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KEEPING YOU INFORMED

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Later this year, our local government representatives are up for election or re-election, and next year we have a general election. I encourage you to talk to your elected representatives, and those seeking election about the role of fenced sanctuaries as part of the nation's collective conservation efforts, and of the precarious and variable local/central government funding for such efforts.

Protected sanctuaries, by their very nature, demand money, time and dedication - lots and lots of all three! Money to pay for biosecurity fencing, constant repairs to the fence, tracks, water courses and weed control are just a very small part of the ongoing costs of sanctuary operations; added to which there are vehicle costs, insurance, power charges, payroll costs, tools and equipment and much more besides.

While it is a commercial objective of the Trustees for the Sanctuary to become financially independent (fully self-funding), in reality, it may take another six to eight years to increase visitor and supporter numbers to the point that sufficient income is generated to cover all our costs.

Sanctuaries such as the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary need government support (both central and local) until they become independently financially secure. Increasingly, conservation investments are linked to the tourism sector, so investing in sanctuaries means investment in the visitor sector.

The Sanctuary is a prime example of a local community asset attracting visitors year round, that with greater investment from local and central government, business and community support could be transformed into a "must-see" top quality visitor attraction in the top of the South Island.

It is my sincere belief, which I imagine is shared by all of our volunteers, that the Sanctuary has the potential to become an iconic conservation and tourism operation for our region in the same way that the much better known Zealandia has become in Wellington.

An opportunity exists to continue to build, improve and utilise the Sanctuary as an existing community tourism and conservation asset that will over time return substantial benefit to both the biodiversity of the region and as a tourism asset for the region attracting greater numbers of local visitors and out-of-region tourists.

However, it must be said, we could always do more if more funding was available. So if you're talking to election candidates, you might like to ask them where they stand on supporting their local conservation and tourism asset the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary - we could be so much more with more funding!

Ngā mihi

Chris Hawkes, Chair BWST

SPECIES TRANSLOCATION UPDATE - POWELLIPHANTA

In April last year, the Sanctuary started the long-held goal of translocating endangered endemic species to the Sanctuary. The first translocated species was the tīeke (saddleback), followed by five translocations of kākāriki karaka (orange-fronted parakeet). And now, we can announce the arrival in the Sanctuary of -

Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina

NZ carnivorous land snail *Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina*

Powelliphanta is a genus of large carnivorous land snails that is endemic to New Zealand. The genus has ten described species, but that number is ultimately likely to exceed 25 species, with many new populations having been found only in recent decades due to their presence in remote parts of the country. Many species are further subdivided into distinctive subspecies.

The species/subspecies being translocated to the Sanctuary is *Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina*. The *P. hochstetteri* snails are among the larger Powelliphanta species. *P. h. consobrina* is medium-large, with some animals attaining shell diameters of over 60mm.

The natural range of *P. h. consobrina* comprises mostly higher altitude areas below bush line within the Bryant and Richmond Ranges. It usually occurs at altitudes in excess of 800m all but at a handful of sites it is found at lower altitudes, as low as 300m. Within this quite extensive range, the subspecies occurs only patchily, which is thought to be due to the impacts of introduced predators. The subspecies was reported in 1930 to be present as far south as Gordon's Knob but subsequent burning of much of the forest there appears to have led to extinction of that population. There is no evidence of *P. h. consobrina* having been found in The Brook catchment previously, but their existing distribution in the vicinity and the fact that some of these populations occur at lower altitudes, well within the altitudinal range of the Sanctuary, suggests that they are likely to have once been present.

Like most Powelliphanta species, *P. h. consobrina* feeds primarily on earthworms which are sought at night. It is likely that some other invertebrates may also be taken. During the day the snails take cover under leaf litter, logs, etc.

Like most snail species, Powelliphanta are hermaphroditic, meaning each animal has both male and female sex organs. When they mate, they cross-fertilise; i.e. both animals are fertilized at the same time. They lay hard-shelled eggs which are large in relation to the size of the adult. Their eggs are laid in clusters of two or three in moist moss or litter. It is thought that annual egg production as is low as 5-10 eggs per animal and no more than 20.

