

Matiu Really Matters

December 2012



Haere mai ki Matiu

Breaking News

Parliament has approved the plan for the three harbour islands, Matiu/Somes, Makaro/Ward, and Mokopuna, which was made public in the Dominion Post on 12/12/12, an auspicious date as well.

The plan sets out key infrastructure improvements, in particular the need to improve the visitor experience through the development of a visitor centre at the wharf entrance, which includes the bio security requirements and a place for Powhiri to be undertaken comfortably.

Further improvements are signalled with Bi-lingual signage and more interpretation on the history of the islands. Ageing infrastructure for carrying water and sewage is also highlighted in the plan.

The islands were part of the settlement package for Taranaki Whanui settled in September 2009. Taranaki Whanui Ki te Upoko O Te Ika is the collective name for the descendants of the original tribes based around the harbour and along the Hutt river in 1839. The whanau, hapu and iwi came from Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngati Tama and Ngati Ruanui.

Under the settlement management of the islands is the co-management model with the Kaitiaki Board as the governance entity jointly established with members of Taranaki Whanui and DOC including a conservation board member in equal numbers. Taranaki Whanui holds the Chair.

Not the Ranger's Ramble

As Ranger Jo and her assistants are really busy in this last month of 2012, this is not their Ramble but an onlooker's version of what is happening on Matiu/Somes.

Ranger Daryl Stephens along with Eastbourne Forest Ranger guides are helping with all the school groups and the many visitors to the island. Volunteer rangers are doing many of the odd jobs around the island in order to keep it in trim and looking good for all the visitors. See p.6 for a list of Rangers.

As a result the island is looking really good. But the weather is becoming rather hot and dry so we ask everyone to remember that, although smoking and fires are prohibited always, we still need to be especially aware of the fire hazard. It's a long way from a fire hydrant and the fire brigade, and helicopters with monsoon buckets take time to arrange.

Welcome to this newsletter
And Seasons Greetings to you
all from *the Matiu/Somes Island
Charitable Trust*:

*Mark Te One, Liz Mellish,
Fred Allen, Colin Ryder,
Ray Smith, Erini Shepherd,
Jan Heine.*

And from Rangers Jo, Emma
in absentia, and Daryl, thank
all of you who are involved in
the island for your time and
efforts on this jewel in Te
Whanganui a Tara, and
Seasons greetings

*Matiu/Somes, Poneke Area Office
Department of Conservation
PO Box 5086, Wellington
Ph 04 5686555 fax 04 5688688
matiusomes@doc.govt.nz
www.doc.govt.nz*

In this issue:

Harbour Islands Plan released
Onlooker's Ramble
Te Araroa Trail walker's news
F&B nursery
GeoNet addition
About Eastbourne Forest Rangers
On the Island art exhibition
Penguin Ponderings
Latest Fluttering Shearwater news

News from the Te Araroa Trail walkers

Emma Dunning, on leave to walk Te Araroa Trail, tells us that: I am going on a little walk, and I have 3000km and 140 days before I have to be back at work (thanks DOC for letting me take the time off).

If interested in where we are, if we are still alive, and the trails and tribulations that come with trail walking, you can follow us on our blog <http://teararoatoru.wordpress.com> And that told that, on 15/12/12, Emma was near Pirongia, and had track-side oranges & lemons, yum, after surviving 1500 steps up & 2000 down on Mt Hakarimata range. Contemplating setting up camp at lunchtime. Managing to leave the supermarket with only what we needed! Having lunch brought to us again, umm blackberries, scorched almonds. The challenge is on! Random acts of kindness, local girl feeling sorry for us & giving us strawberries, yum. Local farmer letting us camp in their paddock after our latest day. Surviving Waipu Riverbank assault course. Track disappearing into blackberry bushes (no fruit). Different stile types involving blackberries or barberry, fences, or no fences. Eating ice cream, everyday. Kirsten taking the lead, energy from hidden places. Passing 800 km!

