

Open Space

CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE

*Everyday people, doing
extraordinary things*



QEII NATIONAL TRUST

Ngā Kairauhi Papa Forever protected

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The Stephenson
Fund in action

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Translocation
success in
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Our new pest
control series

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COVER: North Island Kōkako. Photo credit: Neil Robert Hutton

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A word from the Chair

As this was to be my final report as I complete nine years as chair of the QEII National Trust, I had intended to reflect on the changes and achievements of the past and some of the opportunities and challenges of the future.

However, I find myself writing this in the surreal world of the national lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and it seems unrealistic to trot out facts and figures and not to comment on the bizarre circumstances of this experience. Hopefully, by the time you read this we will have moved on to a more normal state of existence, but there will still be much to reflect on.

Because of where I live and because farming is deemed an essential industry, I enjoyed a privileged lockdown in a 'farm sized bubble' with my family, including seven grandchildren. In many ways it has been business as usual here, although much of that business, particularly our tourism enterprise, has been severely affected. That is compensated by a much clearer focus on the truly important things in life – health, family, friendships and the wonderful natural environment we live in.

I am very proud of the way QEII managed social isolation and working from home. Our senior leadership team have got on with the job and QEII has kept running at a high standard while keeping the wellbeing of staff, regional representatives and covenantors at front of mind.

As a nation, we have responded well to Government directives and have shared a collective responsibility to help minimise the suffering and bring this virus under control within our borders. Regardless of the success of these actions, many New Zealand businesses and employees will be facing huge uncertainties and hardship as we transition to a new future. As someone once said, 'it is dangerous to make predictions – especially about the future', but we can be certain that the post-Covid-19 world will not be the same as it was before the pandemic.

So, where does that leave the QEII National Trust when we are once again 'allowed out to play'? One of my favourite quotes is 'that fortune favours the prepared mind' and, in that regard, we are lucky that QEII has been preparing a new strategic plan for the last six months. New CEO Dan Coup has made this his top priority, and while there will obviously be adjustments to be made to reflect the new national order post-Covid-19, we do have a well-researched and comprehensive blueprint to start with. I have total confidence that as an organisation, QEII will use this experience to strengthen and future-proof itself and continue to lead the way in private land conservation.

At the end of June, I will have completed the maximum three terms and will be due to finish my term as a director. Several of my fellow board members – Gina Solomon, Sue Yerex and Bruce Wills – are also completing their current terms and may or may not be reappointed to the board. While I think there is a strong case for continuity at this time, should we all depart, we will do so knowing that the Trust is in great heart and with the satisfaction that we played a part in bringing this about.

It remains for me to thank all those people who I have had the pleasure of working with since July 2011. Whether around the board table with my fellow directors, at head office in Wellington with the CEO and QEII staff, in the field with regional representatives or throughout the country with our covenantors, I have thoroughly enjoyed the great fellowship of the QEII whānau.

He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.

James Guild
Chair

A man wearing a blue beanie, a dark vest over a long-sleeved shirt, and khaki shorts stands in a forest with his hands on his hips. The forest has many tall, thin trees and green undergrowth.

BUSH COVENANT A KELLY FAMILY LEGACY

"I like the idea of it being looked after and no one coming in and knocking it down. I couldn't bear the thought of that."

Michael Kelly

In February 1912 Michael Kelly's great-grandfather loaded the family possessions on a horse-drawn cart and with his wife and young children, 600 sheep and 20 cattle, walked for three days to a bush block west of Dannevirke. Once in Rua Roa, John Kelly set about clearing the bush to establish a farm that was eventually passed in turn to his son and his grandson, both also named John Kelly.

Now none of Michael's generation of the family is actively involved in farming the land and it is expected to be sold in the next few years, but Michael is hoping the creation of a 4.3 ha QEII covenant over a block of remnant bush on the farm will ensure the family's links to the land endure.

"I'm not just about the environmental conservation, which is important, but it's also a legacy for my family. We are the only family that has ever farmed that land and it's never been on the market before," Michael says.

The 333-acre (135 ha) farm at Rua Roa is currently being leased out but when the lease expires in a couple of years, it will likely be sold and the proceeds divided between Michael and his sisters. He hopes the new owner will later allow him to bring his children and descendants to the bush block, which he is very attached to.

"When I was growing up, I didn't have any brothers and I would go over there with my dog just about any spare time I could get. I know it like the back of my hand. I know that stream, I caught eels and freshwater crays in there and I used to trap possums in the bush."

"I like the idea of it being looked after and no one coming in and knocking it down. I couldn't bear the thought of that."

"I'm honouring my great-grandfather and my grandfather in all of this, they didn't knock it all down. They left that bush on purpose, my father left it too. I want to look after it now."

Michael is the family historian and has unearthed information about his forebears, stretching back to when his great-grandfather left Ireland as an 18-year-old with a few pounds in his pocket. John Kelly first went gum digging with his Uncle Paddy, who preceded him to New Zealand, and the pair made enough money for a deposit on a farm near Makuri in the Tararua District. This was later sold and John succeeded in a land ballot to buy two superior blocks totalling 241 acres at Rua Roa.

Now a dairy run-off block, the farm grew over the years, reaching around 720 acres under Michael's father. Michael left the farm for Auckland with his young family in 1995 and now lives in Napier. Over the years as his parents aged, parts of the farm were sold off until reaching its current size.

Generations of Kelly sons were named John from Michael's great-great grandfather to his father. His mother ended the tradition, telling her husband she refused to live on the farm with three John Kellys and that their son would be named Michael John.

The covenanted block is mainly covered in tōtara and kānuka, with a creek running through it and some wet areas with seepages. The current tenant fenced off the bush block about six years ago and there is already good regrowth taking place. The regional council has done a good job of controlling possums in the area and deer and other browsing pests are not a problem.

The covenant was registered last year and QEII has provided a \$2,000 establishment grant. This will go towards the \$3,000 being spent by Kelly this winter on a shelter belt along the western edge of the block. Strong westerly winds off the Ruahines have made it difficult for new growth to become established under the canopy at that end and the reduction of wind flow provided by the shelter belt will help encourage natural regeneration.

"I'm honouring my great grandfather and my grandfather in all of this, they didn't knock it all down. They left that bush on purpose, my father left it too. I want to look after it now."

Michael Kelly

"There are strong winds there. Growing up there, I've been blown off my motorbike, we've had hay bales rolling across the paddocks, and a barn blown off a block into the bottom end of our farm. Getting the extra bit of shelter on the western end of that block is going to be gold," Michael says.

Regional rep for the Tararua district Bill Wallace says the block is in good condition. He says much of it is advanced secondary forest with some older trees through it. He said the block is virtually weed-free and the absence of browsers and the fencing has prompted strong regeneration.

"There are no browsers, so you're getting a fantastic regeneration underneath the canopy, and quite a diverse range of species coming up," says Bill.

Michael says he plans to put up a big totara slab at the edge of the covenanted block engraved with the words Kelly's Black Creek Bush. "Anyone going to visit will be able to see the name on it and our family's connection with that land. After the land is sold, hopefully we will be able to go back with the kids and have a look at the bush, go back to where the family started."



What is the QEII establishment fund?

In addition to surveying costs and contributing towards fencing, QEII provides funding when approving new voluntary covenants and kawenata with the QEII establishment fund. The funding is given to support work that will enhance protected values, such as indigenous flora and fauna. Funding is usually used for weed and pest control, eco-sourced native plants for revegetation, or expert advice.

Establishment funding is a single grant of \$500, \$2,000 or \$5,000. The amount depends on the values being protected. When a new covenant is proposed, we evaluate the ecological, cultural heritage, social, landscape and/or geological values using a weighted assessment model.

Our ecological values assessment considers:

- How representative the vegetation is compared with cover original cover - the score is weighted to acknowledge that secondary communities are important in areas almost entirely depleted of original cover.
- The diversity of habitats, species and ecotones.
- The rarity of ecosystems and species.
- The ecological context such as size, shape, surrounding land use and connectivity is also considered. This is because large regular-shaped areas buffered by native vegetation are more tolerant of external threats such as wind and temperature, humidity and nutrient level fluctuations

Covenants that score higher receive more funding to support their special values, with exceptionally high-value covenants receiving the maximum \$5,000 establishment funding.

QEII also supports existing covenants through the Stephenson Fund – more information about this can be found on page 34.



AROHA ISLAND

Accommodation, Camping & Venue Hire

Come and stay with us in this peaceful haven on Kerikeri Inlet. Choose from several high-quality accommodation and camping options.

Aroha Island is a secluded island about 12km north east of Kerikeri in the Bay of Islands, offering a unique ecological experience. It is home to North Island Brown Kiwi and a diverse range of other birds and wildlife.

Aroha Island is linked to the mainland via a causeway and is open to both day visitors and holiday makers wanting to escape from it all and enjoy the peace and tranquillity the

island offers. With its well-equipped Eco-Centre, it is the perfect venue for events such as retreats, conferences, meetings, and family reunions.

The Aroha Charitable Trust offers QEII National Trust members 10% discount on venue hire and accommodation (conditions apply).

