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PUBLIC NOTICE

from Tony Bouzaid
of Glenfern Sanctuary

I would like the residents of Great Barrier Island to know that they are welcome to visit and walk through Glenfern Sanctuary at no charge by arranging a suitable time with me.
Tel. 4290091

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GBI Environmental News

The quarterly publication of the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust, whose trustees are: John Ogden (Chair), Tony Bouzaid, Jude Gilbert, David Speir, Don Armitage (Co-opted), Fenella Christian (Secretary).

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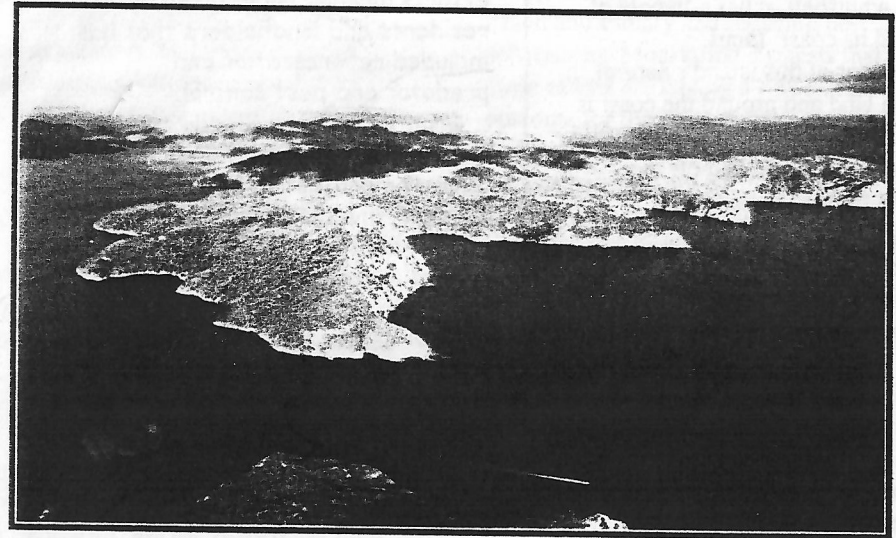
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**Kaikoura Island
– in safe hands**

**Govt. acquires
ownership – new trust
to control useage**

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Trust Evolve?**

Mission Statement: To sustain and restore the cultural and natural environment of Great Barrier Island in order to enhance the native biodiversity and foster the socio-economic well-being of the people.

Getting it right

**Guest Editorial
by Don Armitage**

THE TRUST was set up for the environmental purposes laid out in its deed. In a nutshell, it has a 'whole of island and its coast' focus.

Enhancement of this island's natural values on land and around the coast is central. The involvement of locals and organisations both on and off the island has trended persistently upward.

The great value of this trust's existence is as a focus for groups, organisations and individuals to interact in such a way as to ensure a large degree of consistency exists as to the main strategy(s) by which the potential of this island can be realised.

To that end, the trust has a major project being scoped right now to examine and report on the prospects for the island's economic and social future by various possible means using as a basis an enhanced natural environment. This project will be comprehensive and interactive with the community and other relevant organisations. A report will be produced.

In the meantime it is of vital importance that the four main parties to this island's future (interested locals and landowners, ACC, ARC and DoC) keep talking.

The trust is here for you.

MOHUNGA NEWS FLASH

The Mohunga Restoration Project is an initiative designed to enhance the biodiversity of the peninsula that forms the northern shore of Port Fitzroy Harbour and the southern coastline of Katherine Bay. The project is an extension of the efforts already undertaken by residents and landholders that has included reforestation and predator and pest control.

Grants from the Biodiversity Condition and Advice Funds will allow the project to develop further, implementing more comprehensive rat, pig and cat control over a large part of the peninsula. Funds will also allow feasibility studies to determine the appropriateness of either a predator proof fence or an intensive 'buffer zone' to enable complete eradication of the threats to the surviving flora and fauna.

It is planned that the Mohunga Peninsula will become an area that supports a range of animal and plant species not experienced since pre-settlement times.

With dedication and hard work Mohunga will emulate and add to the successes of the Windy Hill, Glenfern and other projects. The support, co-operation and experience of a wide range of people and organisations is essential to such activities. To all those who have given The Mohunga Project a kick start, A GREAT BIG THANKYOU.

FOCUS: Awana Catchment Trust

The FOCUS series will profile private conservation initiatives on Great Barrier Island.