Many people have asked why we are doing this or who we are doing it for. Personally I am doing it for myself, to experience New Zealand at a different pace, from a different angle, and to achieve personal challenges I have set myself. If I happen to motivate or inspire people along the way, it will be an added bonus. If I can do this anyone can.

It is amazing what passing comments can spark into flames, especially when you are stuck on a couch after knee surgery. However the 11th November is the day when we stand at Cape Reinga, the day we finally stop talking about it and actually start walking.

If you would like to know more about the Te Araroa trail, see the Trust's Website www.teararoa.org.nz



Flowering *Metrosideros perforata* (white rata vine)

Forest & Bird Nursery

We have had nine work parties on the island this year involving an average of nine volunteers. A number of these have been regular workers over the last twenty years, although two new members have recently been welcomed to the team.

Fewer plants have been raised than in earlier years, and they were mainly from seedlings bought in by DOC. The nursery is in good shape with less maintenance required since wood chips have been spread between the boxes.

Although the nursery has been reduced, it continues to serve an important role in the revegetation programme of Matiu.

Alex Kettles

GeoNet adds Matiu-Somes Island to earthquake monitoring network

As part of GeoNet's expansion of the Wellington earthquake monitoring network, our technicians installed a new strong motion seismic site on Matiu-Somes Island in November.

The site is part of our expansion of strong motion accelerographs in the Wellington region which are used to study different rock types as well as the region's faults. It is installed in a shed on the island with the data being transmitted back to GeoNet in real-time via radio transmitters.

How come the Rangers?

Some time in the early 1930s the Eastbourne Borough Council set aside some of the bush-covered areas in the eastern side of Wellington Harbour as the Eastbourne Scenic Reserves, under the 1928 Public Reserves & Domains Act. Later in the 1930s a 'Chief Ranger' was appointed, along with his Eastbourne Forest Rangers.

Then in 1967, the Eastbourne Forest Rangers (EFR) adopted a constitution and expanded its role to provide track work parties in what is now the East Harbour Regional Park (EHRP).

When Eastbourne Borough Council disappeared and became part of Lower Hutt, the Hutt City Council took over the 'administration' of the EFR and issued the Rangers with a written 'authority' for their responsibilities and duties under a Council Bylaw of 1997. However, with the demise of the Department of Lands & Survey and the creation of DOC, the role of voluntary rangers on public lands disappeared.

As well, Wellington Regional Council (now GWRC) took on the welfare of the EHRP including track work.

This meant less involvement in that Park but Stan Hunt, then on the Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust, could see a place for the EFR on Matiu/Somes Island which was now under DOC management and open to the public. It was fast becoming a must-see destination for Wellingtonians and others.

In 1996 informal discussions were held with the then DOC Ranger, Richard Anderson, about how the Rangers could become involved in the 'supervision' of the increasing number of visitors to the Island. These discussions led to a team of volunteer Eastbourne Rangers assisting DOC staff, beginning in February, 1997. Later, the team expanded to draw members from the wider Wellington area.

From initially having simply a presence on the Island especially during total Fire Bans, the role of EFR has spread to helping DOC Rangers by welcoming visitors and doing the biosecurity checks at weekends, and now to providing guides for booked school parties

and other groups. They also provide guided tours on-the-spot if requested.

So EFR are a busy lot as you read next.

How now the Ranger Guides?

2012 has been a very busy year for those Eastbourne Forest Rangers who conduct Guided tours of the island. So far this year we have taken 30 booked groups around, mostly schools-plus about 10 "spot tours", all of which adds up to over 850 people.

Six tours were booked in November alone and another nine are booked for December, or 300 visitors so far this month. At the moment we have 21 Rangers of whom 11 take guided tours. Most of the tours are mid-week so that they are conducted by our retired members.

They seem to be well received by the children who particularly enjoy running wild around the gun emplacements. When the teachers have done some preliminary study of the island we find that the tours are especially rewarding as the children know enough to be able to ask questions.