Aroha Island is a QEII owned property and is managed by the Aroha Island charitable trust. For more information, including photos and bookings visit our website arohaisland.co.nz or phone the office on (09) 407 5243.





BRUSHTAIL POSSUM: ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Written by QEII regional representatives Trevor Thompson, Jake Goonan, Greg Blunden and Wayne O'Keefe

Pest control is a fundamental part of helping QEII covenants reach their potential as thriving and abundant areas for native flora and fauna. This new series, the brainchild of QEII rep Trevor Thompson, will focus on a different pest species each issue. Several QEII regional representatives will collaborate to share their pest control knowledge. In this issue, you'll hear from Jake Goonan, Wayne O'Keefe, Greg Blunden and Trevor Thompson about the tools they use in their regions to control the brushtail possum.

New Zealand has many mammal pests that damage our native forests and there is a lot of overlap in what many of these different species feed on. Having some basic knowledge of the species you are trying to control is vital. The brushtail possum, *Trichosurus vulpecula*, was first introduced to New Zealand from Australia in 1837 to be the mainstay of a proposed fur industry. Many could see the danger and opposed this, but experts claimed their introduction wouldn't adversely affect the native forest and their introduction was supported.

Introduced species to Aotearoa tend to adapt over time and possums are no exception. In Australia they are generally herbivores but we know that in New Zealand they actively hunt birds and eat eggs. While they are not bright and can be clumsy predators, they are well armed with powerful climbing limbs tipped with sharp claws and can easily catch a female bird sitting on a nest. For some species, like the North Island Kōkako, possums must be at low numbers if these birds are to

breed successfully. Not much is off menu for possums, they enjoy protein in the form of chicks and invertebrates, and their meals always consist of a side salad made up of the leaves and flowers of our favourite native trees. They also eat the nectar and berries that native birds like to eat, so there is less food for the birds.

Unfortunately, as is the case with most of our most invasive pests, our biodiversity has not evolved in such a way as to have natural defences against the likes of possums, which is why pest control is so important.

Jake Goonan, QEII regional representative for South Taranaki and Northern Whanganui

I have been involved in the pest management industry for the best part of 30 years and during that time the possum has been at the top of my hit-list. I've used every method known to kill these pesky critters including toxins, night shooting, live cage traps, and leg-hold traps.

Taranaki has been very proactive in the control of possums over the last few decades, for two main reasons. Firstly, the threat of tuberculosis and the risk of the spread of the disease through the farming community and economy, and secondly, the browsing damage done to the biodiversity of our forest ecosystems.

In my view, the key to possum control is to knock the guts out of the population and then to maintain the numbers at low levels, for as long as possible over time.

The model used on the Taranaki ring plain by the Taranaki Regional Council is an initial knockdown carried out by the regional council and then on-going maintenance carried out by landowners. By far the most successful and cost effective option for large-scale possum control and initial knockdown of a large populations is 1080.

Once initial knockdown has been achieved to below a 5 per cent trap catch rate, the methods used to maintain low numbers have moved away from the use of registered toxins such as encapsulated cyanide, trade name Feratox, mainly due to the difficulty of getting a controlled substances licence. Non-registered toxins such as brodifacoum, which can be purchased over the counter at most farm stores are a popular choice. This is the most common bait option in bait stations in Taranaki. I've also found the Timms kill-traps and Steve Allen kill-traps are a popular choice for maintaining low possum numbers.

The relatively new A12 by Goodnature is also becoming a popular. The self-setting device designed specifically to kill possums and can kill up to 12 possums before needing to be re-set, making it a favoured choice for lifestylers.

It is helpful to know when possums are about and what they're feeding on. In my region, I keep an eye out for the bright yellow possum droppings in my local forestry blocks when the catkins are forming, and the possums are moving in. There can be a two to three-week difference from when the pines start pollinating in North Taranaki to blocks in the south. The inserted browse chart is a good starting resource, while it's specific to the Taranaki area, there may be some overlap in other regions.

Greg Blunden, QEII regional representative for Far North and Kaipara

We're lucky to have kiwi in many parts of Northland, and North Island weka have been successfully re-introduced in several places thanks to the establishment of effective integrated animal pest control on private and public land.

While possum control is less critical to managing kiwi and weka, it is a critical first step in improving the health of our forests, gardens and agriculture, and is important by any measure of sustainable land use.

The new AT220 trap produced by NZ Autotraps is a self-setting trap which is great for controlling small remaining populations of possums. Trevor, QEII rep for Wellington and Wairarapa, and I have been testing these traps. While they are expensive at \$325, they use a rechargeable battery that powers a pump, pumping fresh lure from a container. The key difference with the AT220 is that it is triggered by the target breaking a laser beam. Once broken, it activates the trap and a mechanism that is geared down to reset the trap, with a claim of up to 100 cycles.

My wife, Gay, installed two AT220s and other self resetting traps to test in spots on our farm that we don't often visit. Although the whole farm was recently poisoned for possums and there was a low trap rate catch of less than 5 per cent, the results were stunning.

Leghold traps are popular for possum control, however I have seen cases of traps being set on the ground because kiwi was thought not to be present and remnant populations discovered as a result of birds getting caught in traps. While we now know there are kiwi there, it's a tough lesson. I recommend in areas with kiwi and weka it is critical to set legholds over 700mm off the ground to avoid this.



TOP:

The AT220 trap, an automatically resetting trap

BOTTOM:

Flipping Timmy trap in action

Wayne O'Keefe, QEII regional representative for Eastern Bay of Plenty

In my experience, when starting out on a pest control operation, possums should be close to the top of the list. Being omnivorous, the damage done by them is two-fold. I have dealt with possums through a variety of means including shooting, trapping and toxins.

As a parent, I've also had to grapple with the conversations you have with your littlies when you start to take them along "but why, Daddy? They are so cute!". To be honest, that pales in significance when compared to this Brit having to come to terms with the fact that hedgehogs are also pests and must be controlled. However, we're fortunate to be living in an era where awareness of protecting the taonga that makes our country unique is becoming more mainstream.

As Jake mentioned, unless you have the time for intensive trapping, initial knock down is best done by toxins, with subsequent residual populations being dealt to through other methods. Re-invasion can be quite rapid however, if there is untreated land around you, as nature loves a vacuum. Vigilance and persistence is key. My favourite traps have been the good ol' Timms trap – it is very effective.

Once residual levels have been reached, a mind shift to that of a hunter is required. It pays to get to know the animal - their habits, routines, breeding cycle, favoured environment or tree species at various times of the year - as well as a general understanding of the signs left by its presence. For example, if you see lots of leaves on the ground under *Pseudopanax* species, such as fivefinger or lancewood in spring, it'll be because the possums are munching on the growing tips that contain energy rich propolis.

Trevor Thompson, QEII regional representative for Wellington and Wairarapa

I look after the Wairarapa and a sizable chunk of the Wellington region as far north as Paekākāriki. In the Wairarapa, there has been a spotlight on controlling possums mainly due to the spread of tuberculosis into livestock. This drive has seen possum behaviour change. My theory is we have dealt with the dumb ones and the smart ones have been left to breed. They are smarter, harder to detect and

are seldom seen. Gone are the days when possums would sit obligingly while you shone a torch in their eyes and could easily shoot them and their friends. Now, any possum caught in a spotlight makes a hasty escape.

There's always more to learn about pest species. Back in 2002, I set up and ran pest control on a 1000ha native forest block, Pūkaha, in the Wairarapa. A number of kaka were predated, with cats as the suspected culprit. Cage traps were set and baited with fresh rabbit, but the next morning each cage had a lively possum inside. I was surprised they were attracted to raw rabbit meat and they ate every scrap off the bones.

In my region there are several methods being used to control possums. Poison, typically Brodifacoum, trade named as Pestoff, is commonly used in bait stations. It is a great way to deal with high possum numbers and a single feed will kill a possum. This is a cost-effective option when paired with sentry bait stations, which can be as low as \$7, with a fill of Pestoff costing around 40 cents. However, as a second-generation toxin, it can kill or affect anything that eats the poisoned possum because Brodifacoum can stay in the fatty tissues of an animal for an extended period of time. I don't recommend using this toxin where pig hunting could take place, as eating a feral pig that has eaten a poisoned possum is not desirable.

Trapping is also common; Greg mentioned leg-hold traps, which are popular with professional trappers. These traps can cost \$7.50-\$15 and some skill is needed to set them. It's also important to check and despatch any possums caught first thing in the morning.

Kill traps, such as the Timms traps, are easy to set and cost around \$55. They are effective, easy to spot due to their yellow colour, but bulky to carry a number around. They are generally set on the ground or raised to avoid trapping other species. A new similar trap is the Envirotools, Flipping Timmy that retails for \$57. It is mounted on a tree trunk and is hinged, which makes setting and checking traps more comfortable as no bending is required. They can also be set up out of reach of non-target species and the scent of the bait will travel further and last longer. Live traps can also be used, but they are a more expensive option, costing up to \$110 depending on the model and you will also need to shoot the possum once trapped.

