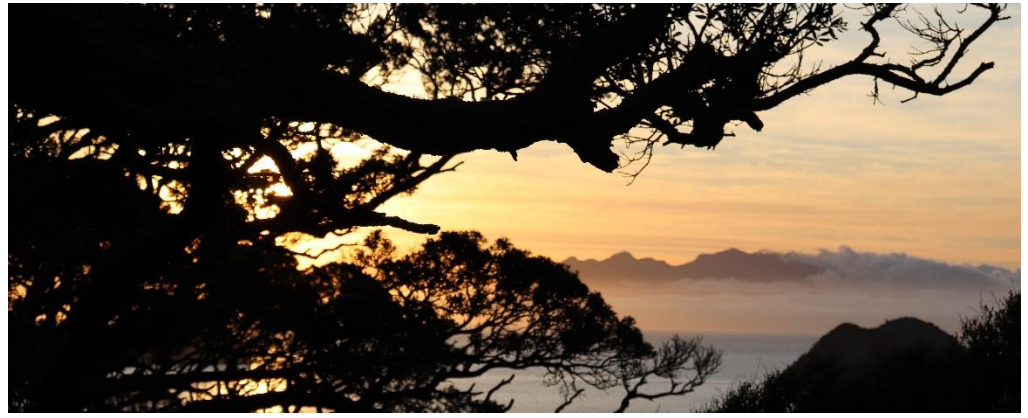


November 2021



Newsletter

www.motukaikoura.org.nz

Motu Kaikoura

Chairperson's update from Mel Galbraith:

For most people, Motu Kaikoura is not an easy island to access, but the Covid-19 restrictions certainly have not helped. This will be the second year in a row that I will have been unable to take a bird survey team to the island – I certainly hope that the situation will be more promising for 2022! However, when we do get visitors back to Motu Kaikoura, finding their way around will be easier. One of our successful funding applications last year was for signage to welcome visitors to the island, and to guide them around the island. This funding was from an Auckland Council Aotea / Great Barrier Local and Capital Grant, and we gratefully acknowledge this support.

Also ready for the summer, visitors using the accommodation will find a new fridge and a new washing machine. Appliances such as these often get a hard life in situations where a multitude of people use them, particularly where access to specialist maintenance and repair can be problematic. These appliances on Motu Kaikoura needed replacing, and we are grateful for the support of 100% Magness Benrow for donating a new fridge and a new washing machine. Also to the Department of Conservation and Clint Stannard, our Ranger, for transportation.

Much of my focus over the last few months has been compiling funding applications to continue our operations and biodiversity research on the island. Such grants are essential to maintain our progress. We have recently been informed that an application for roading maintenance funding from the Auckland Council (Aotea / Great Barrier Local and Capital Grants) was successful, and we extend our thanks to the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board for this project. Maintaining such infrastructure is a constant activity on the island. Our Ranger on the island, Clint, will be taking advantage of the summer weather to improve the road crown and to repair culverts, making the road safer for both vehicles and walkers.

The photos on this page (taken by Clint Stannard) acknowledge our grants and support, and the oft-needed ingenuity to meet logistic challenges. Such support is essential to achieve our mutual aspirations for the island. And please do remember that the Motu Kaikoura Trust is a registered charity, and donations in excess of \$5 are tax deductible.

Thank you for your enduring support.
Mel Galbraith

Appliances arriving at the wharf:



100% MAGNESS BENROW

New signage in place:



Great Barrier Local Board
Auckland Council

Introducing Trustees:

Mel Galbraith (Chair)

I was born on the North Shore, where an association with the islands of the Hauraki Gulf throughout my formative years undoubtedly influenced my passion for natural history, especially ornithology. I formalised my interest through tertiary study, and am now a Senior Lecturer in the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences, Unitec Institute of Technology (Auckland, New Zealand), teaching ecology, biodiversity, biosecurity and restoration ecology within an undergraduate applied science degree. I have had the privilege of having a long involvement in many ecological restoration projects, particularly Tiritiri Matangi Island, and am delighted that I can bring that experience to the Motu Kaikoura Trust. I am a member of the Ornithological Society of NZ (Birds New Zealand; currently a council member), New Zealand Ecological Society (past president) and the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute.



Emma Lynette Hoey

My name is Emma Lynette Hoey, I am of Ngatiwai ki Aotea descent, I have four children who grew up on Aotea for 17 years. I work in the field of Resource and Environmental Management and am presently completing my masters in Applied Indigenous Knowledge. It is a privilege to be part of the Motu Kaikoura Trust, especially having history with the island from the initial establishment of Motu Kaikoura Trust. This was with my Rangatira Whaea Whetu McGregor, who influenced me to learn the kaitiaki responsibilities to protect the health and well-being of our unique Island. Nga Mihi nui.



Harry Doig (Treasurer)

I was born and lived for many years in the south of Te Waipounamu (South Island) and have gradually migrated North, having lived now in Auckland for 17 years. I graduated Victoria University with a maths degree in 1973 and trained as a Civil Engineer at Auckland University. I have worked in a range of fields including civil engineering and tertiary education and I am currently an elected member on the Puketāpapa Local Board of Auckland Council.

I am a keen tramper, outdoor enthusiast and amateur botanist/birder.

