



Newsletter Number 41 April - June 2010

Seminars / Workshops / Events at the Ecosanctuary

Bookings 482 1755 or info@orokonui.org.nz
All proceeds to biodiversity protection in the Ecosanctuary

12th June - Fungi Foray

Fabulous fungi identification workshop with David Orlovich who teaches and researches plant diversity and evolution at the Botany Department and shares his passion for fungi through the Botanical Society. Time: 1pm – 3pm. Cost: \$20. Limit 20 people. Bookings essential

13th June - Magical Mosses and Liverworts

An illustrated talk and field excursion looking at magical mosses and liverworts with Maia Mistral from the University of Otago Botany Department. Time: 10am – 3pm. Cost: \$39

7th July - Taoka Tucker

Learn what our native birds, lizards and insects need to survive in the forest. Dr Ian Jamieson from the Zoology Department and Ecosanctuary staff. Time: 2pm-3pm. Cost: \$5

8th July - Forest Survival Skills

Learn how to create food and shelter from the New Zealand forest with Tahu Mackenzie. Time: 1pm – 3.30pm. Cost: \$19.90 per family

9th July - Nice and Natural Native Nibbles

Revitalise your cooking with native NZ delicacies. Learn how to identify edible native plants and taste for yourself innovative recipes with Tahu Mackenzie. Time: 1pm – 3.30pm. Cost: \$19.90 per family

11th July - Fabulous Ferns

An illustrated talk and field excursion looking at fabulous ferns with John Steel from the University of Otago Botany Department. Time: 10am – 3pm. Cost: \$39

12th to 15th July - Freddo Frog Holiday Programme with Cadbury

Various frog frolics at Orokonui during the week with lots of prizes. Gala Day 11th July at Edgar Centre...

Otago Natural History Trust Notice of Annual General Meeting Wednesday 28th July 2010 Barclay Theatre, Otago Museum, 7-9.30 pm. Guest speaker to be advised.

Nominations are called for three trust board positions. Nominations must be in writing and received by the secretary, Otago Natural History Trust, PO Box 6425, Dunedin, before the 18th July. Nominations should include a CV for the nominee.

Pa Harakeke opening

On Saturday 24 April, more than 80 people, including Neville Peat and Kelvin Lloyd representing the ONHT, gathered for a ceremonial opening of the Pa Harakeke. This flax plantation showcases an amazing collection of varieties of New Zealand flax (Phormium). The project, located close to the Visitor Centre and outside the fence, is jointly operated by Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki and Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Besides openly displaying the diverse forms of New Zealand flax and providing a food source for nectar-feeding birds, the Pa Harakeke is of cultural and educational importance. In a few years weavers will be able to harvest leaves following tikaka or guidelines. Several other plants traditionally used in weaving have been planted within the Pa Harakeke. Most of the flax plants in the plantation have come from the Dunedin Botanic Garden and the Rene Orchiston Collection at Landcare Research, Lincoln.



Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki Upoko, David Ellison, welcomes people into the Pa Harakeke.

Valley Track Handover



Derek Valentine and Rotary Club of Dunedin members at the ceremony.

On 17 April the Rotary Club of Dunedin officially handed the Valley Track over to the Trust. This wonderful asset has been constructed by volunteers from Rotary assisted by our Track Ranger, Craig Leach, as well as the Malcam Trust and others. People who remember the challenges of the old steep, muddy track will marvel at the changes! When the surfacing has been completed the Track will be officially opened.

What's happening on the ground at Orokonui?

Pest control

Conservation Manager Elton Smith reports that a weasel was trapped inside the fence in April, and one rat print was detected in a tracking tunnel. Apparently a weasel can get through a hole the size of a wedding ring, so it wouldn't take much to provide one with access – this coincided with a vandalism event. In April one rat was caught in the same tracking tunnel that recorded the only rat print the previous month. Mice are now in high densities in large stretches around the fence line. A major bait station poison operation will be carried out in July. May tracking tunnel results have been delayed due to the wet weather but the tracking tunnel results have so far shown at least 3 rat locations around the fence perimeter.

It is widely accepted by the fenced sanctuary fraternity that there will always be occasional leaks that allow a pest or two in (particularly rodents), and the success of our monitoring system shows that Orokonui is keeping on top of the situation as well as anybody could.