I often help covenant owners set up a rat control bait station grids and I always ask if there is a possum presence. Normally the answer is no, but sometimes, once we set the rat control bait stations, within a day or two they have been cleaned out or knocked off their brackets. This is evidence of possums and a different approach is needed.

I recently helped landowner Andrew Tierney with pest control on his covenant. Andrew moved to the Pukerua Bay area in November 2019, taking over a covenant in Gray's Bush. Andrew says, "We had little idea what we were getting into but loved the idea of being caretakers for a small part of this country's native landscape."

"Just after Christmas, we caught our first possum in an old Timms trap. Later, we noticed that Pindone, another type of poison

was fast disappearing from rat bait stations – sometimes overnight. After talking to our QEII rep, Trevor, he said that rats aren't that hungry and suggested we had a possum problem."

"Trevor gave us a Flipping Timmy trap and I used it where we were getting cleaned out of Pindone. It was easy to install, move, clean and re-bait. It worked a treat, catching three possums over February and March. We're back to our rat bait disappearing slowly, without any other signs of possums – for now."

For more tips and tricks on controlling the brushtail possum, check out the Predator Free 2050 website or get in touch with your local QEII regional representative. In the next issue of Open Space, we'll focus on rats, but for now – we wish you all happy possum hunting.

Note: While our reps have shared their experience with various pest control methods, we support landowners to make pest control decisions based on what is right for them individually

YEARLY BROWSE CHART OF POSSUMS IN THE TARANAKI REGION.
SUMMER



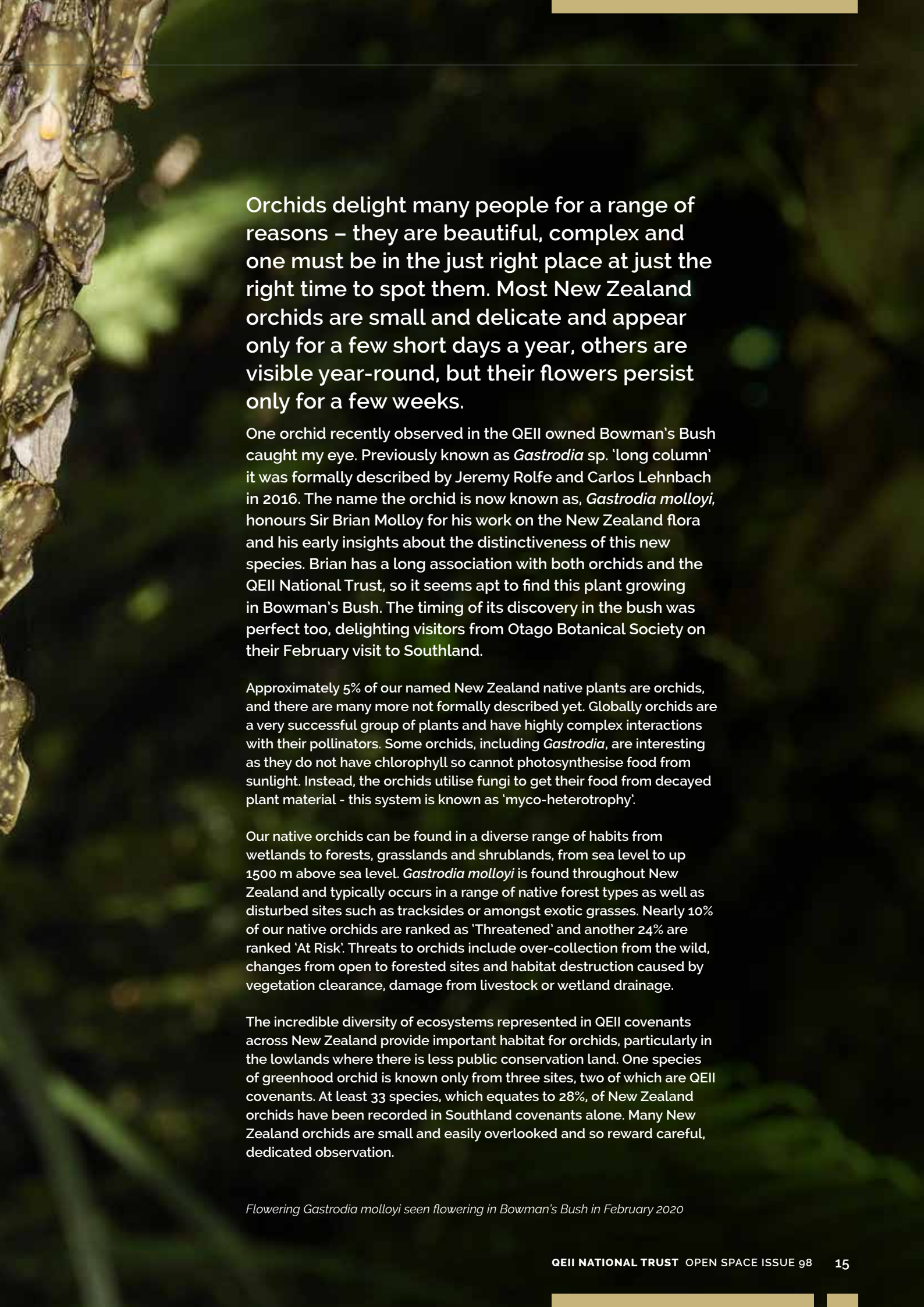
Chart is indicative only and based on the Taranaki region. Reproduced from materials originally published by the Taranaki Regional Council

NEW CONNECTIONS

Written by Jesse Bythell, QEII regional representative for Southland



*Botanic Society of Otago members admiring the *Gastrodia molloyi*.*



Orchids delight many people for a range of reasons – they are beautiful, complex and one must be in the just right place at just the right time to spot them. Most New Zealand orchids are small and delicate and appear only for a few short days a year, others are visible year-round, but their flowers persist only for a few weeks.

One orchid recently observed in the QEII owned Bowman's Bush caught my eye. Previously known as *Gastrodia* sp. 'long column' it was formally described by Jeremy Rolfe and Carlos Lehnbach in 2016. The name the orchid is now known as, *Gastrodia molloyi*, honours Sir Brian Molloy for his work on the New Zealand flora and his early insights about the distinctiveness of this new species. Brian has a long association with both orchids and the QEII National Trust, so it seems apt to find this plant growing in Bowman's Bush. The timing of its discovery in the bush was perfect too, delighting visitors from Otago Botanical Society on their February visit to Southland.

Approximately 5% of our named New Zealand native plants are orchids, and there are many more not formally described yet. Globally orchids are a very successful group of plants and have highly complex interactions with their pollinators. Some orchids, including *Gastrodia*, are interesting as they do not have chlorophyll so cannot photosynthesise food from sunlight. Instead, the orchids utilise fungi to get their food from decayed plant material - this system is known as 'myco-heterotrophy'.

Our native orchids can be found in a diverse range of habits from wetlands to forests, grasslands and shrublands, from sea level to up 1500 m above sea level. *Gastrodia molloyi* is found throughout New Zealand and typically occurs in a range of native forest types as well as disturbed sites such as tracksides or amongst exotic grasses. Nearly 10% of our native orchids are ranked as 'Threatened' and another 24% are ranked 'At Risk'. Threats to orchids include over-collection from the wild, changes from open to forested sites and habitat destruction caused by vegetation clearance, damage from livestock or wetland drainage.

The incredible diversity of ecosystems represented in QEII covenants across New Zealand provide important habitat for orchids, particularly in the lowlands where there is less public conservation land. One species of greenhood orchid is known only from three sites, two of which are QEII covenants. At least 33 species, which equates to 28%, of New Zealand orchids have been recorded in Southland covenants alone. Many New Zealand orchids are small and easily overlooked and so reward careful, dedicated observation.

Flowering Gastrodia molloyi seen flowering in Bowman's Bush in February 2020

FROM PASTURE TO NATIVE FOREST

On the Otago Peninsula, Dunedin QEII covenantor Hendrik Koch hasn't only protected native bush – he's created it. Over 38 years he has transformed an area of former pastureland back into native forest through thousands of hours of replanting as well as natural regeneration.

Covenantor
Hendrik Koch



Birds eye view of
Mānuka Farm



"There was a remnant of rather sickly looking rimu on the place when we first looked at buying the property. I thought it would be great to rescue those. It was remarkable they were still there because so many had gone as a result of sitting out on paddocks all on their own," Hendrik says.

A passion for nature and the bush infuses his many roles, not just as a landowner. He also owns a native plant nursery and has been an active conservationist in community groups over decades.

Hendrik's love of New Zealand's native bush blossomed soon after arriving in the country 47 years ago from Holland, via Australia. "I've been planting natives almost since the day I arrived in New Zealand. I discovered a passion for native bush and wanted more of it."

After deciding he wanted to save the remnant rimu trees, Hendrik and his partner joined forces with friends to buy the property named Mānuka Farm and split the land between them. Hendrik owns about 6.4 ha, of which a little under 2.1 ha is in a QEII covenant.

When he bought the land, it was mostly pasture as well as a mix of piripiri or biddy-bid, blackberry, mānuka and kānuka. About 52 rimu remained on the combined property, along with some pōkākā and several tōtara. A few of the trees on the property were possibly over 300 years old, survivors of the original clearance of the bush in the 1870s to 1880s.

