

PĀNUI

NEWSLETTER

Raumati/Summer 2023



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT November 2023

Kia ora everyone.

Another 3 months have flown past, and it's been a very busy time for the volunteers involved with Ōwhango Alive.

On the 24th September we celebrated World River's Day with a Festival. Thanks go to Tania Bramley and her team from NZ Landcare Trust for helping us organise this day and also helping provide funds for the kai and our guest speaker John Bissell, an expert on trapping predators.

As the weather has warmed up and we have implemented new trapping strategies "The John Bissell" method, our catch totals have increased.

Our working bees continue to be a great success with more volunteers joining Ōwhango Alive to help us remove the invasive weeds from within the Ohine-tonga Scenic Reserve.

All in all, another productive year for Ōwhango Alive. My thanks go to all who support, donate and volunteer in our great team. I wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

Nga mihi

Mark Fredericks

Ōwhango Alive Chairman.

TRAP DATA FOR LAST 3 MONTHS September to November

Feral Cats	2
Hedgehogs	41
Mice	36
Possum	20
Rat	283
Stoat	5
Weasel	4
Rabbit	3
Unknown	3
Total	397



SPONSOR DATA 1 Sept to 30 Nov	Mouse	Rat	Stoat	Weasel	Total Result
Anderson-Smith		5			5
Claire Stevens	1	2			3
David Partis and Suzanne Wilkinson		2			2
Derek & Ann Percy (Swimming Hole 1)	1	3			4
Derek & Ann Percy (Swimming Hole 2)					
Fa'i Pudney, Tauranga		2			2
Grace & Mary Donald		2			2
Jacob Simmonds	1				1
Kayden and Zander McConkey		2			2
Knowles Family	1	1			2
Lucy Simmonds	1	1			2
Manawa Energy (BH01)		2			2
Manawa Energy (BH02)		1			1
Manawa Energy (BH04)		2			2
Manawa Energy (BH05)					
Manawa Energy (SH02A)		2			2
Manawa Energy (SH04A)		4			4
Manawa Energy (SH05)		2			2
Margie Riley (Lagoon 18)					
Margie Riley (Tawa 1)		1			1
Marsaili Cash (Boat Hole 22)					
Marsaili Cash (Boat Hole 3A)		1			1
Marsaili Cash (Swimming Hole 4AA)		4			4
Marsaili Cash (Swimming Hole 7A)					
Martin Bond		2			2
McEntee Family: "Admiral Ackbar"		2			2
McEntee Family: "Stumbleduck"					
McEntee Family: "Verminator"		2			2
McEntee Family: "Weasel Vin Diesel"		3			3
Mike Camm		2			2
Nan & Malcolm Pullman		3		1	4
Ngakonui Valley School		2			2
Opie Family		1			1
Phil & Kate Taylor		3			3
Rachel & Marty Cashin					
Richard & Felicity Porter.		2			2
Sally & Mark		1			1
Shirley and Kevin McEntee	4				4
Simmonds family, Melbourne		6			6
Stent Family		3			3
Taumarunui Auto Centre			1		1
The Baylis Family, Ōwhango		1	1		2
The Golden Family					
TMN Hort and Beaut Soc		1			1
Turangi Painting Services		1			1
Weir Family					
Total Result	9	74	2	1	86



ŌWHANGO ALIVE VOLUNTEER-TANIA DEWITT

Marion Johnston

I was lucky enough to join Ōwhango Alive in 2013 when Tania Dewitt was still living in Ōwhango and an integral part of the volunteer group. At that time she was secretary producing excellent minutes of any meeting or activity and promoting Ōwhango Alive. Sometimes meetings were held at her home on Ōwhango Road near the entrance to the bush and we were able to enjoy the beautiful garden and pond before the meeting and afterwards cavort round the table-tennis table under the carport in some weird knockout version of pingpong.

Tania's dream was to see Kiwi living in the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve but the first thing that she had noticed when she moved to Ōwhango in 2005 was the lack of bird song; so when she got to know some like minded Ōwhango residents the idea of forming a group to help preserve and increase the flora and fauna was born in 2011.

Surprisingly she grew up with parents who had little interest in nature or the outdoors and wasn't encouraged to pursue science even though she topped biology class in her central Auckland high school. If anything, there was a real absence of birds so it's no wonder that when she got to Hauturu (Little Barrier) and Tiritiri in her twenties the native birds and bird song had a big impact. With a background working for the Forest & Bird Protection Society and then Jeanette Fitzsimons, Green Party Co-Leader, at Parliament, plus years of interest in native birds and plants, Tania was the perfect person to help get the group up and running. She was, of course, initially aided and abetted in all this by Sally Lashmar and later Mark Fredericks. Quiet and retiring in personality Tania's guiding hand was felt at all times as she kept Ōwhango Alive on the road to its present success.

Tania left Ōwhango in 2018 to return to Wellington and now lives in Auckland but we are hoping that one day she might come back to Ōwhango.



