

FEBRUARY 2024



Aotea Great Barrier

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS 2023



Haere Mai

Dear members and friends, welcome to our annual report

Right: Trustees past and present (and Brad Moss, grandson of founding trustee Tony Bouzaid) at the 20th Anniversary party (February 2023)



2023 was a big one for the Trust with activity ramping up and new opportunities to grow our advocacy and project work.

We celebrated the Trust's 20th anniversary last February with a party at Glenfern – thank you to everyone who attended despite the impending arrival of Cyclone Gabrielle. It really was a special occasion for all and it was great to see more than 100 people there for the launch of John Ogden's incredible Birds of Aotea report.

We also refreshed our three-year Strategic Plan in 2023, restating our goals and objectives for the 2023-2025 period. Our strategy remains largely the same – to restore Aotea and return lost species by building a partnership with mana whenua, enabling community conservation, providing quality information for decision makers and advocating for the

island's environment. We would love your feedback on this (it's short and sweet) so please get in touch with Hannah if you have any comments: contact.gbiet@gmail.com

And we are grateful to our partners and funders including Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust, Foundation North (Pūtea Hāpai Oranga), Lottery Community (Te Tahua Whakatinana Papakāinga), the Department of Conservation (Te Papa Atawhai), Auckland Council (Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau), and Aotea Great Barrier Local Board (Te Poari ā-Rohe o Aotea).

Thank you again for your ongoing support and donations this year

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou
Kate Waterhouse | Chair

2023 Highlights

The project list was long in 2023 and here's a summary of what we got up to on your behalf

Aotea Bird Count

December 2023 saw the island-wide Aotea Bird Count run for the fifth consecutive year – a great achievement for all involved. Our collaborators on this island-wide survey include Auckland Council, the Department

of Conservation, Glenfern Sanctuary, Motu Kaikōura, Windy Hill Sanctuary and Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea. The data has great value as a long term measure of changes in bird life and the possible effects of different pest management approaches and habitat types. All of the Aotea Bird Count Reports are available to view on our website (www.gbiet.org/bird-count), and we hope to have the results from the 2023 count soon. Results to date suggest most species are stable but there are worrying signs for kererū. We will keep you posted.



From Left: OME Eco-hub, Trustee Kim Bannister at the Ecology Vision Festival (November 2023), our new Forest Taonga of Aotea poster

possible by Auckland Council funding traps and boxes, and Lotte's determination. Get in touch with her for gear and advice on setting up traps to help grow the network across the island: aoteatraplibrary@gmail.com.

Oruawhoro Medlands Ecovision

The Trust is the umbrella trust for OME, which has gone from strength-to-strength starting Phase 2 – increasing the project area south towards Windy Hill Sanctuary and west to include DOC reserves on the hills. Project lead Lotte McIntyre and her new part-time fieldworker surveyed landowners and have now planned new networks in this expanded area based on supportive responses. A track has been marked on the DOC block and rat monitoring, lizard retreats and wētā motels are in place. Thanks to Auckland Council funding and dog handler Jo Sim, black petrel surveys on ridgelines in the Medlands area have located multiple active burrows. This is a really significant discovery and should strengthen OME's Phase 2 funding case. OME now has

the 'Eco-Hub' – a meeting point, community and information base next to the Community Garden and St John's Church. Auckland Council and our Local Board helped with funding, with upcycled and donated materials and labour from Anamata and Dayne Clough Builders. If you're passing, please stop in to look at the many displays and information boards and say hello to any OME volunteers in residence!

Taonga of Aotea Poster Series

Our Birds of Aotea poster, supported by Auckland Council, our Local Board and Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea, was a labour of love for the illustrator Erin Forsyth. We are so pleased with how it turned out and we hope that you've seen a copy – it's not to be missed. We're working with Erin on a second poster which illustrates forest taonga species of invertebrates, lizards, skinks, geckos, frogs and other wonderful creatures. The *Birds of Aotea* poster is available for purchase online (www.gbiet.org/shop-merch) and at vendors across the island.

Advocacy and Engagement

Trustees submitted to the Auckland Council budget process against cuts to funding for environmental work across the region. Trustees also submitted on proposed marine protected areas and bottom trawling/dredging zones in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Chair Kate Waterhouse continued to highlight Aotea issues as Deputy Chair of the Auckland Conservation Board. Barry Scott edited two issues of Environmental News covering topics such as: seabirds, the marine environment, rare plants and more. Our facebook page continues to attract followers and posts gain solid reach, we maintained our usual presence at local markets and events.

Priorities for 2024

Supporting the establishment of an Aotea-based exotic caulerpa response team is top of the list. This will depend on the new government prioritising funding for marine biosecurity and will require the collaboration

of many parties. Tū Mai Taonga shows what is possible and the Aotea Caulerpa Response will need similar backing to build long term capability in Caulerpa detection and removal.

We expect Tū Mai Taonga to make big inroads into the feral cat population in the north of the island in 2024 and begin to plan moving feral cat operations to the next zone south and trials of rat tools. Supporting this kaupapa through ongoing focus community conservation in the south of the island is a priority for the Trust.

Advocacy at the national level will be needed to ensure that decision makers and funders recognise the outstanding ecological value of the Aotea group. On island, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Aotea Trap Library, OME and the Aotea Bird Count will be key. Finally, we will launch the next Taonga of Aotea poster and hope to host the illustrator, Erin Forsyth, at the Claris Gallery for an exhibition of the paintings she's done for us (23 March).

Our Financial Position Remained Healthy in 2023

We are indebted to Foundation North, Lotteries Commission, the Aotea Great Barrier Local Board, Auckland Council and several generous private donors for funding to deliver all of the projects in this annual report. The Trust is constantly seeking ways to minimise costs and continue to fund the two administrative roles (Coordinator and Finance Administrator) that allow us to commission our own projects and act as umbrella trust for community projects. We carry reserves to ensure the sustainability of the Trust for at least 12 months beyond the current year. Please get in touch if you would like a copy of our annual Charities Commission return.

Changes to Our Team

Lucy Dixon & Finn



At the end of 2023 we said goodbye to exceptional treasurer Lynda Moran, who oversaw the setting up of processes to support us to be an umbrella Trust to so many different projects. Lynda's patience and thoroughness are second to none. She has handed the reins over to Lucy Dixon; Lucy will be well known to many of you from her days at Destination Great Barrier, and who takes the role of Financial Administration Officer, alongside Coordinator Hannah Smith. Both are mums of possibly the two cutest toddlers on the Barrier and juggle Trust work with other commitments. If you haven't met her, rest assured Hannah is a stand out talent and we are

very lucky to have her supporting the Trust as Coordinator.

There have been some changes to the Trustee group and officers in 2023. At the end of 2023 we welcomed Philippa Howcroft of Okupu as a Trustee. She joins Emeritus Professor Barry Scott (Deputy Chair), Kim Bannister (Treasurer), Professor George Perry, Jennifer Needs, Bree Biederman and Chair Kate Waterhouse as the current Trustee group. Vertebrate pest ecologist Andrew Veale retired as a Trustee but remains involved, joining John Ogden as one of our Science Advisors.

Philippa Howcroft



How can you help us make a difference in 2024?

Volunteer

None of this work is possible without a committed team. We are always looking for new Trustees and volunteers - [get in touch!](#)

Donate

With many of you converting to one-off life memberships, we do appreciate any other additional annual donations you can make. [Click here](#) to make an additional donation!

PO Box 20 Claris, Aotea |
Great Barrier Island, 0961

www.gbiet.org
contact.gbiet@gmail.com