



Shining cuckoo

Photo: Max Thomson

Centennial Park Bush Society Newsletter



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Pest Free Campbells Bay – Let’s Do This!



Fewer rats means more fantails.

Photo: Andrew McGregor

Bush Society volunteers have been baiting for rats and trapping possums in Centennial Park for four years, resulting in a reduction in rat numbers and an observable and documented improvement in park’s bird life. (Take a walk through the bush at sunrise and hear the bay’s amazing dawn chorus.) This year the Bush Society has initiated a “halo” predator control network surrounding the park. Seven volunteers are operating seven bait/trap lines off Aberdeen Road and Park Rise.

The object is to control rats on private property to help prevent reinvasion into the reserve from surrounding land. Our first baiting period was August, the second is November and the following two phases will be in January and April 2018. In addition, two new monitoring lines have been installed along View Road and Campbells Bay beach front. We are delighted to announce a very generous donation of 10 automatic resetting rat traps (total value \$1800) which are being

deployed along the bush-clad north branch of Campbells Bay Stream between Park Rise and Beach Road. Huge thanks to all the residents who are consenting to host a bait station, or trap, and to the hard working volunteers who are looking after them. The next stage involves expanding this network of bait stations northwards – to cover the rest of Campbells Bay.

The Bush Society continues to receive reports of possums in the bay. Ideally, we would like to eradicate possums because they eat small birds, birds’ eggs and the natural vegetation which sustains other species of wildlife. So, if you see or hear possums please contact the Bush Society. If you have a bush section you most probably will be visited by possums. A volunteer can come and install and monitor a trap, or lend, or sell you one to use yourself. We even provide free training. If together we can create a network of possum traps through Campbells Bay we can gradually eliminate possums.

Richard Hursthouse

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Centennial_park_bush_society

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Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary

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www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz



What We Have Achieved This Year

2017 has been a huge year for Centennial Park. Record rainfall caused a major slip on Morton Rise above the tennis courts. This will hopefully stabilise and the Bush Society plans to plant this area in autumn 2018.

Another slip caused major damage to boardwalks on the upper Kohekohe Track. Volunteers removed the boardwalks and constructed a new track above the slip. So far this has worked really well. We have been racing to keep boggy tracks topped up with gravel from five piles strategically placed around the reserve. This is hard work but good fitness training! In total Bush Society workers have moved a massive 12m³ of metal this year. We are now placing geogrid on slippery sections of boardwalk. Council is planning some significant track upgrades in various areas of the park over summer. The Society's planting programme has been much reduced this year because the park is filling up! Volunteers replanted the edge of Campbells Bay Reserve down by the beach and a new plot on the Aberdeen Track. About 500 new plants have gone in this year. Centennial Park Bush Society has planted 22,000 plants since 2003. The never ending job of pest plant control continues. Council contractor input into this huge task is very limited so we really appreciate the support we get from our dedicated team of volunteers and donors. If getting involved sounds like you, please get in touch. We run two friendly teams every Wednesday morning: Bush Rangers and Wednesday Weeders and a regular working bee on the first Saturday morning of each month.

Why Is Monkey Apple A Problem?

Monkey apple, aka lilly pilly—*Acmena smithii*, or *Syzygium smithii* – is an Australian rain forest tree brought to New Zealand by the horticulture industry for specimen tree planting and hedges. Unfortunately, like



many imported trees, it likes New Zealand just a little too much. Its tasty purplish fruits are eaten by birds and then pooped out in native forests. It

thrives in light or shade, grows rapidly and, if left unchecked, will eventually take over the bush. Bush

Society volunteers see and remove hundreds of these trees from Centennial Park every year. Most are small as we have already dealt to the most of the big ones. Monkey apples are very hard to dig out and herbicide has to be applied to the cut stumps to stop them regrowing. The good news is a well-trimmed monkey apple hedge is fine as it produces very few fruits. The worst are large shrubs or trees which are allowed to fruit and spread. If you have large monkey apples on your land **PLEASE** remove them and treat the stumps, or prune them right down and keep them as a trimmed hedge. They will tolerate heavy pruning. Don't let your monkey apples set fruit.

Protected Trees – Butchered For A View?

Two protected pohutukawa in the Avenue of Remembrance near Rae Road have been butchered in what appears to be an illegal act of deliberate tree damage. These trees were planted to commemorate New Zealand's centenary in 1940 and have special significance to returned servicemen, as many were planted to commemorate New Zealand soldiers leaving to fight in WW2. All trees in the reserve are protected.

If you see any tree damage occurring which you think may be illegal please take lots of photos, including number plates, faces, letter boxes and immediately phone the council on 301 0101 to report it.



Bugs By Night

On Friday 22 September, 35 warmly-clad and



gumbooted children, plus 25 supervising parents, gathered for a night-time bug hunt in Centennial Park. The event was jointly organised by Kiwi Conservation

Club co-ordinators Marilyn Gulliver and Christine Thomson, with support and input from consultant



entomologist Peter Maddison, Bush Society members, Auckland Council representative Paul Duffy and four University of Auckland entomology students. The enthusiastic group met in the pine tree car park below the tennis courts, where, following safety instructions and a programme outline, Peter Maddison spoke about insects which could be found. Families divided into five groups and proceeded to the stations – each manned by a Bush Society volunteer and a student.

There was a moth trap station, a bush walk, a pile of logs, a manuka canopy walk and a leaf litter and soil exploration area. After 20 minutes groups moved to the next activity. Due to damp, chilly spring weather and possibly tennis court light pollution, there were few moths, apart from greasy cutworm and forest semilooper.

However a wide variety of small creatures were found at most activities. Leaf litter and soil produced slugs, slaters, a variety of worms, a few spiders, a weta, centipede and crane flies. The log pile was most productive with grub, beetles, hoppers, caterpillars, a centipede, immature cicada and plenty of different slugs, worms and spiders, including a large nursery web spider with egg sac.

The bush walks produced a spittle bug, leaf veined slug, cockroach, weta, snails and ladybug. It was muddy underfoot but the evening was clear with a new moon and the children were happy exploring by torchlight.



After all stations had been visited there was a gathering at the hub to share findings and stories. Peter identified a long list of resident park bugs.

Photos: Wendy Callaway

We acknowledge the support of:

Devonport Takapuna Local Board for funding weed control in Greville Reserve.

Auckland Council Parks Department for supplying plants, track metal, rat bait, herbicide gel and equipment for volunteers.

Hibiscus & Bays Local Board for funding weed control in Park Rise Bush and the 5th fairway block.

Pest Free Auckland for funding bait stations and bait for CBUS



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