Hendrik and the other new owners agreed to place covenants over parts of their now separate properties to protect the remaining native trees. "The whole ridge where these rimu were is protected. It's all bush now after 30 years-plus of regeneration, some of which has been replanted and some has regenerated naturally."

Nearly all of Hendrik's property is now in bush. Because he couldn't afford to buy native plants to replant the property, he propagated his own and was able to set up a small nursery to sell to others as well. As well as planting, Hendrik battled a range of weeds including gorse, bracken and Balm of Gilead.

The QEII covenant gave Hendrik the reassurance that his restoration work would not be in vain. "I wasn't keen to spend thousands and thousands of hours planting up this place for it to be sold as some kind of rough feed for goats, which was happening at the time," he says.

Conservation has gained momentum in the area and attitudes to looking after the environment have changed since Hendrik first moved in. "We are in a very different place to where we were 30 or 40 years ago."

Today there is a network of covenants in the area around Hendrik's property, stretching across the Otago Peninsula from the harbour around Portobello to Hoopers Inlet on the ocean side. The properties include a mix of lifestyle blocks, farmland and bush blocks owned by conservationists.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Planting at Volco gardens

Volunteers at Shetland Street

Community Gardens and Kaikorai

Estuary Restoration Project



"I wasn't keen to spend thousands and thousands of hours planting up this place for it to be sold as some kind of rough feed for goats."

Predator control by the community and the council has, along with the restoration of vegetation, led to wildlife returning to the area. "When we came on the place there were rifleman (tītipounamu) to start with and a few bellbirds (korimako) but they were mostly reliant on the bush that's further up the hill," he says.

Today rabbits are the only significant pest animal problem. There are large numbers of bellbirds, as well as rifleman, kererū, tūi, occasional tomtits (miromiro), and other indigenous/native fauna. "On a regular basis now tūi swoop down, barely missing me."

Coastal Otago QEII rep Robin Thomas says Hendrik has done great work on his property and in the community. "He is very knowledgeable and goes out of his way to help others as well as doing a lot of work on his covenant. In the early days, he did a lot of enhancement planting to help thicken it up and give it a boost."

Robin says Hendrik's property is part of a "magnificent suite of covenants" in the surrounding area. "It's an amazing sequence of covenants there and a lot of people are doing an awful lot of work on their covenants in that area." One landowner who is devoted to removing introduced predators has appropriately named their property Possums' End.

Hendrik's commitment to conservation extends well beyond

his own property. He has been a trustee for over 10 years of the Initial Volco Trust, which owns an 81ha QEII covenant on Mt Cargill, north of Dunedin. The trust was set up by a Canadian couple, Dorothy and Lloyd Morris, who had settled in Dunedin and started buying land in 1968 with the aim of encouraging environmentalism and community cooperation.

For nearly 20 years Hendrik was a core member of Save the Otago Peninsula, an organisation promoting protection of native bush remnants and restoration work. He has also been a trustee of the Dunedin Environment Centre Trust for more than two decades. The trust runs community gardens and a conservation plant nursery and has undertaken several restoration projects along the Kaikorai Stream.

"The environment centre has been hands on providing opportunities for people in the city in particular to participate in doing conservation work. We've had lots of new people that you wouldn't usually expect to be involved in conservation," Hendrik says.

Everything Hendrik does flows from believing human beings must recognise they are part of the natural world and of the whole fabric of life. He says people should not only conserve more but also consume less. Hendrik's QEII covenant is one of the ways he expresses his philosophy.

"I've been planting natives almost since the day I arrived in New Zealand. I discovered a passion for native bush and wanted more of it."

Hendrik Koch





In 1997, a handful of kōkako were discovered hanging on to life on private land that included some QEII covenants in Manawahe in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Under the guidance of Department of Conservation (DOC) kōkako guru Jeff Hudson and aided with seeding funding from the Whakatāne Rotary Club, a group of dedicated bird nerds formed a trust to protect the birds and give them a future. So, began 22 years of intensive pest control by the Manawahe Kōkako Trust to remove predators and allow the birds to breed safely.

TRANSLOCATION SUCCESS FOR KŌKAKO AT MANAWAHE

They were so successful that within 10 years the kōkako numbers more than tripled. Then, inexplicably they began to decline. Today they are almost down to the starting numbers, a heartbreaking turn of events for the people who have put years of hard work into saving these birds.

One of those people is QEII regional rep for the Eastern Bay of Plenty, Wayne O'Keefe. He has been involved with the fight for the relic kōkako population at Manawahe for many years and in 2014 was instrumental in securing Lottery Grants Board funding for a three-year research project to try to halt the decline. The project saw collaboration between the Manawahe Kōkako Trust volunteers, landowners, QEII National Trust, DOC Whakatāne and Bay of Plenty Regional Council contractors to track the kōkako during the breeding season, find their nests and install cameras to determine if predation was responsible for the sharp decline in numbers.

It began with conservation scientist Ian Flux sharing his expertise and teaching the volunteers to support contractors to locate nests and monitor nesting behaviour. This was new territory for the volunteers who had so far concentrated their efforts on pest control. Now for the first time, they got to observe and enjoy the birds.

The results, when they finally came, were devastating. The team determined that predators were not to blame for the decrease in numbers, but abandoned nests and infertile eggs were a recurring theme. The National Kōkako Specialist Group advised that the reason for this infertility was most likely the result of a genetic bottleneck due to the small initial population. This kicked off Stage 2 of the project; a mission to introduce fresh genetics into the Manawahe population.



*Release taking place in Manawahe
Photo credit: Neil Robert Hutton*

In 2018 Wayne sourced further funding from the Lottery Grants Board and Manawahe Kōkako Trust was granted permission by DOC and iwi to translocate six pairs of kōkako to Manawahe over a two-year period.

After almost two years of planning and preparation, the first translocation by the Kaharoa Kōkako Trust went ahead in August 2019. A formal ceremonial blessing from the gifting iwi, Tapuika and Ngāti Rangiwewehi marked the physical start of the project and formed an enduring bond in the hearts of those attending.

Over four days, conservation ecologists Dave Bryden and Amanda Rogers, assisted by Manawahe and Kaharoa volunteers, caught the first three pairs of kōkako and transferred them to Manawahe. Emotions ran high for the Manawahe volunteers and tears were shed as each bird was released into their new home.

The hope was that they settle into their new surroundings, form their own territories and breed. All six birds were fitted with backpack transmitters to allow tracking of their movements using telemetry gear for up to six months, after which time the backpacks are designed to fall off.

In January 2020 the bird tracker, Greg Moorcroft of Terra Whenua Conservation Services, was able to confirm that of the six birds released at Manawahe, the male Onaia had sadly died, his former partner Eco was paired with a resident Manawahe bird and the remaining four birds were known to be paired and territorial.

One pair, Kara and Ponga nested and successfully fledged a single chick. Banded at 16 or 17 days old to aid future identification, the healthy-looking chick weighed in at 140 grams. The Manawahe Kōkako Trust named the



chick Tūmanako, meaning hope, to symbolise the renewed prospects for the Manawahe population.

Even though there is no certainty that translocation will save these birds, without it this population would have likely faced extinction within five years. With the passion, determination and efforts of the Manawahe Kōkako Trust, supported by QEII regional rep Wayne, contractors and DOC Whakatāne the Lottery Grants Board, they have the best chance they can hope for. With planning well under way for the second batch of translocations, the results so far are exciting and show a glimpse of what is possible for this taonga with a bit of help.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Banding a chick in early 2020

A successfully banded chick

An emotional moment at the original release ceremony in August 2019

Photo credits: Neil Robert Hutton



AUCKLAND



Your Slice of Paradise

Magnificent 6-bedroom, 3-bathroom lifestyle dwelling located in the heart of highly sought-after Dairy Flat, 30km north of central Auckland.

The nearly 10 acres of QEII-covenanted native bush contains mature kauri, kahikatea, nikau palms and ferns. This unique ecosystem is also a bird lovers' sanctuary with kereru, tui and fantail. Enjoy this restful and peaceful haven so close to the CBD, without the hustle and bustle of city life.



A unique rural lifestyle with expansive decks to maximize the indoor-outdoor flow, complete with elevated views towards the north-east over the rolling hills of Dairy Flat and the Hauraki Gulf beyond. Enjoy easy close access to beaches, schools, cafes, shopping malls, motorway and the growing business hubs of Albany and Silverdale.

The seller's children have flown the nest, so it's time for another family to enjoy this exceptionally presented idyllic retreat. The options are plentiful, including an income opportunity with a bedroom and bathroom area adjacent to a huge 4-car garage and workshop space with 3-phase power connection.

**Contact current owner Andrew on 027 280 9657 for more information.
Priced significantly under 2017 CV \$2,325,000**

OUR PEOPLE

"The owners are all different, they've all got their own ways of doing things and it's great to see what they're doing on their land."

Rob Fraser



Western Bay of Plenty rep Rob Fraser is excited to see landowners banding together to look after their properties and areas on a broader scale. "I think the way to protect QEII covenants is for the community to look after the neighbouring environments around them," says Rob.

