

News Update – September, 2008

☪ New Monitoring & Pest Control Programme for Oakley Creek

Bird, Lizard and Weta Monitoring

Oakley Creek now has a monitoring plan in place for birds, lizards and weta for the section of the creek between the northern ‘walkway’ entrance at Great North Road, Waterview and the southern end of Harbutt Reserve, opposite Pak’n’Save. The purpose of this is to see how the animals are responding to our efforts to restore the area.

Bird Monitoring – 12-20 July 2008

The first stage of the monitoring programme began with birds during the annual Landcare Research *National Garden Bird Survey* in mid-July. By doing the survey every year, and recording the results, we will be able to determine the effects of our restoration work on the birds. On Saturday 12 July, volunteers counted the most birds of each species that could be seen at one time at each of the sites. “Having an hour to just sit and watch was a wonderfully tranquil and reflective way to spend time in this special place.” Some volunteers went on to do the survey in their own garden, and some came back the following weekend to do more on Oakley Creek.

The white-faced heron were paired up, and each pair was trying out nesting trees. Every 5 or 10 minutes they would try out a different tree. The greenfinches were eating privet berries; the rosellas and goldfinches enjoyed the plane tree seed cases still hanging on the trees.

Of the native species recorded, there were surprisingly few grey warblers. These are usually quite common in dense shrubs and trees even in urban areas. There were, however, quite a few tui.



Alicia – setting up bird monitoring sites.

The 29 species of birds recorded on Oakley Creek:

Blackbird, Chaffinch, Fantail, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer, Grey Warbler, House Sparrow, Magpie, Myna, Rock Pigeon, Silvereye, Song Thrush, Starling, Tui, Black-Backed Gull, Red-Billed Gull, White-Faced Heron, Eastern Rosella, Mallard, Spotted Dove, Pukeko, Spur-Winged Plover, New Zealand Kingfisher, Black Swan, Ring-Necked Pheasant, Little Shag, Black Shag, Welcome Swallow.

Are there any moreporks still living around Oakley Creek? **If anyone has heard or seen any this year in Oakley Creek please let Wendy or Alicia know.** Moreporks are one of the species that could benefit from the restoration work and pest control.

<http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/index.asp>

Artificial Refuges for Lizards and Weta

The plan for monitoring lizards and weta is to create artificial refuges that can be checked annually to see how many are occupied. Weta refuges are made simply by drilling a tunnel into a log or piece of firewood, and then attaching the log to a tree so the tunnel is entered from underneath and goes vertically upwards.

Lizard refuges are made by stacking 3 Onduline tiles on top of each other with lizard-thickness spacers between, and a stone on top. Forty refuges each for lizards and weta are needed. Auckland City Council is providing the Onduline tiles. **Look out for the volunteer day for putting these out later in September.**

Needed: Weta monitoring requires pieces of untreated wood for making weta tunnels. The wood can be from a small felled tree or branches, or firewood that you no longer need. If anyone can supply straight pieces that are about 75mm x 75mm x 300mm (or 3" x 3" x 12") or slightly larger, and are not prone to splitting, please contact Alicia (828 3177 or 021 545 343)

Also needed: A volunteer to drill tunnels in each piece of wood.

🌀 Pest Monitoring and Control Plan

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga has produced a 3-year 'pest monitoring and control plan' for rodents, possums, hedgehogs and any mustelids (weasels, stoats or ferrets) that might sneak into the area. We are seeking funding from Auckland Regional Council's Environmental Initiatives Fund to put the plan into action. The overall aim is to minimise the impact of the pests on the birds, lizards and invertebrates and their habitat, to give them the freedom to flourish in the restored environment that is being created.

Once funding is secured, one of the first actions will be to put out rodent tracking tunnels. **If you would like to be involved in pest control, please let Wendy know.**

🌀 Planting Update

We are almost at the end of this year's planting season – with some 4500 plants having been put in the ground along the creek, with the assistance of over 200 volunteers, including children from Gladstone Primary School. This brings us up to an overall total of around 18,500 plants since we began in late 2004 – and our efforts are really starting to make a difference.



Wairaka Wetland – *Before (2005)*



After (2008)

🌀 Annual General Meeting Presentation

Rebecca Stanley (ARC, Heritage Section) gave an inspirational presentation at the AGM in June on *Plants in Peril - The Threatened Plants of Auckland*. Rare and endangered plants can grow in a variety of environments – including some modified. The plants are often small, easily overlooked, and can be mistaken for weeds. While restoring the bush it is also important to protect the habitats of any threatened plants that are tenuously hanging on. There are good opportunities to provide habitats for some that have very few safe places left. There is a new species of native geranium (*G. aff. Retrorsum* “Oakley Creek”) that was discovered on a basalt retaining wall on Oakley Creek. The committee have approached the Auckland Botanical Society about undertaking a survey of Oakley Creek and advising us on what threatened plants might be growing in the catchment, and should be protected, and which threatened plants might be propagated and encouraged in Oakley Creek.



🌀 Auckland Heritage Festival – Oakley Creek Activities

Following on from a very successful event last year, we will be participating in the Auckland Heritage Festival again this year, with two events:

- 1) **Guided Walk** of the Oakley Creek Walkway on **Sunday 21st September – 1-3.30pm** - meeting at the Phyllis Reserve Carpark, at the end of Springleigh Street, Mt Albert;
- 2) **Habitat Restoration** - ‘practical conservation activity day’ on **Monday 22nd September – 9am-3pm** – assembling at Carrington’s Café, Unitec.

🌀 Developments:

We have submitted a number of SLIPS (Small Local Initiative Projects) proposals to Auckland City Council for the following, which have all been approved:

- 🌀 Upgrading the area around the waterfall;
- 🌀 Signage, including some interpretation signs;
- 🌀 ‘No Fishing’ signs.

🌀 Subscriptions/Donations:

Just a reminder to our current members that subscriptions are due. And, as with all community organisations, we would welcome more members (\$10.00) and/or donations towards the work we are doing to protect and restore our wonderful urban ‘taonga’ – Oakley Creek Te Auaunga.

Contributions can be made directly into our bank account: *Friends of Oakley Creek* - Kiwibank – A/c 38-9003-0978224-00 – or cheques made out to Friends of Oakley Creek can be sent to the address below.

🌀 Your committee members:

Chairperson: Wendy John
Secretary: Norma de Langen
Treasurer: Alicia Warren
Committee members: Ross Ihaka, Dorothy Maddock