As a bit of an experiment, Elton set 32 rat trap sets under the fence hood. In seven nights eight ship rats were caught, and over four weeks the total extended to 17 ship rats and one mouse. With that much activity under the hood it wouldn't take a rodent long to find a breach.

Weed control

Elton reports good progress on weed control, with a contractor spraying gorse and broom around the outside verges and dealing with the grass, gorse and broom coming up through the fence. Staff and volunteers have the trust land weeds under control, and we continue to maintain grassland within the western boundary by spraying emerging gorse as we await a decision from DoC as to whether Orokonui could host takahe.

Translocation news

Toutouwai/robin

All allocated 25 individuals from the Silver Peaks Douglas fir plantation were successfully released into the heart of the valley on 9 April. Only four had been re-sighted during two full surveys of the reserve by the end of April, but a master's student will begin more intensive monitoring from July to give us a better indication of the retention rate. Toutouwai are renowned for their ability to return to their place of origin.

Tieke/saddleback

Tieke seem to be largely confined to the valley floor area. Elton reports that there is now a core population of 8-14 individuals in this area, including the seven fledglings raised this season by three breeding pairs.

Bryce Masuda, research student, with juvenile saddleback.



Kaka

The two most recent fledglings are now clearly out of the nest. Sue Hensley, our chief kaka watcher, says she has seen one quite small chick and one pretty close to adult size with their mum high in the trees. Mum was feeding the little one, and Sue watched it flapping inexpertly on short hops through the canopy. There were a total of four fledglings in this last season.

Haast tokoeka

There is some confusion over whether Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, the iwi within whose rohe the last few Haast tokoeka survive, have given their blessing to translocation of a few breeding pairs to the safety of Orokonui. We await confirmation from DoC but, in the meantime, it looks like any translocation will have to be postponed beyond the expected time of September/October this year. Meanwhile Haast tokoeka, a kiwi species now not much more common than kakapo, remain extremely vulnerable to predation and eventual extinction by introduced pests.

Buff weka

Our translocation proposal for buff weka plods its weary way through the approval processes. Some minor points from DoC are being attended to, and the application awaits the attention of Kati Huirapa and Te Roopu Weka.

Gate vandalism

Two attempts have been made in the last couple of months to wrench the western boundary vehicle gate off its supports. Although this vandalism is very disappointing, we have been fortunate that community support keeps occurrences such as this extremely rare. The police have been informed and we are taking appropriate steps to prevent it happening again.

Education Programme

Support of our educational programme over the last few months has been phenomenal – over 2,000 students already! Resources developed by our educator, Tahu McKenzie, for the education programme, have brought the classroom alive for our young visitors. We already have good bookings for Term 2. The Easter and school holiday programmes organised by Tahu to attract families have been very successful.

Tours and Attractions

In the first two months of unguided walks we've had more than 1200 people through the gate. Make sure you take advantage of the low price for members; \$7.90 for unguided walking and \$19 for the excellent 90 minute tour.

New Annual Passes for unguided entry offer even greater value if you like to visit often. Prices for members \$18.90 adult, \$9.90 child and \$43.90 family. These make great gifts and we encourage each member to purchase at least one annual pass for a friend (prices are double for non-members).

We have DoC and MFish approval to introduce eels to one of our ponds so that visitors will be able to see these wonderful fish close up. They will be regularly rotated with eels from the lower Orokonui Stream so that there are no constraints on their migration and breeding.

The Seminar and Workshop Programme has provided three talks so far and another nine have been organized. It is being promoted through the university, our membership and website, Probus groups, U3A, the ODT and the Star.

Sculptor Moira Crossman, who crafted the wonderful birds that surmount the plinths at the visitor and education centre entrance, has initiated a course on sculpture from nature. Participants have made good use of the space under the visitor centre.

The Sanctuary Café with stunning views is open 9.30-4.30 daily for coffee and lunches.

Species Feature

Aseroe rubra (flower fungus)

This fairly common fungus is widely distributed in New Zealand, as well Australia, the Pacific Islands and South Africa. It is believed to have reached Great Britain and California in the soil of potted plants from Australia.

