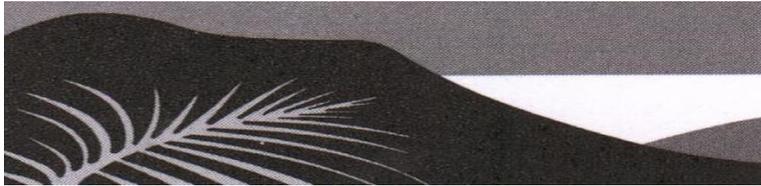


WINDY HILL ROSALIE BAY CATCHMENT TRUST



Annual Report & Newsletter #20 Dec 2011

Kia Ora

2011 has been a year of highs and lows – the high has been the great conservation results achieved by our field team and the low, the loss of our conservation comrade-in-arms Tony Bouzaid who died in October. We celebrate his achievements and miss his determination! Glenfern Sanctuary is to continue with the support of Tony's family and we await DoC approval for our joint application to translocate more North Island robins to our respective sanctuaries in April 2012. There are five females and three robin males breeding at Windy Hill currently – such is the drive for survival that 2 of the males have 2 females each – these little birds are working overtime to feed their spouses and their offspring. The translocated birds coming from Pureora forest will include a few extra males to hopefully help these boys out next year. Seven juveniles will be banded this week adding to the four already banded so far this season.

Keeping on with the highs, I would like to dedicate this Annual Report to our field team, our volunteers, sponsors, and our funders. To achieve the conservation gains we are measuring takes dedicated people and support - the Trust **hugely appreciates** the following:

Our field team : Kevin Parsons ably leads the field operations and directs the field team through comprehensive pest management, monitoring, and research. Field workers Rachel Wakefield, Mick Butterworth, Kyle Penton, and Dave Harland keep both plant and animal pests to a minimum come rain or shine and have been rewarded by the abundance of birds seen this season.



Kevin, Rachel, Brandon, Mick, Kyle

Volunteers : Brandon Kerr and Dave Harland generously donate their time every week to essential tasks within the Sanctuary. Thank you also to Murray Staples for his voluntary culling of rabbits on a regular basis and Dean Medland for managing feral pigs.

Sponsors : Kelvin Floyd donates his GIS and mapping expertise so that we have an awesome array of highly professional sanctuary maps. These show not only our 80+kms of tracks but also where we undertake monitoring, research, and the locations of weeds. Sealink Ltd has sponsored the freighting of equipment to the Island for some years now saving the Trust these costs. Thank you also to Dylan van Winkle for his lizard monitoring and expertise, and Mike Parsonage for auditing the Trusts accounts each year.

Funders: Lotteries Heritage and Environment has been a solid funder of the Trusts work since 2001. Such ongoing funding highlights their commitment to NZ's biodiversity. This year funding has also been received from Auckland Council Heritage Fund, ASB Community Trust (a 3 year grant) and WWF Habitat Protection Fund (a 2 year grant). We are now into the third year of a Biodiversity Condition Fund grant which has been the major funder of our field team.

Trustees : John Ogden donates much time to ecological advise, surveys, and processing data from the Trust's monitoring. Mike Lee keeps us in tune with the big picture. Rose Harland contributes from a landowner's perspective and enthuses as a passionate conservationist.

Administration : every organisation needs a Sue Thompson who keeps excellent account of all the financial aspects of the Trust freeing me, as the voluntary Trust Manager, to manage all other Trust business.

Landowners: we would not have a Sanctuary if we didn't have the cooperation and support of the 17 landowners whose land the Trust works on - Little Windy Hill Company, Helga and Peter Speck, Bruce and Cynthia Macnee, Rosalie Bay Farms Ltd, Martina and Pedro Tschirky, Jimmy and Ruth Speck, DoC, Robin and Judith Henderson, Nicolson and Somerville families, Nick Wilkinson, Rose and Dave Harland, Rachel Wakefield, Blaiklock family, David and Judith Henderson, and the Wells family. We welcome on board the Hunky Dory Company and Waterfall Bay Retreat Company - two new landowners who are allowing us onto their properties for monitoring purposes.

All together there are over 60 individual people engaged with the Sanctuary!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING AND GENEROUS SUPPORT.

Other tasty enviro treats...

- A new species of worm has been discovered at Windy Hill from invertebrate monitoring samples taken in 2001 by Auckland Museum – its called ***Aporodrilus aotea*** sp. nov.
- Monitoring this year revealed another worm – the Velvet worm- on Little Windy Hill which only survives in 'pristine' conditions.
- Annual averages for rat tracking tunnel percentages for 2011 were an improvement for most project areas over 2010. When consistent methodology is applied we can keep rats and mice at low densities using both bait and traps. Over 2000 rats were trapped on the perimeter over this year.
- Three hand reared pateke were released on the ponds at Benthorn Farm in December bringing the number on the farm to 13.



Magnified photo of velvet worm



The rarely seen native paua slug

- Tui, kaka, and kereru have increased between 50 and 350% since 2001.
- A live specimen of the Duvaucels gecko has yet to be found but monitoring for it has shown populations of moko, ornate, copper, and shore skinks as well as pacific and forest geckos. Both juveniles and adults were recorded indicating that breeding is successful for these recovering species.

Trust Matters

The Trust has new contracts from Auckland Council and Auckland Transport to manage biosecurity pest management at the Tryphena, Okupu, and Whangaparapara wharves, and Claris airfield. Dean Medland is employed to carry out this work which increases the biosecurity protection for the island.

We have a new field base shed which has improved and increased the area for the field team to work from daily. Thank you to the Windy Hill Company for the use of old site which was situated under the Company Meeting House. The new field base is sited next to the Auckland Council Incursion Shed at Windy Hill and is full of equipment ready to be deployed in the event of a suspected mustelid, possum, or Norway rat sighting. This work is also carried out by Dean Medland on request from Council.

In summary, the Sanctuary continues to blossom as our expertise grows.

I am excited by our outcomes, our continued high level of funding support, the stability of our field team, the interest and support from landowners in the area, and the growing number of volunteer hours. Our work was affirmed in the latest Hauraki Gulf State of the Environment Report which noted that the only positive improvement in the environment was on those Gulf Islands with restoration projects. Bring on a pest free Great Barrier for one giant improvement!

Till next year – wishing you an abundant Xmas and restful New Year

Judy Gilbert
Trust Manager