

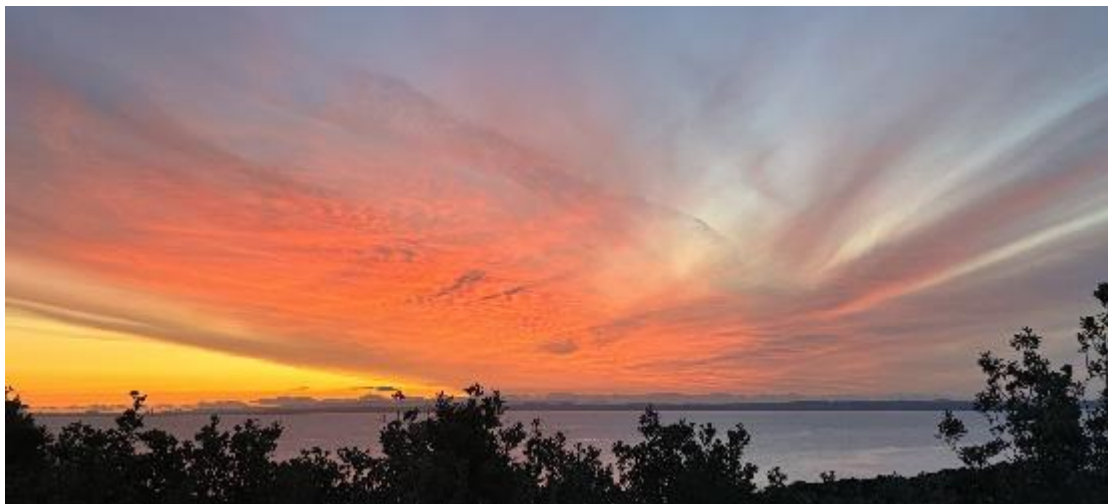


GuideLines

Number 352 – Wednesday 24th January 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa

(Greetings, hello to you all)



Dear guides,

There have been some worrying incidents recently of invasive guide / visitor encounters with tuatara and wetapunga..

As covered in detail in our Guiding Manual, Tiritiri Matangi is a designated 'Scientific Reserve' which gives its fauna and flora a degree of legal protection. Most of our bird species, all of our reptiles and also wetapunga are further protected under the Wildlife Act.

SoTM's current guiding concession, which is reviewed every three years, means we as guides must operate under the rules applicable and ensure our visitors do the same.

The seventh point on page five of our manual states: "We and our clients must not **pursue** or **surround** any of the wildlife".

Also worthy of a refresher is point one of the "New Zealand Environmental Care Code" (page 24 of the manual):

1. Protect plants and animals:

Treat New Zealand's forests and birds with **care** and **respect**. They are unique and often rare.

It also needs to be noted our concession is limited to the **named and mapped tracks only**, with no deviations from those tracks no matter how small. In plain terms, taking visitors in search of tuatara behind the toilets or up other tracks which

are not part of our concession is in contravention of that concession and could result in it being revoked.

Wētāpunga:

Wētāpunga are nocturnal and use camouflage to hide from predators during the day. Sometimes we are lucky enough to see them sitting quite low and close to the track. Just because they don't move does not mean they are not stressed and don't know you are there.

Signs of stress are: moving from the roosting spot, the raising, extending and slow rise and fall of their back legs:



Stressed wetapunga pose

Disturbing their environment (moving leaves or branches) to get a better view or a better photo is NOT OK. This applies to all fauna, not just those that can't fly away. Explain to your group that we are extremely fortunate to see them in the wild, it is a protected species and must not be interfered with. Please be respectful.

Tuatara:

We are having wonderful weather for tuatara. It is warm and humid and they are often to be seen outside their burrows.

The Protocols around approaching tuatara, agreed by SoTM Committee, state:

- Guides should be discreet when showing tuatara to visitors
- If a guide suspects that .. members of their group may abuse this information, then the presence of the tuatara should not be revealed
- When observing a tuatara, guides should not reveal the fact that it is near its burrow.
- They should always be observed from the track and from a distance of at least five metres

Watch quietly and move on. Under no circumstances leave the track.

As a guide, you will often be privy to information which you cannot share with the general public. This includes known locations for tuatara

Please keep all this firmly in mind. Any breaches of these protocols are treated very seriously.

Nga mihi

Ian Alexander

Chairperson - Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc.

E hara taku toa I te toa takitahi, engari e toa takatini

My success is not mine alone, but the strength of many

What a holiday season we've had. Seven days a week, full boat loads of people from all around the world and the motu, coming to spend time in our precious taiao (environment). Thank you to all our enthusiastic and dedicated guides who have made their experience so special. And to our shop volunteers who have helped our visitors find memorable and meaningful gifts to take home – to say nothing of the cool drinks that have hit the spot in these hot days. I love seeing people getting excited with our unique bird beanies!

