

THE FRIENDS OF MANGARAKAU SWAMP INC. SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2016

Once again the end of our Financial year approaches and we are hoping that as many of our members as possible can come for the weekend of Friday the 8th of April to Sunday the 10th, for the working bee and to catch up with changes at Mangarakau Swamp. If you are able to come for the working bee email Robyn robyn@robyn-jones.com

Our annual General Meeting is on Sunday the 10th at 1pm. If you can only come for the AGM, bring a contribution to a shared lunch at 12 noon on Sunday.

If you haven't visited the swamp since the last AGM you will notice many surprising and delightful changes to the swamp property. For a start the season has been remarkable for growth and all those thousands of newly planted trees in the areas we have been actively re-vegetating have become a forest you can neither see through nor see over. Do not expect to play a game of cricket. There are no empty spaces.

We had hoped to report that we had achieved the Ramsar designation for the swamp and the Whanganui Inlet but it hasn't happened yet. The progress, now outside of our control, is glacially slow.

We did sponsor a German University student, Steffi Kunstle, sharing her between other Forest and Bird projects. As well as helping to plant, release and trap at the swamp, Steffi helped Robyn to revamp the Visitor Information Centre to prepare it for being the centre for information about Ramsar and make the information more relevant to the swamp. It looks great.

New to the swamp, and thanks to a generous legacy, we have been able to create a new 800 metre track into an area where we have planned for it for over 10 years. This track takes walkers across two new bridges on either side of swampland then up and into bush. The choice is then to loop back or come out on the road north of the Nugget café. As well as being a valuable new amenity, it has given us easier access to other parts of the swamp for trapping.

Also, working with Colin O'Donnell from DoC, we did a Bittern Survey using sound recorders to record the Bittern Booms at dawn and dusk. The results of the survey aren't in yet but it was obvious that there are more bittern present in the swamp than we had realised and we also discovered that there are lots of spotless crake that we didn't even know about.



This February Nelson hosted the National Wetlands Symposium and we were able to attend its highly informative presentations and showcase Mangarakau Swamp itself, first at the Conference and afterwards at a post Conference field trip.

Thanks again to the legacy from a Native Forest Trust member we have been able to do some upgrading of facilities in the Lodge, or as we call it, the Field Centre. This includes installing beautiful landscape windows to replace two windows whose wooden frames were rotten. We were also able to replace a very deficient kitchen sink set of cabinets and drawers with a new purpose built unit.



We offer our heartfelt thanks to Golden Bay couple, John Barraclough and Bronwen Thorneycroft who come to Mangarakau Swamp to release and manage our plantings, and who were responsible for building the two new bridges and creating the new Wattle Point Track.

See you maybe at the AGM on the 10th April.

Best Wishes from the Team. David, Murray, Jo-Anne, Helen and Robyn .

Message from Chairperson Robyn

I have been compiling an email list and you may have already had an email from me in this regard. If you haven't and want to be on the list please email me at robyn@robyn-jones.com .

When you pay your sub you will automatically go on the email list. I plan to keep you up-to-date with news from the swamp and tell you of any activities we are planning.

We are very happy with progress at the swamp. Our plantings on Bobby's Track and Wattle Point are doing very well and we plan to fill them in with more plants at the AGM weekend on April 9th and 10th.

Our pest catches are down and we hope this is a good sign. We continue to tackle the weeds. We have even managed to eradicate a fair bit of unsightly gorse this year.

It was great to do the Bittern Survey of male bittern booming and it appears we have a population of between 10 and 15 males. Also wonderful to discover we have an extensive population of Spotless Crake inhabiting the reeds in the wetland.

I particularly enjoyed getting Will Blacket to make the Bittern Statue that we have installed near the entrance to the swamp.

Watching 2 pair of Robin nest and fledge young was a delight.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any communication on Mangarakau Swamp matters.

Regards, Robyn .



Your Subscription is a great help toward the management of this precious wildlife reserve.

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