



# FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INCORPORATED

PO BOX 54 101, MANA

Newsletter Number 19

February 2004

Hi Everyone

I hope you are all well rested and refreshed from a well-earned holiday break.

The year has certainly started off with a hiss and a roar, with some massive publicity on the Fairy Prion release (see the photo below), and not to forget the Speckled Skink. I also had the honour of fronting up to a presentation of funds from the Mana Community Trust for the Yellow Crowned Parakeet release which is planned to take place in early March.

Much of the credit for both these projects must come to the Friends and their supporters and Sponsors, but none of this would be possible without the organisational skills of DoC, and the management of their part of the project. My personal thanks go to the volunteers who spent their time and energy on the Island feeding the birds and to Colin Ryder for again managing the process.

The next project is the release of the Yellow Crowned Parakeets and the flax weevil but as you would know the weather has not been very co-operative. The birds are confused as to spring and autumn (aren't we all?), and are still breeding, Some researchers have informed DoC that at least one pair of parakeets on the source island have laid eggs. DoC are investigating and if it is found that the birds are having a late breeding season then the transfer will be deferred until May to give any chicks time to fledge. We should know by the end of this month and we will advise you as soon as possible. Watch this space.

Finally I hope that you will join us for our *AGM* this year, no fears of being coerced onto the committee, the existing team are perfectly happy to continue. Come and enjoy the company, reflect on our achievements and contribute to the planning for the future.

Cheers, Brian



## *Annual General Meeting*

Royal Police College  
Papakowhai Road, Porirua  
(Meeting Room above the Main entry foyer)

Tuesday 23 March 2004  
7:30 pm

Speaker: Carl Hayson  
(Chairperson of the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc)

**"Tiritiri Matangi - Involving Public in NZ Conservation"**

## Lighthouse Keepers on Mana Island by David Cornick

The first principal Lighthouse keeper on Mana Island was William Hendle who was born in London in 1831 and served at Trinity House (for family of men of the sea – ie lighthouse keepers).

In 1856, William sailed to New Zealand and married Jane White. Their family consisted of James White (born 1857 and died 1863), George Norton (born 1862) and Robert White, born 1864.

William's appointment with the Marine Board as first principal lighthouse keeper on Mana Island began on 1 February 1865 with a salary of £190 per annum.

Two more children were born on the Island - George in 1867 and Alfred John in 1869. Unfortunately George Norton died in February 1866. In July 1870, after a stay of five years, the family moved to Cape Campbell lighthouse where Earnest was born in 1871.

The move to Pencarrow lighthouse was in 1872 where William tragically lost his wife as reported in The Evening Post on Wednesday April 21 1875 –

*“A very sad accident occurred at the lighthouse on Pencarrow Head the night before last, attended, we regret to say, with fatal results. Mrs Hendle, wife of one of the lighthouse-keepers, had been taking some coffee to her husband, who was on the top of the tower. She had descended the stairs safely so far as the first landing, but just afterwards Mr Hendle heard a scream and the sound of a fall and found his wife lying at the foot of the staircase. Her injuries proved so serious that she expired this morning from the effects.”*

After six years William returned to Cape Campbell lighthouse in April 1878.

William Hendle died of a heart attack in the lightroom of the lighthouse on Wednesday March 30 1881 at the age of 50. The Marine Department sent his body back to Wellington on the “Stellar”.

Jane and William were both buried in the Bolton Street Cemetery and later re-interred at the time of the motorway construction.

### Volunteer Statistics

YEAR	No. of volunteers	No. of days worked
1995	621	532
1996	513	401
1997	640	395
1998	634	556
1999	481	596
2000	416	570
2001	465	369
2002	453	461
2003	672	675

### Visit our website –

[www.manaisland.org.nz](http://www.manaisland.org.nz)

For general information, contact addresses and membership forms. There is also an order form for a PowerPoint presentation CD available for sale to schools or community groups. The cost is \$10.00 per copy

### ***Subs subs subs***

Subs for 2004 are now due. A renewal slip is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of Mana Island'

### **FOMI COMMITTEE**

Brian Paget (President) 472 4827; Kelvin Hunt (Secretary); Janet Barnes (Treasurer) 232 7231; Sue Chesterfield (Bookings) 233 8314; Doreen Douglas (Vice President/Newsletter) 233 1174; Grant Timlin; Tama Coker (Iwi rep); Colin Ryder; Jason Christensen (DoC); Ian Cooksley (DoC). ☺

## ***NEWS FROM THE ISLAND***

November saw Jason spending a lot of time in the office working on the Business Plan for 2004 and planning for the Fairy Prion transfer. After that he headed to Stephens Island to help collect 100 Prion chicks and 48 speckled skinks ready for their transfer to Mana.