Larger Powelliphanta such as *P. h. consobrina* may take up to five years to reach sexual maturity and may have a life span of 12-14 years, with some individuals possibly living for several years longer than this. Like most snail species they grow continuously throughout their life, but growth slows after the first few years.

It is likely that Powelliphanta have few natural predators, with weka being the most significant. Kiwi may take eggs or young but are unlikely to be able to prey on large snails. A handful of other invertebrate species may be able to prey on them, especially on young. However, they are highly vulnerable to introduced predatory mammals. Not only will mammals take foraging snails at night but they can also use smell to find them in their retreats during the day. The predators that especially impact *P. h. consobrina* throughout their range are possums and pigs. At lower altitudes rats are also a significant predator. At present, there is nowhere within the natural range of *P. h. consobrina* that these predators are being controlled sufficiently to relieve predation pressure on the snails.

Establishment of a population of *P. h. consobrina* within The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary will create the first predator-free population of this subspecies. It is likely that substantial areas of the Sanctuary will ultimately provide suitable habitat for the snails, especially damp and shady areas with good canopy and ground cover.

A translocation refers to the capture, transport, and release of individuals of a species from one location to another. A translocation is an integral part of any reintroduction attempt.

A species reintroduction is the deliberate release of a species into the wild for the purpose of re-establishing a population of a locally extinct species

Establishment is achieved when a population has become self-sustaining, which means reproduction is larger than combined mortality and dispersal away from release site. Depending on the release environment and species involved, this may take several years and may require multiple follow-up translocations (augmentations).

POWELLIPHANTA TRANSLOCATION

Friday, 17 June saw the arrival of 30 powelliphanta in the Sanctuary, these were collected in May by Sanctuary staff and volunteers from three different sites.

A small number of live snails were found in the vast Roding Water Reserve. Unfortunately, the team also found many shells with clear sign of pig, possum and rat depredation! Snails were also collected from several sites on land in the Maitai Valley owned by Ngati Koata iwi and managed by Tasman Pine Forest Ltd.

Introduced predators and habitat loss are the main threat to ***Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina***. The species is classified at risk and of gradual decline.

The release of the snails was attended by Sanctuary volunteers, staff and trustees, and a small number of Ngati Koata whānau, and local secondary school students (see photo below).



Left to right, secondary school students Petra Graney and Freya High from Nelson College for Girls, Nate Wilbourne from Garin College, Matt Donald from Nelson College, and Tye Wells from Nayland College

KĀKĀ AVIARY IS COMPLETE

The kākā translocation aviary has now been completed - our thanks to the dedicated efforts of the asset team who built this terrific resource.

Our heartfelt thanks also to the Stout Trust, Addo and Ina (deceased) Mulders, Peter Williams and Candy Gillies for funding for this aviary project.

While we have formal approval from the Department of Conservation to translocate kākā to the Sanctuary, it will be some time for kākā fledglings with the desired genetic links to Te Taihu (top of the south) region are available for translocation.



Kākā aviary corner opening hatch. Photo credit: Don Fraser



Photo credit: Don Fraser

VISITOR CENTRE UPGRADE HAS COMMENCED

The project is to improve the building as the ticketing office and administration centre for the Sanctuary.

We will create more floor space for visitors and staff, provide better facilities for volunteers with a separate smoko room, and storage facilities. We are also improving our presentation to visitors changing the front entrance to the Sanctuary in a way that can cater for increasing visitor numbers and to take visitors back in time to a Sanctuary rich in wildlife.

The building work for the Visitor Centre enhancement has now commenced and we are aiming to have work completed by late October.