RETARUKE TRAP LIBRARY LAUNCH

Sally Lashmar

On Monday 27th November, three Ōwhango Alivers headed down to the Kaitieke Hall to attend the launch of the Retaruke trap library, being held by the Whanganui Region Catchment Collective (WRCC).

A grant from Horizons had enabled the group to purchase a number of different traps, including live capture cat traps, the AT220 resetting trap and the Flipping Timmy instant kill traps.

Cam Speedy, Wildlife Biologist, was the guest speaker, who drew on his extensive knowledge of predator control to share tips and ideas to refine our trapping skills.

He was joined by students from Kaitieke Primary School, who were also well versed in the art of trapping. The students took us all (about 40 of us) on a tour of their wetland area, adjacent to the school, which they have been restoring from a weed infested area, to become the planted, tracked and trapped area it is now. Their main speakers, Jamie Green and Blue Steele, both 12 years old, held us adults in thrall with their knowledge of trapping and passion for the project. We were all well impressed – our future leaders in conservation, I am sure.

Heather, Brenda and I had made the trip into the Kaitieke Valley to pick up some more tips on trapping, which we certainly did, making the trip home abuzz with ideas and discussions on an afternoon well spent.

These events are always an opportunity to glean more trapping tips and also to network with other groups.

Thanks go to Natasha Cave, Coordinator for the WRCC, for making this event available to us.





WORKING BEES 2023

Sally Lashmar

The regular working bees in the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve continue to be well supported, with a committed group attending each planned session, plus the extra hours that a few others put in on their own.

The focus has been mainly on identifying and removing privet, heather, blackberry, broom, tutsan, cotoneaster. Time has also been spent on planting 150 native trees and then keeping the new trees clear of vegetation. Track maintenance has also been part of the programme.

While some may say we're wasting our time, as Mark says, "It's our time we're wasting!" Can't argue with that!

And we are certainly seeing improvements in the areas we have been focussing our efforts.

Together we have accumulated at least 220 hours this year, just at our working bees!

Then there's all the other hours of trapping, admin, calendars, quizzes and so on. Great work team!



THE ŌWHANGO ALIVE FESTIVAL

Sally Lashmar

Well, what a great day we had celebrating World Rivers Day with a Festival yesterday! After a deluge of rain the previous 24 hours (75mls!), the rain cleared and the day dawned fine and warm - perfect for the occasion.

John Bissell of Backblocks Environmental Management Ltd, Wairarapa, was our guest speaker - John specialises in trapping and educating about the many different predators that run riot, killing as they go, through our patches of paradise. John is also National Predator Control Advisor with Save the Kiwi.

He was a fascinating speaker, having hunted and trapped in Australia and Namibia, as well as all over Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I know John inspired many of us to get out there and refine our trapping techniques to catch the beasts that predate on our precious taonga.

Close to 70 people attended the Festival, from far and wide, so it was also a great opportunity to network with other predator control groups and share info. Each group was invited to share their story of predator control in their area which was followed by a Q&A session with John.

David Crimp from NZAutotraps (Whakatane) also spoke about the AT220 resetting trap, which is so useful and effective.

At the conclusion of the day, 15 of us walked an Ōwhango Alive trapline and planted 30 more native trees in the ngahere.

Our thanks go to:

Tania Bramley of NZ Landcare Trust, for financial, promotional and physical support.

Natasha Cave and Tarsh of WRCC.

Bill and Carol O'Donnell for providing an amazing venue at Brock's Farm in Ōwhango.

Mathew Howell (Ngati Hikairo) and Rev. Mervyn Aitken for offering a karakia and blessing for the day.

David Crimp from NZAutotraps.

Central King Country REAP sponsored lunch which was catered by Ōwhango School PTA.

Ōwhango School, who provided the sound system.

And of course our fab team of Ōwhango Alive volunteers, who worked tirelessly before, during and after the day.

World Rivers Day is also when Ōwhango Alive launches our annual calendar, so thank you to everyone who bought their 2024 edition.




ŌwhangoAlive
PROTECTING OUR OWN BACKYARD

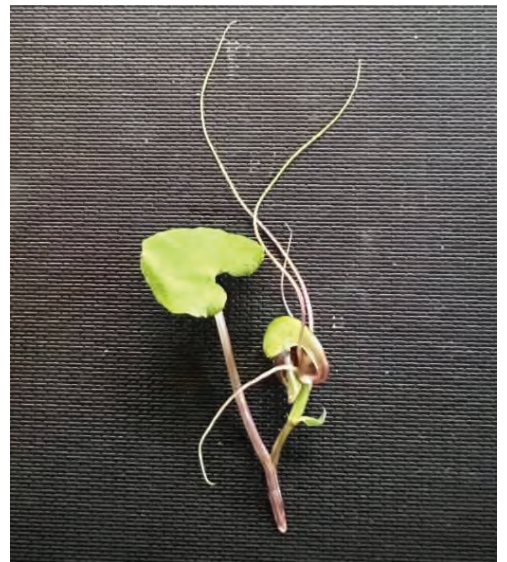
MORE NATIVE ORCHIDS AT OHINETONGA Rosemary Steele