Nio was in charge over the Christmas period. He worked mostly in the nursery, pricking out and bagging up and then he supervised the Global Volunteers who were helping out with the survey work for the planting programme. Jason returned on New Year's day.

Grant finished the weed project and then helped with boat trips and with the Fairy Prion transfer. Nio finished the summer spray programme after his break.

Grant and Jason rescued six boaties on the 19 January who, due to bad weather, were then marooned on Mana for a further three days.

Another group got marooned too. Three people from the FOMI Historical Group spent a

weekend cleaning and oiling all the old artifacts. History files were checked and all-important information was listed for the History Committee. They also got stuck for an extra day when the weather turned nasty.

Three students have been doing some research. Kelly was checking the metabolic rates of Geckos, Jennie was researching the dispersal of the common gecko in the different vegetation types and Josh was checking the quantities of fruiting species and which birds were eating them.

In order to try and return the Mistletoe species to the Island, seeds from a host plant on Kapiti Island were placed in the trunks of trees. It will take one or two years before there are any results but keep your fingers crossed for this project.

Culvert pipes have been put in on the Tirohunga track, replacing the old ankle biters (open drains).

The boxthorn on the cliffs has been sprayed with the helicopter.

Volunteers have been helping in the Nursery,

starting a major survey project on the previous planting grids to help locate gaps in the species mix so that the next 5-7 years planting can be planned.

November 25 was a sad day. The old boat, which had served the Island well for fifteen years, was taken for its final clean before being put out for tender. Jason, Nio and Grant sat on Mana Ranger 2, had a nice cold beer and came up with some boat poetry. [*Sorry Jason - lack of space prevents its being published here! - Ed*].

Before the bad storm, there were six Takahe chicks. Staff are now waiting for some fine weather in order to check on their survival.

The big event in January was the Fairy Prion transfer (See report on Pg 5), also the release of the speckled skinks.

Public access was restricted for the month of January due to the increasing fire hazard.

The total number of visitors for 2003 was 888, down on last year, probably due to the dry summer.

## **FAIRY PRIONS ALL AT SEA** by Colin Ryder

Three weeks to the day after arriving at Mana Island, the last of the 100 fairy prion chicks transferred from Stephens Island in January has headed out to sea.

While these birds spend the next three years in the changeable and sometimes extreme conditions of Cook Strait, it is hoped that the first of the 240 chicks transferred from Stephens Island since January 2002 will return to Mana Island later this year

Describing the three year project to re-establish a breeding colony of fairy prions on the Island as “very successful”, Friends of Mana Island president Brian Paget said it was particularly pleasing that all chicks fledged without a single fatality.

This is despite eight chicks having to be moved to drier accommodation this year when their burrows became flooded because of torrential rain. One chick was even found floating, quite happily, in several centimetres of water in its burrow.

“This is a tribute to the Department of Conservation, our contractors, and particularly, the many volunteers who fed the chicks during their stay on Mana Island. The project has enabled techniques used in seabird transfers to be refined” Mr Paget said. “This means that transfers involving other seabirds elsewhere can proceed more smoothly, more cheaply, and with a higher chance of success.”

The Friends of Mana Island was established in December 1998 to promote and enhance the Scientific Reserve on Mana Island and to encourage the general public to take an active interest in all aspects of conservation on the island.

In addition to the fairy prion project, the Friends have provided support for several other projects and activities, including organising and substantially funding the volunteer effort in planting 85,000 trees. Future species transfers planned include yellow-crowned parakeets and flax weevils next month and fluttering shearwaters in 2005.

### ***Tiritiri Matangi***

Our speaker at the AGM this year is Carl Hayson, Chairperson of the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc. He has an impressive CV. He joined the Supporters shortly after it was formed in October 1988 and has since served as Treasurer, Secretary, Membership and now Chairperson. He has helped with planting, with species translocations and has also helped develop relationships with many stakeholders such as DOC, Iwi, universities etc. He is an experienced guide and has given many talks to interested groups about the development of the Island.

Tiritiri Matangi attracts more than 20,000 visitors annually. It has many similarities to Mana Island - it lies 4km off the coast of Auckland's Whangaparaoa Peninsula and was originally cleared and farmed for many years. It was also the site of one of the Hauraki Gulf's most important aids to navigation, the Tiritiri Light.

Between 1984 and 1994 the farm animals were removed and over 280,000 trees planted by volunteers. It is now pest-free and provides a habitat for a number of rare and endangered species, including saddleback, takahe, parakeet, North Island robin, kokao, whitehead, little spotted kiwi, stitchbird and brown teal.