The fees for the tours, which can be booked on-line through the DOC National Visitors Booking System, have recently been reduced. The basic charge is \$10 per person. Schools pay \$2 per child. Discounts are given for larger groups.

These fees have been used to provide uniforms for the EFR Rangers. This identifies them as having an official presence on the Island. Recently two more benches have been bought including a much-needed one half way up the Bullock Track.

We welcome new Rangers, Richard, John, Katya and Irene. We are especially pleased to welcome Irene as she is a member of the Taranaki Whanui. With the increase in the number and size of the tours (some can be up to 70), EFR is occasionally stretched to provide the number of Guides needed as we aim to provide one Guide for each 15 persons. If the number of tours continues to increase we may need to recruit more Rangers to act as Guides – preferably those who would be available mid-week. Contact us (see p.6) Ray Smith & Derek Sole

Matiu Somes: On the Island

26 September - 27 October 2012

Solander Gallery, in partnership with the Department of Conservation and the Harbour Island Kaitiaki Board, initiated an artist residency project on Matiu Somes Island featuring seven artists from around Aotearoa New Zealand. The artists spent the weekend on the Island in March 2012, discovering the fascinating natural and cultural histories of the island.

The seven artists were Inge Doesburg, Jo Ogier, Stanley Palmer, Ben Reid, Stephen Robinson, Basia Smolnicki and Lynn Taylor, absorbing the magic and history of this interesting sanctuary.

Sifting through their experiences and impressions back in their studios for six months, over 30 works were conceived reflecting incredibly diverse points of view from a single source of inspiration. The artworks were on exhibition at Solander Gallery during October 2012 in an exhibition titled Matiu Somes: The Next Chapter.

Selected works from this exhibition will travel back to the Island over Wellington's Anniversary Weekend (19-21 January 2013) in a project that combines an exhibition of artworks and free public printmaking workshops.

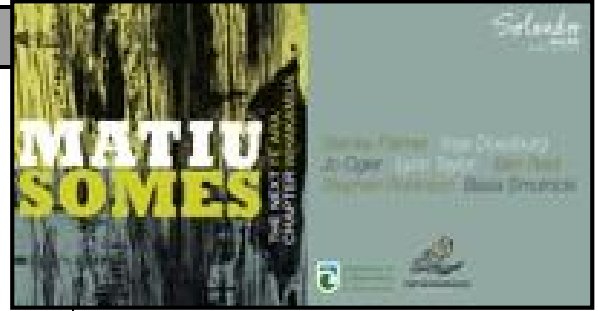
The Caretakers Cottage will be transformed into an art gallery for the weekend with an exhibition of over twenty artworks inspired by Matiu Somes.

There will also be the opportunity to talk with many of the artists featured who will be on the island over the weekend.

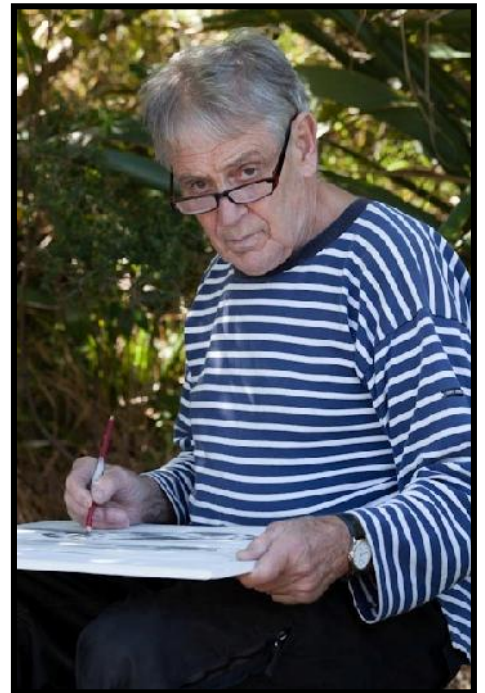
Environmentally friendly printmaking workshops will run over the weekend so you can indulge your own Matiu Somes inspiration. The Barracks Building will be transformed into a hotbed of creativity with monoprint workshop experiences run by Wellington artists Basia Smolnicki and Vincent Drane while Dunedin artist Lynn Taylor will run screenprinting workshop experiences in the Caretakers Cottage. The workshop events are free and are suitable for all ages: no art experience required – just a desire to have fun.

