



# Ngā Ringa o Te Auaunga Friends of Oakley Creek

AUTUMN 2026

## Editorial

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Autumn has arrived. As I write this editorial, parts of Wellington are underwater. I hesitate to tempt fate, but to-date we have had just the right amount of rainfall to usher in our planting season. Te Auaunga is running high. But so far, despite the red weather warnings, the rain has not been excessive in Auckland.

There's a lot going on down the creek. Kererū have been observed flocking in numbers more than twice the previously recorded high in the local area. Our contractors have been felling privet and turning the wood into eco-stacks to accommodate insect life. Our volunteers have been busy weeding, mulching, controlling pests and monitoring water quality.

Our feature articles invite you to look more closely at the resurgent life on Te Auaunga. We have a fascinating article on the insect life to be found in old logs. Another article invites you to look more closely at the wonderful creations of our avian architects. One of our members ponders the problem of



*Photo (above): Ti kouka during flooding*

pest species at home in the creek and suggests a solution. Finally, we have some reflections on the joys of community engendered by restoration work and reflected in our name.

Feeling overwhelmed by the signs of climate change? I can recommend being part of our restoration project as a salve to climate change angst. Take a look, get involved! Enjoy!

**Gina Hefferan, Editor**

## Friday Working Bees

*By Wendy John*

Since the start of the year our Friday volunteers have been busy working on a range of tasks and at a number of sites along the creek. With everything that needs doing, it's always a bit of a juggle deciding what to do each week. Sites visited have included the Wairaka Wetland, the 'rock forest' in Harbutt Reserve, and a couple of areas in Waterview Glades. We even held a working bee on Easter Friday, and had a great turnout for a public holiday – including Micky, Christina and Saana (all kitted out in her overalls, gloves and boots).



*Photo (above): Christina, Saana & Micky*



*Photo (above): Friday working bee*

# Monthly Working Bees

*By Wendy John*

We started the year with our February working bee taking place on a floodplain area in Harbutt Reserve, with the focus being on clearing bindweed, palm grass and Jerusalem cherry.

In March, volunteers did some serious plant releasing and weeding around the plants in the south-west end of Harbutt Reserve that were planted last winter.

In April, we were back at the same site in Harbutt Reserve to do more plant releasing and weeding, and to spread a heap of mulch around the plants. We had a great turnout for this working bee, with a group from Rotaract, and a small group from the Puketāpapa Climate Action 'ride and restore' event, which was timed to coincide with this working bee. Folk rode from the Wesley Community



*Photo (above): Puketāpapa Climate Action 'Ride & Restore' team join our monthly working bee*



*Photo (above): Rotaract group join our monthly working bee*



*Photo (above): Monthly working bee, mulching*

Centre, down along the creek, and joined us to give a helping hand. It was a fun event. Thanks, heaps, to everyone, including TreeTops who supplied us with the mulch.

If you haven't had a chance to check out this area recently, it's looking stunning. We have filled an area up with plants, but created what will, eventually be a lovely, meandering bush walk. And, thanks to the lovely volcanic soil, the growth of the plants in just 12 months is amazing.

# Te Auaunga Partner Community Group Activities

*By Wendy John*

There's been lots happening on the creek with the support of our wonderful 'local' groups, and more.

**Oakley Loop Group** – It was good to get back to the Oakley Loop site and do some very much needed plant releasing and weeding. This is a challenging site, but we are slowly making progress, and this is very much a multi-generational project.



*Photo (above): Oakley Loop Group*

**Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood Group** – The Powell Street site is coming along beautifully. At our recent working bee, the team cleared a large willow branch, did some more weeding, and mulched the small area that was planted last year. Another



*Photo (above): Powell Street working bee*

great effort, which finished with the usual gathering together for a shared meal beside the pool.

**St Judes Scouts** – As always, it was great to get our local scouts group helping out on the creek behind their den – this time with more weed control and rubbish removal. While there is still more work to be done, this restoration of this area is looking stunning. Well done to all of the scouts who have contributed over the years.