According to Wikipedia, *Aseroe rubra* was the first native Australian fungus to be formally described. It was collected in 1800 in southern Tasmania and named by the French botanist Jacques Labillardière. The scientific name is derived from the Ancient Greek words for 'disgust' and 'juice', and the Latin for 'red'.

Aseroe rubra is a member of the stinkhorn family (Phallaceae), although it is sometimes placed in the separate family Clathraceae. The fruiting body – the only bit of the fungus that is seen above ground - begins as a partly buried whitish egg-shaped structure 3 cm in diameter, which bursts open when the hollow white stalk with red arms erupts and grows to a height of 10 cm. It matures into a reddish star-shaped structure with six to ten arms up to 3.5 cm long, each divided into two limbs. *Aseroe rubra* bears its spores on a disc at the centre of the arms in a brownish slime which smells of decomposing meat and attracts flies, which spread the spores.

The Landcare Research fungal guide states that *Aseroe rubra* is saprobic (lives on decomposing plant matter) on soil and litter. It is often found in disturbed sites in natural areas, and at Orokonui it is very conspicuous on disturbed ground beside the Rimu track, sometimes in groups of several specimens. The best time to see the flower fungus at Orokonui is in February.



Flower fungus (Aseroe rubra) at Orokonui, showing development stages. Photos by Sue Hensley.

The ONHT Board

Valedictory from Ralph Allen

Dear members and friends of the Otago Natural History Trust

After ten years on the Trust Board, I stepped down in April, and Neville Peat has been appointed as the new Chairman.

Orokonui Ecosanctuary is thoroughly up and running, and it's entirely because of the efforts of you - our members, supporters, and staff. I'm proud of your fantastic success, and privileged to have been associated with you.

It's especially high time I acknowledged the work put into the project by your board of trustees, past and present – Kelvin Lloyd, Stewart Harvey, Jim Wilson, Rosemary Clucas, the late Diane Campbell-Hunt, Barbara Moerhuis, Neville Peat and Claire Freeman. New Zealand's native flora and fauna are better placed to survive into the future as a result, and that's been the driving force behind everything the board has done.

While the trust board puts its energies into planning and policy, we shouldn't lose sight of the voluntary directors of Orokonui Ecosanctuary Ltd, led by Chairman Andrew Noone. Their task, not to be undertaken lightly, is to ensure that the Ecosanctuary remains financially viable. Orokonui is the only fenced sanctuary in the country to adopt a commercial model as the basis for its financial security, so the OEL directors – at present comprising Glenn Alexander, David Smillie, Tony Hunter, John Scandrett, Carolyn Edwards and the chair and treasurer of ONHT – have a lot to live up to.

Our volunteers, hundreds of you, have kept the place running. The vast plantings on the trust's land, the 60km of monitoring tracks, the beautifully built main visitor tracks, the care of our temporarily captive fauna, the construction of much of our built infrastructure inside the fence, the maintenance of our people databases, assistance with all sorts of administration – well, you can see immediately that our few hard-pressed staff couldn't have managed alone.

Elton Smith, our first employee, got thrown straight in at the deep end with construction of the pest proof fence, for which he ended up being the de facto project manager. Far from being just the bloke in charge of the wildlife, he's had to take on huge responsibilities in overseeing contractors, volunteers and our hard-working rangers Kelly Gough and Craig Leach, organising construction, maintenance and repairs, designing and directing the initial pest knock-down operations and following up with endless monitoring and control and, only recently, doing what he really loves – reintroducing our missing fauna. Elton has grown splendidly into the job of conservation manager, and we couldn't have asked for a better candidate.

Chris Baillie stood head and shoulders above the many other applicants for the job of general manager. Our beautiful visitor and education centre wouldn't be there but for her skills in fundraising, liaison and people management. The ONHT and OEL boards rely hugely on her administrative and financial skills, and couldn't function effectively without her comprehensive and concise monthly reporting. Chris also oversees the great work of our marketing manager Pip Dalgliesh, our head guide, Sue Hensley, our educator, Tahu McKenzie, our admin staff, Priya Logan and Megan Blok, and the many people who help them.

The efforts put into Orokonui by all of you have been a constant inspiration to me. On behalf of New Zealand's beleaguered native flora and fauna, I thank you for your dedication.