A potentially exciting example of joint landowner action in Rob's patch is a cluster of 15 QEII covenants south of Te Puke, between the Kaharoa Conservation Area and the Otanewainuku Forest. Successful predator control by DOC and volunteers in these public areas has seen kōkako and kiwi overflowing into the neighbouring farmland, however they are often predated in neighbouring environments.

Rob has long believed a predator-free area could be created across farm properties between the two populations of kōkako and kiwi and promoted the idea to the owners of the 15 QEII covenants. "It's the best possible way of looking after those covenants, doing it as part of a whole landscape surrounding them. The QEII objectives totally fit like a glove," he says.

The farmers are enthusiastic about having kiwi and kōkako on their properties. Recently two local identities started the ball rolling with the first catchment group meeting.

Another example of community conservation is l'Anson Reserve, 8 km west of Tauranga, which is owned by QEII National Trust. The 10 ha former dairy block was donated by Keith and Takiko l'Anson who had long wished to see a native bush reserve established in the Te Puna area.

In the late 1980s the Tauranga branch of Forest & Bird began revegetating the reserve and it has formed a care group to carry out weed and predator control. The main lesson from the reserve is that decades after planting there is still work to do, controlling weeds and animal pests.



"There are not many examples in the Bay of Plenty and possibly even New Zealand of 35-year-old planting," says Rob. "It's significant today because everyone is talking about these re-vegetation programmes. You can go to that reserve and see what your project is going to look like in 30- or 40-years' time."

Since joining QEII four years ago, Rob has loved working with his colleagues and meeting landowners to discuss issues with their covenants and how to deal with them. "The owners are all different, they've all got their own ways of doing things and it's great to see what they're doing on their land."

Rob knows what farming life is like, coming from a Hawke's Bay sheep and cattle farming background. His early work history involved farm and forestry work and even a spell running a backpacker hostel in Australia.

A mid-life university degree offered a new direction, beginning with a park ranger job in Wellington's regional parks. His love of hunting and fishing later led to work in the Kaweka Ranges, monitoring sites on a three-year project.

"I was pretty much learning the trade in the field really. I think the main concern of the people who gave me my first ecologist job was putting people out in the field who wouldn't get lost in the bush."

Later he did a five-year contract helping with an ecological study and measuring the carbon content of the bush as part of New Zealand's international climate change commitments. "Now I've been to just about every patch of bush in the North Island and the top of the South."

There was lots of helicopter work and walking on public and private land to set up monitoring sites. His last job before joining QEII was as a park ranger for eight years at Papamoa Hills Regional Park.

A lifestyle farm and two young children aged seven months and five years also keep Rob busy. He is growing a flock of Wiltshire sheep, but at least the breed's self-shedding wool means shearing isn't another job to add to his long list. "It's a typical small farm, never ending work," he says with a laugh.

Rob says conservation work like weeding and predator control can also seem never-ending. But in conservation as well as farming, the rewards of hard work can be huge.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

*Rob speaking to attendees at a recent event at l'Anson reserve
Inside l'Anson Reserve*



"It's the best possible way of looking after those covenants, doing it as part of a whole landscape surrounding them. The QEII objectives totally fit like a glove."

Eastern Bay of Plenty rep Wayne O'Keefe says he would happily sit down for a beer with every single one of his colleagues at QEII National Trust. "I think we've all got the same passions, we're all driven by the same things, they're an incredible bunch of people."

There's no doubting Wayne's passion for New Zealand nature and his work for QEII. Since arriving in New Zealand about 20 years ago, the native Welshman has sucked up knowledge about New Zealand's native plants and animals, as well as predator and weed control. He's learned to apply that knowledge for the benefit of QEII covenantors, and in his role as an environmental restoration consultant for councils and community groups.

The course of his life since settling in New Zealand was set during a spell working with some very motivated people at Oratia Native Plant Nursery in West Auckland. "They triggered something in me I guess that took me on a journey to where I am now. When you're passionate, you constantly want to learn," says Wayne.

About 16 years ago he and his partner Wei Mei Leong bought a 14ha QEII bush covenant from an elderly couple, Ernie and Jean Alspach, at Ōpōtiki, a move that later opened doors to work with the regional council and QEII. The land had previously been partly logged but the forest had regenerated under the care of the Alspachs, who were among the first covenantors in the Bay of Plenty.

"The covenant is home to 1000-year-old puriri trees, absolutely enormous, but it's also very diverse. It's only 14ha but it's got a bit of everything in there. It's semi-coastal forest, a lot of puriri, kohekohe, tawa, pigeonwood, kahikatea, and a ridge of beech as well, which is very unusual to have at an altitude of about 120m.

"You couldn't landscape an area of bush any better to be honest. It's really well tracked too and reasonably flat so you are able to enjoy it."

Wayne taught his two daughters to recognise from an early age the edible plants in the forest, including mushrooms, berries and supplejack shoots. He recalls one of his daughters being indignant about seeing a kereru eating "her" berries.

He admires the knowledge that Māori accumulated about the uses of native plants. "In the space of a few hundred years, they nailed it. They developed a deep understanding of the qualities of these plants."

When the first of their two daughters reached high school age, the family moved to Whakatāne. Leaving the covenant property was difficult but a good friend, another passionate conservationist, took it over. They knew the forest was in good hands and they would be able to visit whenever they wanted.

The family found there was plenty of nature to enjoy in Whakatāne too, thanks in large part to the predator control work done covering 2000ha around the town. Wayne is doing his bit as operations manager for the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust.

"There's 350 kiwi living around Whakatāne, people get them in their back gardens, the weka have just moved in as well. The bird life is phenomenal," he says.



While living on the Ōpōtiki covenant eight years ago, Wayne heard about the QEII rep job becoming available. Today there are 82 covenants registered in his region and he enjoys getting around and visiting covenantors, some of whom have become good friends.

"My favourite covenants to visit are the ones that are being actively managed because when you walk into a forest, you do sense it if it is being managed. If someone is killing rats, possums

“There’s 350 kiwi living around Whakatāne, people get them in their back gardens, the weka have just moved in as well. The bird life is phenomenal.”

Wayne O’Keefe



and stoats, you know it as soon as you walk into the forest because it’s got a different energy, it’s got bird life.”

Wayne enjoys the challenge of enthusing covenantors about the special things their properties are home to. “You may be able to spark their enthusiasm by telling them there is a bird or a plant that is special to them in their covenant. Trying to foster a connection between the covenantor and their covenant is an important role the QEII reps play.”

For Wayne, it comes back to passion, and he says there’s no lack of that within QEII. “We’re all in it because we enjoy doing what we do and we’re passionate about it. The role of a QEII rep is way more than a job.”

“The role of a QEII rep is way more than a job.”

LIMESTONE LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMED

Written by Marie Taylor

When Lois and Nick Riddell originally bought their Argyll Road farm, the tītoki trees were alive with possums and the wetland was a trap for sheep and cattle. Now thirty years later, thanks to their care and passion, the Central Hawke's Bay property has been transformed, with two gorgeous QEII covenants – one bush, the other, wetland.

The backdrop to their farm is a stunning rimrock hillside of limestone, with tītoki, kahikatea and totara forest nestled into its flanks. Reliable springs at the foot of the limestone cliffs feed an impressively planted wetland just a paddock away down the hillslopes, and now linked by a fenced streamside corridor.

They had already protected the 4.5ha hillside in 1992 by placing a covenant on the area in conjunction with their neighbours, the Twist family.



Lois and Nick on their property



Current view of the wetland



ABOVE: Overview of the covenant before revegetation

It's been a labour of love for Lois and Nick as well as their daughter Karen, a botanist, who is controlling woody weeds in the bush block, including cotoneaster and walnuts. They have taken every care with their project, planting up to 1,000 native plants into the wetland area every year. They are enjoying the changed landscape, especially the birdlife that it brings. "In spring when the kōwhai are out, it is just bedlam with tui," Nick says.

Their second QEII covenant begun to come to fruition after Nick had a heart attack while he was playing golf at nearby Ongaonga in 1996. There is nothing quite like a triple heart bypass to sort out your priorities, says Nick. "I came home with a new set of values. When you are lying on the slab you realise money is not an issue in your life, your family and health are the main issue."

As part of his recuperation, Nick looked at the wetland. "We were going to drain it, but there were too many complications. Our son David suggested we just fence it off, so we did that and started planting."

Although it was initially fenced to keep stock out of the wetland, Nick says it feels good to be leaving something behind for mankind. He poisoned the willows and poplars, and started planting kānuka on the drier sites, cabbage trees, kōwhai, lacebark, ribbonwood and kahikatea and they spent many hours releasing plants from long grass.

It's a far cry from when it contained a few scraggly cabbage trees, some stumps of *Carex secta* and some willows. QEII National Trust regional representative for Hawkes Bay, Troy Duncan, estimates that approximately 7,000 plants have gone into the wetland restoration, including 1,500 kahikatea.