*Photo (above): St Judes Scouts*

**St Lukes Brownies** – It was a delight to have a group of 'brownies' back helping out on the creek again. They did a wonderful job of mulching some of the young trees near the very large mulch pile in Harbutt Reserve and are such fun to work with.



*Photo (above): St Lukes Brownies*

**Conservation Volunteers New Zealand CPP – ‘Connecting People with Parks’** – CVNZ volunteer teams have been back with us again – the ‘migrant’ groups, both at the Waterview Heritage Area (with Sandra) and helping our regular Friday team. And a big group of their CPP (Connecting People with Parks) volunteers helped with plant releasing and

moving a heap of mulch, in the southern valley in Waterview Glades. The mulching was no mean feat. Fortunately, the volunteers were carrying full buckets of mulch down the steep slope!

Thanks, heaps, CVNZ for your continued support of our project.



Photo (above): CVNZ CPP group



Photo (above): CVNZ - Waterview Glades – Before



Photo (above): CVNZ - Waterview Glades – After

## Corporates and More

*By Wendy John*

Again, things have been a little quieter on the corporate front for the start of the year. Groups who have joined us have included one of our sponsors, The Collective – with another session of weed clearance at their site in the lower creek, and Westpac – with two groups joining our Friday morning working bees. We always welcome corporates. So, if you work for a company that might like to contribute to the restoration of the awa, do let us know.



*Photo (above): Westpac volunteer, Ali*



*Photo (above): The Collective*

# Regular Teams

*By Wendy John*

**Predator Control** – Trapping is back in full swing after the summer break. We started the year with some general maintenance and calibrating of the traps to ensure they are working efficiently. We also welcomed a new volunteer, Kerry Bracewell, who has joined David Blackall on the Howlett and Waterview Esplanade Reserves trap line. And the March baiting pulse is completed.



Photo (above): Southern Circuit, Rosemary & Wayne



Photo (above): Mid-Circuit Team, Beau, Jude & Cameron & family

**Nursery** – Work is ticking along in the nursery. Summer is a time for seed collection and propagation – of which there has been lots happening. And now, as we get closer to the planting season, which is just



Photo (above): Bev & Margaret at the Nursery – an improvement on the usual buckets

around the corner, the plants are looking good and ready to go down onto the creek.

**Water Monitoring** – The late summer monitoring has now been done. There have been no major concerns at any of our sites – although the phosphorous levels were up slightly at one of the sites when it was monitored, just a couple of days after some heavy rain. And, while the macroinvertebrate numbers have been down slightly over recent months, we did see some young damselfly larvae, an oligochaete worm, a *Paroxyethira* caddisfly and midge larvae. But the most exciting discovery of all was seeing several freshwater shrimp at the Kukuwai Park site (main stream channel). While we see these wee critters regularly in the lower part of the catchment, they have never been sighted this far up the creek before. This proves that they can climb the waterfall!

And a reminder that, if you notice any unusual smells, colouring, silt etc. in any of our freshwater streams, please report it as soon as possible to the Council call centre – 301 0101.



Photo (above): Water Monitoring, Kukuwai Park – Sarah & Emmie



Photo (above): Freshwater shrimp

# Outreach Report

By **Sandra Maclean**

Great growing conditions kept us busy through January and February. Lots of plant releasing and bindweed control by our fabulous volunteers meant that our natives kept ahead of the weeds. At the Waterview Heritage Area (WHA) we welcomed another great team from Ernst and Young who controlled bindweed in February. And in March, the CVNZ New Migrant team came out with their new team leader Jing, to work on Madeira vine. Tuesday activities have ranged along 700m of the tidal stretch of the awa with target control plants including periwinkle, moth plant, honeysuckle and privet, as well as the usual suspects. Our volunteer work was supported by ecological contractors, Toitū Taiao, funded through the Albert-Eden Local Board.

