

HAUTURU

LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND SUPPORTERS TRUST

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NEWSLETTER
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FROM THE CHAIR

Hauturu, “the resting place of the winds” seems an appropriate name for the island as I write this. An autumnal gale blows outside, and summer seems a long time ago. Back in January we were able to hold a day trip to Hauturu for the Trust’s major funders which had been cancelled in November. We shared with the group some of the results of their funding: a side trip in the launch to see cliffs now clear of pampas and climbing asparagus thanks to Auckland Zoo, Nufarm, Chisholm Whitney Family Charitable Trust, Foundation North and the DOC Community Conservation Fund.

In addition there was an opportunity to ‘track’ the ranger’s daughter, Mahina, and her friend with the new telemetry gear for tracking the island’s birds that was bought with funds from Chisholm Whitney Family Charitable Trust. We were able to take everyone on a bush walk through the island’s lush forest, during which we were serenaded by continuous birdsong. A magical day was had by all. ►

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Funders stop for lunch under rata tree on the Thumb Track

► Filming for the Trust's video about the island, generously funded by the Becroft Foundation, began in February (for more on this turn to page 4). We hope to make this video widely available to schools, groups, zoos, museums etc. The cameraman, Bill Morris, who is himself a film producer, musician and writer, has been contracted by NHNZ to obtain the footage for the video, and it's spectacular.

It is with sadness that we farewell long-time trustee Geoff Drew. Geoff had just stepped down after 18 years as the Trust's financial officer/accountant and was planning to stay on as a trustee when he broke his leg in January. With retirement and travel beckoning he decided it was time to retire from the Trust. Geoff has covered many miles over the years, travelling up from Hamilton every six weeks or so for Trust meetings. He has a special family connection to the island; his brother is remembered by the John Drew Memorial Track that follows the Tirikakawa Stream.

In 2016 the Trust will hold its fiftieth working weekend. Through these weekends, if my maths is correct, we have given around 450 people the opportunity to experience the magic that is Hauturu. The fiftieth weekend is going to be a special one for the trustees: we plan to hold our August meeting on the island, plus do all the things one does on a working weekend – jobs for the rangers, night walks and bush walks, although probably not swimming!

To close I would just like to thank all our supporters: those who come on our working weekends and then share their magical experience with others, those who make donations small and large (every bit helps), those who subscribe to our newsletter, the trusts and funders who have provided large sums or donated goods for projects over the years, the DOC rangers on the island for their warm welcomes, and DOC staff in Warkworth, particularly, for their support of the Trust.

Lyn Wade – Chair



Tim Gaffney, chair of the Chisholm Whitney Family Charitable Trust, with telemetry gear funded by his trust



Funders on board Sumo for their January visit



The phenomenal weed team

RANGER'S REPORT

One of the great things about working and living on Hauturu is the variety of work and the people we meet. To put this report together I go back through my diary and have great fun reminiscing about the past few months.

WEED SEASON

Wow! Did we have a great weed team this year! On paper they looked good but in reality they were phenomenal. If you were a weed on Hauturu last season you were in big trouble. I had also learnt a lot from the previous season, and from day one we adopted a 'no-tolerance' policy, NYC style!

The hours spent searching were up, which partly reflects the weather but also the valuable input from the dedicated volunteers teams and also my wife Cathy during the season. The statistics for weeds controlled speak for themselves; these guys have really set the benchmark for future years. Of course these results are also in part due to the funding assistance we received from the Trust, which allowed the team to spend more time focusing on pampas and other weeds. ►



Biz Bell and a slightly vexed black petrel

► Ground Team results 2011–2015

Year	Hours searched	Asparagus	Pampas	Other	Total weeds controlled
2011	1209	198	0	189	387
2012	1782	150	0	93	243
2013	1783	175	20	47	242
2014	1561	192	880	756	1828
2015	1844	293	6641	5100	12034

The abseil team guys work incredibly hard and spent 14 days searching the south-west cliffs near Base and at Orau Gorge. They completed all planned work, and the number of climbing asparagus found continues to decline. A total of four plants was found on the south-west cliffs and 83 at Orau Gorge; only 11 of these were adults. The abseil team also controlled 254 pampas plants while working the established drops.