I was appointed onto the Trust Board in 2006 and have since taken on several of roles including member, chair, and I am now filling in as Treasurer until we find someone with more specific skills.

It is a privilege to be involved with the restoration of Motu Kaikoura and amazing to see the regeneration changes that have taken place over the years. I am reminded of the story that an early Trustee used to tell of when he was a naval rating at the end of WW2. To keep them fit they would be dropped off on one side of the island and would be required to run across the open fields to meet the warship on the other side. Those open fields are now covered with over 3m high bush.



Kauri re-establishing in a highly modified area:



Predator control

Update on Motu Kaikoura rats:

Like the mainland of Aotea /Great Barrier Island, Motu Kaikoura (564 ha) was until recently infested with high numbers of rats. As on Great Barrier these were mainly dominant ship rats with lesser numbers of subordinate Pacific rats or kiore.

Our long term project to control and manage rats by manual methods to zero density began in 2014. For most of that time we have used an approximately 100m x 100m grid of bait stations and snap traps. This work has been undertaken from the start by our Scenic Reserve Ranger Clint Stannard, assisted by his wife Jacinda and supported by other temporary volunteers.

After detecting a noticeable decline in the proportion of ship rats trapped over the previous three years in our December 2020 report we were able to announce that ship rats had been systematically managed to near eradication. In fact, in terms of the island's coastal forest ecosystem ship rats are now functionally extinct.

This year, up to mid October, of the 1081 rats trapped there have been only 6 ship rats and these were captured on or near the coast. Evidently these were late summer swimmers from the Aotea mainland.

Kiore are now the only rat on Motu Kaikoura. Smaller and less harmful than ship rats none-the-less kiore still impact on the environment and so our long-term eradication objective still remains. Given the kiore's much smaller territories our 100m x 100m grid is unlikely to achieve eradication that way it has for ship rats. Indeed, to eradicate kiore by manual methods over such a large area of challenging terrain constitutes a major logistic challenge.

In January we launched an experimental 'intensified management area' (IMA) covering some 30 ha, with a station grid of 100m x 50m. This was to target kiore. So far this year, of the 1081 rats trapped on the island, 322 have been trapped in the IMA. At the start of the operation the IMA was busy indeed, with some 33% of all rats trapped. Since that time, while overall rat numbers caught has declined across the island, the proportion of rats caught in the IMA has declined more so to only 16%. So the IMA is certainly having an impact. Next year we are considering further intensifying the IMA and we will measure the effect of this.

Our goal of a rat free Motu Kaikoura remains one of our cardinal goals and one we are determined to achieve over the long haul.

Mike Lee



Life on the island: From the Stannard family

Lockdown is unique on Kaikoura Island, but still carries with it the difficulties faced by most New Zealanders at this time. Our children are enrolled with Te aho o te kura (the correspondence school) so the switch to learning from home was easy. However, getting basic supplies has become more difficult with disruptions to the freight services to the island. We are very fortunate to have good gardens in place, which we have relied on heavily over this time.

Kākāriki re-established on Motu Kaikoura:

*When I carried out my first bird surveys on Motu Kaikoura throughout 2006-8, I recorded 37 bird species on or around the island, of which 26 were native. This included both terrestrial and coastal species. Since then we have added three further native species to the list: korimako bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*), koekoē long-tailed cuckoo (*Eudynamis taitensis*) and kākāriki red-crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*).*

*All of these new species are strong flyers, and could have come from any of the nearby islands of Aotea, Rakitu or Te Hauturu-o-Toi. The long-tailed cuckoo is a brood parasite of the pōpokatea whitehead (*Mohoua albigilla*) which is not present on Motu Kaikoura, so this record may have been just one individual passing through on migration. To date, we have no evidence of the bellbird breeding on the island. However, we now know that the kākāriki has established a breeding population on the northern side of Motu Kaikoura.*



Formerly common throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, the flash of brilliant green and noisy chatter of kākāriki are now more commonly associated with the sights and sounds of our offshore islands, particularly those free of mammal predators. Kākāriki are a welcome addition to the island's avifauna – their self-return to Motu Kaikoura is a sure measure of our restoration progress, especially the maintenance of rodents at

low densities. There is much habitat on Motu Kaikoura waiting to be filled by kākāriki. Although omnivorous, they eat mainly seeds, flowers and fruit, and nest in small cavities in trees, or in holes on the ground. Kākāriki are unlikely to have significant competition with other species on Motu Kaikoura, and we anticipate that in time they will make the island a local stronghold.

Mel Galbraith

Informations for donations:

Direct credit is via our ASB Motu Kaikoura Trust account: 12 3077 0580668 00
Please message us if you have made a direct payment so that we can issue you with a tax deductible receipt: <https://www.motukaikoura.org.nz/contact>



Work was limited while under level 4 restrictions, so we used the opportunity to complete a few projects around the settlement area: After hearing strange noises emitting from a kayak on the wharf we investigated and found a pair of Korora inside. The children enjoyed building a nesting box so future visitors will have some better options for nesting.



We also designed a seat for the front deck of the lodge. The timber was cut from pest species present on the island. Rocks were collected from Bradshaws Cove and the mesh was joined up with wire from old stock fences on the island.

We find it settling to be surrounded by nature's regularities of birth and death, growth and decline while the anthropic world gets slightly disordered.

Stannard Family