

## Newsletter # 2 December 2002

### Kia Ora

We are delighted to report that the Trust's pest management projects at Benthorn Farm on Great Barrier Island are continuing to operate successfully within these two project areas. Our monitoring programme is indicating an biodiversity of this area of south-eastern Great Barrier and the dawn chorus is a real indictment of our efforts.

The area now managed intensively for rats and feral cats is around 230 hectares. A team of three field workers - Fred Littin, Dean Medland and Kevin Parsons are managing 3000 rodents, 25 cats, 56 goats and 4 pigs. The contract to eradicate the feral goats has now been let and this will see our coastline clear of goats by the meantime these are hunted on a regular basis and the benefit to the community is much in evidence. A wide range of invasive plants have also been removed.

Over this year the Trust has managed plant and animal pests on five neighbouring properties. Each landowner has negotiated a working agreement with the Trust over the Trust's role and the specific requirements of each owner. We hope to see a new project area (Big Windy Hill Pest Management Project) in the New Year as the Trust's role is reached. Two DoC coastal blocks are included in this new area and we look forward to cooperatively with DoC in managing their land.

It has been a very progressive year not just on the pest management front but also on the other objectives of the Trust. In August, myself and Don Armitage (and others) met with representatives of DoC, Auckland Regional Council, Auckland City Council, Auckland, and Uniserve Ltd to bring the vision of a rodent free Great Barrier Island to the attention of these agencies. The idea met with a very positive response and we have formed an Advisory group to a working party made up of Barrier locals. We are currently scoping a feasibility study of an Island wide rodent and feral cat eradication programme to be funded through a variety of agencies. A Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust is set up to act as the community's agency for manifesting and funding this feasibility study. Thanks to Don Armitage for his drive and energy in bringing about the meeting and the formation of the Trust.

A telephone survey of 100 Barrier ratepayers and residents was carried out. The purpose of the survey was to give the Trust a current picture of local opinion about the idea of a total Island rat and cat eradication. The response from off-island people was very positive with an exceptionally high number of people participating. The results will be published in February of next year and will provide the information needed by the community to further this vision.

The Trust has been involved in a number of contracts this year. Rats have been managed for Forest and Bird in the Rangitawhiri Reserve in Tryphena and rat control was carried out on contract to Auckland City at Tryphena Wharf. The Trust also supplied two workers to the ARC

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for weed control over six months of the year. With a good level of expertise now developed, our team of field workers are supporting other initiatives on the Island as requested.

The Trust has continued to be very well supported with funding from other Trusts and groups. Thankyou. Our partnerships with WINZ and the Auckland Regional Council have been vital to the ability of the Trust to sustain its work at such a high level. We have also received much encouragement and advice from DoC, the local community, and the Ministry for the Environment. The creation of employment opportunities is proving to be a very important here as the local population continues to decline along with the Islands economic base. The vision of Barrier being the largest pest free inhabited Island in the world holds economic wellbeing close with the readily achieved environmental benefits.

Throughout this year we have been monitoring for both flying and ground invertebrates in partnership with the entomology department at the Auckland Museum. We intend to have a detailed report of not only the variety and densities of invertebrates present here, but to map their success following the removal of rats and cat. Thank you to John Early.

In the New Year we will begin negotiations to reintroduce the North Island robin back to our sanctuary and to Great Barrier Island - the first of what we hope will be a number of birds currently lost to the Island. We look forward to keeping you in touch with our progress.

So, there is much to be positive about at this time and on behalf of our Trust board members - Liz Westbrooke, John Ogden, Mike Lee, and Geoff Lloyd - I wish you a creative Christmas and a bountiful New Year.

Kind regards  
Judy Gilbert  
Founding Trustee & Trust Manager