

THE LAKE NEWS

Official Newsletter of Rotokare Volunteers



View From The Top

BY ADRIAN CLEARY - GENERAL MANAGER

Kia ora e te whānau,

I hope this finds you all well...

It's the 1st of December as I write this and I've begun reflecting on this past year: I feel its been a big one. Perhaps because its only just been once around the Rotokare sun for me, but either way, the reserve is a busy place and will continue to be so.

Firstly a warm welcome to new Summer Ranger Fyfe. He will be with us from NMIT for 3 months. Glad to have you here.

We've had some standout highlights this year; from TKKR/Rotokare kiwi being released in the capital via Te Papa, striped skink being translocated to the reserve, Pateke releases, a successful mouse mop-up, a new entry gate system (well, maybe not!), a new land purchase and plenty more. We've also had more Rotokare Volunteers recognised for their outstanding contributions, including our volunteer Trustees. Well done to you all.

These highlights could not have been possible without our incredible volunteers and the often unseen mahi that you all continue to show up and do. I'm immensely proud to have such a committed crew of passionate people. Outstanding.

The Rotokare family has also experienced some health challenges this year and its warming to see people rallying around and offering support to those in need. When it rains it pours. Please keep looking after each other and of course yourselves. I wish a healthier year in 2025 for you all.

Thank you for another year of making Rotokare the incredible place it is, you are all seen and appreciated, Thank you.

I wish you all a fantastic festive season with lots of fine weather, take care and Meri Kirihimete!

Adrian

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Last month at a glance

It's pleasing to report that the tracking cards retrieved from the October card run showed no sign of predator activity. This was followed up with a visit by a rodent dog who was unable to find any trace of pests within the sanctuary. What a tremendous result. Well done everybody who was involved in the mouse mop-up.

A big welcome to trainee ranger Fyfe Ferguson, who joins us until early February. Please make him feel at home when you see him around the sanctuary.

After a number of years of kiwi translocation out of the reserve, this month we actually had a new founder kiwi released into the reserve. It is hoped that Porotahi will introduce new genes into the Rotokare kiwi gene pool.

The bee hives are back in the sanctuary for the summer, so if you are working in the top end of the Crawshaw block keep an eye out for our busy bees.

A successful workshop was held to discuss display ideas and operation options for the new visitor centre. This is still very much a work in progress so if you have any ideas please contact Adrian.

Test Your Rotokare Knowledge

1. What is the average bill length of a mature north Island Brown Kiwi?
a. 98mm b. 108mm c. 128mm
2. Which species has become the most common detected in the sanctuary Five Minute Bird counts?
a. Tui b. Robin c. Tieke
3. How many screws was it estimated that would be required for the current fence remediation project?
a. 16200 b. 62000 c. 162000



'Twas the night before
Christmas in the
Rotokare Reserve, Not a
creature was stirring,
none to observe. Thank
goodness, not even a
mouse was in sight, Just
our treasured birds
bathed in the night.

Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a good cheer.

Wishing everyone joy in
the coming year.'





Volunteer News

- The kiwi breeding is progressing albeit a little slow. Mid month there were 4 of the 10 monitored males incubating eggs.
- The hihi breeding season is going well with the first chicks expected to fledge about now.
- Its been a busy month for surveys with a fernbird and spotless crane survey, which indicated their populations are stable, plus a Five Minute bird count.
- The lizard monitoring devices through the reserve were checked in preparation for the monitoring survey in early December
- Health and safety issues this month have included a number of tree falls had to be cleared due to inclement weather. A rope has been installed on the steep section of the Trig fence to make this safer to negotiate when ground conditions are wet.
- Rotokare Christmas BBQs being held on Friday 6th December at 5.30pm.

Volunteer of the Month

Wietze Hoogeveen

I am fairly new to the Lake Rotokare volunteer family. I came to assist when there was a suspected rodent incursion and never left. I am not that interested in getting involved with the wild life but I am interested in infrastructure. The first job I was tested on was the boots on toilet lining followed by the porch. I had recently retired, so I had spare time and got involved in the Bush Classroom project, that was a big job. Whilst I was on site I was very concerned at the lack of communication from the field as the radios were inefficient and people were going out on their own. Together with John Cooper and Mike Mills from Mills Chapman Communication we put together a plan for a repeater to cover the whole area. This was quite a project but we now have reliable communication around the Reserve and beyond. There were other outstanding issues that would bug me. The fence monitoring system would fail due to flat batteries so we worked up a project to upgrade the solar charging systems so that this problem would be eliminated. The fence monitoring relied on cellphone reception which was very poor to nothing so we installed a cell repeater system so that cellphone coverage is now possible around the base area. A second lizard enclosure was needed so I organized the trolley and made the enclosure at home and then bought it to site. This was successful so the remeshing and upgrading of the existing enclosure was called for. . Rae is interested in bugs so we built a Bug Motel out of pallets and also a weta house. Currently I am involved with John on the CCTV system for the entrance gates. I am now doing regular edge mowing and line trimming around the lawns and Rae does site weeding, trimming and cleaning around the Bush Classrooms.

I nominate Ray Willy as the next Volunteer of the Month.



Christmas At Rotokare

The Christmas period brings a lot of work for our volunteer family at Rotokare. As well as the normal trap and fence checks, public facilities cleaning and Hihi and lizards feeding there will be a Peak Season tracking card run to execute.

With Christmas and New Year occurring mid week the work load is concentrated onto fewer days. It is planned to get all normal Mondays and Wednesday tasks, together with the tracking card run completed on the Monday and Tuesday of each week.

To achieve this goal it will be essential to have a good turnout of volunteers for each of the three weeks to ensure all tasks are completed efficiently.

Christmas Holiday Task List

Trap Checks - Mondays 23/12, 30/12 & 6/1

Fence Checks - Tuesdays 24/12 & 31/12, Wednesday 8/1

Peak Season tracking card run (230 cards)

Cards out from 23/12

Cards changed from 30/12

Cards collected from 6/1

Hihi Feeding - as per roster

Hihi nest checks - as per roster

Lizard feeding

Cleaning - as per roster

General site checks inc. litter collection - ideally done daily

Please contact Ross at volunteers@rotokare.org.nz or 027 412 7751 with an indication of what days you are available together with a task preference.



Looking Ahead

Sunday December 1st

Lake Rotokare opened to powerboats for the summer.

Friday December 6th 5.30pm

Rotokare Scenic Reserve Christmas Barbeque

Monday December 23rd 8.30am

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards out

Monday December 30th 8.30am

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards changed

Monday January 6th 8.30am

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards in



Task List

- Spray Barrier free track edges.
- Hihi feeder one (1) sign needs installing.
- Regular assistance with trap checks around the middle of each month when DOC traps get serviced and rebaited.
- Help with weekly fence checks and trap rebaiting.
- Weed control - Mexican Daisy and Selaginella. See Fiona for details.
- Line clearing of sanctuary access lines.
- Volunteers to help with regular cleaning of the public facilities
- Help with Christmas holiday task list.

Assistance with these tasks would be appreciated.

If you are able to help please check with Fiona or Kane for further details. fiona@rotokare.org.nz or kane@rotokare.org.nz

Knowledge Answers

1. (a) 96mm 2. (c) Tieke 3. (b) 62000

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