



## **Motu Kaikoura**

*An open sanctuary promoting  
wilderness education,  
ecosystem restoration and  
public recreation on an  
offshore island*

# KAKA COMMENTS

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MOTU KAIKOURA TRUST SUPPORTERS' NEWSLETTER ISSUE 29 JUNE 2020

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## ANNUAL REPORT – JUNE 2020

### OUR OBJECTIVES

- **Restoring the natural environment of Motu Kaikoura**
- **Making Motu Kaikoura available for outdoor and environmental education**
- **Keeping a scenic reserve open and available to the public of NZ**

Our objective of natural regeneration leaves us time for other projects. While our rodent eradication programme continues under the management of Mike Lee, over the years we have been able to embark on major improvements to the island. This last year has seen the installation of solar power. This coming year our aim is to improve the water supply system and “Save our Streams”

### Lockdown

This has been our unexpected challenge at the end of the year and we have adapted to the situation. The island was closed during Levels 4 and 3 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and we now conduct our meetings via ZOOM. It is now open under Level 2.

### Management Plan

The Management Plan and Summary of Submissions are now on the website [www.motukaikoura.org.nz](http://www.motukaikoura.org.nz) We appreciate the advice and support we have received from DOC staff.

### Rodents

Mike Lee has continued with the management of rodent eradication on the island and the Rodent Management Plan Report December 2019 has been forwarded to the Minister of Conservation and is on the website. Our last quarterly monitoring in May indicated 6%.

### Staff

Contractors Clint and Jacinda Stannard along with their children continue with carrying out rodent control on the island and managing the day to day activities in keeping the facilities operational and up to date.

There has also been an increasing number of visitors over the years which are welcomed to the island. Resident volunteer Nick Mitchell continues to help reduce their work load in appropriate activities.



**“SILENCE IS GOLDEN”**  
**Friday 15 December, 2019,**  
**SOLAR PANELS ON – GENERATOR OFF**  
**A MOMENTOUS OCCASION**

Our thanks to the Gt Barrier Local Board and Pub Charity for their grants towards the cost of solar power for Motu Kaikoura and the expertise of electrician Ricky Gregory in designing and installing the system. We also appreciate his support in time and materials.



Lion Foundation contributed towards the cost of our insurance for the lodge and other buildings.

DOC Community Fund for grant for ranger.

Foundation North for grant for operational costs.

Gt Barrier Local Board for funding towards a water supply.

The Trust appreciates the continued support given from these funders to help keep the island operational.

As a volunteer organisation it is imperative that we continue with fundraising to enable us to operate

## Airfield

I continue to manage the airfield under the Civil Aviation regulations and keep the airfield mown. I have visited the island regularly during the year and now total 464 flights plus boat trips.

## Supporters

We continue to increase our numbers of supporters and their financial support is very much appreciated. Newsletters are always well received as we endeavour to keep everyone up to date with activities on the island. Thanks to those who contribute articles. It is encouraging that so many people are willing to support conservation in general in NZ.

## Website

Yenagh Badimayalew of Collate continues to keep our website up to date. All information regarding booking of accommodation and operational documents are regularly added to the site.

## Trustees

Trustees have met 11 times during the year with the December meeting held at the home of Bev and Geoff Davidson which gave us a delightful ending of the year. Trustees do not meet in January.

Trustee Sue Daly has resigned after 6 years, firstly representing the GB Local Board and then later as an independent. The Trust expressed their appreciation of her input in keeping them up to date with GB activities and operational matters. We wish her well in her other duties on the Barrier.

We welcomed Rosemary Barraclough who has now joined our Trust.

My thanks to my fellow volunteer trustees, especially Kim Grove as treasurer, and Rosalie Miller as secretary/supporter co-ordinator. We all bring different attributes to the Trust.



Rod Miller  
Chair  
Motu Kaikoura Trust



## Motu Kaikoura Bird Survey, December 2019

Our 2019 bird survey took place as usual in December. The weather was fine for the 4 days, which is always a plus when trying to see and hear birds in the canopies of the taller trees on the survey transects. And with the new solar panels operational, having electricity available 24/7 for the first time was fantastic.

My first impressions of the birdlife were encouraging, with a number of team members commenting on an apparent increased abundance. But the analysis of the survey data showed a very different story. In all habitats and for all species, the counts were down! This was certainly unexpected, and initiated some serious team talks about what was different for 2019.

One anecdotal observation worthy of noting was that the stick insects and cicadas were not as obvious as usual, possibly late emerging for that season or emerging in lower numbers. Their activity cycles are highly in tune with local environmental conditions, and possibly a good indicator that the conditions were not optimal. These invertebrates are a significant food resource for many birds, so if their activity is delayed, there will be a flow-on effect to the bird populations.

It may not necessarily mean that the populations are down, just that a change in behaviour may not have favoured us detecting the birds. Our thoughts to date are that a lower-than-usual seasonal rainfall had impacted on all fauna.

However, I think it also crucial to point out that survey such as ours is a snapshot of a point in time. The true value of such surveys lies in tracking trends over an extended period of time. Despite the count drop for 2019, the overall bird diversity for Motu Kaikoura is creeping up – and we do anticipate the trend to increase as the recovery of the native vegetation continues to take effect.