Matiu Somes: On The Island is a project in partnership with Department of Conservation, Museum of Wellington City & Sea and Wellington City Council.

Solander would also like to take this opportunity to thank Matiu Somes DOC staff – with a special mention to Jo Greenman and Emma Dunning for their invaluable support. The depth and diversity of the Island that others tend to overlook, is often taken by artists who probe to bring to life hidden, forgotten or disregarded stories. The singular visions and different approaches of the artists involved realise the possibility that all may draw inspiration from this unique place.



Matiu/Somes Island, in the middle of Wellington's harbour (Te Whanganui a Tara) has an extraordinarily rich and complex history. From its original naming after one of Kupe's female relatives to its later European use as a quarantine station, internment camp, military installation and now nature reserve, its relatively small area is packed with stories.



Stanley Palmer at work as one of the artists in residence. He works on bamboo



Matiu/Somes, a place of history
Bamboo engraving by Stanley Palmer

A Place in the Sun, woodcut by Ben Reid



Penguin Ponderings

Stage One Study

The Little Blue Penguin study on Matiu/Somes, Makaro, and Mokopuna Islands ended in December 2012. The study looked at whether flipper bands could be causing drag in the water and thus were affecting their ability to feed themselves and their chicks.

A substantial amount of data was collected over the five-year study period by the team of volunteers. The volume of data collected by the team is substantial and will be a valuable resource for future studies of this unique little bird. The team is awaiting preliminary feedback on the results of a comprehensive analysis of the data that is now under way.

Stage Two Study

Earlier in 2012 DOC gave approval for a new – Stage Two – study based on the Matiu/Somes Island. This study began in September 2012, and will focus on nest-related activities – for example, eggs, nests, chick identification, and nest fidelity. Stage Two is restricted to selected areas and nests on Matiu/Somes Island.

DOC also has approved a parallel study by a PhD student from Auckland University which will look initially at feeding and ranging habits of Little Blue Penguins from Matiu/Somes Island. Data obtained from GPS tracking devices fitted to adult birds is beginning to provide useful information about their habits on and around the island.

Here is a summary of the data obtained after three of the four monthly surveys listed for 2012:

- 156 individual birds identified
- 85 active nests have produced 145 eggs
- 119 healthy chicks

Mike Rumble

EFRangers Need Recruits

The Rangers aim to provide one Guide for each 15 persons on Guided parties. We can be stretched to provide this number of Guides.

If the number of tours continues to increase, we may need to recruit more Rangers to act as Guides, preferably those who would be available mid-week.

Anyone interested should contact Ray Smith at 562 8587 or at rmsmith@xtra.co.nz and have a chat about what is involved.

Ray Smith

Landcare Weta Researchers' news

Corinne Watts and Danny Thornburrow at Landcare Research, Hamilton, and possibly Ian Stringer ex DOC, plan to come back to Matiu in February 2013 to re-collect abundance, distribution and tracking rate data for Cook Strait giant weta to compare with the data collected 5 years ago.

Hopefully the data will show an increase in the abundance, tracking rates and increased spread of Cook Strait giant weta across Matiu.

More information will come later after the work is done. Watch out weta, a morepork is on board the Island.

