

VOL. 2 ISSUE 6 · JUNE 2025

# THE LAKE NEWS

Official Newsletter of Rotokare Volunteers

## View From The Top

BY ADRIAN CLEARY GENERAL MANAGER

Kia ora koutou,

I hope this finds you all well.

I wanted to kick off by saying a huge thanks to our volunteers who assisted with kiwi season this year. We had a very successful season with 41x birds translocated to either Omoana or down to Capital Kiwi at Mākara. Even if you weren't directly involved with translocations, your contribution is essential to Rotokare and means that we have enough resources to make translocation happen. Thankyou.

This past Saturday we played host to a number of DoC staff as well as mana whenua (Mōkau ki runga) for the nationally critical Mahoenui giant wētā. The group, which included members of the Technical Advisory Group, visited the sanctuary to see whether we would be a good home for one of the world's largest insects! Many connections (and reconnections) were made, chats had, kai shared and tour of barrier-free included. It was a fantastic day and we're hopeful for a successful outcome. Thanks to Julie and Tāne for assisting us with the day.

Lastly, if you haven't seen it yet, please check the Seven Sharp page on the TVNZ website. Carolyn Robinson produced a beautiful piece on Rotokare which aired this past Tuesday – Featuring veteran volly Ray Lawrence!

Thanks all, your continued contributions and support are not taken for granted.

Noho ora mai.

Adrian

## This issue:

View from the Top.  
PAGE 1

Last month at a glance.  
Test your Rotokare  
knowledge.  
PAGE 2

Volunteer News.  
Volunteer Of The Month.  
PAGE 3

Looking Ahead.  
Task List.  
Knowledge Answers  
Contact.  
PAGE 4





## Last month at a glance

The first Full Sanctuary Tracking card run for the year was carried out during the month. We had a great turnout of volunteers both Sundays to get cards placed and then recovered. No predators were detected which is tremendous news after 6 mice have been caught inside the sanctuary over the past couple of months. It is now hoped that the audit by the rodent detection dog in early June will confirm the pest free status of the sanctuary.

The Kiwi translocations out of the sanctuary for this year have now been completed with 41 birds being moved to new homes. This year kiwi have gone to the Totara Block and Omoana in Taranaki and to Makara near Wellington. Many volunteer hours go into this huge exercise.

The Rotokare classroom is looking resplendent with its new coat of paint. Another huge effort by a dedicated team of volunteers especially Jenny Kerrisk who spent many hours sanding and painting.

The new Rotokare Information Centre is now starting to take shape with builders on site most days. This will be a huge asset to the sanctuary when finished and will be able to provide much more in depth information to visitors, telling the stories about Rotokare and all that thrive here.

After what seems like an extended period of water woes due to the extremely dry summer/autumn period the recent rains have now restored the water supply to the public toilets. Plans are now in place to install water tanks at the toilets to hopefully alleviate this problem from occurring again.

Another Pateke release occurred during May, with a further 20 birds being added to Rotokare's population.

World Biodiversity Day was celebrated at Rotokare with the Taranaki Regional Council hosting approximately 140 children from around the province.

**“Optimism is  
the faith that  
leads to  
achievement.  
Nothing can be  
done without  
hope and  
confidence.”**

HELEN KELLER

## Test Your Rotokare Knowledge

1. How many lizard species are known to exist in New Zealand?

- a. 46.
- b. 66.
- c. 126.

2. How many of the above are been confirmed residents of the Rotokare Scenic reserve?

- a. 3.
- b. 5.
- c. 7.

3. Which group of lizards is identified by having scaly skin, stout legs and large eyes that cannot blink?

- a. Geckos.
- b. Skinks.







## Volunteer News

Although there have been a number of inquiries regarding volunteering at Rotokare we have had no new volunteers join our team this past month.

Recorded volunteer hours contributed to Rotokare for the period January to March, Q3, was 1603 hrs this year, compared to 1519 hrs last year.

A huge thanks go out to those volunteers who contributed to the three major projects this past month, kiwi tracking and catching for translocation, the full sanctuary tracking card run and completing the painting of the classroom. Not to be forgotten though are all of the other volunteers who have helped to maintain the normal activities that keep the sanctuary running. Top job everyone.

We are on the lookout for volunteers who are prepared to be champions for several ongoing projects for Rotokare.

Wetland board walk engraving

Bush classroom cleaning.

Fence platform weed spraying.

Contact Kane or Ross for further information.

## Volunteer of the Month

### Andrea Shepherd

In 2016 I moved to Taranaki and at an "Arts in the Park" event, chatted to some Rotokare people at their promotion stall. As a trumper and passionate about learning our native birds, it felt like this could be the volunteer opportunity I was looking for. After hearing nothing back for a week, I rang the reserve and chatted to Simon who arranged for Jenny Kerrisk to pick me up for next fence check day. It was a typical wet day with continuous heavy rain...I got soaked, and I fell in love with Rotokare.

Soon I was coming 2 days a week, then 4, doing traplines, fence checks, tracking tunnel cards (the gnarly west lines were my favs) and learning bird survey work from Jenny. My favourite task quickly became line clearing - spending 6-7 hours alone clearing tracks and encountering bird life.

Not owning a car at that time, I was really grateful to Jenny for providing transport. Litchy and Jenny showed me heaps of patience as I learnt new skills and got over my fear of setting doc traps.

Soon came more amazing opportunities, Tiritiri Matangi for hibi translocation, Pureora for toutouwai, and night kiwi surveys all over Taranaki back country. Plus learning to track and catch kiwi. (Simon helped me overcome my terror of catching a kiwi!).

I've loved watching the birdlife explode. In my first year or two, Litchy, Jenny and I would get really excited to find one toutouwai a week,...so much so that we had their known territories marked on our site maps!

Nowadays I am still enjoying being useful 2-3 days a week at Rotokare where the team have become my Taranaki whānau and my best friends.

Photo is of me in my favorite place to unwind ...the moss slopes of the Maunga.

I nominate Helen Cooper for the next Volunteer of the Month.





# Looking Ahead

Monday June 2<sup>nd</sup>

Kings Birthday holiday

Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup> 9.00am

June Working Bee - Office and operations area surrounds cleanup.

July

High Risk Tracking Card Run

Sunday August 31<sup>st</sup>

August Working Bee - details TBC

September

Hihi Pre Breeding Survey

October

Full Sanctuary Tracking Card Run



## Task List

- Regular tidying of the Bush Classroom.
- Name engraving on wetlands boardwalk.
- Clearing of sanctuary access lines.
- Vegetation clearing of fence platform.
- Spraying of grass and weeds on fence platform.
- Finish installation of screws in fence.
- Regular assistance with tracking card run organisation and card reading.
- Regular Wednesday assistance with fence and trap checks.

Assistance with these tasks would be appreciated.

If you are interested in helping please contact Kane, Fiona or Ross

## Knowledge Answers

1. (c) 126    2. (b) 5    3. (a) Geckos

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