This means that we really do need to continue the bird surveys for some years to come!

Nevertheless, our visit to the island is never without great sightings of kaka, kereru and banded rail – and for an ornithologist, it always a delight to see the myriad of petrels during the boat crossings from Sandspit. Motu Kaikoura always has something on show for a team of biologists loose in the field, as the photos show!

I do extend my thanks to my fellow 2019 expedition members for their support to make the annual surveys a reality.

Mel Galbraith



Gorse mite web

Introduced bio control agent



Manuka in flower



Kawakawa caterpillar

Hanging on a thread

Photos: Barbara Hughes

## Rat Behaviour and Banded Rail

I was fortunate to be able to return to Motu Kaikoura this summer to continue in my work investigating rat behaviour while combining it with some work on the Banded rail/moho pereru population on the island as I now had a DOC Wildlife Permit to work with this species as well.

As all these species are opportunistic omnivores, there are some potentially interesting overlaps in diet between them. In addition, as the vast majority of the rats I catch on Motu Kaikoura are kiore, I now have the opportunity to compare kiore diet and behavior on different islands where they exist alongside other species that may compete or otherwise interfere with them.

Ecological fieldwork always throws up surprises though, and this year it was the much drier conditions that have now continued well into the Autumn. Potentially this was one of the reasons why I captured far fewer banded rails than in my visits in the previous two years. I captured a total of 10 individuals with an even split between adults and juveniles.

Apart from that I cannot tell you much more about them as Covid19 has prevented me from carrying out any laboratory analyses.

However, these captures also enabled me to provide training in bird handling and banding to Jacques de Satge, a PhD student at Massey University who is studying banded rails in New Zealand mangrove habitats.

Thomas Bodey



Juvenile Banded Rail (duller)



Adult Banded Rail (moho pereru)

### Volunteers

The Trust always welcomes volunteers, especially for track clearing before the summer would be appreciated. If you are able to help in this way please check the website for details regarding accommodation and what you need to bring.

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

## Motu Kaikoura Autumn 2020

Hi Everyone,

Finally, the rains of autumn have begun to revive the bush on Kaikoura Island, but only just... as many Punga, Taraire and Hangihangi have not survived our exceptionally dry summer.

Good news on the pest control and avian fronts though.

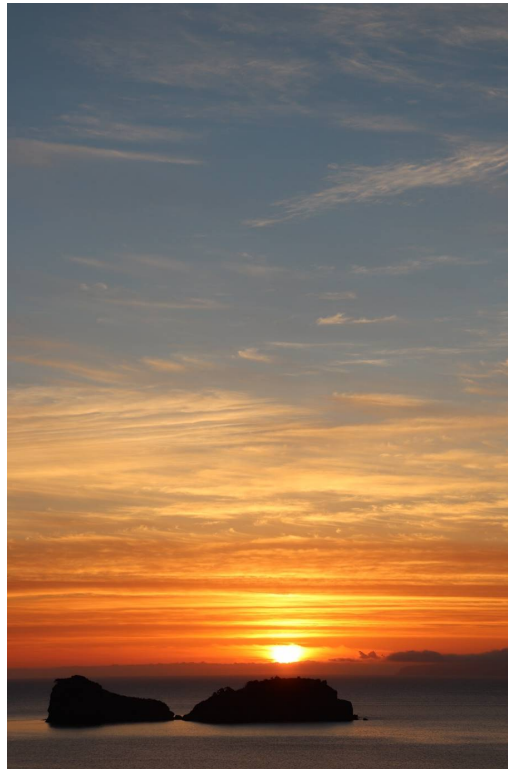
Kakariki have become a more common sight in the past year; a heart-warming change to behold, and for the first time that we have experienced, there have been two broods of Pateke at the top pond up past the old house.

We have been busy with pest control get the ship rat population down to and are now focussing our efforts on more trap stations and creating new progress.

We have had some lovely volunteers majority through connections of our dozen people from boats, hailing from the globe, who helped out with the monitoring.

Home schooling our children during change for us. We are fortunate to has proven essential during these always grateful to live and work in environment.

From the Stannard family.



and have managed to extremely low levels Kiore by introducing tracks to facilitate this

during summer. The children, including a far flung corners of invertebrate

lockdown was no big have a garden which unusual times. We are such a beautiful

### **TREASURER - URGENT**

Following the resignation of our treasurer of many years, Peter Hutton, Kim Grove (treasurer TOSSI) stepped in temporarily to assist us.

She has now advised she is resigning from this position and we are in urgent need of a volunteer treasurer.

The job involves payment of monthly accounts, cash reports for our monthly meetings, annual balance sheet, invoicing accommodation and completing the annual Charities Services return.

Accounting system is Xero.

If you can help please contact Rod Miller [hellorodmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:hellorodmiller@hotmail.com) or 021 773 286

We would really appreciate your help.



## MOTU KAIKOURA TRUST SUPPORTERS

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Annual donations as a supporter are tax deductible. Your donations are appreciated.

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Thank you.  
Rosalie Miller  
Motu Kaikoura Supporters

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Hard copy Yes/No

*“Having vision is not enough.  
Change comes through realising the vision  
And turning it into reality.”  
Sir Peter Blake*

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