***- and don't forget  
to come to the***

### **AGM**

**Royal Police College  
Papakowhai Road  
Porirua  
(Meeting Room above the  
Main entry foyer)**

**Tuesday 23 March  
7:30 pm**

*Open to non- members  
Bring your friends!  
Bring your partners!  
Bring anyone you think  
would be interested!*

## **THE PARADOX OF NOCTURNAL LIZARDS**

Kelly Hare spent three weeks on Mana Island during November 2003 as part of her PhD research. She is studying how nocturnal lizards are able to function at cool night temperatures. Reptiles are ectothermic (cold-blooded) and highly influenced by environmental temperature. Most reptiles are diurnal and forage during warm daytime temperatures. However, some species of lizard are nocturnal and are able to function at cool night-time temperatures, even though they prefer body temperature ranges only attainable during day hours.

Kelly's research aims to compare physiological measures of both nocturnal and diurnal species of skink and gecko, including their metabolic rates and energy use at different temperatures. Kelly hopes to find a difference in energy use and metabolic rates between nocturnal and diurnal species at low vs. high temperatures.

While on Mana Island, Kelly captured 30 adults of each of the following species: common gecko (*Hoplodactylus maculatus*), gold stripe gecko (*H. chrysosireticus*) and Macgregor's skink (*Cylcodina macgregori*), and measured their metabolic rates at both 15 and 25°C. Kelly has not yet analysed the data but results from other species from the mainland and Stephens Island show that metabolic rates do not differ at cool vs. warm temperatures in nocturnal and diurnal geckos. It will be interesting to see if this pattern is also apparent in skinks.

Currently Kelly is capturing more lizards from the Greater Wellington Region, including the green gecko (*Naultinus elegans punctatus*). If she manages to find any green geckos they will be translocated to Mana Island.

### **TRANSFER OF FLAX WEEVILS TO MANA ISLAND**

12 March 2004 is an important date in the ecological restoration of Mana Island. The Yellow Crowned Parakeets may be the glamour species hogging the limelight on that day but the opportunity is also being taken to transfer the first invertebrate to the Island, the flax weevil.

The flax weevil is a large, nocturnal, and flightless weevil that was once widespread throughout New Zealand but is now mainly found on offshore islands. Although no records exist, it is likely that it was on Mana Island before human disturbance and the mouse plague. It will surprise nobody to be told that it feeds specifically on flax.

Fifty weevils from Maud Island will share a helicopter ride with the yellow crowned parakeets and will be released in a suitable location on Mana Island. Two more transfers of the same size will take place over the next couple of years. Your Committee has already agreed to financially support the rest of this project although, as usual, any donations will be gratefully received.

Other threatened invertebrate species mentioned in the Mana Island Ecological Restoration Plan as candidates for introduction are the speargrass weevil, *Lissotes reticulatus* (a large flightless stag beetle), the giant pill millipede, and three species of large land snails.

## ***VOLUNTEERS WANTED!***

### ***YELLOW CROWNED PARAKEET PROJECT***

Thanks to very generous sponsorship from the Mana Community Trust and a donation from an anonymous member, the Friends of Mana Island and the Department of Conservation are now able to plan the transfer of 25 yellow crowned parakeets from the Marlborough Sounds to Mana Island on 12 March 2004.

The birds will be monitored weekly for the first month, fortnightly until the end of June and monthly until the end of March 2005. Monitoring will be undertaken by teams of seven volunteers over the weekends (ie there will be an overnight stay on the island).

We are therefore seeking volunteers who can commit their time and services for any of the following dates:

#### **2004**

13/14 March	20/21 March	27/28 March
3/4 April	possibly 9/11 April	17/18 April
1/2 May	15/16 May	7/8 August
4/5 September	2/3 October	6/7 November
11/12 December		

#### **2005**

8/9 January	12/13 February	12/13 March
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Volunteers should be reasonably fit, with reasonable eyesight and hearing. For the initial period, we will be endeavouring to have some volunteers with previous bird monitoring experience on each team.

The teams in August, September and October will also be monitoring the fairy prion site for the return (hopefully) of some of the birds from the first year's chick transfer. This will involve nighttime work so long hours can be expected over that period.

*If you are interested, email Colin Ryder on [rydercj@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rydercj@xtra.co.nz) with a few details (eg background, contact telephone numbers).*

### ***AND MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES -***

13 March 2004 - Karo/Weed removal  
1 May 2004 - Tube removal  
8 May 2004 - Tube removal

*If you are interested, email [contactus@manaisland.org.nz](mailto:contactus@manaisland.org.nz) for more details.*