FUNDING IS STILL NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT

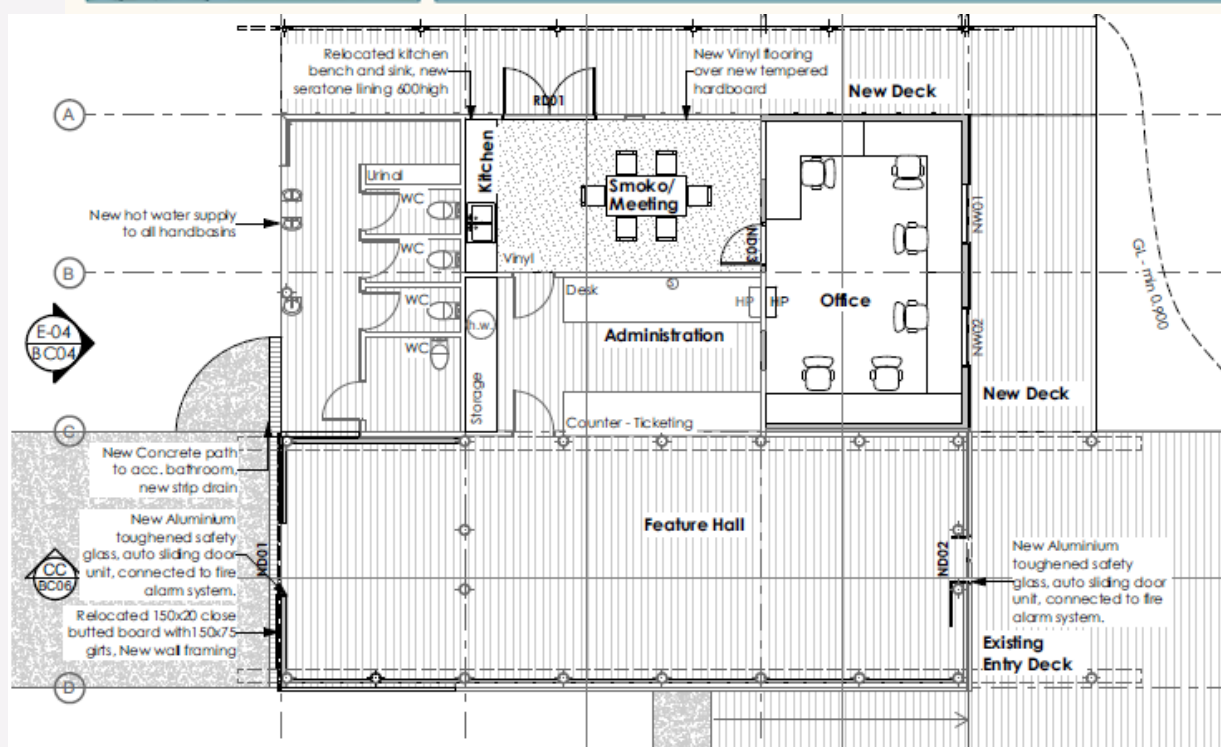
Last year we received a grant of \$63,880 from Simplicity Trust for this project, which together with a contribution of \$26k from Platinum Asset Management in Australia has been set aside for the Visitor Centre enhancement project. This year we have received a donation of \$15,000 for solar panels for the roof of the Visitor Centre from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

We are seeking further financial support toward this important project.

For anyone who wants to help, please contact:
info@brooksanctuary.org.nz.