Helicopter pampas spraying on the coastal cliffs began in November, with the Trust making a very significant contribution of just over \$95,000 towards flying hours. The pampas programme was reviewed in 2014, and with the assistance of the Trust we have been able to make significant progress toward controlling this highly invasive pest plant species. Prior to 2014 typically half of the coastal margin was controlled each season. In 2015/16 we had enough resources to control pampas around the entire coast line and also made significant progress on the known inland slip and bluff areas. This means we are well on our way to the goal of controlling the entire island each season to break the seed cycle and thereby dramatically reduce re-infestation in subsequent years. Skyworks developed a new lance for us this season, and it was great to see this in action tackling those hard-to-reach plants tight on the cliffs and under large trees.

VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS AND RESEARCH TEAMS

Following a nice Christmas break to recharge the batteries, we were straight back into it with visitors, volunteers and researchers coming thick and fast. Some of the highlights:

- **Black Petrel:** Biz Bell and her team visited several times this year to complete the second year of the five-year study. She has located almost all of Mike Imber's old study burrows, and is trying to compare breeding success and population density between here and Great Barrier. The Cooks petrels had a phenomenal season and it will be interesting to see how they impact on the black petrels over time.
- **Volunteers** included a very dedicated team who painted the bunk house and repaired the decking/boardwalks there. The Trust volunteers have also been over to assist in the tuarium and helped Richard to retrieve kakapo monitoring gear from Track 20.
- **Film crews** for a major Pacific Island documentary and also for the Trust's own short film were here for two weeks, enthusiastically guided by Lyn Wade and David Stone. Two weeks' filming equals just minutes of finished product; lots of patience required!
- **New Zealand Storm Petrel:** Capture, band, measure and release continued on the flats this summer using a large, generator-

powered spotlight. Great fun, but overall Chris and his team are finding the little birds very elusive when it comes to revealing their nest sites and breeding biology.

- **Cooks Petrels:** This translocation to Boundary Stream runs like clockwork with a very experienced team. Cathy and I were both able to assist again this year, me up the hill for the collection at Orau and Cathy down to Hawkes Bay running the feeding programme. 106 Cooks petrels were moved from Hauturu and 105 successfully fledged; a very good result.
- **Kakapo** breeding season is always busy and this year was no exception. A very big thank you to the volunteers from Auckland Zoo and to Lesley Baigent, who helped with nest monitoring and generally lugging monitoring gear up the hill. Nationally kakapo has had a fantastic breeding season, with the adult population of 123 being boosted this year by an incredible 36 chicks. On Hauturu we had two nests but were unable to contribute any chicks this year. Lisa laid two eggs but both of these were infertile and Heather had one fertile egg which failed at hatch. A team which included Richard, Leigh and Cathy have just completed the transmitter changes and health checks for the year, with Lesley, keen as ever, back to help out.
- **Wetapunga** were the target for a team from Auckland Zoo looking to translocate 12 specimens for their captive management programme. This programme has been very successful at breeding wetapunga for translocation to other Hauraki Gulf islands, with the aim of providing long-term security for the species. They were collecting the 12 individuals to help prevent genetic bottleneck in the captive population.

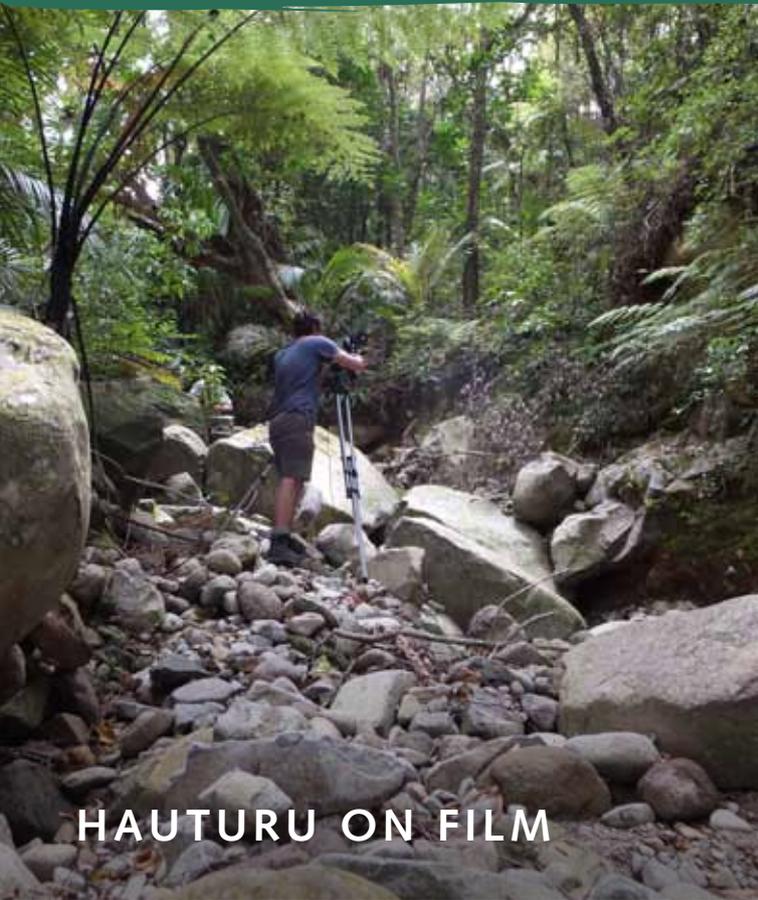
BIOSECURITY:

We conducted our Argentine ant monitoring again this year, targeting all the buildings and west landing. Chris Green (DOC Auckland technical advisor) checked the samples for us and we detected five species but fortunately no Argentine or Darwin ants were present.

Miriam Ritchie (DOC ranger, Whangarei) and her rodent dog Will spent nine days searching the island in late March. They covered the entire coastline, up over the main ridge, around Pohutukawa Flat and all the visitor tracks! Thanks Miri, that was a mammoth effort and lucky for us they found no sign of rodents. We actively maintain the sentry station network but it is reassuring to have these annual dog audits.

As always, Richard and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Trust and its supporters for your incredible, unwavering support.

Pete Mitchell – Hauturu Ranger



HAUTURU ON FILM

Little Barrier Island/Hauturu floats almost mysteriously on the horizon east of Auckland and on the edge of the inner Hauraki Gulf. So near but so far. Restricted access and the difficult and a sometimes dangerous landing experience mean few people know first-hand the story of New Zealand's first nature reserve.

Often a cloud sits over the summit like a crown, giving a majestic appearance and accounting for the loose translation of Hauturu as "the place where the wind rests". In fact that cloud is a swirling eerie mist that nurtures a unique primeval forest of native plants and giant trees.

Keen to explain the unique story of Hauturu, considered by many to be New Zealand's Ark, and give a virtual experience of the island to the widest audience, the Little Barrier Island Supporters Trust decided to make a short film about the island, its beautiful but forbidding landscape, and its flora and fauna featuring in particular the abundant birdlife and their sounds.

Left: Bill in action in the Tirikakawa stream bed

With funding provided by the Becroft Foundation, the Trust engaged Natural History New Zealand to make an 8 to 12-minute, high-definition video to tell the story of Hauturu. As well as being an informative and entertaining production intended to showcase the special features and values of the island and the conservation work undertaken there, it will be used by the Trust as a tool for fund-raising, education and advocacy and to promote awareness of the island both nationally and internationally as New Zealand's most intact ecosystem.

Filming began in February this year. Cameraman Bill Morris was escorted by trustees Lyn Wade and David Stone to sites in and around the island including a traverse with Leigh Joyce, kakapo expert and wife of ranger Richard Walle. A further shoot will occur in early December to capture the breeding events of the huge variety of birds that make the island 'home' and the flowering of many of the plants, all in a pest-free environment. Additional filming, including tuatara, skinks and wetapunga, will complement the images and film already recorded.

Editing and post-production are scheduled for early 2017 with patron of the Trust, Ruud Kleinpaste, providing the narrative. Versions in other languages such as Maori and Mandarin may be produced to engage with the most number of people and 'new' New Zealanders. A premiere showing could be as early as March 2017, and then the video will be made available free to all via the Trust's website and the internet.

Recognised by many as the jewel in the crown of New Zealand conservation, Little Barrier Island must remain protected; that is a motivation for the video. And by telling its story, it is hoped that others will be inspired to continue and start new conservation initiatives throughout New Zealand.

The video should also engender pride in what has been achieved by the Department of Conservation, island rangers, volunteers and the supporters of the Trust, who together work to protect, preserve and enhance the unique, diverse and endangered species that are the flora and fauna of one, if not the greatest, natural treasures of New Zealand.

