

Dear members,

Spring 2019

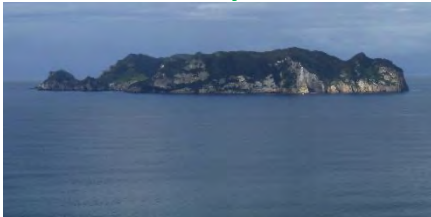
Welcome to our annual report to members for the year to June 2019. Firstly, thank you for your support, it's vital to our ongoing work. Thanks especially to those of you who donate on a regular basis. Our small team depends on non-grant income for projects so please get in touch if you would like to do more or help more.

The trust has continued to advocate strongly for conservation and restoration of Aotea Great Barrier's places and taonga. We provide decision-makers and the community with quality information and work to ensure the dots are joined here on the island.

There has been a very obvious increase in engagement from all quarters in protecting and restoring the Barrier's treasures. But our thanks go to you, our most loyal supporters, for being there for us – here's what we've been up to on your behalf. As always, please get in touch with any feedback, and keep trapping and planting!

Kate Waterhouse, Chair

2018/2019 – the year in review...



1. The big news of 2018 was the **eradication of rats from Rakitu** (though this will take some time to

confirm) by the Department of Conservation, following years of advocacy from members of this trust. Community pressure, due in part to mis-information about the effects of broadifacoum, put unreasonable pressure on DOC staff locally as they successfully carried out the two drops. Pre-drop monitoring showed the rats on Rakitu were amongst the largest and highest density ever recorded in NZ. Amazingly, grey face petrels, diving petrels and fluttering shearwaters continue to try to breed there. The potential for the island to become a **seabird sanctuary** for up to 7 species now that rats are gone and once introduced weka can be removed, is very high (see the [Northern NZ Seabird Trust Rakitu Report](#)). We continue to advocate for a restoration plan for the island which includes the removal of the weka to an alternative site, and for the return of lost species, including other seabirds, tieke, hihi, whitehead, bellbird, kakariki, reptiles and insects.

2. **Pāteke protection:** following a long period of decline, pateke stabilised in 2018. We requested that the DOC Pateke Recovery Group determine the causes for ongoing decline on the Barrier, particularly the impact of rats, and advocated for more pukeko and cat control.

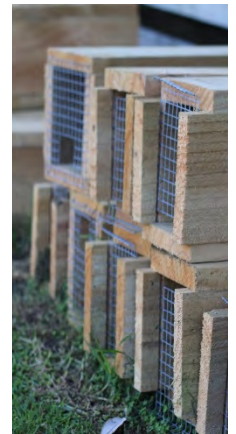
DOC increased cat trapping, rabbit control and pukeko culls. Flock count data is not in yet for 2019 but we will continue to monitor this.



3. **Hirakimata and black petrel pest management:** a trial of A24 self-resetting traps continued for a second year, with the report co-funded by GBIET and DOC. There are now plans to significantly increase trap numbers on Hirakimata thanks to the donation of A24s by Auckland Council used in a large-scale Local Board funded trial at Windy Hill. This is a timely action as falling black petrel population trends continue to worry researchers (see *Environmental News Winter 2019*).

4. **Okiwi kākāriki:** this research project worked with local landowners and Okiwi School to locate nest sites for this remnant breeding population of kākāriki (red crowned parakeets). Fledging chicks spend time on the ground, so timing is important! Potential nest trees now have more traps set around them as part of the Local Board funded Okiwi Community Pest Project. Trustees also participated in a bird count workshop and pest management as part of this project. (See [Environmental News Winter 2018](#)).

5. **Community trap Library:** the successful trap library pilot funded by DOC distributed trap boxes and snap traps to three community projects and some land owners in 2018, directly and at community events. As a result, Auckland Council agreed to fund traps and boxes for three years starting in 2019. The goal is to make trapping rats the norm and help people see the positive effects on birds, insects and plants of having fewer rats around.



6. **Mapping land under pest management:** the map continues to be updated as more people start trapping on their own properties. Please get in touch if you are trapping to add your place to the map.