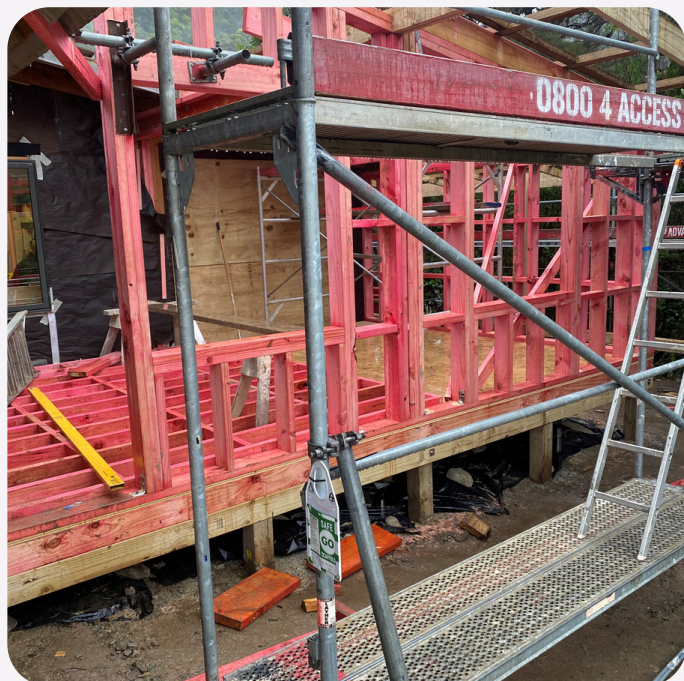
A journey through time

Starting from the carpark, we take people on a journey back to before humans were here.



VISITOR CENTRE UPGRADE HAS COMMENCED

We're rather excited to see the work has commenced on building the exterior access way to a volunteer 'smoko room', and new office space for Sanctuary staff.



Sanctuary staff and volunteers are also delighted that the 'top' car park has recently been transformed from a slippery muddy area into a much smarter parking area. Major supporter KŪMĀNU ENVIRONMENTAL kindly supplied the (metal chip) material and the time and equipment to compact down the chip.



FUNGI FUN AT THE SANCTUARY

Fans of fungi enjoy this time of year when all sorts of species grow in the wet weather and the Sanctuary is one of the best places to observe them.

Catering to this interest, we recently launched a guided fungi walks led by Sanctuary supporter, fungi enthusiast and photographer Rebecca Bowater, the first guided walk sold out within a matter of hours, and a second tour had four paying participants. We've received some terrific feedback on the first walk,

Thanks Rebecca it was a great tour with lots of fungi to learn about

Anthea Michaelis (posted to Facebook 13 June 2022)

I recently did the guided fungi tour my Rebecca Bowater. I would highly recommend this tour. Rebecca is friendly and very knowledgeable and the Sanctuary is an outstanding place to visit.

Review posted on TripAdvisor 13 June 2022



FUNGI NEWS!

Volunteer Wayne Hennessy, one of our fungi fans has been keenly photographing Sanctuary fungi, and in particular he has been watching for the endangered Fischer's egg fungus (*Claustula fischeri*) that was originally discovered in the 1920s on Fringed Hill. It is totally different from puffballs in that its spores are spread by the 'egg' being eaten and excreted.

Since 2020, twenty of these endangered fungi have been found in five different locations within the Sanctuary. This large one (see right) was unusual in having its pink cover still attached instead of the white egg popping out of its cover.



From the beak-like marks on the fungi (see left), Wayne reckons a bird may have eaten parts of this particular fungus, uprooting it so it rolled down to the track. While bird monitoring recently, Wayne showed a friend where the first one was found, lifting a leaf covering a small ribbon and finding an unopened small one in the same spot. The photo above shows it still had its pink cover intact and by now the white fruitbody will have burst through the cover and eventually the egg will pop out. Wayne believes there are probably hundreds of Fischer's Egg sites yet to be discovered by volunteers within the Sanctuary. These discoveries are the result of our removal of possums, deer, goats and pigs that would normally eat any edible fungi and plants before we could find them.

KĀKĀRIKI BEER LAUNCH THE FREE HOUSE

We are thrilled to have collaborated with The Free House recently to create a beer which incorporates a taste of the New Zealand Forest. The kākāriki karaka Pale Ale is one of the newest offerings at The Free House and is infused with locally sourced kawakawa and tōtara berries. The beer was made in celebration of the recent kākāriki karaka translocation, with a portion of the proceeds from every beer purchased being donated to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.

Thanks to all the volunteers and Business Club members who came out to support the launch. For those who have not yet tried the brew, head along to The Free House to try a pint of this delicious brew - while stocks last!

Our thanks also to designer Sophie Holt for the eye catching Pale Ale label artwork which we're incorporating into a range of Sanctuary goods. T-shirts and tote bags will soon be available for purchase through our website.