David Stone – Trustee

HAUTURU IS A MOUSE-CLICK AWAY

Just a reminder, if you haven't already, to check out our new website. When you first click on it there is the most glorious sound of bird song, recorded on Hauturu, and a rotation of beautiful images of the island.

You can find it on www.littlebarrierisland.org.nz. We're on Facebook too: look for Little Barrier Island – Hauturu Supporters Trust. Thanks to trustee Mary Binney, our secretary Sandra Jones, and Tony Lindsay of Vega for their great work on it.





THE SECRET LIVES OF BATS

My name is Zenon Czenze, and I'm a PhD student at the University of Auckland. Pete has asked me to write you all an overview of the research that I'm conducting here on Hauturu. My research focuses on the New Zealand lesser short-tailed bat, one of only two native land mammals in New Zealand. My project examines how diet and body temperature change seasonally and differ between bat populations from the South and North Island.

Basically, my questions are: What are the bats eating in summer and winter? How does the bats' diet affect their body temperatures? And are there differences between bats in the warmer North Island compared to the colder South Island?

To answer these questions I have to catch the bats, and I do this using harp traps which I put in areas where bats commute during night-time. The bats hit a layer of fine fishing line and fall into a large bag. Once captured, I place them into a small cloth bag until they poop. I collect the faecal sample, which will be sent to England and analysed using DNA techniques. By analysing the DNA in the sample we can tell exactly what insects the bats are eating: moths, beetles, flies etc.

Some bats are outfitted with a special temperature-sensitive radio transmitter, which is glued between the bat's shoulders and allows me to track a bat to its roost every morning. Every day I track the bat to its new day roost and set up my recording equipment, which records the information sent by the radio transmitter, allowing me to see how the bat's body temperature changes while it is resting. Currently, to conserve energy, the island bats are reducing their day-time temperatures down to a minimum of 7.8 degrees Celsius; this is very cold for a mammal and is called 'being in torpor'.



Clockwise from top left: Zen Czenze tracking bats in the Pureora forest, a harp trap, a bat's remarkable wings

Over the past two years, I have looked at bat populations from Pureora in the North Island to the Eglinton Valley in Fiordland in the South Island. It seems that weather, and especially temperature, have a big impact on both diet and body temperature, with bats in the South behaving differently than bats in the North.

By understanding how populations respond to environmental conditions we can better predict how populations may react to climate change. This will give us critical conservation knowledge and allow managers to better protect and allocate resources to conserving New Zealand's vulnerable bat species.

Zenon Czenze



WORKING WEEKEND MAGIC

Sarah Mason writes about a memorable April visit to the island.

I had a dream to one day return to Little Barrier. Years ago, my family visited the Blanshard family, who were the resident rangers at the time. On that day the mooring conditions were perfect for Dad's launch. Our family of six piled into the dinghy and negotiated the boulder landing; no quarantine then, or fancy ramps to transport the arrival craft over the boulders. The Blanshard children were experts at running over the boulders. We city kids had a lot to learn!

The island left a huge impression on me. Now, 50 years later, I had an opportunity to go back to the island on a working weekend with other like-minded enthusiasts. I noticed many changes: the very strict quarantine, excellent landing systems and the development of infrastructure to support what is now a very focused operation to care for Hauturu.

Even though we knew we were going to be in for something special, everyone was immediately awed by the magnificence of the trees and the chorus of many birds. The island rangers were very welcoming and outlined the first day's tasks: weeding the tuatarium or cutting back the tracks. I opted for track cutting, which meant I could explore the island at the same time.

When our afternoon's work was completed a few of us went for a swim in the crystal-clear water, hardly needing a mask to see the snapper and curious moki. In the evening, we had a shared meal and I discovered that the barbecue area was where the living room of the Blanshard house had once been. A few brave souls went for a night walk to spot kiwi, but the heavens opened and sensibly the kiwis remained in their nests.

On Sunday morning we awoke to the most amazing dawn chorus: the mournful cry of the kokako, busy saddlebacks, robins, bellbirds, tuis, stitchbird, the penetrating call of the kaka and more... just fabulous.