In 2005 the Hawke's Bay Regional Council generously helped with the fence costs, funding for new plants and weed control to help with attacking the willows. Nick and Lois covenanted 2.2ha of the wetland in 2011 and have fenced extra land into the wetland.

Pest control has also played a big role in the success of the covenant, with the couple noting that since possums have gone, the



regeneration has taken off, particularly in the cliffs. "I just love going over there and seeing the bush," Lois says. "The hoheria at the moment are beautiful. It's a good place to go for a picnic, and just to sit and enjoy."

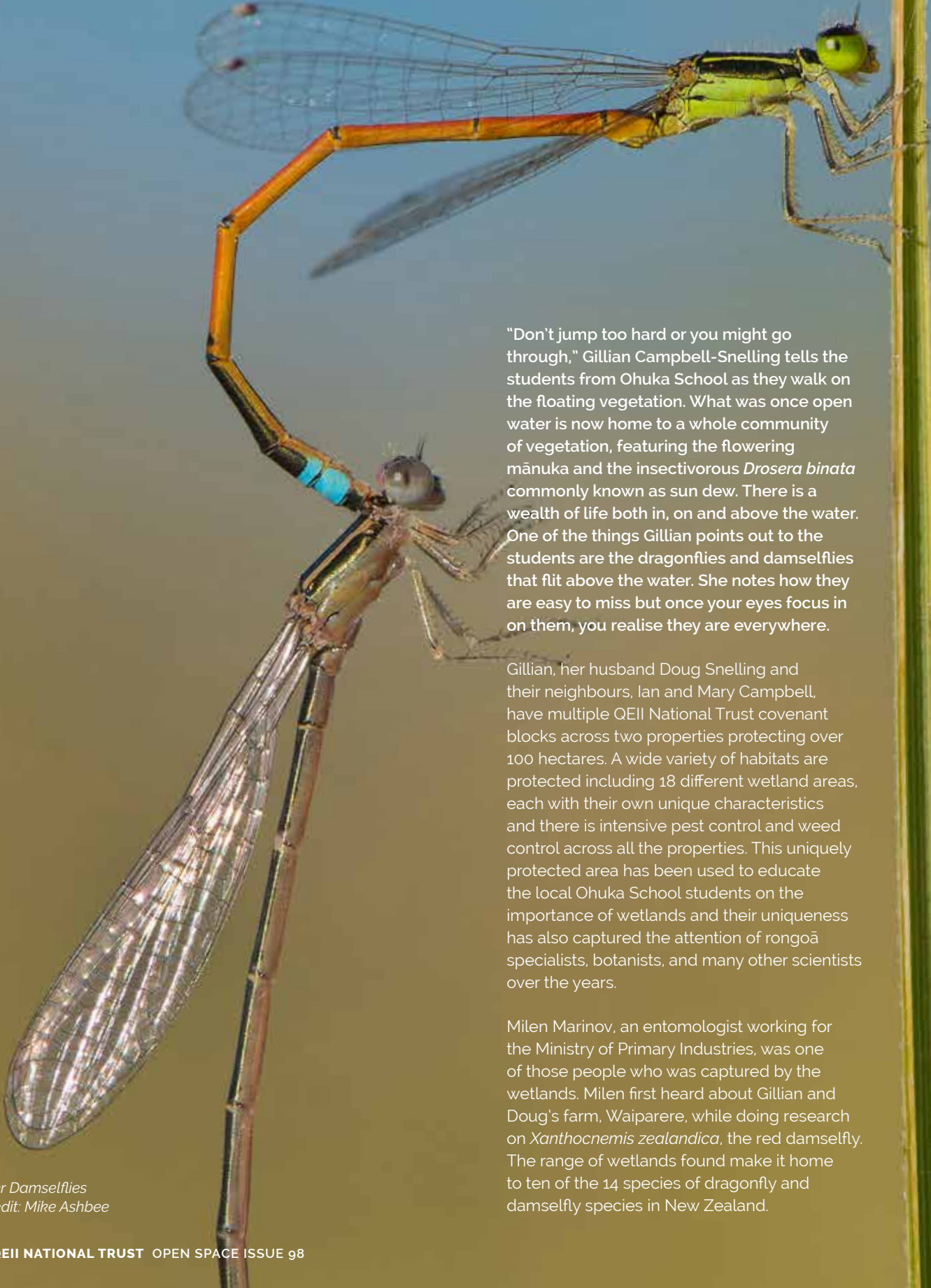
New challenges for Nick and Lois are coping with the rampaging muehlenbeckia vines, which are spreading like mad, and feral deer which roam through the local landscape. The pair have appreciated getting help and advice from their rep, Troy, especially with poisoning the willows.

Troy says it has been interesting to watch the significant improvement in the revegetation area over time. "The effort, expense and work Nick and Lois have put into the block is a real credit to them. It's a great example of what can be achieved by quietly chipping away at it."

Recovering remnants are few and far between in this part of Central Hawke's Bay, and the Riddells' efforts have rescued these from the brink.

The Dragonflies and damselflies of Waiparere

Written by Malcolm Rutherford, QEII regional representative for Gisborne



"Don't jump too hard or you might go through," Gillian Campbell-Snelling tells the students from Ohuka School as they walk on the floating vegetation. What was once open water is now home to a whole community of vegetation, featuring the flowering mānuka and the insectivorous *Drosera binata* commonly known as sun dew. There is a wealth of life both in, on and above the water. One of the things Gillian points out to the students are the dragonflies and damselflies that flit above the water. She notes how they are easy to miss but once your eyes focus in on them, you realise they are everywhere.

Gillian, her husband Doug Snelling and their neighbours, Ian and Mary Campbell, have multiple QEII National Trust covenant blocks across two properties protecting over 100 hectares. A wide variety of habitats are protected including 18 different wetland areas, each with their own unique characteristics and there is intensive pest control and weed control across all the properties. This uniquely protected area has been used to educate the local Ohuka School students on the importance of wetlands and their uniqueness has also captured the attention of rongoā specialists, botanists, and many other scientists over the years.

Milen Marinov, an entomologist working for the Ministry of Primary Industries, was one of those people who was captured by the wetlands. Milen first heard about Gillian and Doug's farm, Waiparere, while doing research on *Xanthocnemis zealandica*, the red damselfly. The range of wetlands found make it home to ten of the 14 species of dragonfly and damselfly species in New Zealand.

Gossamer Damselflies
Photo credit: Mike Ashbee



Exploring the wetlands
Photo credit:
Malcolm Rutherford

Milen and photographer Mike Ashbee have recently published the book "Dragonflies and Damselflies of New Zealand" to showcase the many amazing species found in our backyards. With the variety of wetland habitats at Waiparere, it was the ideal spot to capture photos of some difficult to find species, including the dusk dragonfly, *Antipodochlora braueri*. Each dragonfly species has its own niche – the set of environmental conditions under which it can thrive. For the dusk dragonfly this includes tannin streams, often found in the bush. When Milen described the habitat, Gillian was able to take him to the most likely spot where they would be able to find it and they were successful in spotting it.

Milen's lifetime mission is to promote wetlands and change one of the myths created about them as being "nasty mosquito places". Milen says that a permanent wetland is a way to ease up the pressure of mosquitoes and flies during the summer months. "Permanent waters develop communities of invertebrates where mosquito larvae find it very difficult to survive. They breathe oxygen from the air and therefore must stay just under the upper most water layer, exposing themselves to the predation pressure of dragonflies, damselflies and other invertebrate and vertebrate animals. Wetlands and the aquatic vegetation that surrounds them can filter wastewater from domestic and commercial activities. Not to mention the calmness, serenity and tranquillity that the warm reflection of the sun off the surface brings to the observer sitting at the back of a lake."

Milen also points out that when it comes to dragonflies and damselflies, there is a whole world of fascination to be found. They are in the insect order of flying insects called Odonata, which received its scientific name in honour of their toothed jaws. These jaws, when enlarged enough for the human eyes, could bring fear and respect, and they use them to devour other insects following the simple rule

'if it moves – it is a potential prey.' They do not distinguish between siblings and relatives – if they can catch it, they will eat it. This is how they can destroy many mosquitoes and flies all year around. In warmer months adults 'clear' the aerial space macerating most of the little insects in flight, while the immature nymphs in the water help us by feeding on mosquito larvae and other small invertebrates.

When it comes to observing dragonflies and damselflies, Milen has a few tips. First, pull up a chair by a pond or a lake, and "surrender to the dance in front of you." Everything that anyone has ever read or seen on documentary films about mammals defending territories, fighting for mates, feeding, surviving the pressure from neighbours can be seen without travelling to a safari in Africa but around your backyard's pond. There are several morphological features to use to distinguish between dragonflies and damselflies species. Generally, dragonflies look bigger and sturdier and damselflies appear dainty and more delicate. The best method to distinguish one from the other is to focus on the wings. All species have four wings arranged in two pairs. In damselflies, these two pairs are almost identical whereas in dragonflies the hind pair is significantly larger. Colour and size help additionally in distinguishing between the 14 species, so far known as breeding on the North, South, Stewart and Chatham islands.



Milen on location during
his second visit.