Soon there will be an Annual General Meeting. I encourage you to attend it, because it's your opportunity to have a direct input into Orokonui's future through the election of trustees. This is not to be taken lightly – the trustees are the guardians of the vision of Orokonui.

The trust's constitution is carefully worded to ensure full democratic participation by our membership so that trustees are elected solely on merit. With so many people now involved with the Ecosanctuary, it's inevitable that there will be pressure to accommodate new and different ideas. Not all of these will be true to the vision. Not all of them will have at their core the philosophy that Orokonui is, above all else, a place where native flora and fauna are safe from unnatural threats. As members, it's up to you to check the credentials and aspirations of nominees for the trust board, and to make sure that they would be appropriate guardians of the vision.

Of the 15 million hectares that make up the South Island, there are only a tiny 300 hectares where introduced predators – including humans – cannot harm our native animals, and where introduced herbivores cannot consume our vulnerable native plants. Those 300 hectares are the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. All I ask of you is to ensure that they remain *truly* a sanctuary.

With sincere thanks and best wishes

Ralph Allen

Marketing

We've been running many familiarisation tours for coach and cruise ship tour companies and a number are now looking at including Orokonui in 2011/2012 itineraries. We have brochures in accommodation, cafes, libraries and other tourist operations in Dunedin, Port Chalmers and Waitati, Dunedin and Oamaru i-sites and regularly advertise in the ODT and the Star. We're currently putting much effort into promoting the hire of our venue for small conferences.

Injured Lizard Hospital

If your cat injures a lizard in the Dunedin city area please phone the sanctuary so that we can arrange collection and rehabilitate them in our lizard hospital.

Items Wanted

We are looking for

- Past issues of Forest and Bird magazine and NZ Geographic magazine to sell in our shop
- A folding table such as a card table
- Digital cameras, binoculars, magnifying glasses, specimens and specimen jars for our Education Programme
- Natural History books for our Education library.
- A whiteboard preferably on a moveable stand.
- A Perspex display case
- A baby change table
- Native seedlings (we don't plant them in the Ecosanctuary but use them as fundraisers)
- A car trailer

Thanks to all of our volunteers and supporters for all the ways you contribute. We are looking for a small team to form a roster for weekend help on reception. If you have some experience in customer service and would like to help please give us a call.

Fern Terrarium

We are looking for someone keen on ferns to help set up a terrarium with a background display of some of Orokonui's ferns. Fern expert Elspeth Tindall is able to assist. If you are able to help please phone us.

Visitor Centre Shop

We have a great range of books and DVDs on local wildlife including Identification guides and children's books – ideal for gifts. Some of them are listed on our website.

Fundraising

The revenue generated by visitors isn't expected to make us financially self-sufficient until 2012. In addition to making fundraising applications we still need your help. How?

- Ask the payroll person in your workplace about **Payroll Giving** and get immediate tax credits. Some Orokonui staff have recently easily done this by providing our payroll administrator with our name – Orokonui Ecosanctuary, amount of the donation, pay period, or periods, we want to donate in and Bank account or postal address details for the Ecosanctuary – National Bank 0901-0377788-00. Encourage your colleagues to do the same.
- Make regular donations by **automatic payment**. Thanks to all of you who make a regular monthly donation.
- Consider Orokonui as a recipient of a **bequest** in your will

We warmly welcome the following new members:

<p>Individual Irene Weinberger Stephanie Hicks Chris Dyson Amber Faris Lindsey Shields Alec Mitchell Jonathon Wilton Robyn Kerr David Verrall Shona Murray Sally Upsher Pauline Durning Iain Fulcher Fred Shield David Murray Anne McCarthy Angela Whitehead Paul Crabbe Vineet Rajasekhar Anthony Holcroft Julia Wilson Jenny Cooper Kimberley McDermott April Anderson MMG Jamieson Janice Oliver Bev Stacey Mrs J.M. Throp</p> <p>Life Tama Toi McNamara Alan & Lynda Jackson</p> <p>Not for Profit Port Chalmers Kindergarten</p> <p>Family Joan Campbell Jan Lee & Tom Hand Frede & Theresa Jorgensen Janet M Carrington Grant & Sue Rissman Davidson Family Wyn & David Jones Liz & David Crook Virginia Toy & Todd Marsden Clare Fitzpatrick</p>	<p>Katrina Bryant LJ Tod Chris Aubin Jason Leong Alec Mitchell Henrica & Paul Ayer Joe Skinner Mike Paulin & Helen Davies David & Tracy Shaw Jonathan Woolrych Lorna & Gary Bain Nathan Parker Graham McMillan John Adams Yvette Henry Henrica & Paul Ayer Yvette Hendry, Ian Davie and Loren Palmer Peter & Marion Strang Ken Foote Andrew & Rosemary Meek Rob & Julia Lawson Peter Sinclair Helen Bradstock Liz & Jeff Dickie Julian Field Jamin Halberstadt & Cindy Hall Clinton & Clare Miller Mark Miller Michael Pullar M & M Beagley Alison & Brian St John Napier Family Steve, Nick and Harry Macknight Bourne/Peppercorn Family Madden Family Warren & Mary Grant Brendan Forde Laurence Hay Ray & Joy Sisley Mark & Tui Bevan Chris and Glenda Burns Peter Dulgarr and Davina Thornley Suzanne Craig & John Perry Marcus Turner J & M Beard Shirley & Michael McAlevey Tom McGrath, Göknil Biner Richard & Jan Muir Heather La Dell Sales Family Jan Hamill</p>	<p>Julie Reason & Brian Rathbone Graham & Betty Riach Paul Baker Elizabeth Morahan Kate Fitzharris & Jason Ross Jo Stanton & Peder Aapslund Hebe Bosworth Jack Bosworth Mark & Pip McQuillan Mr & Mrs J Ringland-Stewart Abigail Stanley Brian & Marguerite Smith Barbara Johnston Therese Wassell Woods Chris & Laurie Lukey Honey Family Margaret Ryan Neil & Judith Stevenson Gordon & Clare Wilson John & Ann Scandrett Rhonda Robinson & Dennis Price Mr & Mrs A Wright Elizabeth Higbee Nancy & Mike Mayo Andrew Geddis Adele Woolley Graeme & Diane Glasgow Kevin Tattersall David & Jane Yates A & A Grant André Chalmers Denise & Chris Hopkins Mathew & Jane Bailey Carolyne Harvie Robyn West & Family Livingstone Family Lee & Helen Paterson</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Membership Cards

We now have membership cards available for collection at the Visitor Centre next time you visit.

Thank you to our sponsors



Marie and Graeme Bennett
Alexander McMillan Trust
Dunedin City Council
Work and Income
Caversham Foundation
Biodiversity Funds
Ministry of Education
Otago Daily Times
Otago Community Trust
Otago Regional Council

Ministry of Tourism
The Friends of NZ Trust
Pub Charity
Callis Charitable Trust
AAW Jones Charitable Trust
Pacific Development and Conservation Trust
Transpower
The Rotary Club of Dunedin
Naylor Love Ltd
Cooke Howlison
Community Conservation Fund
Hall Bros

Aotea Electric
Blackhead Quarries Ltd
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
NZ Trade and Enterprise
Dunedin Forest and Bird
WWF – New Zealand
PlaceMakers
The Royal Society of NZ
MTF
RG & B Calvert Trust
Ironmaster Trust
City Forests

Assisi Charitable Trust
Dunedin Casino Charitable Trust
Transpower Grants
Trusts Charitable Foundation
Blueskin Nurseries
Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust
Topflite
Rotary South

Friends of New Zealand Trust
Sargood Bequest
Community Organisation Grants
Scheme
NHNZ Ltd
Farra Engineering
Alan Cubbitt
Fund Managers Otago
WHK
Polson Higgs
Signal Hill Flats

Shacklock Charitable Trust
Foodstuffs Community Trust
Robert C Bruce Trust
BOC Ltd
John Swan
Mercy Hospital
Galloway Cook Allan
Amenities Society
Hope and Sons

Office contact details:

Street address: 600 Blueskin Rd, Waitati, Dunedin
Postal address: P.O. Box 6425 Dunedin
email: info@orokonui.org.nz
Telephone: (03) 482 1755
www.orokonui.org.nz

Small Changes . . . Done by Many . . . Create Big Results