The Awana Catchment Trust was set up in 2000. Professor John Ogden is the scientific advisor, and Maaka McCandless is currently the field project director. The Trust's general aim is the conservation of threatened wildlife species, habitat enhancement, and protection of the historical and cultural heritage of the Awana area.

The catchment is relatively undeveloped. It is a microcosm of Great Barrier Island: all 'Land Units' (and ecosystems) from the summit of Hirikimata to the sea, are represented. Several rare and endangered bird species nest in the area.

Projects supported by the Trust over the last four years have been aimed mainly at gathering baseline data and paying for year-round field operations, hence creating employment and establishing the basis for further local work in future.

The Trust has been supported financially by the founding Trustees, the UK based Whitley Awards Scheme (Rufford Small Grant), the Auckland Regional and City Councils, and the Department of Conservation. It has also had voluntary local assistance, advice and cooperation from landowners. The Trust is currently seeking funding to continue its current projects and undertake some modest expansion.

The Trust has co-operated with the Awana Beachcare Group in the protection of the endangered beach-nesting birds: New Zealand dotterel and variable oystercatcher. Protection of the brown teal flock has also been a priority. The key activity here has been reducing dog activity on the beach and estuary and reducing pest infestations. Monitoring suggests that these efforts are having a successful outcome for the birds, but the long-term prospect remains in doubt: species numbers are perilously low and are showing only a modest increase each year.

The Trust's three-year rat-trapping project concluded in March 2004. Traps were monitored for three days each month along a 2.5km line passing through five distinct vegetation types. The aim of establishing the seasonal abundance cycle for ship rats and kiore, and recording differences in rat numbers between the vegetation types, has been successfully completed. These data are currently being assessed and will contribute to the knowledge base required before Barrier-wide rat elimination can be attempted.

Other activities have included general bird monitoring and a survey of the seaweeds and fish of the Awana coast. Information on the historical and cultural heritage of the area is also being accumulated, and this is likely to be the main thrust of initiatives next year, along with ongoing pest control..

The Robins' Return

by Jude Gilbert

On April 6 The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust conducted the public release of 30 North Island robins in their SE Great Barrier Island sanctuary area - the first bird reintroduction on GBI. The event was a resounding success receiving nationwide radio and television coverage. It was made possible by an incredible amount of background work over many years and a steadfast vision by the architects of the Trust.

This work is a shining example for conservation on GBI.

Background: The last recorded sighting of a North Island Robin on Aotea Great Barrier Island was in 1868 by a Frederick Hutton. Hutton was a university professor and museum curator whose account of birds on the island was recorded before the full impact of European colonisation. Robins, along with the North Island Saddleback, and NZ Quail have not been sighted since, despite field surveys in

1964, 1972, and 1975. The spread of the rat, (both ship and kiore) likened to a grey tide sweeping through our forests has taken its toll. Today, birds such as shore plover, stitchbird, falcon, red and yellow-crowned kakariki, long tailed cuckoo, bellbird, rifleman, whitehead, tomtit, and kokako are either extinct or rare on the Island.

It has taken more than five years for the landowners of the Little Windy Hill Company to bring their bush-clad property to a relatively pest-free standard whereby a release of a species is possible. Over 12,000 rats and 100 feral cats have been removed from the Windy Hill and neighbouring Benthorn Farm pest management project areas. A total of 250 hectares is currently intensively managed for pests by the Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust.

Application to reintroduce a native species anywhere in NZ is governed by the Department of Conservation to whom a comprehensive application must be made. It covers aspects such as "who are the people applying, and who will make up the project team to do the capture, banding, and release? Why is there a need for a relocation and how appropriate is it? What is hoped to be achieved and what will we learn? Where will we source birds and what iwi will we need to consult with? How will

removal of birds affect that area? What will be the impact if re-introducing a 'new' species on the existing bird populations? How will we manage the disease risks to ensure we do not inadvertently bring new diseases to the Barrier? How are we going to move the birds? Do we have the approval of the tangata whenua for Aotea? How are we going to monitor the birds after release to ensure the relocation has worked?"

A professional was employed to prepare this document. Further to the application I consulted with the iwi for Aotea—the Ngati Rehua-Ngati Wai Trust Board—who gave their blessing to the return of the robins. Four iwi with an interest in Tiritiri Matangi were also consulted. A permit to disease-screen a number of robins was applied for and the local vet Anne Kernohan joined ornithologist Kevin Parker at Tiritiri Matangi to take blood and faecal matter for disease-screening.

