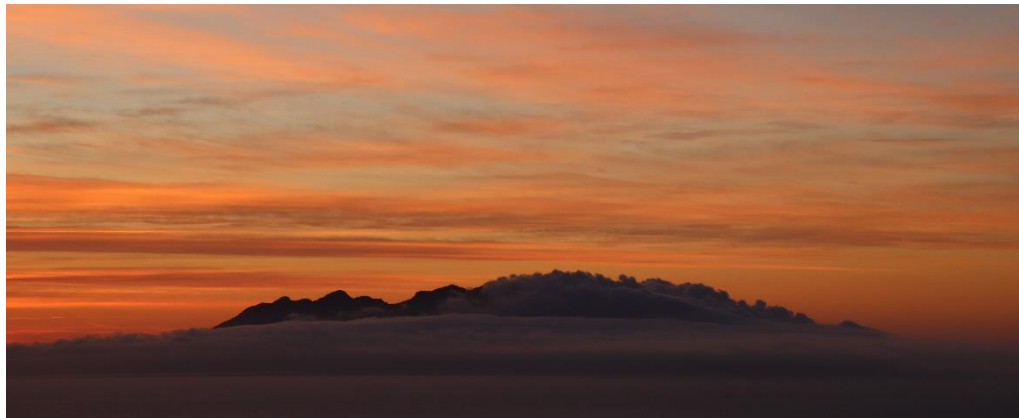


June 2021



Newsletter

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

# Motu Kaikoura

## *Chairperson's update from Mel Galbraith:*

One of my favourite BBC comedies in the 1980s was the situation comedy *Ever decreasing circles*, starring Penelope Wilton, Richard Briers and Paul Egan. The programme explored the tensions between the key characters involved in a local community, with the relationship differences generating the humour. With most situation comedies such as *Ever decreasing circles*, however, the subject matter invariably reflects real life where, particularly in formal structures, it is almost inevitable that differences between operational strategies and personalities will generate disagreements and friction at some point.

The Motu Kaikoura Trust is no exception to this reality. Most of you will be aware that the Board recently experienced a rift from such differences, culminating in the resignations of Rod and Rosalie Miller, and Geoff Davidson. I am saddened that there was no resolution to the differences expressed throughout the rift, and that some parties saw resignation as their only option. Rod, Rosalie and Geoff all made a significant contribution to the Motu Kaikoura project and the Board unreservedly acknowledges their voluntary contributions.

I wish to assure our Supporters, however, that the Board is in a sound position to move forward to meet the objectives of the Trust and the Management Plan for the island. We have welcomed two new Trustees (see later) who bring with them a breadth of experiences and interests to the project. We have committed to an annual operational plan, and continue to have a positive working relationship with our contractor on the island, Clint Stannard. We greatly value the contribution both he and his family make to the project both as a contractor and in a voluntary role.

The restoration and management of Motu Kaikoura is not an easy exercise. The island is large and rugged, and the limited access means that most of the management intentions are challenging and funding hungry. The project's public profile reflects the relatively low level of visitors compared to some other restoration islands in the Gulf. However, the island's size and absence of mammal predators other than rats offers huge potential for biodiversity conservation outcomes. We look forward to sharing these outcomes as we progress (see this issue's rat control news) – slowly but surely!

Mel Galbraith

## *News from the island:*

### Summer worker

*This summer, due to the increasing number of visitors, we brought in some help to manage the island duties. Tess Van der Wel (a recent graduate of The University of Canterbury) was on the island for four months helping out with all manner of work, from biosecurity to looking after our guests. Tess not only proved valuable as a worker but became a good friend to our family and somehow even managed to keep up a four-month long game of tag with the children. We wish Tess all the best in her journey and expect she will use the skills developed on Kaikoura to continue her good work in other environmental projects around NZ. Thanks Tess, Clint & Jacinda*





## Predator control:

### *Ship rats virtually eradicated on Motu Kaikoura*

The Motu Kaikoura Trust has been undertaking a manual rat control operation (baiting and trapping) on the island since March 2014, with the objective of managing rodent numbers at or below 5% index level. The Trust's latest annual rat report reveals excellent progress towards this goal. See link for full report:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a80bcc551a5849ed8f1eec7/t/5cb69da2085229a5fbb03f70/1555471784702/December+2018+Motu+Kaikoura+Sanctuary+rat+management+programme.pdf>

There are two species of rodents on Motu Kaikoura, the ship rat, probably the most destructive predator in New Zealand's native forests, and the Pacific rat or kiore which is considered rather less harmful. However as ship rats, apart from the odd swimmer, have now been virtually eradicated from the island, almost all rats now recorded are kiore. This is more than a direct reversal of the relationship of these two species at the start of the operation and confirms that a 100m x 100m (one station per hectare) grid, consistently managed, is sufficient over time to eliminate ship rats from a given habitat.

