hitchhiking in your equipment.

All inclusive cost (ferry, food, camp) \$45 per person, children under 12 years \$15

To be prepaid by the end of January – send cheque to:  
Motuora Restoration Society, PO Box 100-132, NSMC

Contacts - Eilene Lamb, (09) 427 8911 to book.

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Plan (email Robin at [rgg@clear.net.nz](mailto:rgg@clear.net.nz) for a pdf of the plan).

These seabird transfers are part of the ongoing ecosystem restoration on Motuora. In centuries past Motuora would probably have had extensive colonies of seabirds including sooty shearwater, flesh-footed shearwater, fluttering shearwater, white-faced storm petrel and perhaps Cook's petrel and Puffin. The colonies would have been built on burrows or dig new ones each year. These seabird species clean out old burrows brought in rich nutrients from the sea through their guano, carrying nutrients and food sources for other species. Rebuilding this type of seabird colony is a major task. Conservation ornithologists have been working to be established at new locations over the last six months. Helen's expertise has been crucial so patiently and generously. Griffiths, Les Buckton, Kit and all those who drove boats, sewed bird bags, tracked down equipment or installed burrows



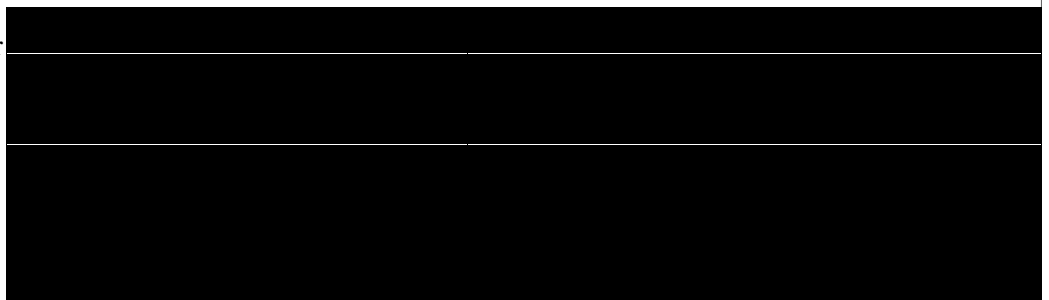
Is there anyone who could donate funds towards the purchase of 2 sets of bunk beds for the use of island volunteers and visiting researchers/scientists. Total cost \$800 . Part or all would be greatly appreciated.

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

### Motuora Restoration Society (Inc)

The Society is undertaking the restoration of native forest to create habitat for endangered species on the island.

Membership costs \$25 per



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planting target the monthly trips turned into fortnightly trips and during August and September small groups of planters went almost every Sunday to progress the work. The last of the plants went in the ground on 24th September finally making the target of 30,000, a record planting number.



Orca - Brick Bay. Photographer Clare Watkins

## Awesome sight

On the ferry trip home from Motuora on 26/8/07 we were lucky enough to see several orca. Claire Watkins had her camera at the ready! She kindly passed her photographs taken that day to Dr Ingrid Visser. Part of Ingrid's reply is below

"Hi All

I just wanted to say how very excited I was to receive your email with photos very clearly show two orca whom I can instantly recognize - Koru- an adult male with the tip of his fin sort-of scrunched up and curled over, like the curled tip of a ponga tree-fern frond (a koru) and Nicky, a female with a large nick out of her fin."

Both of these orca are really well known to me, and I was in fact, with them on the Friday previous to your sighting on Sunday 26th August 2007. I was with them at the Poor Knight Islands, just north of Whangarei Harbour."

For more information on the Orca Research Trust and the work of Dr. Visser visit [www.orcaresearch.org](http://www.orcaresearch.org)

## Motuora

Dylan and Maureen are with the Ecology & Conservation Group, Institute of Natural Resources, Massey University. Shore skink (Cyclodina smithii) and Duvaucel's geckos (Hoplodactylus duvaucelii) were released on Motuora (and Tiritiri Island) in December 2006.

I have both good and bad news to report. You may remember the sapping Kaitiaki as a "gecko hotspot". Well since the 170km an hour! The bush patch at the Icopper) and that rebuilding the island reptile fauna is a vital part of the island restoration.

ground and tossed over younger trees and saplings. The canopy was opened up completely as winds stripped leaves from branches. It took a couple of days for me to find and repair the tracking tunnels and refuges that had been carried hundreds of metres away by the winds. At Pohutukawa Bay, the high seas pushed sand and debris up to the grass bank and managed to wash out most of the pitfall traps!

As far as we are aware, there were no gecko or skink casualties over this time. Since the animals originated from naturally exposed areas we may assume that they are adapted enough to survive these storms. However, the months following the storm failed to indicate any geckos in the area and no shore skinks have been found. This may be partly due to the reduced activity of the lizards during winter.

The good news though, is that spring has sprung and finally the geckos have shown some signs of activity! There has been an increase in the tracking rates (the proportion of geckos leaving footprint tracks in tracking tunnels) over the last month and I have even seen a gecko. An attempted capture of this gecko, at night, resulted in many scratches, bruises, and a cliffhanging event which I do not wish to repeat!

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped spotlight for geckos all hours of the night and a very special thanks to Dave Jenkins for his ongoing help, support, and hospitality.

Dylan van Winkel and Marleen Baling

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

### Next trip

2nd December. **NB** Later than usual to allow viewing the diving petrel translocation work. (Also nursery work and general tasks)

Join us in 2008 (on the camp weekend in February) and on the last Sunday of each month.

### Booking essential:

Eilene Lamb, Hib.Coast, (09) 427 8911; Robin Gardner-Gee (Auckland) 09 378 9548. Fare: Adults \$16, Children 5-12 years \$8, under 5 years free. Parking \$5.

### What to bring

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

# Thank You

**Simon Chamberlin** for donation towards the cost of northern diving petrel translocation.

**Lion Foundation** for grant for the for northern diving petrel translocation (professional fees).

**Foodstuffs (Auckland) Ltd and Devonport New World** for assistance with costs of sardines for northern diving petrels.

**Phyllis Knott** for contribution to Newsletter Costs.

**NZ Post** for 400 prepaid envelopes.

**United Campervans** for ongoing sponsorship.

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

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

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



Dave Jenkins was presented with the new edition of Eagles 'Trees & Shrubs of NZ', with colour illustrations of 800 plants, as a 'thank you' for his work as Island Manager.



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