We ran a very successful Neighbourly Creek event at the WHA on Sunday 19 April with Neighbourhood New Zealand, as part of the Albert Eden Ecofestival. This was a fabulous whānau friendly, planting and kōrero event, with some exceptional kai which our local tamariki loved.

We were lucky to be given a couple of trail cameras from Predator Free NZ last year, which our trapping volunteers enjoyed putting into action. Stephen Jarman has been doing a fantastic job for over a year, checking the trapline along the Waterview Heritage Area and sent us the photo below. So



Photo (above): Ernst & Young at WHA (Sandra Maclean)



Photo (above): Neighbourly creek day (Sandra Maclean)

far, we have seen rats, a possum, hedgehog and, in daylight, cats in the vicinity of our traps. The cameras help us identify what trap shy predators are in our trapping area and will help us target more effective ways to nail them. Family commitments mean that Stephen is stepping down from his trapping role in Waterview – thanks Stephen for all your time looking after this line – it’s much appreciated, especially given the time you also give to our other restoration activities.

After some very wild weather, at Odyssey House, a very large pine came down within our restoration area. Post big wind – a couple of other pines were left on an interesting lean, so a decent part of the site has been out of bounds until arborists made it safe in mid-April. Since then, we have deployed the Odyssey House team out of the potential fall zone at the western end of the site. This is an area which was an impenetrable jungle of *muehlenbeckia*, honeysuckle and blackberry. Once these vines were controlled, a surprising amount of surviving native carex took full advantage of the new light levels, and the area is shaping up very nicely with some ongoing attention from the Odyssey House residents.

Bamboo was felled by ecological contractors, Te Ngahere, at the Esplanade Reserve below 27 Powell Street, through funding from the Whau Local Board, via the Whau Wildlink. The Mason Clinic carried on with their sterling restoration work near the “Plane Tree Bridge” after the summer break. Our riparian



*Photo (above): Rat on top of victor trap box at WHA*

planting is thickening up here and we are extending the area we look after downstream. At the tributary behind the Mt Roskill Police Station, local legend Lou and friends made sure our natives survived the weed growth, and in late April we had another visit from the CVNZ New Migrant team to top up this great work. Happy Days!

Moth plant control still dominates many days, and revisits are being made up and down the awa to catch any late flowering and sneaky pod laden vines that have evaded our gaze. Our devoted high pod specialists Jean, Keith and Tejo have been incredibly productive in their work bringing down pods beyond the reach of normal humans. We are immensely grateful for their support.



*Photo (above): High pod work – Jean Tejo and Keith (Sandra Maclean)*

## Annual Archaeological Assessment

**By Wendy John**

As per the requirements under the Pouhere Taonga / Heritage NZ Authority to Modify (ATM), to have our proposed planting sites for the year assessed, our regular archaeologist, Brent Druskovich, did his visit and assessment recently.



*Photo (above): L-R AC Park Rangers, McKenzie & Teresa and archaeologist, Brent Druskovich*

# Community Real-Time Flood Monitoring

*By Wendy John*

This exciting pilot project is a collaboration between Auckland Council – Healthy Waters and Flood Resilience (HWFR), Acts of Roskill Kindness (ARK) and Friends of Oakley Creek.

Radar water level sensors and cameras have been installed at two locations in the mid-catchment of Te Auaunga – one at the pedestrian foot bridge by the Wesley Community Centre and the other one is at the Richardson Road overbridge.

The intent is to foster awareness of flooding and prompt data driven decision-making and actions – where appropriate e.g. by warning the local community of any impending risks from flooding.

Also, Auckland Council staff members were spotted monitoring the water flow on the creek, at the Richardson Road Bridge, during a recent heavy rain event.



Photo (above): Flood Flow Monitor



Photo (above): Flood Flow Monitoring



Photo (above): Real Time Water Monitoring Data

# Contractors

*By Wendy John*

**Te Ngahere** – the teams have been working hard with weed control under the Council’s Ecological Contract – note the castor oil plant felling that has been done on the north-east side of Te Piringa Bridge. They have also been undertaking weed control at a number of locations that is being funded by our three local boards. This work also includes some site prep for the first tree plantings of the season.