We had one couple from the UK (Manchester) who organised a 'specialist tour' prior to landing in Auckland, and they enjoyed it so much they came back for a second day to free range their way around the tracks. Another family group had 'the best day of their lives' thanks to our wonderful guide. There have been several visitors who have made a specific point of giving me positive feedback on their experiences on the island.

So a huge mihi for everyone pitching in and working together as a team in the best interests of the visitors and the island. I'm sure your guiding has inspired many to become more attuned to conservation and te taiao.

Pre-assigning guides

I was pleased that the innovation of pre-assigning guides on the boat seemed to hit the spot, both with guides and visitors. And it certainly made it easier to allocate the smaller numbers left after the early get-away groups leave the concrete.

New guides

We have continued to receive a good level of Expressions of Interest in volunteering, both for guiding and for project work.

Congratulations to three newly fledged guides – Rachel Connor, Chloe McMenamin and Graham McQuaid have all started flying solo over the last couple of months. Which brings me to whanaungatanga – that sense of family connection that is part of the magic of Tiritiri Matangi. When people first start their guiding journey it can be daunting, particularly if they are completely new to the island. A little awahi (care) can go a long way. So if you see someone with a temporary badge sitting by themselves on the ferry, please reach out and include them in group conversations. That personal connection is vital in building our guiding team on Tiri. There may also be other ways you can think of to include new guides in your conversations.

School's back

We have one senior school group on 2 February, then visits start in earnest 14 February. We'll soon welcome back Sara Dean and Liz Maire as educators.



Health & Safety

Sweep the concrete

DOC have asked us to take responsibility for keeping the top of the concrete road where it meets the gravel swept clear of rubble. It's treacherous if stones are on the concrete as it can easily cause a slip and fall situation. There is a large broom in the wharf shed. If you see it needs doing, please grab the broom and sweep away. When I have time pre-island I will be asking a person to volunteer to do the task each day.

Tides and Kawerau track

We've had guidance from DOC about the high tide and Kawerau track accessibility. It goes like this. If the tide is 2.25m and not rising when the ferry docks, it's OK to guide on the track. I will be putting the tide height and times on the guide planning sheet each day as a reference. Of course, wave height and wind direction can also impact the call on whether or not it is safe to guide visitors along there.

It's wasp season

A message from the Rangers about wasps on the island. Remember that paper wasps make their nests under harakeke leaves. If you see evidence of a nest, or any common or German wasps while on your walks could you please make a note of the location and let the duty Ranger know so they can deal with it appropriately. Alternatively, you can let the Guide Manager know so they can message the Rangers.

Skills survey

Thank you to those of you who have completed the skills survey online. If you have yet to complete it there is a request from the Committee that you do so by 31st January. Here is the link to the survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SoTMSkills2023>



Guides needed

Concert

We need 4 extra guides for the day of the concert – 9 March. Please let us know if you can help with staying on to catch the later ferry, and to help ensure all our visitors make it back to the ferry safely.

February bookings

We are quite thin on the ground for guides generally in February. So if you haven't yet booked your regular days, please think about doing that now. Email to booktoguide@tiritirimatangi.org.nz. Much appreciated.

Gail Reichert

027 222 7318

Volunteer & Guide Manager

Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc

Flora News

Summer fruit for the birds on Tiritiri Matangi by Warren Brewer

Mahoe:

The mahoe trees are having a second flush of flowers. Male and female flowers are on separate trees, spread along thin branches. New green fruit, which ripens to a deep purple, is also forming.



Mahoe male flowers



Mahoe female flowers and new fruit



Mahoe ripe fruit

Taupata

Taupata has fruit ripening on female bushes. Fruit can be seen on the taupata bush growing beside the wharf.



Taupata fruit

Karaka

Ripe karaka fruit on the large tree in the Visitor Centre courtyard is being harvested by kereru. The fruit's flesh is edible and very nutritious. The kernel inside contains the toxin karakin. Maori learnt how to neutralise the toxin by steaming and leaching in water to provide a food similar to oatmeal.



Karaka ripe fruit



Karaka kernels ready for steaming

Fauna News

Titipounamu:

Simon Fordham reports; “there are clearly a record number of riflemen on the Island, with guides reporting seeing numerous individuals, pairs and family groups along all three routes. With over 200 individuals identified this season in accessible areas, and many unbanded birds being sighted, population estimates are now in the high-hundreds.