See next page for more detail...



Sanctuary volunteers enjoying the Kākāriki Pale Ale



Left to right: Ilesha, Chris and Chelsea from the Sanctuary weed control project team and a friend



Kākāriki artwork designer Sophie, her son & a friend

NEW LIMITED-EDITION MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE!

The Sanctuary has recently partnered with local artist StudioSoph (aka Sophie Holt) for a limited release of new merchandise as part of our artist collaboration series. Some of you who joined us at The Free House Kākāriki Pale Ale launch would have seen a sneak peak of the brand new tote-bags and t-shirts on offer.

The new merchandise features a unique vibrant original artwork of the kākāriki karaka and all merchandise has been sustainably sourced and features natural fibres. Tote-bags will soon be available for purchase online and from the Sanctuary town office & Little Beehive collective. To minimise our impact, the t-shirts will be available for pre-order only via our website and will be shipped directly to you from the North Island screen printer. No refunds or exchanges available.



MATARIKI POP-UP - CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

For those of you that joined in with the Matariki celebrations on Friday night at Rutherford park, you might have seen the Sanctuary gazebo illuminated and full of activity. Sanctuary staff and volunteers set up a pop-up space where children of all ages were invited to decorate Tupuārangi stars (the star of the birds, forest, food and growth above the ground) while learning about the Sanctuary and eco-system restoration. The pop-up was a hive of activity and an important time for the Sanctuary to connect with the community while raising awareness about the importance of kaitiakitanga of our natural environment. Native seedlings kindly provided by Brian Hirst were available for a donation to the Sanctuary, alongside some of our latest merchandise.



All photos by Shani Bennett

NELSON CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT GRANT

Earlier this month (June) we received an NCC Environment grant of \$2,950 to replace 290 plastic corflute rat trapping tunnels with plywood tunnels and this work has commenced.

This environment grant from NCC follows an earlier grant approved last year and received in March (\$1,000) which was used to purchase SD memory cards, batteries and an external hard drive for the capture of storage from monitoring cameras within the Sanctuary.

LOTTERY GRANTS BOARD GRANT APPROVED

We're recently been advised that our application to the Lottery Grants Board has been accepted and approved, payment (\$8935.50) was received 15 June.

These funds will be used for the design, production and installation of interpretive panels explaining the history of the waterworks structures found within the Sanctuary.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

In May we received a donation from Broadgreen Intermediate of \$417.50 which was raised by Broadgreen students through cake sales and other activities. Their donation will be recognised with four sponsored fenceposts in the Sanctuary. Our grateful thanks for the terrific effort.



Photo credit: Brittany Packer, Teacher Room 17 Broadgreen Intermediate

WANTED WANTED WANTED VOLUNTEERS

The Sanctuary is very keen to hear from anyone interested, or even just plain curious, about volunteering in the Sanctuary!

View our new volunteers team page on the website to learn more about the various volunteer teams (we have two more teams yet to be profiled - our Visitor Centre Hosts team and our events team).

Click >>>[here](#)<<<

Register your interest in becoming a Sanctuary volunteer by completing the following volunteer sign-up form.

Click >>>[here](#)<<<

Contact Sabrina, Volunteer Connector at:
volunteerconnector@brooksanctuary.org.nz

SANCTUARY OPENING HOURS IN JULY

In July the Sanctuary will be open as follows:

Fri-Sun 10am - 4pm

School holidays (9-24 Jul), we will be open as follows:

Tue-Sun 10am - 4pm (closed on Mondays)

WE'VE CHANGED BANKS

We've been saying this for some time now, but money keeps appearing in our old BNZ account. Our day-to-day banking is now done with NBS. Please update your records (especially if you have us saved in your online banking payees list).

Our new NBS account number is:

03-1354-0561993-00

FUNGI GALORE!