**TreeTops – Tree Privet Removal** – As people may be aware, we still have a massive amount of tree privet on the creek – particularly in Harbutt Reserve, while we have slowly been chipping away at removing these, including ‘drilling and



*Photo (above): Te Ngahere getting moth pods down*



*Photo (above): TreeTops team*

filling’ a good number. We have moved up a notch this year, with arborists, TreeTops, clearing two areas in two sites in the ‘rock forest’ in the reserve – thanks again, to Albert Eden Local Board for funding this. Since the sites were not suitable to get a chipper to, we now have some wonderful big eco-piles for insects and lizards to make their homes in. And, we will be planting around them this coming planting season.



*Photo (above): Tree privet eco-pile*

# Warrior Women on the Creek

By **Marin Adams**

It started on a sunny afternoon as we walked with my cousin Liz, along the creek at the bottom of Powell Street, Avondale. “Look at those koi!” she said, pointing to some large goldfish swimming in a hollowed-out pool in the stream. “I think there are three. No maybe four. Yes five ... See they all have slightly different markings. They are bad news. We need to get rid of them.”

My husband, Michael, found a net in the shed. I thought to myself, this is going to be easy. The koi are large and slow moving and it's just a matter of scooping them up. Being an experienced trapper, my cousin volunteered to kill them on capture. The koi were not stupid. They immediately recognised the net as a potentially dangerous foreign object and promptly dived down out of sight. We returned from the creek empty handed.

I did not let the matter rest. Knowing that roughly 76% (39

out of 51) of our native fish are classified as either threatened with, or at risk of, extinction, I had no wish for the ones that live in our creek to be deprived of their sources of food, habitat or ability to successfully reproduce. I did some research on koi and the best way of culling them.

*Cyprinus rubrofuscus* is the scientific name for koi. But they also have a nickname, Rats of the Rivers. Like rats they are omnivores. They feed like a vacuum cleaner, sucking up everything and blowing out what isn't wanted. Aquatic plants are dislodged in the process and are unlikely to re-establish. Koi cause habitat loss for plants, native fish, invertebrates and waterfowl. They can also worsen river erosion by undermining banks as they feed.

Koi originated in Asia and are adapted to cold water, but they survive in New Zealand's warmer climate. They grow large and have no predators. Koi produce 30,000-800,000 eggs. They



Photo (above): Koi carp (Stephen Moore in Tiakitamakimakaurau)

spawn in spring when the water reaches 15-16° C and can continue spawning throughout summer. Some females can carry three batches of eggs at different stages of development in their ovaries. It is easy to see how their numbers have grown out of control in our benign environment.

Conservationists see koi as “noxious”. However, eradication is expensive and difficult, especially in running water. Possible tools for their control are manual removal using nets, traps, electric fishing or recreational fishing. To view an electric fishing cull in Western Springs, click on <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1C1iZpKZMK/?mibextid=adiEgM>



Photo (above): Michael and Cousin Liz returning from the failed venture (Marin Adams)



Photo (above): Hunters at the World Koi Carp Classic with their bow, arrows and catch (RNZ)

An item in google search, caught my eye – the "World Koi Carp Classic" held each year in the Waikato. Last year 4.6 tonnes of the pest fish were shot. The Department of Conservation partners with the New Zealand Bow Hunters Society to run the event.

I decided community action, albeit on a much smaller scale, was worth a try. I wrote to the New Zealand Bow Hunters Society asking for assistance. I was delighted to receive an email saying one of

their members who lives in New Lynn has offered to help. She would get in touch on her return from overseas. We will pilot a cull at the bottom of Powell Street and, if successful, I may call on those of you who know of other locations where koi are living in the creek, to host our local Warrior Woman.

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## Convergence Event

**By Gina Hefferan**

"I've seen that one before, is that a weed?"

"We've got that coming up all over our backyard!"