As I bent down to pull privet seedlings during a working bee in mid-September, I spotted the leaves of some spider orchids. These are tiny ground-dwelling plants, less than 5cm tall. Each has a single leaf about 1.5cm across. Unfortunately, the flower photo doesn't show the shape well, but it has 2 rounded lobes and a tiny triangular tip. The flowers vary in colour depending on where they grow in NZ. Currently it is called *Corybas trilobus* but further research may mean that the species is split into many. (This is typical of botanists; one splits a species into several, another comes along and lumps them back into one. The magnificent "New Zealand's native trees" by John Dawson and Rob Lucas has a striking example of this habit. Kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) was divided into 9 different species. I recently learned that they have now been lumped back into one!)

Getting back to *Corybas*, there are a number of species growing throughout NZ, usually in damp soil on the forest floor or on the banks of streams. They are commonly known as spider orchids and generally have 2 long filament sepals which stick up above the leaf. The name comes from the Greek word korybas one of a group of priests known for their mad frenzy. Goodness knows why their discoverer thought to give such tiny plants that name!

More recently (early November), I found 2 more orchids, one growing on the edges of the track to the Boat Hole and another slightly further in the bush. These are commonly known as green helmet orchids or *Pterostylis*. The larger of the two is *P. banksii* which is usually about 30cm tall with long narrow leaves and a single flower. The smaller one is *P. venosa* which doesn't grow much above 10 cm with fewer leaves and a smaller flower with less pronounced "feelers".

Earina mucronata, which I described in an earlier article, is in flower now with sprays of small yellowish flowers. It hangs from the branches of various of our native trees.



There are two main types of privet commonly found in our area. These include Tree privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*). They can be distinguished by their leaves and flowering times. Tree privet leaves are a darker green while Chinese are a dull green and have wavy edges. Tree privet flowers from January to March and Chinese flower September to December. Both produce huge numbers of seeds that are spread by birds. Tree privet grows to 15m. Chinese privet grows to around 5m. Being fast growing, both can overtake our native vegetation. Both leaves and berries are poisonous to humans and animals.

They are notoriously difficult to eradicate. The Waikato Regional Council has an excellent site which describes the many methods of eradication, see www.waikatoregion.govt.nz. Generally cutting/digging out and using a herbicide paste on the 'frilled' stump is the easiest method.



Chinese privet.



THE CALENDAR 2024 Sally Lashmar

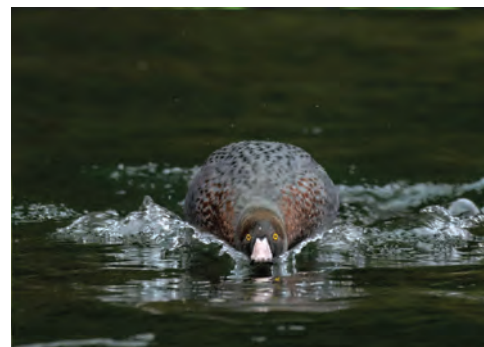
Sales for the Ōwhango Alive calendar have been strong, with 200 initially printed, then another 30 and THEN another 20 printed!

The calendar is an important fundraiser for the group, with the monies going towards more hi-tech traps, trail cameras and the ongoing costs of running over 300 traps.

Appreciation goes to the many volunteers who have been part our marketing team. Every calendar sold makes a difference – some folk have taken 5, 10, or 20 to showcase to their friends, families and workplaces. Many people are now repeat purchasers of the annual calendar, some even requesting their copies prior to them going to print!

Thanks go to all the photographers, from near and far, who submitted photos, to David Robinson who collated and put the calendar together, to our local printer, Gareth at Vivid Signs, Taumarunui, and of course the proof readers (especially Tim Leahy!!).

By the time you receive this newsletter, the sign “SOLD OUT” may be on the door!



March/Poutū-te-rangi Ōhio Awareness Month 2024

Monday/Īhina	Tuesday/Īhā	Wednesday/Īhapa	Thursday/Īhāpē	Friday/Īhāpē	Saturday/Īhāpē	Sunday/Īhāpē
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

The Ōwhango Alive team would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year

Ka kite ano

David Robinson

Editor



PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1: Kereru in kowhai - Malcolm Pullman, Ōwhango Alive stall at the Ōwhango Market- Sally Lashmar

Page 3: Tania Dewitt - Sally Lashmar, Retaruke Trap Library launch - Sally Lashmar

Page 4: Top left - Rosemary Steele, Left second row - Karen St. John, remaining photos - Sally Lashmar

Page 5: John Bissell, Festival audience - Sally Lashmar

Page 6: Orchid on black background - Raine Williams, rest - Sally Lashmar

Page 7: Chinese privet - Shirley McEntee

Page 8: Calendar photos - Peter Brennan, Heather O'Brien