With a new understanding of dragonflies, Gillian has become a self-described dragonfly nut and hasn't stopped there. Her unbridled curiosity for the natural world and the importance she places on recording her findings has made for quite the list of species on her property, including peripatus, all sorts of orchids, over 50 species of birds, and over 450 species of fungi on the property.

Milen Marinov and Mike Ashbee's book "Dragonflies and Damselflies of New Zealand" is a beautifully illustrated natural history and field guide to the 14 species found here. It includes more than 200 new photographs and hand-drawn illustrations at all life stages along with expert and leading up to date information. Published by Auckland University Press, it is available in hard copy and e-book from various outlets for purchase. Hard copy RRP \$49.99.



Mountain Giant Dragonfly
Photo credit: Mike Ashbee

The Stephenson Fund

Named after key founders of QEII, Gordon and Celia Stephenson, The Stephenson Fund was launched by QEII in May 2017 to support landowners with ongoing management and enhancement of their protected land. It is also available to assist when natural disasters or other extreme circumstances impact protected land. The fund comes from internal resources, including donations, legacies and investment income.

The Stephenson Fund is contestable, meaning applications for funding are made by either the landowner or a supporting organisation. Applications can cover up to 50% of the total costs of a project, sometimes more if extenuating circumstances apply and can range from a minimum of \$2,000 up to maximum of \$20,000. All projects must be aligned with the purpose and objectives of the covenant deed and protect and enhance the covenant's open space values.

Applications for the next round of funding is due to open in early August 2020. An email will be sent to members to let them know when the funding round is open. If you need to update your contact details please let us know. You can update your contact details with us using the online form on our website or by calling us.

More information about the Stephenson Fund, including the funding criteria, timeframes and an application form can be found on our website, qeii.org.nz keyword search: The Stephenson Fund. Also, feel free to get in touch with your local QEII regional representative for more information.

The Stephenson Fund in action

Launched in 2017 to support landowners with ongoing management and enhancement of their protected land, the Stephenson Fund has helped many of our landowners with projects that align with the purpose and objectives of the covenant deed.

The Webber Family Farm

Ross and Eleanor Webber are the proud owners of The Webber Family Farm, a 195ha farm overlooking Kaipara Harbour in South Head. The property has been in the Webber family since 1955, with Ross being the third generation. They currently have 35ha of land protected by two QEII covenants, registered in 2006 and 2007. The pair also have plans for a further 15ha to be protected in the future.



The regional supreme winners of the 2019 Auckland Ballance Farm Environment Awards are passionate about sustainable farming practices while taking care of the unique waterways, native birds and trees in their patch. "Weed and pest control is always on going on, especially in our 6.5ha QEII covenant, Jock's Block. We also like to introduce eco-sourced specimen trees such as pūriri, karaka, cabbage trees, and kahikatea to allow a seed source in proximity for the birds to naturally do their job." Eleanor says.

Deer were introduced to the area in the early 1900s and while Ross is a keen hunter, he notes, "there is nothing more disheartening than to see trees that had grown from 500mm tall, no wider than your baby finger to over 5 metres high with trunks 100mm round, smashed and destroyed by deer." Chris Floyd, local QEII rep, monitored the covenant in 2015. During the visit, Chris suggested they look at trying to find funding to support them with the cost of deer fencing some of the covenant areas. The Webbers were so enthusiastic about the idea that they voluntarily deer fenced a covenant block at their own expense.

Deer are very adept at pushing through or jumping under or over traditional fences, but following deer fencing, the lower tiers of vegetation are already showing signs of recovery. Ross has also been able to plant palatable canopy species such as pūriri and kahikatea into the covenant area. Now any bush or wetland areas the Webbers retire are protected with a deer fence. "Even though it is slightly more expensive, it is worth it.

The benefit we see in under storey regeneration of the blocks, and bush density enhancing weed suppression and natural bird spread of native seedlings, is remarkable," says Eleanor.

After the success of their deer fencing, Chris suggested that they apply for funding through the Stephenson Fund to fence off 6.5ha of hillslope kanuka and wetland towards the north of their property. The Webbers applied in 2017 and were approved for funds to help with the cost of replacing the conventional fencing around two covenant blocks with deer netting.

When applying for the fund, Eleanor and Ross felt that they had great support from their local QEII rep. "From his visits, Chris recognised the potential to further protect this area and he encouraged us to apply. Chris also helped make the application process easy and we got a quick response," Eleanor says. "The funding assisted us immensely, providing a 50/50 basis ensured the project was completed."

The pair say the fund reaffirms that landowners have the backing of QEII when it comes to the guardianship and vision for covenants. Their advice for other landowners who are considering applying for the fund is, "don't be afraid to ask! Talk to your regional rep, they are the best starting point for the funding application – and choose your block wisely, you don't want to see your fencing swept away by floods or slips."





Predator control in Fisherman's Bay

Just 12 kilometres out of Akaroa on Banks Peninsula is Richard and Jill Simpson's farm, Fisherman's Bay. Over the past 22 years they have transformed the previously run-down 320-hectare farm while protecting the special areas within it. The pair are founding members of the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust (BPCT) and in addition to their QEII covenant, which was registered in 2000, they have two BPCT covenants, totalling 76 hectares.

white rata (*Metrosideros diffusa*), a native mistletoe (*Tupeia antarctica*) and *Veronica strictissima*, a hebe found only on the Banks Peninsula. Other regionally rare plant species include the Lance fern (*Loxogramme dictyopteris*) and jointed fern (*Arthropteris tenella*), which are both at their southern national distributional limits.



A penguin on top of a trap inside the covenant

The 25-hectare QEII-protected block with regenerating coastal forest is one of the few places on the Peninsula with undisturbed, natural links between original forest and sea. Seals haul-out onto the forest floor and are found in the bay all year round. It is also a nesting site for little blue penguins as well as many other native bird species and home to several threatened plant species such as Rohutu (*Lophomyrtus obcordata*),

Pest control has been a key part of the work that the Simpsons have been doing in their covenant. "We've had a trapping programme for ferrets, stoats, weasels, possums, cats and rats on our property for at least the last 15 years," says Richard. The Simpsons are also part of the Wildside predator trapping programme, which focuses on protecting the breeding sites of sea birds such as hoiho/ yellow eyed penguin and kororā/ little blue penguin. The programme

covers 13,500-hectares and is a collaboration between landowners, Christchurch City Council, Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, and BPCT.

"Right now, we're lucky because we have good fences and trapping, so every time I go into my covenant; I am so happy with how healthy it looks. The bird life, the vegetation, everything is flourishing and healthy. We're always looking for funds for trapping so that our eco-systems can keep thriving," says Richard.

By managing pests within the covenant, the bird populations both inside the covenant and in the surrounding reserves have a better chance to grow by providing birds with safe nesting areas. "Sometimes we have kororā and very rarely, hoiho, nesting here. We have a great habitat, but we don't get as much nesting as we would like

to. We want those birds to return and nest here as they once did, that's why predator control is so important."

Richard applied for The Stephenson Fund in 2017 after conversations with his QEII regional representative, Alice Shanks. "I had previously read about the fund, but I remember talking to my rep Alice about it and she encouraged me to apply. The application form and the application process were really easy and straight-forward."

The fund helped improve pest control in the covenant with the addition of 27 new stainless-steel DOC 200 traps for close to sea trapping, with stainless-steel being key to ensure that the traps would not deteriorate from rusting in the salt air. The grant was also used to employ an experienced local contractor to help service the traps for a year – checking, clearing and resetting each trap.

"Applying was well worthwhile; we're thankful that we got the help and were able to put the funds to good use. The fact that we have a flourishing and healthy eco-system is an indication that the trapping is worthwhile." Richard says, "The Stephenson Fund is a valuable source of funding for doing those things that need to be done to enhance your covenant. Anyone who has a good project in mind should use it."