Such were the revealing comments of excited youngsters earning a pineapple lump by identifying a weed. In March, Friends of Oakley Creek was delighted to be part of the inaugural Convergence Event put together by Puketāpapa Climate Action, a group we have worked with many times in the past.

Groups of intrepid cyclists, via various bike routes, some along the creek, converged on Ōwairaka Park. There they found live music, bicycle maintenance, smoothies created by cycle power, fundraising stalls from local scouts and Ōwairaka District School, Junky Monkeys play, bug hotel creation and AT Hop cards to be won. Urban Ark was also present, signing up residents as backyard trappers.

Since one of the themes was weeds, Tane, Eva and I put together an exciting bucket of weeds which the children were invited to identify, using our handy weed identification chart. For the kids, one correct guess earned a pineapple lump, or a lump of pineapple. Surprisingly, some chose the latter. Adults had to identify three.

Our thanks to Young George café for supplying the prizes for the other competition that we ran. Sandra



*Photo (above): Friends of Oakley Creek stall at Convergence event (Eve Mandahar)*

had gathered a massive sack of moth plant pods. Visitors were invited to guess the number of pods to win a coffee from Young George. There were, in fact, 190 pods and our eventual winner's guess was only four short. A second coffee could be won by guesstimating the number of moth seeds in the sack. Probably the most accurate answer was squillions. It was surprising how few people realised just how many seeds were potentially present in each pod. Getting that information out there probably justified all the effort of putting the stall together.

# Built by Beak: The Architects of Oakley Creek

By Rachel Klein

Along Te Auaunga – Oakley Creek in central Auckland, bird life is everywhere – darting through the canopy, singing from the trees, or dancing along a branch. It's easy to notice the birds themselves. What's far less obvious are the intricate structures they leave behind. Tucked into branches and hidden among foliage are nests – carefully constructed, purpose-built, and often invisible, unless you know where to look. These small, unassuming structures are more than just homes; they are physical records of how birds live, adapt and respond to their surroundings. However, despite the extensive range of native birds in Aotearoa, little research has been conducted on their nest architecture.

Previously, nests were overlooked as mere receptacles for eggs. But to an ecologist, they are rich in information. My research explores what passerine<sup>1</sup> birds use to build their nests, and what those nests reveal about the environments they live in. Each one



Photo (above): Piwakawaka nest (Rachel Klein)



Photo (above): Tauhou nest (Rachel Klein)

is a snapshot in time of an environment, shaped by the components a bird has chosen to build with. This means nests can be a record of the materials available in the surrounding vegetation, and even the pressures of an urban ecosystem.

Along Te Auaunga, species such as pīwakawaka (fantail), tauhou (silveryeye) and riroriro (grey warbler) construct remarkably different nests. Pīwakawaka weave a thick, cup-shaped structure, mounted on a sturdy forked branch in the dense undergrowth. They use the indigenous vegetation and include thicker materials, such as fern roots, likely for stability and insulation. In comparison, tauhou also build a cup-shaped nest. However, it is much more delicate, and hangs suspended between two branches. These little birds also show greater adaptability to their urbanised environments by often incorporating exotic vegetation and human-made materials, carefully woven together and reinforced with spider silk. Riroriro, however, build a completely different type of nest. These tiny architects build enclosed, dome-shaped nests that hang from branches. They are carefully constructed from native fibres and camouflaged with moss and lichen, making them hard to find – even for those of

<sup>1</sup> Ed note – perching

us with a trained eye. These three species offer just a glimpse into the diversity of bird architecture. But they also highlight how closely nest construction is tied to available materials.

In places like Te Auaunga, where restoration is actively reshaping the landscape, this relationship becomes especially important. The plants that establish along the creek, and those we choose to grow in our own gardens, directly influence the materials birds have access to. While we often think about planting for food or aesthetics, vegetation also plays a critical role in providing the structural resources needed for nesting. As native plantings mature and urban pressures shift, nests may begin to reflect these changes, subtly recording the progress of restoration over time.

