



## Key Facts about the Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust Great Barrier Island

### Who are we?

The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust was formed in 2001 and is a registered Charitable Trust which manages the Windy Hill Sanctuary. The voluntary Trustees are: **Judy Gilbert**, Founder, Trust and Sanctuary Manager, landowner Little Windy Hill; **Rose Harland**, landowner Rosalie Bay; **John Ogden**, Professor of Ecology, landowner Awana. The Trust was created to formalise the management of ecological restoration and to expand existing pest management projects initiated in 1999 by south-eastern Great Barrier Island landowners.

### What's the objective?

The Trust's overall objective is to sustain and enhance the biodiversity of the area by removing invasive plants and animals creating a Sanctuary within which native species can flourish, threatened species can be protected, and species that have been lost to the Island reintroduced. The Trust engages the community in the benefits of conservation and is committed to assisting the fragile economy of the Island by creating conservation based employment.

### What's been happening?

For the past 19 years the Trust has been raising funds and employing field workers to systematically remove invasive plants and animals; monitor species outcomes; and research best practice. The area currently under intensive management for rats, mice, pigs, rabbits, and feral cats totals 770 hectares. The Trust has three full and one part time field worker and a part time contractor all of whom were previously unemployed. North Island robins were translocated into the Sanctuary in 2004, 2009 and 2012 but failed to successfully establish a population at Windy Hill due to dispersal of young. Two rare chevron skinks were released at Windy Hill by DoC in 2004 and three pateke released in 2011. In January 2011 a Duvaucels skink was trapped - the second only sighting in 40 years.

### Why are we controlling pests?

This area of the Island has long been considered ecologically significant. It is remote, has very little development, and has large areas of undisturbed coastal-broadleaf- podocarp mature forest. The Sanctuary is home to brown teal duck, black petrels, Duvaucels gecko, chevron and striped skinks, kaka, and kereru. The Category C rare plant pimelea

	<p>tomentosa is found on the coast. The area is recognised under <b>Category 4 of the National Priorities for Biodiversity on Private Land</b>. Three areas totalling 267 hectares are covenanted with <b>QE11 National Trust</b>. The landowners have responded to the call for all NZRs to halt the waning of the country's biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>How is it happening?</b></p>	<p>Eighty km of tracks with 5500 bait or trap stations and 70 cat traps have been established in 4 pest project areas to remove rats, mice, and feral cats. From 1999 to 2004 trapping was the sole method used to reduce pest densities, and a discrete introduction of toxins began in 2005. Since 1999, 51,350,000 rats, 347 cats, 300 goats ( now eradicated), 79 wasp nests, and 125 pigs have been removed. Currently the programme uses low potency rat bait backed up with traps. Research into the best way of maintaining rats at low densities using socially acceptable practices while being cost effective continues. Field workers keep a detailed record of all catches and bait take.</p>
<p><b>Who Pays?</b></p>	<p>The private landowners involved make an annual donation to the project costs and the Trust Manager is voluntary - a minimum of 15 hours per week. Since 2000 funds have been raised from the Auckland Regional Council Environmental Initiatives Fund, World Wild Life Habitat Protection Fund, Pacific Conservation and Development Fund, QEII National Trust, Auckland City Heritage Fund, Scottwood Group, Lotteries Environment, Transpower Landcare, Biodiversity Condition Fund and Community Conservation Partnerships Fund. Over \$2.4M has been raised to date.</p>
<p><b>How do we know we are achieving our objectives?</b></p>	<p>A monitoring programme has been in operation since 2000. Bird Monitoring is undertaken annually and supervised by ecologist John Ogden. Monitoring is undertaken for weta, invertebrates, and lizards every six months, and seedlings every five years. Freshwater stream monitoring was introduced in 2004 to assess health of streams. Monitoring tunnels are carried out for rats five times a year. Rat tracking tunnels generally average 5 -12%. Comparatively, a Control project established on an unmanaged site in 2006 has an average of 40-85%. Regular reports are published of monitoring results which show clear conservation gains in species presence and abundance.</p>
<p><b>How do we involve our community?</b></p>	<p>Open Days on the project sites were held in 2000, 2001, 2003, 2015 and three 'Rat Attack' community workshops held in 2007 and 2008. Articles about our activities are published in the GBI Trust Enviro News and Bush Telegraph which goes to 1200 residents and ratepayers. A twice yearly newsletter is sent to around 200 organisations and individuals. The</p>

**What are the benefits?**

Trustees and Field Workers are a resource for information and equipment on request. The local schools visit and other visitors on request. The local Youth group and students from Hillary Outdoors participate in weeding, equipment deployment and track maintenance. The GBI Environmental Trust State of the Environment Report published in 2010 contained photographs and data taken from the project.

The benefits to the biodiversity of the area are apparent. Bird numbers per hectare have doubled, lizard sightings are now common, and weta are abundant. The Sanctuary area is used to rehabilitate captured native species and for research, the results of which are of international significance. The community benefits economically and socially through the provision of employment opportunities—twenty-two to date. These jobs assist with reducing the number of unemployed on Island and up-skill workers to become conservation professionals. The project is a working role model of ecological restoration for DoC, other private landowners and organisations. The Trust is a member of the Sanctuaries of NZ group and shares widely the knowledge gained here.

**What are our achievements?**

In 2003 the Trust received a Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon Award for Caring for Biodiversity, and an Auckland Regional Council E-Award for Caring for Land and Biodiversity. The E-Award judges comments summed up... **"This project impresses through its professionalism and comprehensiveness. It not only benefits the local environment on Great Barrier but provides an excellent example for the rest of the country as to what can be achieved by committed and cooperative individuals in the field of conservation. The scientific rigour and strategic planning employed throughout this project are exemplary and innovative initiatives such as a community survey contribute greatly to its overall success. This project carries out tasks of complexity and comprehensiveness that many institutions would envy. One of its most impressive features, however, is the vision behind the project, and the enthusiasm with which the vision is communicated and put into practice. This is truly an inspirational project that deserves to be recognised and publicised throughout NZ"**.

In 2004 the Department of Conservation awarded the Trust the Stella Francis Award for Conservation Excellence.

**What's next?**

The Sanctuary will continue to expand as neighbours indicate their interest. In partnership with DOC and the Local Board a two year trial of the A24 Goodnature trap commenced in February 2016 with the results of the completed project being published later in 2018. Research continues into

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long life baits and a trial of the trap sensing unit Econode which began in April 2017.

We are committed to sustaining employment for people who have previously been unemployed for long periods of time and paying a living wage. The development of self-esteem and work ethic is highly rewarding.

The Trust will focus this year on creating further organisational and sponsorship partnerships to assist with meeting costs.

We will continue to advocate for the conservation of Great Barrier and promote the vision of a pest free Great Barrier Island.

*The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust actively promotes biodiversity, conservation, the conservation experience, conservation based employment, conservation partnerships, and quality conservation management.*