

WRPS NEWS



Issue 184

Newsletter of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

February 2020

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc. is a registered charitable entity in terms of the Charities Act 2005. Registration No. CC46103

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Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

***Please join us at our
Annual General Meeting***

7 pm, Monday 30 March 2020
Arataki Visitors Centre, Scenic Drive, Titirangi

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Announcements
3. Apologies
4. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM 2019 and Matters arising
5. Annual Report
6. Financial Report
7. Election of Officers
8. General Business

Address

The speakers this year will be Environmental Defence Society Executive Director Gary Taylor and Policy Director Raewyn Peart. Raewyn will talk about EDS's Protected Landscapes Project with special reference to the Waitakere Ranges. WRPS was pleased to contribute funds to this review and we look forward to hearing how the project is proceeding. Gary will traverse wider topics including a number of emerging environmental reforms and will critique expected election issues.

Please join us for this very special occasion.

Supper will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Edgar".

John Edgar ONZM, President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As large parts of the North Island go into severe drought conditions, I have been told by the Karekare Fire Chief that the ranges are as dry as he has seen them in many years. In January I recorded 11 mm of rainfall, and to date (21 February) no rain at all. The fire danger in the forest is extreme.

I can now report on the Society's Environment Court case regarding Prohibited Activity Status in the Waitakere Ranges. After two years of mediation in the Court, all three appellants withdrew their appeals. The matter now goes back to the original High Court decision that Prohibited Activity Status be reinstated. This has been a long case, and I would like to thank our counsel, Douglas Allan, for his help to see this very important case resolved.

You will have read on the front page of this newsletter that our Annual General Meeting will be held on the 30th March. The speakers this year will be Environmental Defence Society Executive Director Gary Taylor and Policy Director Raewyn Peart. Their subject will be a review of Protected Landscapes of New Zealand with special reference to the Waitakere Ranges. WRPS were pleased to contribute funds to this review and we look forward to hearing how the project is proceeding.

Thanks to our Vice President Anna Fomison, our Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act history book is now progressing well. Anna has located the historic images for the first three chapters and those chapters will be sent to the publisher and book designer very soon.

Our new website will be active in March. Thanks to our website designer all our website has been migrated to a new platform and as the designer lives in West Auckland we will have much better access to his expert IT skills.

Hearings for the proposed new Huia Water Treatment Plant begin in March and the Society will be represented by Douglas Allan and myself, with expert evidence from ecologist Shona Myers and Kauri dieback expert Dr Nick Waipara.

The Society is always keen to find new committee members. We have operated for the last year without a secretary and this has put quite an extra

workload on me and our treasurer Sandra Jones. If anyone would like to find out more about the Society, please call me on 8187447.

Thanks to all members who have paid their annual subscriptions and in many cases a donation as well. Your support is much appreciated.

John Edgar ONZM
President

HERITAGE AREA COORDINATOR

REPORT

Since the last newsletter the submissions WRPS has focused on are the recent proposal to increase the landfill levy, and a draft National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.

Reducing waste: a more effective landfill levy

This is a proposal to both increase the amount of the levy, and to expand its application. In Auckland there are over 80 historic landfills, and many in the Waitakere Ranges. In this submission we urged that information on the monitoring and maintenance of historic (or 'closed') landfills be public information and easily accessible. In general we wrote in support of the landfill levy being raised and having a broader application, as anything to help reduce future waste is an important measure. We also highlighted the importance of investment into further initiatives and infrastructure to ensure that alternatives to landfill use becomes a more accessible and affordable option.

Draft National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

This National Policy Statement proposes to support clarity and direction around management of biodiversity under the Resource Management Act. In 2014 there were 71 identified rare ecosystems, 45 of them threatened with collapse. 4000 of NZ native species have been identified as threatened with or at-risk of extinction. WRPS is currently working on a strong submission as this National Policy Statement will be a significant tool in maintaining and improving the health of our indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems.

Eva Wrassky-Bulmer
Heritage Area Coordinator

KAKA IN THE VALLEY

Over the past few months, residents of Karekare have reported sighting of kākā in the valley and up on Farm Rd. Normally heard before they are seen, this large forest dwelling parrot has a very recognizable call. Whilst flying above the forest canopy, they can be heard making a harsh, repeated, rhythmic “ka-aa” sounds, and harsh grating “kraak” alarm call when disturbed.

Kākā are often mistaken for the kea, which are only found in the South Island. Kea are larger and more olive colouring, whereas kākā have a grey-white crown, bright red-orange underwing and deep crimson belly and under-tail feathers. Males have a noticeably longer and deeper upper mandible and bigger head than females, which is apparent when the two are seen side by side.

Kākā eat fruits, berries, seeds, flowers, buds, nectar, sap, plants and invertebrates. It uses its beak to shred the cones of the kauri tree to obtain the seeds and has a brush tongue with which it feeds on nectar.

Kākā require large tracts of forest to survive. With the huge amount of deforestation in Aotearoa, combined with the threat of introduced predators, the kākā, like so many other species, has struggled to survive. Possums also eat the same kind of food as kākā, most significantly, high energy food types such as endemic mistletoe and rātā. Other introduced pests such as deer and pigs also significantly reduce their food sources.

Kākā make their nests in hollow trees, laying 2 to 4 eggs in late winter. Both parents assist in raising their chicks, and in a good year may use the same nest hole for a second clutch. It is unusual for a pair to raise more than three chicks in a clutch. Kākā have a long incubation period, requiring the mother to stay on the nest for at least 90 days, leaving them particularly vulnerable to predation. Stoats and possums prey on nesting adult females, eggs and chicks. There is strong evidence that predation of chicks and females has led to a serious age and sex imbalance, affecting the population, which is thought to be less than 10,000.



So, it's very exciting news to see a few of these cheeky guys return to the west. Hopefully the numbers will increase! If you want to do your bit to help, as with all of our native bird life – trapping and pest control is the way to go.

Mandy Patmore

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Subscription renewal notices for the period 1 Feb 2020 to 31 Jan 2021 were sent to all members in early February. If you haven't renewed your subscription yet, we urge you to do so as soon as possible. If you aren't sure, feel free to email me or phone me to check. I'd rather that you did that than pay twice. If you've lost/misaid your invoice, we'd be pleased to send you another.

If you have previously paid by cheque and you aren't sure what to do about paying your subscription now that our bank is no longer accepting cheques after the end of this month (February), please give me a call to discuss options.

Sandra Jones, Treasurer
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YOUR COMMITTEE

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Committee meetings are held monthly, from February to November, on the second Wednesday of the month.