So next time you walk along the creek, pause for a moment. Look beyond the movement of birds and into the spaces between branches. You might not see a nest straight away, but they are there, woven into the landscape, holding the story of a changing ecosystem.



Photo (above): Riroriro nest (Rachel Klein)

## Community Flooding Resilience Guided Walk

**By Wendy John**

We recently partnered with Earth Action Trust to lead a guided walk through Walmsley Park, as part of Auckland Council's Community Flooding Resilience Programme. This programme aims to educate and inform people on how they can prepare for and be more resilient during flooding events, along with how restoring our waterways can contribute to greater flood resilience in our catchments. The group included members of the Epsom Chinese Community, members of the Indian community and others, and it was supported by Age



Photo (above): Guided Walk

Concern. We stopped for a break and snacks at the outdoor education centre, concluding

with a delightful tai chi session, led by one of the members of the Chinese community.

# Insects and Spiders of Te Auaunga Oakley Creek

By Micky de Pont

While volunteering along Te Auaunga Oakley Creek clearing invasive plants, I've found that some of the most interesting discoveries aren't the plants at all – but the creatures living quietly beneath logs, inside soil banks, and among the leaf litter.

Working close to the ground gives you a front-row seat to a hidden world of invertebrates. From fast-moving predators to highly specialised parasitic insects, these species are an important part of the creek's ecosystem and a reminder of how much biodiversity persists in urban spaces.

Here are a few of the more memorable species I've encountered.

**Ichneumon Wasp** (*Xanthocryptus novozelandicus*) is a stunning wasp, with bold black and white stripes and bright orange legs that make it stand out immediately.

It can usually be seen flitting around and only rarely landing, constantly in motion as it searches for host insects in which to lay its eggs. Watching it in action, it's clear how focused and purposeful it is, never staying still for long.

**Common Tiger Beetle** (*Neocicindela tuberculata*) – I was surprised to find a large number of common tiger beetles near the waterfall.



Photo (above): Ichneumon Wasp – *Xanthocryptus novozelandicus* (Micky de Pont)

These are true speedsters of the insect world, capable of running at incredible pace, which makes them very difficult to photograph. Interestingly, they have to stop briefly after each dash – not to rest, but because they run so fast, they can't properly see where they are going.

They're fascinating to watch, even if getting a clear photo is a challenge.

**Banded Tunnelweb Spider** (*Hexathele hochstetteri*) – This was one I was especially excited about.

I had been keeping an eye out for a banded tunnelweb for over two years since I started photographing bugs. I finally found my first while



Photo (above): Common Tiger Beetle – *Neocicindela tuberculata* (Micky de Pont)





Photo (above): Banded Tunnelweb Spider – *Hexathele hochstetteri* (Micky de Pont)

observing tiger beetles on a clay face near the waterfall. She had left her tunnel and was scuttling down the clay bank.

They are very impressive spiders, with distinct patterning on their abdomen. The individual I found was around 50 mm including her legs.

On my next visit, I was even more excited to discover at least 15 more inside a felled tree that was rotting away. Most were small, but there was one large female around 70 mm. It really showed how important rotting wood is as habitat for these spiders.

**Vagrant Spiders** (*Uliodon* spp.) – In the same rotten log, I also found large vagrant spiders.



Photo (above): Vagrant Spiders – *Uliodon* spp. (Micky de Pont)



I collected two females, both around 60 mm, and they are currently spending some time in my terrarium – to the delight of my two-year old daughter, who has been catching roaches for their dinner.

They are nocturnal hunting spiders, so I only see them at night once all the lights are out in the house. It's been fascinating to observe their behaviour up close.

**Giant New Zealand Centipede** (*Cormocephalus rubriceps*) – Lastly, I found one of the largest giant New Zealand centipedes I've ever seen, again inside a rotten log.

It was an impressive specimen, at well over 200 mm long, and quite intimidating. I attempted to stop it briefly so I could get a photograph, but I didn't dare try to pick it up, as they can deliver an extremely painful bite.