Sunday's task was to retrieve the camp and electronic observing equipment used by the experts who had been monitoring a female kakapo and her nest. After a two-hour climb, boulder-

Above: The April group bound for Track 20

Below: The April working-weekenders. Back row: Alicia Warren, Peter Lupi, Richard Challis, Petra Neunz, Michael and Sarah Mason. Front row: Lyn Wade, Anko Hanse, Annalily van den Broeke and Marjolijn Vos

walking, stream crossings and scrambling over rough tracks not used normally by volunteers we arrived at a remote camp concealed in the dense bush. It was challenging to say the least, but extremely rewarding; we all felt that we had been useful by carrying out the equipment that had made up the hi-tech observation post. Again we were privileged to hear incredible bird song, spend time in stunning bush and see tuatara in their natural habitat.

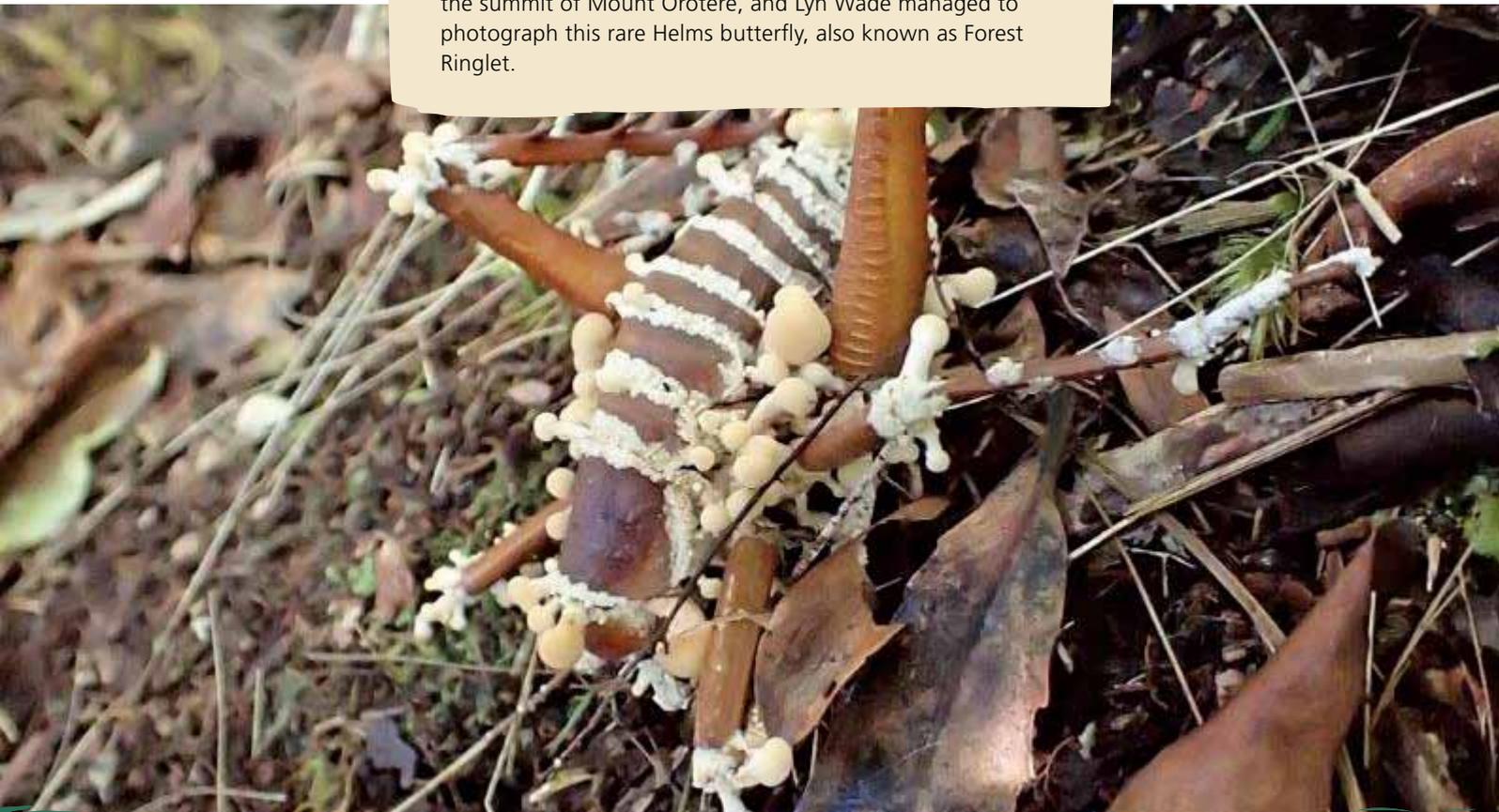
Our time on Hauturu came to an end quickly. New friendships had formed, knowledge had been enriched, and we all felt tremendously satisfied that we had been part of the dynamic Little Barrier team for 24 hours. I have huge admiration for the work that the rangers and their wives, DOC, supporting experts and the Hauturu Little Barrier Island Supporters Trust do to ensure that Hauturu is kept a perfect place for our native birds, flora and fauna. This is truly a treasure for New Zealand. Thank you, Lyn Wade, for making this weekend enlightening and memorable.