To target kiore, in January we launched a comprehensive expansion of the network, a new pilot intensified grid, zig-zagging 4 km, covering 30 ha. This comprises mostly newly cut tracks with some older refurbished tracks. The Intensified Management Area (IMA) consists of 173 stations, 96 of which are new, comprising 234 traps and 346 baits on a 100m x 50m grid located at the southeast corner of the island. The new intensified grid was built by ranger Clint Stannard, commencing in November. The work was funded by the DOC Conservation Fund.

On Motu Kaikoura the lifting of the environmental burden of rats, especially ship rats, is enabling natural regeneration of a flourishing forest understory, healthy numbers of soil invertebrates, and insects such as the yellow admiral butterfly. Also, we are seeing increasing numbers of forest birds, including red-crowned parakeets, kakariki, established on the island over the last two years, as well as breeding brown teal, pāteke. Cook's petrels are now roosting and perhaps breeding on the island.

The Motu Kaikoura rat control network comprising nearly 800 stations is operated by island ranger Clint Stannard with assistance from his wife Jacinda Stannard, (contracted as 'Island Care') and volunteers like Tess Van der Wel. Bait stations and traps are normally serviced on a monthly basis. Index monitoring takes place four times per year. The programme is overseen and guided by trustee Mike Lee who reports to the Trust.

The Motu Kaikoura Trust anticipates further success in our restoration objectives over the coming year.

### *Introducing two new Trustees:*

#### David Gauld ONZM

*David is a retired professor of Mathematics, having worked for the University of Auckland for half a century. During his working life he served on a number of local and national committees. Since retiring he has been busy with conservation volunteer work: including pest control in Ark in the Park in the Waitakere Ranges and in the Pourewa and Omaru valleys in central Auckland; and assisting the Botany Section of the Auckland Museum in digitising its numerous specimens. He has a lifelong love of the New Zealand back-country, and has tramped to many of NZ's most cobwebby corners!*



#### Michael Ngatai

*Ko Ngati Wai te iwi. Ko Ngati Rehua te hapu. Ko Hirakimata te maunga. Ko Motairehe te marae. Ko Michael Para Ngatai tōku ingoa. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou kātoa.*

*I've recently been appointed as a new trustee on the Motu Kaikoura Trust Board. I'm really looking forward to supporting and progressing the goals and aspirations of the Trust. My background is ecology and community conservation and I hope to bring a helpful perspective in that regard. Kia ora.*



#### Joining standing trustees:

Mel Galbraith (Chairperson), Lynette Hoey (Secretary), Harry Doig, Mike Lee, Rosemary Barraclough

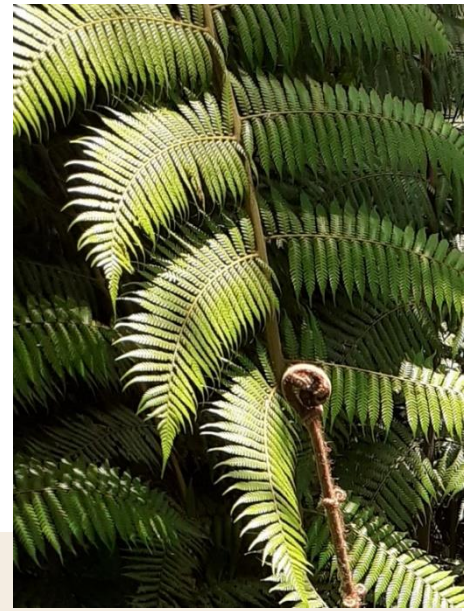
## Life on the island:

### From the Stannard family

*Hi Everyone,*

*It's been another busy summer this year, not as parched as the last, so it's been lovely to have some rain helping to green up areas that had completely died off by this time a year ago.*

*We've had quite a few visitors this year too, with the visits from Chris on his "Hooked on Barrier" charter business calling in to the wharf to admire our friendly local fish, as a highlight of the tour.*



### Grey beaked whale

*We had a juvenile male Gray's beaked whale wash ashore at Bradshaws cove this summer. Matt and Odette from Massey university (pictured) helped us take measurements and other important information.*



*We had a very friendly morepork form a friendship with Tazmyn... and a few visitors..*



### Lots of fungi

*The warm, wet wheather also brought quite the proliferation of fungi...Even this Leucocoprinus birnbaumii managed to emerge from a pretty unlikely place!*



*With the warmer weather this year we've also been swimming with a few jellyfish. Watching out for their tentacles of course!*



*That's about all for now.  
From the Stannard family.*