Unfortunately, it disappeared back into the rotting wood very quickly, so I wasn't able to get a photo – but it's definitely one I'll be looking for again.

**Closing Thoughts** – Volunteering at Te Auaunga Oakley Creek has shown me that restoration work supports far more than just plant life. Beneath our feet is a complex and active ecosystem of invertebrates, each playing a role in maintaining ecological balance.

Taking the time to notice these species adds another layer of appreciation to the work being done – and highlights the importance of continuing to protect and restore these habitats.

# What's in a Name? Ngā Ringa o Te Auaunga

By **Marin Adams**

Friends of Oakley Creek was gifted the name Ngā Ringa o Te Auaunga by Whaea Lynda Toki, from Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae. The word 'ringa' in te reo Māori translates to 'hands' which incorporates concepts such as embracing, uplifting, encompassing, connecting, massaging, nurturing, holding/upholding and welcoming.

After the Mosque attack and during the years of Covid and Cyclone Gabrielle, new words and concepts like "social cohesion" entered the nation's vocabulary. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern used the phrase "They are us", conveying

a message of unity amongst all New Zealanders. These sentiments and words have filtered down to the community.

*"Whatever community you are in, it feels good to belong, to feel included, to be yourself and be part of something." Te Korowai Whetu*

In the recent devastating storms, floods and landslides, it has become apparent that people cannot always access timely help from civil defence or the police in a major emergency. Sometimes the only source of immediate help is neighbours. So, it helps to know them. Auckland Council is investing in a neighbourhood approach through their *Building Flood Resilience for Auckland's Future*. Friends of Oakley Creek is contributing by actively involving residents in flood protection activities.

Auckland Council and our local boards are a major source of our funding. To quote from the Albert Eden Local Board's policy on the outcomes of their community grants programme: "Our community is resilient and supportive, particularly through times of change and challenge, so we can thrive." Friends of Oakley Creek is proud to be able to restore the natural environment and, at the same time, work in a way that strengthens social cohesion.



Photo (above): Hands linked together in a common purpose



Photo (above): Mahi tahi – working together 2025



Photo (above): Learning about creek creatures together 2014

I came to Avondale in 2012 after living in Ponsonby Terrace, where everyone knew everyone. There was a culture of inclusion bequeathed by former residents – Māori, Pacific, Pakeha and Asian lived happily side by side. A young man was found in a distressed state in the park adjacent to our street and neighbours streamed over to where he was, hoping to help. The local clergywoman came several days later and offered to cleanse the site and through ritual, heal those of us who were affected by the trauma of his death.

Our family hoped to experience the similar levels of support, mutual respect and inclusion in our new neighbourhood. A 'no exit' street always helps. But it was Friends of Oakley Creek that really connected us with our new community. Down by the creek we worked alongside other residents to clear rubbish, weeds, and then plant new seedlings. Our two WOOFFers from the Czech Republic were astonished. To be accepted, valued and included by strangers was a great surprise to them.



Photo (above): The first steps in revegetation and making connections 2015



Photo (above): Neighbours who became friends 2025

Ten years later and a group of us still weed and plant down by the creek. But we also help each other to improve the street environment. We have become close friends. We bump into each other in the street and chat. And it has given me a feeling of connection and safety, knowing I can obtain help in a crisis. There are other people living close by who don't participate in Friends of Oakley Creek working bees. I sometimes see them as they drive past. I don't know their names. I don't feel any connection. Social cohesion does not happen by chance, and I imagine many people reading this article will give a silent 'thank you' to Friends of Oakley Creek for strengthening their social connections.

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## Seasonal gallery

We are highlighting the kererū in this edition, in celebration of the flock seen this year (see following article). This thriving population is a testament to the sterling work of our trapping teams. It is also a function of our planting so many trees favoured by kererū: puriri, karaka, kawakawa, tī kōuka /cabbage tree, puahou/ five-finger, māhoe/ whiteywood, karamū, kowhai and houhere/lacebark. This kererū is feeding on puriri berries.

