



## WINDY HILL - ROSALIE BAY CATCHMENT TRUST

Windy Hill Sanctuary Newsletter # 27

June 2015

### *A field worker's view.....*

This newsletter is a little different because it has been written by me, Henry Cookson, field worker for the Sanctuary, coming up on my 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This year I took part in the resurveying of the Hochstetter frog population in the



**Hochstetter Frog**



**Henry & Sarah**

Te Paparahi block at the northern end of Great Barrier Island. This was done in collaboration with EcoGecko and began with tramping all our equipment, food and sleeping gear to where the DOC hut used to be—an hour's walk from the summit of Mount Taraweka.

This took 3 people 3 hours to walk. The three of us were Sarah Herbert from Eco Gecko, Kevin Parsons and myself. Kevin was only there as a packhorse! This allowed us to take everything up in half the time. Sarah and I stayed out there for 12 days in tents.

We had 2 or 3 days of bad weather. Apart from that it wasn't too bad but I was down to my last pair of socks by Day 9.

As part of the locating of the frogs we took plenty of photos and were blown away by the size and colours, so we have included several photos for you. The black frog



**Frog at my fingertip**

below is beside the tip of my index finger. We believe we counted a slightly higher number of frogs than the previous survey done in 2013 and will give you the full results as soon as they are collated.



**Hochstetter Frog**

Continued on page 2

***In other news.....*** Unfortunately, our application relocate Kakariki from Little Barrier to the Sanctuary for our proposed breeding programme was declined. This was disappointing as their aviary has been ready for the last year and a half and as yet hasn't had a bird in it.

.....At the end of last year we had Jo Sim with her 2 dogs come to help us look for petrels within the Sanctuary. Jo & I did not find any new petrel nests but we confirmed that a number of nests that we had identified in previous years were still in use.



**Juvenile Black Petrel**

Here are some of the tasks that my day to day job entails. It is certainly varied and productive.

Between the 3 of us (Henry, Kevin and Rachel), we check all the perimeter tracks once a month for catches and rat baiting. Little Windy gets done twice a month as this area tends to have higher rat catch and bait take. The internal tracks get checked once a month as well. This takes up most of our time. At the same time we have to replace broken traps and any bait that is either gone or mouldy. This happens quite regularly. Track maintenance is a constant battle and with the amount of tracks it takes three years roughly to maintain them all. By that time we have to start all over again.

On average I walk roughly 10 to 15 kms a day throughout the Sanctuary

On rainy days I analyze seabird recordings that were collected from December 2012 until November 2013 from a range of locations in the Sanctuary. We hope to confirm the presence of Cook's Petrel in the Sanctuary through this data that I am analyzing. Another rainy day task is the analysis of morepork data. Last year we collected audio recordings from within the Sanctuary and from two other local locations outside the sanctuary in a study of morepork numbers associated with areas that have poisons used or not. This study has so far shown that the sanctuary has much greater numbers. The use of poison in the controlled environ that we have with the use of boxes seems to limit the secondary poisoning of predacious birds .

Earlier this year we received a chevron skink from Auckland zoo. An x-ray had been taken of the skink that showed that it had eaten its own tail. We are not sure why this was but it was in good health when we released it within the Sanctuary.

#### **Stats, stats & more stats**

##### **Hochstetter Frog Survey**

Interim indications are that despite the impact of the June 2014 storm the population estimates are stable. Around 250 frogs counted in 2015.

**Rat catches** for 2015 stand at 1778.