DOC's Impressive Summer Staff list

Jo Greenman is really pleased to have such a lot of great staff to help over the busy summer

**Emma's cover while away:
Daryl Stephens**

**Trainee Rangers:
Geoff Reid Oct-Dec
Bridget Hunt Dec-Jan**

**Summer Volunteer Rangers:
Terese McLeod Dec
James Hansen Jan
Mike Mobbs Feb-Mar**

Island cleaner: Roger Pope

**And Jo's very handy &
casual man: Iain Wilson**

Penguin Ponderings in detail



Photos by Vince Waanders

Numbers for October 2012:

	Sept 2012: 12th, 13th, 14th.	Oct 2012: 10th, 11th, 12th.
Burrows visited:	169	165
Burrows with Adults:	93	91
Burrows with Eggs:	43	70
Burrows with Chicks:	0	13
<i>Nights at Wharf:</i>		
Wednesday. Marked :	10	17
Un marked:	6	10
Total:	16	27
Thursday. Marked:	14	12
Un marked:	7	6
Total:	21	18

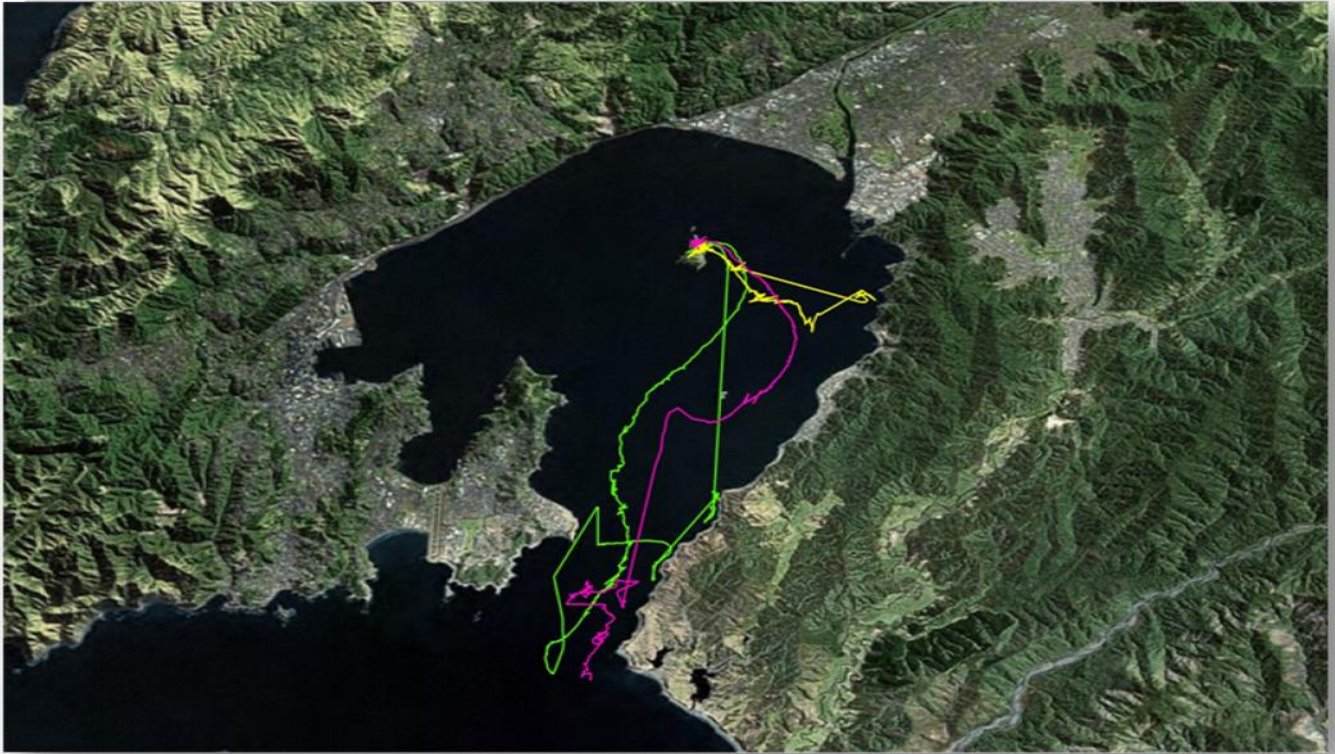
The four weeks leading up to the October trip showed a steady increase in the number of burrows with eggs compared to last month - up from 43 to 70 burrows with eggs this month.