Other sightings on the creek include hoheria flowers; kohekohe fruit; kahikatea fruit and seeds and this curious piwakawaka.



*Photo (above): Kererū feeding on puriri berries*



*Photo (above): From left to right: Hoheria flowers; kohekohe fruit; kahikatea fruit and seeds; piwakawaka.*

## Notices

**Monthly Community Working Bees:** As per normal, our monthly working bees are held on the first Sunday of each month – 10.00am-12.00noon. Check out our FB page for more information – <https://www.facebook.com/OakleyCreek/>

**Tuesday Working Bees:** Tuesday mornings 9.30am to 12.00pm. This exciting project is looking for some more regular volunteers. For more information contact Sandra - 021 166 7647.

**Friday Working Bees:** Friday mornings 9.00am to 12.00pm. We work in different locations on Friday mornings, depending on the need at the time. If you're interested let us know and we'll include you in the Friday email list so that you can join us when you are free – or contact Wendy – 027 232 6454.

**Love Your Awa Workshop:** Wednesday 20th May – 2-4pm, Harbutt Reserve. Bookings – <https://events.humanitix.com/love-your-awa-stream-workshop-at-oakley-creek>

**Annual General Meeting:** Monday 8th June – 7.00-9.00pm, Ferndale House. Mark your calendar. More details to come.

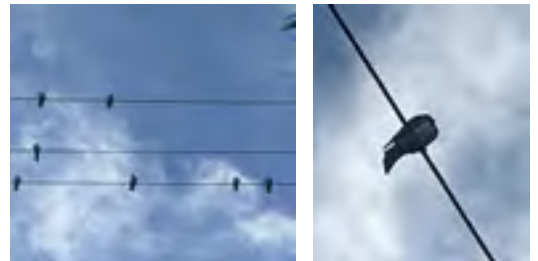
**Predator Control** – if you are interested in joining our rodent control team, we are needing volunteers to assist with this. Training and resources are provided – contact Wendy – [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)

## Hot off the Press – Kererū Flocking on the Creek

*By Wendy John*

In mid-April I was fortunate to observe nine kererū perched on the power lines, over the creek above the bridge in Harbutt Reserve, in the early evening. According to the 'birder', Trina Smith, kererū flock post the breeding season, and the flock may have included juveniles (although it was difficult to tell from the ground).

They congregate in April-July for socialising (particularly the younger birds) – typically near a decent food resource such as miro or kahikatea – or taraire (as may have been the case in this instance). On eBird, the highest number



*Photo (above): Kererū flock perched above the creek*

recorded together in the area is four birds on Mt Albert. So, it was wonderful to see such a large number hanging out on the creek.

For more info check – <https://urbanark.nz/biodiversity/birds/kereru/>

# Ngā Ringa o Te Auaunga Friends of Oakley Creek

**Chairperson:**

David Bowden

**Treasurer:**

Helen Edwards

**Secretary:**

Eva Manandhar

**Committee:**

Adrienne Stanton, Chris Brown, John Stevenson, Marin Adams, Tane Feary, Kyle Hemming, Wendy John.

**Newsletter Editor:** Gina Hefferan

**Newsletter Photos:** Unless otherwise credited, all photos are by Wendy John



Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome – email [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)

**Membership**

Subscriptions – Individual – \$10 and Family – \$20

If you are not already a member, we encourage you to become one to help support the protection and restoration of Te Auaunga. There is still lots to be done – and even more following on from the 2023 storms.

And, of course, donations are always welcome.

These can be paid directly into our bank account – 38-9003-0978224-00 or at the AGM. Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.

You can also find us at <http://oakleycreek.org.nz/> and <https://www.facebook.com/OakleyCreek>

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Foundation North, The Trusts Community Foundation, the Collective, Auckland Council, Albert-Eden, Puketāpapa and Whau Local Boards, The Trust, Waterview Primary School and the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS).

