

President's Annual Report: 2021



REMUTAKA
CONSERVATION TRUST

Regenerating
our natural
habitat

Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc.

Annual Report 2021

Presented by the President on behalf of the Executive Committee

This Annual Report is presented to the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc. (Trading as the Remutaka Conservation Trust) held in Petone, Lower Hutt on 13th October 2021.

Executive Committee

The 2020/21 Committee was elected at the last AGM and comprised:

President	Geoff Cameron
Vice President	Peter Cooper
Secretary	Malcolm Arnot
Treasurer	Karen Baker
Committee members	Susan Ellis, Alan Peck, Esther King, Winifred Long, Janet Lawson and Pierre Tellier.

Esther and Susan resigned from the committee part way through the year due to other commitments. We were fortunate to be able to co-opt Fanny Leduc to the Committee during the year.

The Committee met 5 times during the year, and I wish to formally thank this Committee for the skill, thought and considerable effort they have contributed towards the effective running of the Trust. As I said last year, an organization such as ours does not run itself, and the membership at large should be immensely proud of the efforts your committee has put in on a voluntary basis.

I continue to emphasize that we need to have the youth and vitality of our new volunteers represented at the governance level and having Fanny on board now is an important part of that re-vitalization process.

Kiwi Project

This flagship project saw the first Kiwi re-introductions in May 2006, so this year marked the 15th anniversary of the first releases. Alan Peck prepared an interesting news release and member notification, and Susan Ellis was interviewed on RNZ's Afternoon programme.

In November, the Kiwi project team recommended that the Trust make use of developing technology and amend the Kiwi monitoring procedure. This would be done by removing the remaining transmitters from our monitored birds and using acoustic monitoring as required. This recommendation was accepted and has been implemented.

Using acoustic monitoring data, Susan produced a detailed map of kiwi dispersal, showing the spread into the adjoining Regional Council water collection area.

We were asked to “look after” 3 birds from Pukaha/Mt Bruce, and we are expecting our remaining ONE chick, along with her offspring, back from Wairakei Kiwi creche – all adding to our expanding Kiwi population.

Trapping data

The trapping success data continues to be collected and analysed by our volunteer statistician Winifred Long. This data is incredibly valuable, especially now that each trap has a GPS location. Trapline leaders receive regular updates on the success of their lines and advice on which traps may need to be checked.

An audit of the trapping network was completed and a 5-year plan to identify and cost trap repair and replacement is being prepared.

Catchpool Restoration Project

This project continues to see corporate volunteers and school groups spending time doing this work, including the Catchpool valley wetland system, and there is a particularly good section describing some of the activities on the Trust's website. The Trust's nursery continues to be used as an essential part of this project.

Strategic Planning

As reported at the last AGM, the Committee finalised the formal part of the strategic plan review and undertook to complete the first of the rolling 5-year operating plans to give effect to the strategic plan. This is important given the funding challenges likely to be facing us in the future. However, with the committee changes and then lockdowns, we couldn't complete the task during this last year. It will be one of the first tasks for the new committee and project leaders in this new year.

Finances

Karen Baker has set out the Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2021. You will see from these Accounts and the Statement of Service Performance the complex nature of the Trust accounts. The skill and dedication of Karen to this work continue to be appreciated by me and all the Committee.

Our financial position continues to be sound, with a small surplus. However, we are rapidly approaching a situation where the costs of maintaining our stock of A24 traps will exceed our annual revenue, meaning that our fundraising and sponsorship-seeking efforts will have to be raised to a whole new level. I believe that we will require access to specific skills for this task.

We also gratefully acknowledge the generous support of grant sponsorship during the year from:

- Department of Conservation.
- Hutt City Council.
- WN Pharazyn Trust.

Placemakers Seaview have been very generous in providing items such as screw drivers, batteries etc at no cost.

External relationships

During the year the Trust has been involved with several external agencies and projects of relevance to us.

- A DOC-sponsored project to develop a strategy for the Remutaka area.
- Several potential Jobs for Nature projects which may flow over into the Park.
- The “Fence” project for the Wainuiomata catchment, as outlined to us at our last AGM.
- The Trust is represented on the “governance group” advising DOC on the expenditure of the funds generated from the pine harvest.
- With the Taranaki Whanui Iwi, first to gain knowledge of their history and conservation goals, then as part of the governance group for work in the Park. This has continued and developed our long-term relationship with local Iwi who have been involved in the Kiwi project from the start.
- The contacts with research and other conservation groups in the region are vital to achieve our Vision. Links with Victoria University, Zealandia, the Botanical Society, the Aorangi Forest Trust and Capital Kiwi are all incredibly important and valued.

Communications

Alan Peck continues to be responsible for the Communications aspects of our work, including the Remutalker and the notifications to members.

Our website, www.remutaka.nz continues to be popular and is the major point of access for information about us. Peter Cooper continues as our webmaster,

Our Facebook page, ably managed by Sarah Hutchison, has more than 300 followers, and our Twitter and YouTube sites are also active.

Highlights of the Year

This has been another big year for the Trust, and the highlights have included:

1. The celebration of 15 years since the first Kiwi release into the Turere valley.
2. The completion of another year of acoustic recorder surveying of Kiwi distribution and diurnal bird monitoring.

3. The Department of Conservation signing a contract for the removal of the last 30-odd hectares of mature pines in the Catchpool valley. Trust members assisted with some of the technical aspects of that process.
4. The completion of two Kiwi avoidance training courses for dogs, with a good number of dogs going through this training procedure, some for the second time. Securing funding for this is proving difficult, and we need to seriously consider whether the Trust members can continue to subsidise this activity.
5. No Serious Harm incidents reported during the past year.
6. Organising, with assistance from Ihaia Puketapu, two korero to gain an understanding of the history of the local Iwi and understand conservation issues of importance.
7. Planning for our upcoming Bat survey in late 2021/early 2022 has been undertaken by Fanny Leduc and is outlined on our website at this link:
https://www.remutaka.nz/projects/bat_surveys/bats.htm

Appreciation

On behalf of the Committee, I want to give a big Thank You to all who have helped the Trust operate successfully as a voluntary environmental organization during the year. Members and non-member volunteers have contributed enormously to the full range of Trust activities.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance and friendly cooperation from the staff of the Department of Conservation. We do appreciate your support and we look forward to cooperating again in the future. Staff of the Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Hutt City Council have also been extremely helpful to us.

Geoff Cameron
President
October 2021



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