SPOTTED ON HAUTURU

February was a big month for rare finds on Hauturu. While accompanying NHNZ's Bill Morris over the Summit Track, Trustee chair Lyn Wade spotted a small number of the rare blue fungi, *Entoloma hochstetteri*. This beautiful fungi features on our \$50 note. Trustee David Stone came upon this dead wetapunga, its decomposing body covered in fungus, at 600m close to the summit of Mount Orotere, and Lyn Wade managed to photograph this rare Helms butterfly, also known as Forest Ringlet.



NEW HAUTURU EDITOR NEEDED

Have you some extra time to share news of the island with our wide support base by editing our twice-yearly newsletter, *Hauturu*? Our editor needs to claim back some time due to workload. It's not an onerous task, and we'd support you as you learn the ropes. Ideally you will have some journalism or communications or other newsletter experience and a good proof-reading eye. If this sounds like you please email our secretary, Sandra Jones, info@littlebarrierisland.org.nz

THINKING OF A BEQUEST TO HAUTURU?

The Trust has recently developed a robust process for acknowledging bequests made to it by people for whom *Hauturu* was important. Such bequests are hugely important to our work on the island and can play a key part in determining whether a research or conservation project will go ahead. When budgets are tight, an extra \$3000 to \$10,000 can make a real difference, and that has certainly been the case over the years.

If you would like to find out more about leaving funds to the island in your will, please contact our secretary at info@littlebarrierisland.org.nz



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Editor: Nicola Legat

Logo and newsletter design: Danielle McBride

WORKING WEEKENDS SPRING/SUMMER 2016

Two working weekends are planned for spring 2016.

The target dates (weather permitting) are:

November 19/20 (back-up dates November 26/27)

December 10/11 (back-up dates December 17/18)

All participants need to be reasonably fit and agile and prepared to cope, if necessary, with a wet and difficult landing over large and slippery boulders. We will do a variety of jobs for the rangers, plus there will be time for walking, bird-watching and botanising.

For further details and to register your interest in either of these weekends, please ring Sandra Jones, ph 09 817 2788, or email info@littlebarrierisland.org.nz

The closing date for enquiries is Friday 30 September 2016

The Trust apologises to those whose applications weren't processed by the website in time for the autumn working weekends. Please try again.

Little Barrier Island/Hauturu Supporters Trust

The Trust was established in 1997 to help support conservation and research activities on Te Hauturu-o-Toi / Little Barrier Island. Supporters of the Trust receive *Hauturu*, the Trust's twice-yearly newsletter, by paying an annual subscription. The newsletter brings you up-to-date news from and about the island. Copies of past issues are available on request. Donations are also welcome. All donations are directed towards activities that are of benefit to *Hauturu*. To become a supporter, make a donation or offer help in some other way, please contact the Trust secretary Sandra Jones, phone: 09 817 2788.

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THE TRUST

Patron: Ruud Kleinpaste

Trustees: Lyn Wade (Chair), Evan Hamlet, Ray Stone, Dr Matt Rayner, Mary Binney, Nicola Legat, David Stone, Rodger Murphy, John Clark

Scientific Advisors: Sandra Anderson (UoA), Assoc Prof Jacqueline Beggs (UoA), Ewen Cameron (Auckland Museum), Dr Nicola Nelson (VUW), Dr Kevin Parker, Dr James Russell (UoA), David Seldon (UoA)

The Little Barrier Island (Hauturu) Supporters Trust is a registered charitable trust CC24983