Tim Lovegrove, a research scientist for the Auckland Regional Council, was approached and agreed to lead the team. Tim, responsible for an earlier capture and release from Tiritiri Matangi to Wenderholm Regional Park north of Waiwera, was able to use his banding permit for this capture and release. Birds are individually banded at capture for easier identification and monitoring post release. Field managers



North Island Robin
Petroica australis longpipes

from Windy Hill and Benthorn Farm—Dean Medlands and Kevin Parsons—spent a day with Tim at Wenderholm prior to the relocation to become familiar with the birds by sight and sound and also to learn monitoring techniques such as finding nest locations. The release sites at Windy Hill and Glenfern were visited by the Department of Conservation and the habitat assessed for its suitability for the robins.

Update: At this point in time the birds are being monitored regularly. Since their release 19 individual robins have been identified. Most of these have come to a call and been fed. This encourages the robins to stay in the protected area. However, a robin has been sighted in Mulberry Grove so they are dispersing. We have three pairs that have formed within the pest-managed area and this augers well for a productive breed up in the spring.

Kaikoura Island – in safe hands

TONY BOUZOID wrote this article entitled 'A Walk in the Footsteps of Peter Blake' in November '03 and foreshadowed the Labour-Progressive Government's recent decision to acquire the island.

Government Press release – Hon Chris Carter, May 10

"Kaikoura Island in the outer Hauraki Gulf is to be protected, restored and used as an area for environmental education of New Zealand youth. At 564 hectares, Kaikoura is the seventh largest island in the Hauraki Gulf. It is situated on Auckland's doorstep, next door to Great Barrier Island, and in one of the world's most renowned sailing havens. As a home for kereru, kaka, morepork and kingfisher, it has immense potential as an important conservation area, once restored."

Although on the outer edge of the Hauraki Gulf, Great Barrier Island is a part of Auckland City's territorial area, geographically a very large part, over 2.5 times the area of Isthmus Auckland. From a Great Barrier Island perspective, Kaikoura sits astride one of the main points of entry to the island, creating by its location one of the finest deep water harbours in New Zealand known throughout the yachting world for its safe anchorage and relatively unspoiled environs.

As a wildlife refuge and potential Outward Bound of the north it has several benefits. The reintroduction of a ferry service to Port FitzRoy, however sporadic, would re-invigorate North Barrier. A reservoir of pest eradication skills have been developed here as a result of private initiatives at Little Windy Hill,

Benthorn Farm, Awana, Kotuku and Glenfern Sanctuary where rats, cats and pigs are maintained at very low levels. The advent of Kaikoura as another wildlife reserve would be a shot in the arm for the local vision of a pest-free Great Barrier. Without possums and mustelids on Great Barrier Island it would be a simple matter to eradicate the pests from Kaikoura Island. Then the introduction and re-introduction of endangered species would have an overflow effect in spreading birds to the adjacent landmass particularly with Kotuku and Glenfern Sanctuaries just across the northern harbour entrance.

The Barrier is already the wilderness destination for Auckland City and the region. It will become more so with the recent Department of Conservation initiative to build more backcountry huts and upgrade and

extend the already extensive track system. Port FitzRoy is one of the best natural deep-water harbours in New Zealand. Landlocked, but for two narrow entrances, it is a safe haven in all weathers.

Recognised as a strategic asset during the Second World War, the approaches were mined and the harbour fortified against a Japanese invasion as the logical stopping-off point for an attack on Auckland only 90 kms away. The underground bunkers in Bradshaw Cove on Kaikoura Island's northern shore, which controlled the Port Abercrombie minefield, could be restored as an added attraction for visitors. The island has its own 600m airfield, orientated SW-NE and capable of receiving the Britten Norman Islander aircraft operated by Great Barrier Airlines. A gravel road has been built across the island linking Bradshaw Cove, the airfield and the wharf in Gardeners Bay.

With no point in the harbour more than 600m from the shore, water-based activities for an Outward Bound experience can be conducted in any weather. Stony Bay on the island's eastern shore is a logical place for marine-based activities. Protected in all winds from the north through west to south, the upper reaches are ideal

for launching small sailing craft or kayaks. This is also a great opportunity to combine environmental education. Already the Windemere Campus of the Bay of Plenty Polytech comes to the Barrier as a part of its Environmental Management Diploma.

There is also some basic accommodation on the island as well as an excellent jetty and floating pontoon so this type of operation could be up and running in very little time. Port FitzRoy is a regular port of call for the "Spirit of New Zealand" with a mandatory tramp to the top of Mount Hirakimata (Hobson) and back.

