



# LANDCARE IN THE NORTH

Summer 2017

**Happy New Year.** Revegetating stream banks is a long game so it is always a pleasure to post pictures of progress. The shots below were taken at one of the first Kaipara Harbour planting sites initiated through the Reconnecting Northland programme. Landowners, Mick & Sarah, were initially daunted by the weeding required for the site but they persevered and 2.5 years later they are experiencing the fruits

of their labour. They opted for a 15 metre riparian margin and the native plantings, mostly manuka, cabbage trees and flax, have now leaped ahead of the weeds and pasture grasses. They should provide some decent stream cover in the coming years.

January 2017

October 2014



## Totara for timber, biodiversity and riparian management

In November the Northland Totara Working Group (NTWG) hosted a field day at its newest site at the Hillford's dairy farm in the Mangakahia valley.

The 50 or so attendees heard from a range of speakers on the management of naturally regenerating totara for water quality and biodiversity enhancements as well as for sustainable timber production. The topics discussed included growth rates in thinned and pruned totara stands, water quality improvements observed through the macroinvertebrate monitoring programme and the regulatory requirements for harvesting totara.

If you've got totara trees and are interested in managing them or are keen to see the totara industry develop then you can register on the NTWG mailing list at [www.tanestrees.org.nz](http://www.tanestrees.org.nz)



NTWG field day at the Hillford Farm.



Kiwi Coast at the Bay of Islands I&P Show, November 2016.

## Kiwi Coast

December saw the Kiwi Coast expand to the southernmost border of the Northland region as both Marunui Conservation Ltd in the Brynderwyn Hills and the NZ Fairy Tern Trust based in Mangawhai linked in. It also deepened its educational dimension with the participation of Ngunguru School on the Tutukaka coast. The school is one of 363 initiatives using the Trap.NZ app to keep accurate pest control data.

Marunui Conservation Ltd cares for Northland's southernmost kiwi population on a 423ha property in the Brynderwyn Hills. The entire property is covered by a QE II National Trust open space covenant protecting the indigenous flora and fauna in perpetuity.

In 2013 fourteen Northland brown kiwi were translocated to Marunui from Motuora Island after being absent from the Brynderwyn's for nearly 50 years. This established Northland's southernmost kiwi population.

The NZ Fairy Tern Charitable Trust cares for NZ's rarest endemic bird. There are less than 40 New Zealand fairy terns remaining, including just 10-12 breeding pairs that are limited to Mangawhai and three other sites. The NZ Fairy Tern Trust work with the Department of Conservation to carry out intensive animal pest control and assist the birds to breed successfully and add vital new stock to the small remaining populations.



## Inanga: the Kaipara Harbour's primary whitebait species

With the discovery of an inanga spawning site on the Wairau River near Maungaturoto the Reconnecting Northland team was keen to understand the effect rodents are having on spawning, having heard the spawn referred to as 'rat caviar'.

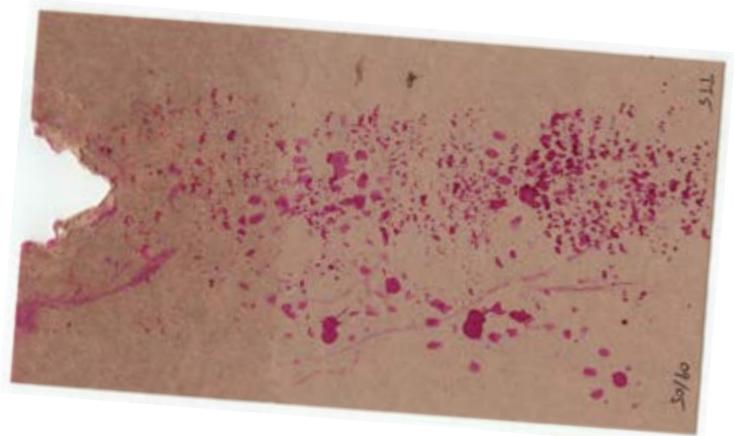
To better understand the issue a set of simple field investigations was devised. These involved motion sensitive cameras, rodent tracking tunnels and inanga egg counts. Unfortunately, due to some technical glitches (too many fiddly buttons!) no conclusive proof of rodent predation was captured with the cameras. However, the tracking tunnels and egg counts did provide some useful insights.

A positive correlation was found between inanga spawn and an increasing presence of mice and this coincided with a small decrease in inanga eggs over the monitored period (although the reliability of the egg count data was low due to several factors). The presence of rats remained relatively stable over the period. Another interesting but

unintended finding was that inanga are spawning multiple times over a tidal sequence i.e. spawning does not occur in one mass event as is the case with some other species of fish.



While the investigation's findings should be used cautiously the evidence suggests that inanga spawn at this location is more a 'mouse meal' than 'rat caviar'. At a practical restoration level the next step is to discuss with the landowner options for rodent control prior to and during the spawning period. It would also be useful to have another go at obtaining camera footage of predation.



A tracking tunnel card displaying rat and mouse paw prints.

Regional Coordinator Jon Hampson demonstrates the rodent tracking tunnels to students from Maungaturoto School.



## Understanding Kauri Dieback

In October the Trust brought together Northland's Landcare groups and project representatives to share knowledge and understanding of the kauri pathogen, *Phytophthora Taxon Agathis*, commonly known as Kauri Dieback disease.

The workshop was hosted by Manaia Landcare on the Whangarei Heads peninsula and was led by Dr Karen Verdurmen. Dr Verdurmen has spent several years investigating infected kauri stands in Northland, Auckland and the Waikato with landowners, community members, iwi and hapu. Members of Manaia Landcare were on hand to share insights into how the presence of Kauri Dieback disease has affected their animal pest control work.

Participants walked traplines on Mt Manaia that traversed infected kauri stands and learnt how to recognise symptoms exhibited by trees infected with the disease from both a ridgeline away, as well as during a close up inspection. They also learnt basic Kauri Dieback hygiene procedures as well as experiencing the innovative Manaia Landcare boot-cover system that meant that participants could move in and out of kauri stands without moving soil and spreading the disease.

The workshop gave participants the skills and confidence to keep vital pest control operations going within infected forest areas.

Boot covers can minimise the spread of the disease.



## Coming up...

**Saturday 28th January**

**Puketi Forest Kauri Challenge 2017** | Organised by the Puketi Forest Trust, this year's event will be held on Saturday 28th January. The format will be similar to the previous years, with a choice of either the full 21km tramp or a shorter 12km tramp through some of the most spectacular parts of Puketi Forest. For more information visit, [www.puketi.org.nz/events.html](http://www.puketi.org.nz/events.html)

**Sunday 26th February**

**Northland Hui** | Kiwis for Kiwi and the Predator Free NZ Trust will be hosting their Northland Hui on the 26th February 2017 from 9.30am till 4pm at Pakaraka, Northland. Please contact the Northland Kiwi Coordinator for further details and registrations, [northlandkiwicoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:northlandkiwicoordinator@gmail.com)

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