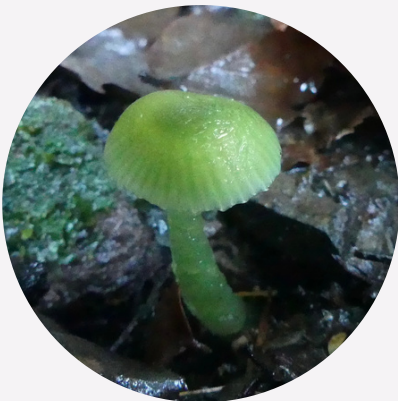
If you've been following our Facebook page, you might have seen some great and varied fungi photographs taken by Sanctuary supporter Rebecca Bowater. Our thanks to Rebecca for sharing her terrific photos with us, here's a tiny sample.



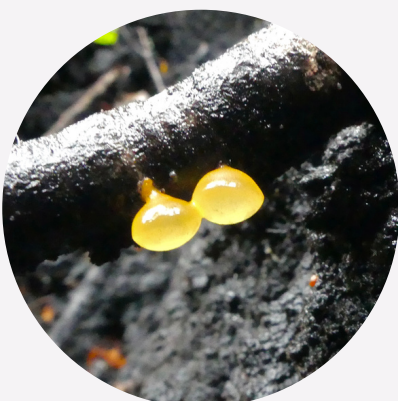
Chlorociboria sp.
© Deb Corbett



Cortinarius castoreus
© Deb Corbett



Gliophorus gramnicolour.
© Deb Corbett



Jelly fungus
Heteroteux miltinus
© Deb Corbett

RECENTLY SEEN IN THE SANCTUARY

If you have some great photos taken in the Sanctuary that you'd like to share in future issues of our newsletter, send them to: info@brooksanctuary.org.nz



ngaokeoke
Velvet worm
Peripatoides sp.
© Deb Corbett



ruru
morepork
Ninox novaeseelandiae
© Benjamin Ramos



Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina
© Iesha Hogarty



Spotted fleshy tree orchid
Drymoanthus flavus
© Deb Corbett

GLOWWORM TOURS HAVE RESUMED

We relaunched our glowworm tours on 16 May and most of the original tour dates have now sold out, or are very close to it.

Seven additional tour dates for July, were recently added to our website, at the time of writing there are still places available on tours in the second half of July; [click here](#) for more details. Tours are \$30 per adult for the general public, or \$20 per adult paid-up supporter. Click on the blue "book now" button to view available dates and live availability.

Tour dates for August will be announced within the next couple of weeks.

THEMED GUIDED WALKS

Over the next few months we will be trialling several themed guided walks focusing on specific subjects such as, fungi, orchids, Sanctuary heritage features, etc.

New tours will be announced via our Facebook page and website when available in the coming months.

“This morning we did the guided orchid walk and it was totally amazing. Our guide Erwin shared his extensive knowledge with us so freely and patiently answered our many questions. The sight and the smell of the orchids was quite mesmerising. Found a few intriguing mushrooms as well. Highly recommended.”

Sabine Osthorst
6 March 2022

NOW RECRUITING

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary invites applications for paid Sanctuary tour guides. These are new (casual) employee positions.

- Casual work, pay rate ~\$28 per hour
- Hours will be variable/seasonal and will involve weekend/evening work
- Guides will work closely with Sanctuary staff to manage tour bookings
- Successful applicants will be expected to:
 1. follow a guide/tour script
 2. understand and have an affinity for the Sanctuary's purpose of restoring an eco-system.

Past experience with hosting groups is an advantage but not essential as training will be provided

Confidential applications should be sent to:
info@brooksanctuary.org.nz



Photo credit: Andy MacDonald

SONZI CONFERENCE TO VISIT THE SANCTUARY

In August Nelson is hosting the Sanctuaries of New Zealand Inc. (SONZI) annual workshop in conjunction with the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Trust. A visit to the Sanctuary will be part of the agenda.

While the workshop is open to the general public upon registration and payment of the workshop fee, it is quite 'technical' in nature, the principal audience being sanctuaries ecologists and operators.