Hihi update

Emma Gray reports stats for the hihi season at 18th January are:

- 387 eggs laid
- 307 chicks hatched
- 214 chicks banded
- and 202 fledglings currently flying around with another three nests to fledge
- we still have four active nests with chicks that are 10 days and under.



Kokako update

Morag Fordham reports "As of 20.01.2024 we have six fledglings and nine chicks. At this stage both Discovery and Sarang and Jenny and Slingshot have two each. In the case of Oran and Haar he has been left to feed their fledgling and she appears to be sitting on a new nest.

Although both Haeata and Hotu and Wai Ata and Awenga were feeding two chicks each, only one fledgling from each of these nests has been seen.

Others pairs have had failed nests, some for the second time, and so far none of them have renested.



Moana and UB9 continue to entertain visitors with their efforts learning to sing. They have taken up residence at the top of Little Wattle Valley/ Implement Shed area.

John Stewart's update:

Kororā

Many of you will be aware that our little penguins/kororā have had a very poor nesting season with all 15 chicks in our nest boxes dying in late October. Only one pair, in the second seaside display box, has made a second nesting attempt and they currently have two chicks. Unfortunately, the inspection lid and perspex window have suffered some damage and, to protect the chicks and parents, the lid has been screwed down. We will try to come up with a safer solution for next season.

Cook's Petrel/ Tītī attraction

After five years of no success in attracting over-flying Cook's petrels to adopt a home on Tiritiri and with increasing problems in maintaining the solar-powered loudspeakers it was time to review the project.

Rather than give up completely, it was decided to move the speakers, solar panel and nest boxes to the east coast on a promontory north of Emergency Landing. Trail cameras are used to monitor any arrivals and so far, we've had regular images of both kiwi and kororā.

The bird feeding app

Thanks to all of you who have loaded the bird feeding app on your mobile phones and submitted 725 records. That's a lot of sightings but many more are needed, especially in the winter months when we only have a few dozen for each month. Already there are some fascinating results and there will be a short report in the next Dawn Chorus.

Most of the records are of kōkako which is not surprising as it is easier to see what they are eating, and they eat a lot! Part of their diet is seasonal – they only eat cicadas when they are available and clematis during and just after flowering – but some plants seem to be eaten year round including karo, mahoe, puriri and trackside weeds.

Just drop me an email (johnreastewart@gmail.com) or catch me on the ferry or on the Island if you'd like to help.

Dog tags on trees

Some of you have noticed metal dog tags appearing recently on trees around the Island. I've been using these to identify potential trees for a new phenology study. Phenology is the study of the timing of flowering and fruiting of plants. I'm planning to link the data to that from our bird feeding study and to the weather records for the Island.

Taken together it may be possible to identify when nutritious food is in short supply, what impacts this has on our birds (and maybe reptiles and invertebrates) and what could be done about it.

Very soon I'll be recruiting volunteers to collect the phenology data. Some survey routes will be convenient enough for guides to do on their way back to the ferry but others will require a day trip at the weekend. I'd like to assign teams to routes to help get good year-round coverage. Feel free to get in touch if you think you might like to help.

Nature Notes:

Have our kororā starved because the marine food web in the Gulf has collapsed?

By John Sibley

For some time now the conservation status of our kororā/little blue penguins has been described as “at risk – declining” nationally.

On Tiritiri Matangi the Kororā breeding season this year has been the worst since monitoring began four years ago. Over a short period in October 2023 all the kororā chicks in the monitored nest boxes died of starvation, abandoned by parents who were unable to catch enough fish to feed them.

John’s full report, which will be published in the next issue of Dawn Chorus, studies:

- Declines in the “bread-and-butter” plankton species that feed the fish that sustain the kororā
- The recent marine heatwaves that appear to have had a significant effect on these plankton trends, and
- Sediment and storm events, which have left behind a fine, very slow settling organic particulate matter which obscures sunlight and hiding prey fish, and is easily stirred up by any moderately rough seas.

Ask the Experts:

One of our guides was asked how high the hill the lighthouse is on, and is Coronary Hill the highest point on Tiritiri Matangi.

The lighthouse is 21 metres high and the hill is 70m so the top of the lighthouse is 91m above sea level.

The highest point of the motu is about halfway along Ridge Road on a grassy knoll on the right hand side heading away from the Visitors Centre. There is a trig there and the height is about 90m.

Send your most vexing questions to guidelines@tiritirimatangi.org.nz and we'll ask the experts for an answer.

