

THE LAKE NEWS

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Official Newsletter of Rotokare Volunteers



... From the General Manager

BY ADRIAN CLEARY

Kia ora e te whānau,

It's been a massively busy time here at the sanctuary (when is it not, I hear you all say). We've just completed another round of 5MBC's and of course our Mahoenui giant wētā release – this first invertebrate release into our beautiful ngahere. The MGW release an exceptionally special day, one we won't forget for a long time. Shoutout to the volunteers who assisted with both of those events. Thankyou.

By the time you would have read this, Andrea Shepherd would have received her Life Membership to Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust. Andrea is truly deserving of this honour – She has been a dedicated and passionate volunteer for almost 10 years. What an incredible contribution. Thankyou Andrea.

Also wanted to give a huge thanks to Ross Laurence who has been our stalwart Volunteer Coordinator. Ross is stepping down from his role and I want to acknowledge him for his outstanding contribution over that time. On behalf of the team, thankyou.

The new VC will be announced soon...

Thanks again for all you do, take care out there.
Adrian

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Last month at a glance

- The big news for the month, the first release of 97 Mahoenui giant weta into the Rotokare Scenic Reserve. Further releases are planned over the next few years to ensure there is a good base population for this species to successfully get established.
- Trainee ranger, Jarrod Wilson has commenced work at Rotokare and will be with us through to March. He is already proving an asset to the team.
- The rodent dog audit early in the month conformed the pest free status of the sanctuary following the Full Sanctuary tracking card run in October. No pest indications were detected.
- The latest round of 5 Minute Bird counts and Fernbird and spotless crane surveys have been conducted but no results are available yet.
- The bee hives are back on site for this summers honey harvest so beware when traversing the ridge walkway.
- The Hihi breeding season is progressing well with many of the nesting boxes in use. The first chicks are expected to fledge any day now.
- The Christmas barbeque was thoroughly enjoyed by around 30 volunteers and staff. Good food, a few drinks and plenty of banter. Attendees had the opportunity to preview the conceptional plans for the new information centers' fit-out. There are tremendous ideas being considered.
- The lake opening for the summer has been delayed indefinitely due to the serious threat posed by the Golden Clam find in a New Plymouth lake.



Test Your Rotokare Knowledge

1. How do most people first become aware of the presence of Spotless Crane?
 - a. Smell them.
 - b. See them.
 - c. Hear them.
2. What appears to be the Spotless Cranes preferred way of moving about?
 - a. Swimming.
 - b. Flying.
 - c. Running.
3. What is the main habitat of the Spotless Crane?
 - a. Dry forest areas.
 - b. Dense freshwater wetlands.
 - c. Open grasslands.





A Special Thank-You

To our incredible Rotokare volunteers,
From all of us who call the sanctuary home, we want to send you the biggest, most heartfelt Christmas thank-you.

From the kiwi proudly prowling the night,
the tieke hopping boldly along the branches,
the hihi darting like tiny sparks of sunlight,
the robin boldly keeping watch on every move,
the pāteke gliding peacefully across the lake,
the fernbird watching quietly from their lakeside hideaways,
the lizards, weta and all the other Rotokare forest folk— thank you.

Because of your dedication—checking traps, maintaining our fence, clearing tracks, monitoring and caring—we live safer, healthier, and wilder lives.
Every hour you give helps our songs ring louder, our forests grow stronger, and our future stretch further.

This Christmas may your hearts be as full as our sanctuary is with life.
May your days be merry, your boots be muddy, just the right amount, and may you feel proud knowing you make Rotokare truly special.

With endless gratitude and festive cheer,
All the creatures of Rotokare Scenic Reserve 🌲🌿🦎🦉



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.

Normal Monday trap checks and Wednesday fence check tasks will be done and then tracking cards will be done on the Tuesdays of each week. Other tasks will be done as per their respective rosters.

To ensure this period goes smoothly it would help if we had a commitment from volunteers as to availability so we are confident of having enough hands on deck to complete each days jobs.

Task List

Trap Checks - Mondays 22/12, 29/12 & 5/1

Fence Checks - Wednesdays 24/12, 31/12 & 7/1

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 if you are able to help over this period. We need to know which days you are available and your preferred job.





Volunteer News

- A warm welcome to the new volunteers who joined the Rotokare volunteer team during November;
Rachel Freeman Dave Brookes
- Congratulations to Andrea Shepherd for being awarded with Life Membership to the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust for her services to the sanctuary over the past 9 years. Extremely well deserved.
- Georgina and Robert Goble have had a busy month working their way around the sanctuary cleaning and oiling the wooden seats, good job team.
- Ian Robertson has spent the past few Sundays getting the entire fence platform sprayed for weeds.



Volunteer of the Month

Dave Jordan

My Parents first farm job following their marriage in 1944 was with Lawry O'Connor. Lawry's farm bordered the lake and his cattle would graze the bush in the lake reserve each winter (I wonder did they like the taste of supplejack / bush asparagus). As well as Lawry my folks became life long friends with Pat and Joan O'Connor.

I love volunteering at the lake. As well as the connection with my family's past it is great to be in an environment that is not centered around human needs and desires. The reserve belongs to the birds, wetas, geckos and skinks. We merely help to facilitate a safer world for them, while getting exercise, grubby and tuckered out.

I love the random bird encounters that we have each week.

I really enjoy working alongside like-minded people.

Thank you to all that help to make Lake Rotokare the special place that it is.

Hopefully in years to come reports of birds from Rotokare establishing themselves in the surrounding areas will become common.

Nga mihi, Dave Jordan

I would like to nominate Murray Pranker as the next Volunteer of the Month





Looking Ahead

Tuesday December 23rd

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards out.

Thursday December 25th

Christmas Day.

Tuesday December 30th

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards changed.

Thursday January 1st

New Years Day.

Tuesday January 6th

Peak Season Tracking Card Run - Cards In.

Sunday January 25th

January Working Bee - Walkway Maintenance.



Sunday Working Bees.

Start time: 9.00am at the Rotokare workshop **Finish time:** approx 12.30pm

Barbeque lunch supplied at the end of the working bee.

Please bring: Strong footwear, Small day pack, Rain wear, Drink & snacks if required.



Task List

- Fence platform vegetation control.
- Fence hood bracket replacement.
- Assist with weed control within the sanctuary.
- Regular assistance with Wednesday fence and trap checks.
- Maintaining monitoring lines.
- One or two people are required to become working bee leaders for the Tracking Card Runs. This will primarily involve organising volunteers to get tracking cards deployed out into the sanctuary and also card recovery.

Assistance with these tasks would be appreciated.

If you are interested in helping with any of these tasks please contact Kane or Fiona.

Knowledge Answers

1. (c) Hear them 2. (c) Running. 3. (b) Dense freshwater wetlands.



CONTACT US

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