

A network of volunteers prepared to help maintain  
the historic and indigenous natural features of the reserve and adjoining slopes  
Website: <http://www.waiwhetu.org>

Coordinator: Russ McStay, 37 Mawson Street, Waiwhetu  
Phone: 569-2915  
E-mail: [r.mcstay@hyper.net.nz](mailto:r.mcstay@hyper.net.nz)



## Hayward Scenic Reserve



### Newsletter No 5

**Social Activities:** The pot-luck dinner held on 23 September at the home of Leon Ramakers & Alison Sinclair was another successful get-together at which several new members were welcomed to our group and were able to meet Rosie Doole and Robert Ashe. We were treated to an excellent range of culinary delights and nice wines. To aid volunteers in the recognition of pest plants other than snakefeather, I displayed fresh cuttings of boneseed and the 3 different wattle species (Sydney Golden, Prickly Moses & Black Wattle) that are growing in parts of the reserve. I envisage arranging another BBQ get-together at my place in February when (I hope) summer weather will have finally arrived.

**Abysmal Winter & Spring Weather:** Water-logged ground and strong winds have wreaked havoc in parts of the greater Wellington area. I am aware of two very large windfallen trees across tracks in our reserve. Also, several smaller trees that came down on some tracks have had to be dealt with by volunteers. As is normally the case, a lot of minor storm-debris has needed picking up from the surface of most tracks. To my knowledge, there have been no significant land-slips or wash-outs along any of the tracks. Given the atrocious weather, we can be glad our reserve escaped so lightly. One pleasing factor – the peak flows in the Tyndall Creek were fully contained in the redirected course cut by a working party earlier in the year. There should now be no further damage to the restored section of the historic Hayward Track that was being scoured out by the creek when it flowed over the huge mound of rubble deposited by the severe rain storm in February 2004.

**Northern Rata:** After a very disappointing showing last summer, the Northern Rata trees in the reserve (and also in the Mission St catchment) have provided a much better flowering display over recent weeks. A professional photographer from DoC took a picture of Rata in the Tyndall Creek catchment and has made it available to James Cross for inclusion in the group's website. Northern Ratas (*Metrosideros robusta*) usually begin life as an epiphyte perched high on another giant tree, but they can also propagate from seed to form a free standing tree. Using this latter process, it takes about 3 years before the young Ratas become ready to be planted out. Hopefully, some young Ratas will be made available to us for planting out in due course, to help diversify the regenerating bush in our reserve. Although a favourite food for possums, they should thrive provided possum numbers continue to be kept under control. While seedlings of Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*), the Rata's close cousin, are plentiful in the Hutt Valley, Pohutukawa is not indigenous to this region and so the authorities are opposed to this species being planted out in regenerating native bush reserves.

**Native Plant Nursery:** A relatively new member of our group, Barbara de ste Croix, has a plant potting facility in her backyard and has now adapted her skills to the raising of native plants from seedlings. Working with Pam Mayston on maintaining the Rewarewa and Pikitū Tracks, she has taken home and potted many of the small tree seedlings found among the encroaching vegetation being cut back or removed. While her initial collection was dominated by Rewarewa, her nursery stock has gradually diversified, thanks in part to young plants collected locally and passed on to her by Forest & Bird friends. The range she is raising for eventual planting out in our reserve now includes Beech (2 species), Miro, Kahikatea and Kanuka.

**Kowhai:** Don Millward has contacts who have been giving him significant quantities of Kowhai seeds. He has been scattering these widely in the reserve in places where there appears to be sufficient light for this species to germinate and grow. Alison Sinclair brought home from this year's

Forest & Bird plant sale some young potted Kowhai which she has planted out in the reserve. Recent visitors to the reserve have expressed to me their surprise and pleasure about seeing young Kowhai seedlings growing in several places up there.

**Report a Bird:** Thanks to James Cross, there is provision in the group's website to record sightings of bellbirds in or around the reserve. Also, whenever one is sighted, please look carefully to see whether or not it has coloured bands on its legs. The Karori Sanctuary has succeeded in re-establishing breeding populations of at least 10 native bird species previously extinct in Wellington. More and more are being seen outside the fence. Most birds released at the Sanctuary are given a unique set of "bands" – coloured bracelets placed on each leg. The Sanctuary would like anyone who sees a banded native bird to make a note of where and when it was seen, what it was doing, and if possible record the band colours on each leg, reading them from top to bottom. Log on to the Sanctuary website [www.sanctuary.org.nz](http://www.sanctuary.org.nz) and click the ***Report a Bird*** on the right-hand side.

**Possum Control:** Greater Wellington staff and contractors are currently undertaking intensive possum control work in the reserve and up on the adjoining slopes. Flagging tape is being used in places to mark out of-track control lines. People using the Leightons Gully Track, and who are not fully familiar with this route, should take care to avoid being inadvertently led astray by following control line markers.

**Other Animal Pest Control:** Naenae Possumbusters have run out of possums and are prepared to try some enclosed rat traps (as per DoC standards) in the lower stretches of the reserve. Two DoC 200 stoat traps (secure in wooden boxes) will soon be deployed. I have received reports of stoat sightings.

**Pest Plant Control:** There are significant infestations of Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia*) at both the Whites Line and Mawson St entrances to the reserve. As an effective chemical control is now commercially available, the spraying of this invasive pest plant has been ordered by HCC.

While I can't yet pass on definite news about when and where snakefeather spraying will be done this summer, I am confident there will be action to report before long.

**Native Snails:** D.J. Roscoe has compiled brief notes and produced a CD showing photos of native snail species, including those (about 65) which he found in our reserve. I now have a copy of his notes and CD which any interested members of our group are welcome to borrow.

I shall be away from 21 December and back only briefly a couple of times early in January. As I have a hospital appointment on 25 January, I shall be settled back home well and truly by then,

May I wish all of you a very merry Xmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

Russ McStay  
19 December 2006