First chicks for the season! Thirteen of the 165 burrows visited on this trip had chicks. All still very small and with adult still present - saw one burrow with the egg shells still in the burrow.

First chicks were recorded in previous years on:

8th Sept 2009, 28th Sept 2010, 7th Sept 2011,
10th Oct 2012

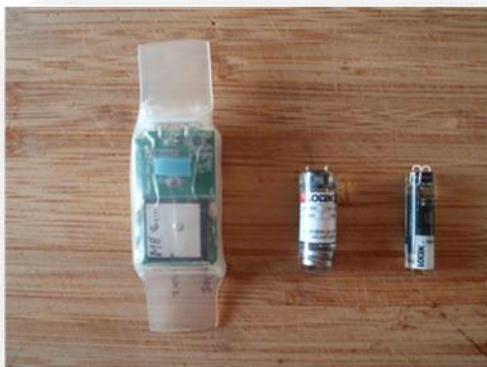
Although we are now monitoring a smaller sample of burrows on the island compared to previous years, it still appears that this season has had a delayed or similar start to 2010. The chicks on this trip were all within 1 to 1.5 weeks old.



Jingjing's first GPS Tracks of three Penguin's from Matiu/Somes Island.

Trip highlights:

Jingjing Zhang, a PhD Biology student from the University of Auckland, joined us on this trip. Jingjing is starting a 3-year study on population dynamic and movement ecology of little blue penguins. She plans to use *GPS* telemetry to track the movements of penguins out at sea as well as developing geospatial models of the burrow sites on Matiu/Somes. Jingjing is also doing the same study with penguins on Mokohinau Island in the Hauraki Gulf and on Motuara Island in the Marlborough Sounds. Jingjing will be joining us on our monthly penguin trips throughout the breeding season over the next 3 years collecting data.



GPS (left) and Time Depth Recorders being used by Jingjing for monitoring penguin movements.



Christmas tree of lights.... GPS devices (x5) being recharged from laptop by Jingjing.

So welcome along Jingjing! We look forward to working with you especially as the data you are collecting is of great interest to us all.

Penguin "S-0040" - Update:



"S-0040" is the web tag number of the penguin found on 9th Sept 2012, halfway down the bullock track with deep cuts to the top of both flippers as well as along the skin near the upper beak. The update on its progress, from the avian wildlife vets at Wellington zoo, was "Feathers re-growing and doing well".

Tuatara: a Tuatara was seen in natural penguin burrow 'AC5', close to western circuit track. Also the 'tail' of one was seen in Cable Bay up a black plastic pipe. Jo also called to let us know the tuatara under the shed near her house was out catching the last of the day's sun rays.

Robin: Just one Robin G-RM was sighted on this trip, down at beach level on the southern Light House coast. Very quiet, no vocals heard. We were doing the Bait Stations for Jo.

Reef Heron: No sign of the reef herons around North point. The previous nests both remain inactive.

Canada goose; One Canada goose nest was found with 6 eggs and two very stropy adults. Since hatched.

Juvenile Black Backed Gull band was recovered by Reuben, from west end of Wharf area, near old barge.



Jingjinm & Amy (L)

Meeting the locals -
Cook Strait Giant weta
with Reuben (R)



Thanks to all the volunteers on this trip; Ali Hull, Amy Doyle, Angi Beuttner (day), Di Batchelor (day), Jingjing Zhang, Reg Cotter, Reuben Tipoki, Ros Batcheler, Vince Waanders.
And to Doc and Jo Greenman for letting us get on with the work.

The chicks have flown their nests

Here is an update on what's happening with the Matiu/Somes Island fluttering shearwater translocation project.

2012 transfer

On 10th January 2012, 74 chicks were transferred to Matiu/Somes, and all fledged successfully. They fledged at heavier weights than those in previous projects. This bodes well as the heavier they are the more likely they are to survive the first few months after fledging while they are learn to feed themselves. Two fledged chicks have been recovered dead. One crash-landed in Wellington city but died later at the Zoo, and the other was found dead (quite decomposed) on the 90 Mile beach at Loch Sport, Victoria, Australia, not far from Melbourne on 13th February 2012. This indicates that chicks depart for Australia immediately after fledging. It is sad that this bird died but it has added to our knowledge of the species.