7. **Cat control:** we provided subsidised cat spaying and neutering with support from Auckland Council through our local vet until June this year (17 cats). Council is now taking this responsibility on directly and teaming up with DOC to trap feral cats up to 2 kms from the main road.

8. **Submissions to the - 30 Year Auckland Plan, Long Term Plan (10-year budget), Local Board Annual Plan and Regional Pest Management Strategy:** trustees and members submitted to these critical investment plans. In a nutshell, your feedback and a strong case for protection of Aotea has resulted in significantly increased focus on and resources for biodiversity, pest management and biosecurity here.



9. Marine dumping: we have supported the appeal process lodged by members of Ngati Rehua Ngatwai ki Aotea and continue advocacy at a political,

regional and local level for a proper policy to be developed on how dredge spoil is managed in the region – we do not believe marine disposal is the only option, nor is there a political mandate for this.

10. Department of Conservation prioritisation of Aotea: we have highlighted to the Minister and officials the lack of investment in biodiversity protection on Aotea relative to the size and biodiversity value of the island, particularly in relation to pest management and progress towards a predator free Aotea. Chair Kate Waterhouse has been appointed to both the Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee and Auckland Conservation Board.



Finally, we welcomed **new trustee** Andrew Veale (an evolutionary biologist at Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research). In late 2018, we sadly

farewelled Emmy Pratt, a long-serving trustee. Emmy continues to volunteer and write for our Bush Telegraph.

So what's on our radar for 2019/20?

Our priorities for this year are:

- **The Aotea State of the Environment Report 2020:** to be completed in 2020, focusing on documenting the state of Aotea's birds. It will pull together all data on all bird species with mana whenua and local stories of bird distribution, with data from a new annual **Aotea Bird Count** (a collaborative project to be launched in Conservation Week). We aim to make the report as accessible as possible to everyone with an interest in the island's birdlife and their current status.
- **Aotea Community Trap Library:** we'll be supporting the community trap library leads and landowners to get trapping and keep trapping.
- **Supporting Medlands and other community projects:** we will continue to be the umbrella organisation for the new Medlands community restoration project (Oruawharo Medlands Ecovision Group) and others as they are established, alongside council-funded resources.
- **Social research and community engagement:** this area is seen as the critical next step to take towards a pest-free island and discussion with partners will start in 2020.

- **Advocating for key ecosystems and species:** this is always a focus and is likely to include **pateke protection, marine protection, a Rakitu Restoration plan** and planning **return of kokako to Te Paparahi** (both are mana whenua and DOC lead)



- We'll also continue the next phase of the **kākāriki research** and complete school resources on the **impact of rats in our forests** (a late running project).
- Look out for our two publications, **Environmental News** (twice a year) and the **Bush Telegraph** (quarterly). Or find them online here under publications <https://www.gbiet.org/>
- **Expanding our trustee team:** we are in discussions with possible new trustees living on island. And are eager to have more community involvement – if YOU are keen to make a difference restoring Aotea, get in touch with our Coordinator, Marea via contact.gbiet@gmail.com or 022 344 2438 if you want to know more!

Funding our work

Support from long term partners and funders including **Foundation North, DOC, Auckland Council and Aotea Great Barrier Local Board** continue to support operations and projects. With many members converting to life membership in recent years, membership fees are providing only a small proportion of our income. We are in touch with some long-time members and their networks who are keen to support our projects. Please contact us if you would like to **upgrade your support** for the Trust's work in general and/or for a specific project.

Annual: Individual: \$25; Family: \$35; Senior: \$20; Student: \$15
 Corporate I: \$200 (up to 5 employees)
 Corporate II: \$300 (over 5 employees)
Life: Individual: \$250; Family: \$330; Senior (> 65): \$200

You can also **sponsor** activities or projects or make a **significant donation** - contact us for options at contact.gbiet@gmail.com. If you would like to set up a **regular donation** our account number is ASB 12-3110-0058231-00.

All donations are tax deductible.

If you know of anyone else who may be keen to join us, they can do so at <https://www.gbiet.org/join-us>.

Of course, sending a cheque is also a possibility:

Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust

PO Box 35

Okiwi,

Great Barrier Island, 0963.

Thank you in advance!