Like Tiritiri Matangi, in 1940 Kaikoura was 90% grass. Unlike Tiritiri it has regenerated naturally so that now it is 95% in native bush. While the majority of the vegetation is in kanuka and manuka this provides an excellent nursery for planting climax species such as kauri, totara, tanekaha, miro, tawa, kawaka and others. In the valleys and upper reaches of Stony Bay there is a variety of mature native trees including kohekohe, puriri, kowhai, pohutakawa and taraire to name a few. The majority of the Port FitzRoy coastline is under Department of Conservation administration with native bush running down to the sea.

This island has it all: a refuge for endangered wildlife, an island ready for reforestation in native trees, an all weather sheltered harbour with the wilderness of Great Barrier Island at its doorstep. What better place for young New Zealanders to gain an outdoor experience and walk in the footsteps of Sir Peter Blake.

Generous Grants for Local Conservation Efforts

THE AUCKLAND REGION has three projects from the Biodiversity Advice Fund and 11 from the Biodiversity Condition Fund worth \$142,607 approved:

1. **Mohunga Peninsular Ecological Restoration Project** has approval from both funds:

- Predator control study and planning on 800ha of private land involving 12 land owners on the Mohunga Peninsula of Great Barrier Island. The planning will seek the expert advice in the fields of pest eradication, predator-proof fence erection, monitoring existing biodiversity and habitat improvement strategies. The purpose is to develop a strategy to preserve the remnant flora and fauna that has survived. Up to \$19,000;

- Implementing the developed plan for predator control targeting feral cats and pigs, rodents and rabbits activity. Also regeneration of kanuka and manuka and maintain fencing for stock control. \$12,402.

4. **Karen Walker and Ken Morris** to enhance and revegetate 1ha brown teal habitat on their Puriri Bay property (Great Barrier Island). The project involves enhancing and revegetating with flax, rushes and trees the brown teal habitat, providing cover and extra nesting sites. \$1,125.

5. **Charlie and Winnie Blackwell** for 1ha brown teal habitat improvement at

Kaitoke on Great Barrier Island. Fencing and revegetation are the main activities for this project improving safe cover for the brown teal. \$9,905.

6. **Helen Mabey** to fence 4ha of coastal forest from stock. The area is approximately 4ha and has the 2nd highest brown teal colony in New Zealand. The fencing project would remove stock and allow regeneration of coastal forest and improve the nesting habitat for the brown teal. \$7,875.

The QEII National Trust has grants approved for three projects in the Auckland region, one of which is for the eradication of cats and rats on the 50ha **Glenfern Sanctuary** mainland island, Port Fitzroy Great Barrier Island. The eradication programme involves trapping and laying of bait stations. \$25,000.

Varroa mite found in Barrier hives

THE INFECTIOUS and deadly varroa mite has been confirmed in southern GBI beehives. How the mite breached a supposedly bio-secure zone is unknown, but this spells the end of organic honey production on the Barrier and an uncertain future for the wild bees.

Establishing the GBI Trust

by Jude Gilbert

During the mid to late nineties a number of private conservation initiatives were in action on Great Barrier Island. These were mostly focussed on pest management and the planting of native species with some specific species protection. By early 2000 these initiatives started to meet as the GBIs Private Conservation Initiatives to share resources, ideas, and expertise.

By the third meeting in 2002 it became clear that a more formal body was needed both to represent the private landowner working in conservation at a local and regional level, and as a central body for resources. The need for a collective focus and goal was also required but the form of organisation could not be agreed upon.

In August 2002 Don Armitage and Judy Gilbert called a meeting with the Auckland Regional Council, Auckland City Council, the Department of Conservation, and Auckland University to bring forward for feedback the notion of a rat and feral cat free Great Barrier. There was a very positive response to this idea and it became clearer that a Trust-like body made up of local people was

going to be needed to spearhead an investigation into the feasibility of this idea.

Following this meeting, it was decided to form the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust and the formal aspects of establishing it were then undertaken by Don Armitage. By 2003 the Trust was formed with locals John Ogden, Judy Gilbert, David Speir, and Tony Bouzaid as Trustees. The Trust has a broad conservation basis but an initial focus of eradicating rats and feral cats from the Island.

At this time the Trust has a paid part time secretary, Fenella Christian, and has co-opted Don Armitage onto the Trust in an unofficial capacity. The Trust meets regularly, has begun raising funds for its activities, and is close to initiating a feasibility study for the eradication of rats and cats from the Island.

Would YOU like to support the creation of our vision: a pest and predator free natural environment supporting a vibrant local economy. Join the membership of the **Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust** Form on the the back page.