



429 Rosalie Bay Road
RD1 Tryphena
Great Barrier Island
Telephone 09 429 0306
email lovebirds@xtra.co.nz

December 2003 Newsletter #4 Annual Report

Kia Ora

From simple beginnings the work of the WHRBC Trust has become a highly successful example of conservation and biodiversity enhancement on private land. The Trust's pest management projects at Little Windy Hill and Benthorn Farm projects have become a role model for neighbours, many of whom have now become part of the Trust's initiative to create 750 hectares of ecologically restored land on south eastern GBIs.

In the five years since the approval of the projects over 12,000 rats, 95 cats, around 300 goats, 20 pigs, magpies, mynas, and a suite of invasive plants have been removed. The Windy Hill and Benthorn Farm Monitoring Programme indicates an improvement in the densities of small birds while invertebrate monitoring shows good numbers of invertebrates present.

The dream of reintroducing kiwi to the land has been redirected toward reintroducing those bird species that were known to have been present on Great Barrier, with an application to Department of Conservation awaiting approval to release 30 North Island Robins in Autumn 2004.

The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust was this year awarded a Green Ribbon Award from the Ministry for the Environment for Caring for Biodiversity, winning this category from 32 other entrants. It also received the Community section of the Auckland Regional Council Environmental Initiatives Fund Caring for Land and Biodiversity award.

Field Work

An amazing effort this year from our Field Managers Dean Medland and Kevin Parsons with assistance of field worker Rose Harland. The team has managed to maintain and improve existing systems and continue to expand our area of operation. The Trust acknowledges WINZ for its support of our employees through WINZ Work schemes. Approximately 250 hectares of private land is currently intensively managed for rats and feral cats. The culling of feral goats has continued and the Auckland Regional Council and Department of Conservation Total Island Goat Eradication programme should be completed by mid 2004.

Thank you to the following Trust
& Project Sponsors:

J.S Watson Trust
(Forest & Bird)

WWF Habitat Protection Fund

G B Is SLIPS- Pest Fund

Scottwood Trust

Pacific Development and
Conservation Trust

QEII National Trust

Auckland Regional Council
Environmental Initiatives Fund

Auckland City Council
Heritage Fund

Transpower Landcare Trust
Grants

Lotteries Environment

Subritzky Shipping

Wilson & Macindoe Ltd

WINZ & DoC

Great Barrier Airlines

Great Barrier Landowners

The improvement in coastal plants is already evident. With a mild wet winter the bush is in amazing condition and our team of field workers has been hard pressed to keep the trapping tracks open. The trapping routes are divided into sections of the outer 'perimeter' track and a series of 'internal' tracks. At Windy Hill there are currently 24 sections of perimeter track and 22 internal tracks. The perimeter track, which takes one field worker around 5 hours to service, is intensively trapped with rat traps every 12.5 metres and cat traps every 200 metres or so. This system helps to minimise reinvasion and catch data indicates a much higher percentage of catches occur in perimeter traps than interior track traps.

Open Day

The Great Barrier Island Trust hosted an Open Day on Windy Hill on the 8th November. This was well attended with about 60 people enjoying a talk from chairman John Ogden, followed by groups taking a bush walk with Kevin and Rose, invertebrate fossicking with John Early (Auckland Museum), and skink searching with Helema Jamieson (Department of Conservation). The afternoon speaker was Jo Ritchie talking about the Tawharanui Sanctuary project and how it combines farming and conservation.

The Trust has worked on other projects in the community this year - 6 months of pest control on the Forest and Bird Rangitawhiri Reserve in Tryphena, stoat monitoring for the Auckland Regional Council Biosecurity Unit, and some pest management on private property.

Monitoring Programme

In May 2000 Dean Medland carried out the first five minute bird count. Sam Ferreira, DoC Ecologist, designed the Little Windy Hill monitoring programme which was introduced in September 2000 and has produced 3-4 reports a year since of bird monitoring, with additional reports reviewing rodent and cat control results. Indications are of improvement in the small bird densities and a comparison with the bird monitoring results done on Little Barrier shows a similarity of bird densities in those species that are present on both Islands.

Invertebrate monitoring using malaise traps was introduced on 2002 under the supervision of John Early of the Auckland Museum and later in the same year 30 pitfall traps were established. The objective of this monitoring is to gather information on the invertebrate species and their densities present, as well as observing the effects of removing rodents on some indicator species.

The robust scientific nature of our monitoring has been instrumental in our funding success as well as providing credibility to our work.

A Masters student, Deline Samaka, from Auckland University has just completed his thesis practical work here which will provide us with an independent assessment of effectiveness comparing managed to unmanaged areas and the effectiveness of community based conservation.

Finances

The Trust has had an extremely successful year with funding being approved from Lotteries Environment and the new Biodiversity Condition Fund. The Auckland City Heritage Fund has continued its support as has the Landcare Transpower Grants scheme and the Auckland Regional Council Environmental Initiatives Fund. A private donation of \$10,000 from Scott Macindoe and Karyn Winstone, Little Windy Hill shareholders, has meant that the Trust has been able to start its capital fund by investing this donation thereby creating our first self generated income. Thankyou.

The Trust wishes to thank neighbouring landowners for their donations and the support of Great Barrier Airlines and Subritzky Shipping.

Applications for funding are ongoing to meet the projected budget for the 2004 year.

The Future

The Trust will continue to expand the managed area with a number of new neighbours signing our working agreement for pest management to be undertaken on their land. It is exciting to be entering the next phase of the restoration programme, species reintroductions. Liz Westbrooke will be working on a long term relocation programme over the summer giving us a time frame and order for further species reintroductions.

The recently formed Great Barrier Island Trust has taken on the role of achieving community 'buy-in' to a total Island rat and feral cat eradication and it is hoped will fund a full scale feasibility study on this idea in the near future. The results of this study will determine the long term plans for this Trust.

Have a Merry Xmas and thank you for your interest and encouragement.

Judy Gilbert, Liz Westbrooke, John Ogden, and Mike Lee
Trustees