Details:

Dates: 16-18 August 2022

Venues: [Beachside Conference & Events Centre](#) & the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary

Cost: TBC. SONZI is committed to providing low cost high value conservation networking and information exchange.

Draft Programme:

- Science Day
- SONZI Day – presentations and discussions
- SONZI AGM
- Soapbox talks
- Workshop Dinner
- Field trip to Brook Waimārama Sanctuary
- Lots of quality networking time

Enquiries to: sanctuariesofnz@gmail.com

Further details are expected to be up on the SONZI within the next day or so, please check:

Sanctuaries of New Zealand (sanctuariesnz.org)

SPONSOR PROFILES



We're delighted to advise that Nelson Pine Industries has recently renewed their sponsorship of the Sanctuary, renewing for a further three years.

Nelson Pine Industries Limited (NPIL) produces GoldenEdge MDF (Medium Density Fibreboard) and NelsonPine LVL (Laminated Veneer Lumber) from radiata pine grown in the plantation forests of Nelson, New Zealand. Production of MDF began in 1986, and the LVL plant was commissioned in 2002. Nelson Pine Industries has a reputation for:

- product consistency and quality
- sustainable timber resource management
- low environmental impact practices
- market-led research into product and production development.

The Nelson-Marlborough region is one of New Zealand's major forestry areas, with 16% of the productive land area planted in production forests. Nelson Pine Industries has capacity to process one million cubic metres per annum, or 40% of the region's annual harvest.



PLATINUM ASSET MANAGEMENT

Last month we received our second of three annual payments from silver sponsor Platinum Asset Management, and we acknowledge our heartfelt appreciation to Platinum for their support. These funds, all the way from Australia, will be utilised for the Visitor Centre enhancement project which is due to commence in the next month.

About Platinum:

Platinum Asset Management is an Australian-based funds manager that focuses on one asset class – international shares. Platinum now manages around A\$20 billion (as at 30 April 2022).

Platinum has a long association with New Zealand via the highly engaged investor and advisory community. We are proud to support the local community with our sponsorship of the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. We are pleased to be able to provide a financial contribution to assist work on species reintroduction projects, education, capital projects and developing the visitor experience. We look forward to watching the Sanctuary's ongoing work and dedication to restoring the native flora and fauna of the Brook Valley.

OUR FAMILY OF SPONSORS

BOWATER MOTOR GROUP



BUSINESS CLUB PROFILES



Absolute Energy is 100% locally owned and operated. Managing Director Paul Brockie has been working in the building industry for 40 years and has specialised in energy efficiency and insulation for the last 20 years.

Book a free insulation assessment to find out if you are eligible for a Warmer Kiwi Homes grant. This is a government scheme which now covers 80 percent of the cost of retrofitting ceiling and underfloor insulation and combined with the Warmer Healthier Homes Te Tau Ihu Charitable Trust project, you could see your cost reduced to zero. (Conditions apply)

Combining expert advice and quality workmanship, Absolute Energy go the extra mile to provide a personal service. This includes their Post-Install Audit - once your insulation is installed, they send an assessor to check and sign-off on the work. This means you can be sure your insulation has been installed to the highest standard, a quality guarantee for your absolute peace of mind.

Beyond helping to lower your energy bill, good quality insulation creates homes that are made for living in. A warmer, healthier space, you and your family will be safe in the knowledge that it's a home for life.

Book your free home insulation assessment today! Phone 0800 423 454 or visit [our website](#)

BROOK BUSINESS CLUB

In 2018 the Trust launched the Brook Business Club to develop/strengthen our ties to many of the businesses in the Nelson/Tasman region, and to develop new income to support the activities of the Sanctuary. We asked businesses to commit to a three-year programme at a cost of \$500+GST per annum. The programme has seen 60+ businesses joining, and while we've lost a few due to COVID-19, we're delighted with the number of businesses who have recently rolled over their third-year commitment. We are continuing to evolve the programme to make it more attractive and meaningful to businesses supporters, and would welcome your feedback; and of course we're always keen to sign-up new business club supporters. [Click for more details](#), or contact: deborah.mcconochie@brooksanctuary.org.nz

Tāhuna Beach Holiday Park and Motel



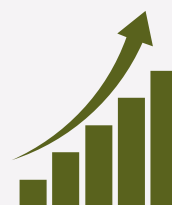
The largest accommodation provider in our region, Tāhuna Beach Holiday Park and Motel is located on 54 acres stretching 1km along the coastline at Tāhunanui. A firm favourite on the holiday destination menu for thousands of New Zealanders every year, the Park has been creating happy memories for more than nine decades.