District Council	Location	Covenant Name	Area (ha)	Main open space type
New Plymouth	Inglewood	Moa Hill Covenant	1.4348	Lowland modified primary forest, wetland and open water
South Taranaki	Whakamara	Whakamara	7.7012	Lowland modified primary forest
New Plymouth	Urenui	Hickman Road 2019	17.8662	Semicoastal modified primary forest
Whangarei	Waipu	Worthy McLean Bushland	86.9839	Lowland modified secondary kanuka, kauri-rimu podocarp and taraire broadleaf forest and treefernland
Rangitikei	Turakina		2.1705	Lowland modified primary and modified secondary forest and modified secondary sedgeland
Waitaki	Oamaru		9.3054	Semi-coastal modified modified secondary forest, secondary scrub and sedgeland and modified primary open water
New Plymouth	Oakura	The Julian & Looney Covenant	1.9945	Semicoastal modified primary forest and open water pond
Ruapehu	Taumaranui	Totaras Covenant - Meringa	23.164	Lowland modified primary forest
Ruapehu	Taumaranui	Sinamon's Bush Covenant - Meringa	6.7054	Lowland modified primary podocarp-hardwood forest
Ruapehu	Taumaranui	Basin Bush Covenant - Meringa	10.4915	Lowland modified primary podocarp-hardwood forest
Ruapehu	Taumaranui	Graham's Lodge Bush - Meringa	2.9953	Lowland modified primary and secondary podocarp-hardwood forest
Thames-Coromandel	Whenuakite	Yearsley (Kohekohe)	4.8407	Coastal modified primary forest
Thames-Coromandel	Whenuakite	Yearsley (Pohutukawa)	12.2995	Coastal modified primary forest and semi-coastal modified secondary forest
Thames-Coromandel	Whenuakite	Yearsley (Nikau)	10.4097	Coastal modified primary and semi-coastal modified secondary forest
Thames-Coromandel	Whenuakite	Yearsley (Puriri)	7.151	Coastal modified secondary forest and exotic forest
Gisborne	Tarndale		578.284	Montane and lowland primary forest and lowland modified primary forest
Whakatane	Manawahe	A.J.'s Covenant	15.722	Semicoastal secondary forest
Stratford	Kaponga	Selwyn O'Neill Native Sanctuary	5.3957	Lowland secondary forest
Christchurch	Upper Lyttelton Harbour	Hunters Gully	14.8772	Semi coastal secondary forest, modified primary sedgeland and shrubland and modified secondary grassland
Marlborough	Marlborough Sounds	Kaingākaunui	1.5387	Coastal modified primary and secondary forest.
Hastings	Kereru	Piringa	13.5404	Lowland Secondary Forest
Rangitikei	Waiouru		26.7126	Submontane modified primary and secondary forest
Southland	Waipango	Elliott's Bush	11.7048	Lowland modified primary forest, secondary and modified secondary shrubland and exotic treeland
Christchurch	Little River	Tirowaikare	8.056	Lowland totara-matai-mixed hardwood forest with patches of kanuka

Waikato	Matahuru Valley	The Don Family Covenant	30.0465	Lowland modified secondary podocarp forest
Hutt City	Lowry Bay	Mendhurst Bower	0.2297	*Semicoastal modified primary
Thames-Coromandel	Whenuakite	Yearsley	9.4137	Coastal modified primary and secondary forest
Hurunui	Scargill, North Canterbury	Scargill Creek North	1.045	Lowland modified secondary treeland and shrubland
Southland	Te Anau	Karen's Gully – Lynmore	2.8584	Sub-montane secondary shrubland and small stream system
New Plymouth	Hurford	Rata Hill	4.7221	Semi-coastal modified primary forest
Southland	Te Anau	Webb's Wetland Extension – Lynmore	3.44	Sub-montane modified primary tussockland, peatfield and modified secondary grassland
Southland	Te Anau	Four Tarns Extension – Lynmore	3.1511	Sub-montane modified primary peatfield and tussockland, and modified secondary rushland and grassland
Waitaki	Duntroon	Anatani Fossil Valley Covenant	14.5447	Lowland modified primary sedgeland and grassland
South Taranaki	Hawera	Cotebrook	5.8951	Lowland modified primary forest
Hurunui	Scargill, North Canterbury	Scargill Hills Covenant Area	2.749	Lowland modified secondary shrubland, secondary scrub and modified secondary scrub
Southland	Te Anau	The Hobbit - Eweburn	265.4744	Sub-montane modified primary forest, shrubland, mossfield and modified secondary grassland
Westland	Hokitika	Dave's Bush	0.9975	Semi coastal modified primary forest, flaxland, sedgeland and herbfield
New Plymouth	Tikorangi	Otaraua	3.6177	Semicoastal modified primary forest
New Plymouth	Tikorangi	Nikorima	1.8653	Semicoastal modified primary forest
Tasman	Wakefield	Newton Squire Protected Area	7.8846	Lowland modified primary and secondary forest
Waikato	Waiuku	Highland Hills	8.946	semicoastal modified primary forest, reedland and exotic grassland
Waikato	Waiuku	Highland Hills	9.663	semicoastal modified primary forest and reedland, secondary forest and shrubland
Central Hawke's Bay	Tikokino	Pineridge Covenant	2.495	Lowland secondary forest
Kapiti Coast	Waikanae	Te Rama Covenant	0.6525	Semi-coastal primary, modified primary and secondary forest
Waipa	Te Miro		5.9202	Lowland modified secondary forest
Tasman	Waimea Inlet, Richmond	Renco	5.4471	Coastal landscape protection
Southland	Manapouri	Smith's - Duncraigen	5.4483	Submontane modified primary shrubland and treeland, secondary grassland and modified secondary sedgeland wetland
Southland	Manapouri	Paul's Wetland - Duncraigen	3.7125	Submontane modified primary rushland, grey scrub shrubland (stream meander)
Whangarei	Waipu		1.196	Lowland podocarp forest remnants
Kaipara	Maungaturoto	Garnerdale West Forest	8.366	Lowland secondary podocarp-broadleaf forest

Unfortunately some new registrations that should have been included in the last issue of Open Space were missed, due to a technical error. Below shows a summary of covenant registrations from 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019.

District Council	Location	Covenant Name	Area (ha)	Main open space type
Selwyn	Windwhistle	Longspur Bluff Covenant	1.9	Submontane modified-primary and modified secondary forest and modified primary and modified secondary shrubland and modified secondary scrub and geological and landscape feature
Tararua	Raumati	Te Maunga Lord of the Rings	4	Lowland modified secondary boulderfield with limestone cliff and boulder features
Tararua	Rua Roa	Kelly's Black Creek Bush	4.3	Lowland secondary forest
Selwyn	Windwhistle	Round Top Bluff	3.2	Submontane modified primary shrubland and modified secondary forest, scrub and tussockland and stream and volcanic cliffs
Selwyn	Windwhistle	The Point Bush	2	Submontane modified primary forest, secondary scrub and grassland and stream
Waitaki	Hampden	Kakaho Bank	3	Semi-coastal revegetated scrub and exotic grassland
New Plymouth	Korito		2.4	Lowland modified primary forest
New Plymouth	Waitara	The Two Sisters	3.14	Lowland modified primary forest
New Plymouth	Urenui	The Log Jam	370	Lowland primary and modified primary forest
Clutha	Lawrence	Mulligan's Waipori Covenant	1320	Sub-alpine modified primary shrubland-tussockland/mossfield and exotic grassland
Hurunui	Omihi	Yarrabee Covenant	11.5	Secondary lowland podocarp-hardwood forest, dryland scrub and shrubland
Whangarei	Parua Bay	Wildest Dreams	16	Lowland modified secondary forest and shrubland
Whangarei	Mata	Mata Bush	4.27	Lowland alluvial floodplain modified secondary forest
Southland	Ramparts – Te Anau	Jack's Covenant Extension - Stuart	3.8	Submontane modified secondary shrubland, sedgeland and exotic grassland
Far North	Pahii Bay, Russell	Te Pahii	41	Coastal pohutukawa forest, freshwater wetland system, regenerating shrubland, duneland
Nelson	Wakapuaka	Atua Whenua	3.2	Lowland modified secondary forest
Nelson	Wakapuaka	Three Kiwis	2.2	Lowland modified secondary forest and fernland
Matamata-Piako	Mangateparu		49	Modified primary forest

Waitomo	Pio Pio		4	Lowland modified primary forest and secondary forest, treeland and scrub and limestone outcrops
Waikato	Te Hoe	Gwenda and Don Allen Family Covenant	210	Lowland modified primary and secondary forest
South Taranaki	Patea		22	Lowland secondary forest
Stratford	Eastern Taranaki	Heao Road Covenant	33.7	Lowland modified primary and secondary forest
New Plymouth	Inglewood	Vickers Bush	4.2	Lowland modified primary forest
Far North	Kaikohe	Tobin	3.8	Lowland modified primary and secondary forest, stream and artificially created wetland.
New Plymouth	Hurdon	Atkinson Bush	5.3	Semicoastal modified primary and secondary forest
Queenstown-Lakes	Rapid No 128 Hunter Road	Hamilton Hill Open Space Covenant	15.2	Lowland exotic treeland and pasture and revegetated sedgeland and open water
New Plymouth	North Taranaki	Howell's Bush	7.45	Semicoastal modified primary forest
Waikato	Waikaretu	Mandeno 2	5.35	Semi coastal modified primary forest and modified primary sedgeland
Waipa	Maungatautari	Dallinger Bush	3.1	Lowland modified primary forest
Waikato	Mangatangi	Black Pond Farm Ngahere	6.3	Lowland modified secondary podocarp forest & life of tree (kauri)
New Plymouth	Inglewood	Vujcich Kamahi, Swamp Maire Forest	15	Lowland modified primary forest
Masterton	Matahiwi	Matahiwi Bush Covenant	1.6	Lowland modified primary forest
South Taranaki	Ngamatapouri	Richard Alexander Wetlands	2.08	Lowland primary modified reedland, secondary shrubland and openwater
New Plymouth	Urenui	Evans Gully	2.17	Semi-coastal modified primary forest
Masterton	Matahiwi	Matahiwi Bush	10	Lowland modified primary forest
Stratford	Huiroa	Harlow Fern	7.8	Lowland modified primary forest
Whangarei	Matapouri		2.25	Semi coastal modified secondary kanuka-manuka forest



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