Obituary

John McLeod passed away on 8th December aged 76. He and his wife Kay were involved in the early days of the planting in the 1980's and he was instrumental in the design and contract for the Visitors centre. He was on the committee for a couple of years and his son, Ian, was a ranger on the island. He was very active on Tiritiri while he was in Auckland before retiring to Opotiki.

Up and coming

Tiritiri Matangi Talks 2024

Monday 29th April

Monday 10th June

Concert

Saturday 9th March

Supporters' Weekends

Saturday 11th May

Saturday 13th July

Saturday 7th September

Saturday 5th October

Working Weekends

Auckland Anniversary Weekend - 27th January

Easter Weekend - 29th March

King's Birthday Weekend - 1st June

Focus on Te Reo Māori

This is a major part in the New Zealand Curriculum across all levels in schools.

1. **Helpful Guidelines for all SoTM members for upskilling in Te Reo Māori.**
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/maori-language-week/114961703/power-te-reo-maori-video-lesson-pronounce-words-with-confidence>
2. The following link has been provided by the 2022 Year 11 te reo Māori students at Rangitoto College. It is excellent for learning about vowel and consonant sounds, and the use of macrons, in te reo Māori. It includes some key words specific to Tiritiri Matangi.
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/190hdBjzxyx_2Cpe8DC8aMI4mlyZUShyqjW62rN-6hvY/edit?usp=sharing
3. Note the **Māori Bird Lore - An Introduction by Murdoch Riley** is available in the office for guides/ SoTM members to pick up and dip into during lunch breaks.
4. **Kupu Māori / words.** Ideal to constantly check the aural: Te Aka Māori Dictionary <http://maoridictionary.co.nz/> The sound in Māori is often quite different from the way many of us have traditionally pronounced kupu / words.

Cybersleuth

Six weeks worth of links:

- [Incredibly rare half-male, half-female bird spotted by kiwi in South America](#)
- [The coloured stripes that explain climate change](#)
- [Northland clamps down on vehicles on beaches](#)
- [Demolition of Te Urewera huts found to be unlawful](#)
- [Whanganui River's rare nankeen night heron captured in new book](#)
- [Humans, rats and dogs pushed the takahē into Fiordland – new genetic research maps its dramatic journey](#)
- [The daredevil flight to save rare birds](#)
- [Wairakei Golf & Sanctuary bounces back from Cyclone Gabrielle](#)
- [DOC closes Wellington visitor centre](#)
- The Pūkoro Shorebird Team are offering guided tours this summer. For more information, visit their booking page:
<https://shop.shorebirds.org.nz/event-booking/>
- [Maori-led trapping effort aiming to wipe out ship rats, feral cats on Great Barrier Island](#)
- [The major kiwi harbour that's become a 'pupping ground' for great white sharks](#)
- [Scientists brave rough seas to hunt out albatross killer](#)
- [Marine biologist spots orca she rescued a decade ago](#)
- [Battle of the 'beaver believers' breaks out in Italy as species mysteriously reintroduced](#)
- [Birdwatching changes the way you look at the world – it truly is the gateway drug to environmental awareness](#)
- [Bird 'super sanctuary' proposed for Lower Hutt](#)
- [Listen to the audio of a talk with a slide show on Tiritiri Matangi by Anne Rimmer in 2007. Anne Rimmer and the birds by Ngā Pātaka Kōrero - Auckland Libraries in Ngā Pōito-o-Te Kupenga O Taramainuku - Islands of the Hauraki Gulf playlist online for free on SoundCloud](#)
- [Electric fences found to protect beach-nesting birds from dog walkers](#)
- ['Smart' trap trial raises hopes American mink can be driven from UK](#)
- [Dramatic stoat photo alarms Wellington conservationists](#)
- [Mesmerizing drone footage shows humpback whales create spiral to hunt](#)
- [Far north iwi gets \\$6.6m to save threatened taonga species](#)
- [Cook Islands turtle facial recognition project aims to help conservation efforts](#)
- [The Punakaiki petrel patrol: Helping an endangered bird](#)
- [Did we put takahe in the wrong place?](#)

SoTM website links and blogs

- [Titipounamu / rifleman survey](#)
- [The translocation of miromiro to Tiritiri Matangi](#)
- [Guides section](#)



Stoat dogs chilling after a hard day running the whole island

**Ngā mihi maioha
(with thanks and appreciation)**

Photographs:

Header:	Karin Gouldstone
Stressed wetapunga	Karin Gouldstone
Takahe bathtime	Emma Gray (L) & Jacqui Darvill (R)
Tawaka / poplar mushroom (cyclocybe parasitica)	Emma Gray
Flora	Warren Brewer
Hihi	Martin Sanders
Kokako (Honesty)	Neil Davies
Footer	Jacqui Darvill



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