Burrows

Since February the colony has been visited once a month for a night time check of the colony. Eight burrows are regularly being visited by adult flutterers and several others are visited occasionally.

Adults

Eleven different adult birds have been captured at the colony site. Seven are ex-Mana Island birds with two chicks from 2006, 2007 and 2008 and an adult banded on Mana moving to Matiu/Somes. This adult had her Matiu/Somes burrow taken over by a penguin so has now returned to Mana Island. Four unbanded adults have now been banded on Matiu/Somes as well.

Eggs

On 30th September, an egg was located in burrow 15, a burrow that is very close to the Eastbourne speaker. When I went back in October, this burrow had 2 eggs inside. A pair only lay one egg so two females must have been using this burrow. Both eggs were incubated by two different adults until the beginning of December when they were found in the burrow without an adult present. If this was the first breeding attempt by these birds, they did well as success is never guaranteed. We will have to see what happens, maybe they will come back. (see photo)

Next season 2013

Planning is well underway for the 2013 transfer, with the actual transfer happening on the same date as last year, 10th January. Another 80 chicks will be flown to the island arriving at around 12.30pm. The feeders' roster is full, bookings for the ferry, accommodation, helicopters etc all completed. Last minute items are all being addressed.

Thanks everyone

Again I thank everyone who has assisted this year. Your enthusiasm and willingness to do jobs has been outstanding. We have made fantastic progress, better than could be expected.

To everyone, on behalf of the Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust, we really appreciate your efforts and thank you. Till next year then (well later this year actually) and to those who haven't been there yet, you will enjoy it.

Shane Cotter

EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE!

To save paper, reduce printing and postage costs, and minimise handling, we would like send this newsletter by e-mail to as many Friends as possible. Please help by sending your email address to

rmsmith@xtra.co.nz

Your help will be much appreciated

Thank you

DO YOUR BIT TO REDUCE WASTE

What we are getting so excited about. Already adults are 'thinking' about their next generations.



Nest box and it's in use by the most appropriate tenants



Overnight stays for Friends

We now have a variety of overnight accommodation available for Friends of Matiu. If interested check out the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz for information and bookings.

Forest and Bird Members can get a 25% discount on any Island accommodation. Contact the DOC Wellington Visitors Centre wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz
04 384 7770

Karobusters for 2013

16-17 February
16-17 March
13-14 April

For further information please contact Dave Cox: coxfamily@paradise.net.nz

Guided Walks

Interested? Check out the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz or email Jo or Emma at matiusomes@doc.govt.nz

Matiu Really Matters* – Newsletter
Issued c.3 times a year, and as required

*Name based on that used in Wellington Botanical Society Newsletter, by kind permission of Stan Butcher, Lower Hutt Branch Forest & Bird, Wellington Botanical Society

Thank you to all contributors – without your input it would not be the interesting read it is. And thanks to the team on Matiu/Somes of Jo, Emma & all.

To have your say, why not email janheine@xtra.co.nz
Jan Heine NL compiler



Next issue is next year 2013:
Deadline due 01/03/13 or some time

Would you like to help with projects on Matiu/Somes Island

Please give us details of your name, email address, and phone number and we will send you notices and news of projects and events. If you do not have email but would like to contribute to conservation projects on the Island, please give your postal address and we will send you newsletters from time to time (about 3 times a year).

Then we can invite you to:

- take part in hands-on conservation projects
- work with like-minded people on Island projects
- receive newsletters
- stay overnight as part of a 'work' weekend

Name:

Email address:

Telephone:

Postal address:

.....

.....

Your donation will help the Trust initiate projects on the Island

Donation

Please send to:
Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust
C/- PO Box 39294
Lower Hutt 5045

Do you want to help the Trust?

Why not fill in this form?



Intentionally blank