Today Tāhuna Beach Holiday Park offers accommodation to suit most budgets – from campsites (some dog-friendly) to cosy cabins to modern, fully self-contained motel units.

On-site, the Park offers a large variety of activities including mini golf, flying fox, mega swing and pedal-karts plus a cafe/store and the multi-room Beachside Events and Conference Centre. The Park's location allows direct access to the beach, as well as an easy walk to family attractions and dining options.

The Park holds Gold QualMark status for Tourism Sustainability, and encourages and upholds the Tiaki Promise; a commitment to protect and preserve New Zealand.

SUPPORTERS NEAR 1,400



In the March edition of eNews we reported that supporter numbers had hit 1,200, we now report that the number is still growing and now we're not far off 1,400 paid-up supporters. If you're uncertain as to whether or not you're a paid-up supporter, contact info@brooksanctuary.org.nz to check.

If you're not currently paid-up, you can become so via the Sanctuary website, [click here](#) for more details, or email: info@brooksanctuary.org.nz

Sanctuary supporters receive free of charge entry to the Sanctuary (on days/times we're open to the general public) and can vote at our AGM.

ENDEMIC SPECIES FEATURE

It's important to celebrate what we already have within the Sanctuary. Some species, such as toutouwai (South Island Robin) and titipounamu (rifleman) are more unique than most of us realise. We aim to profile a species in each issue of our newsletters with the input of our ecologist Robert, volunteers and other staff.

NGIRUNGIRU

South Island Tomtit

Petroica macrocephala macrocephala

If you were to breed a bird for cuteness, you would be hard pressed to outdo the tomtit. It resembles a cross between a fantail, Tweety Bird and a panda. Tomtits belong to the same genus as the New Zealand robin (kakarua) and are likewise endemic to New Zealand. Like robins, tomtits feed primarily on insects and other small invertebrates such as spiders and worms. While robins tend to forage on or near the ground, tomtits forage throughout all levels of the forest.

There are 5 subspecies of tomtit (*Petroica macrocephala*), one for each of the following: North Island, South Island, Chatham Island, Snares Island, and Auckland Island. The Maori name for the North Island tomtit is miromiro and for the South Island tomtit ngirungiru. The North and South Island tomtits are smaller than the offshore tomtits. With the exception of the Snares Island tomtit, which is all black, male tomtits are black and white, while females are grey-brown and white. The males of the South, Chatham and Auckland Islands differ from those of the North Island tomtit in having a yellow tinge on their breasts.

Tomtits inhabit forests and shrublands, both native and exotic. Year round, pairs protect large territories of about 4 hectares in size. The breeding season of the South Island tomtit extends from September to February, during which they may produce up to 3 clutches, each containing 3-6 eggs. Nest building and incubation are jobs exclusive to the female, while the male brings her food. Both parents feed the chicks and fledglings. When they are older, the female may leave the fledglings in the care of her mate while she builds a new nest for a new clutch.

While not endangered, tomtits are vulnerable to predation from introduced mammalian species, especially rats. Tomtits within the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary have benefited greatly from the eradication of exotic mammals. The average number of tomtits seen or heard during our five-minute bird counts has tripled since 2017 from 7 detected per 100 five-minute bird counts to over 21.

Katherine Chamberlain

5-Minute Bird Count Coordinator



Female tomtit. Photo credit: Deb Corbett



Male tomtit. Photo credit: Dave Curtis



Male tomtit. Photo credit: Hannahshanart