

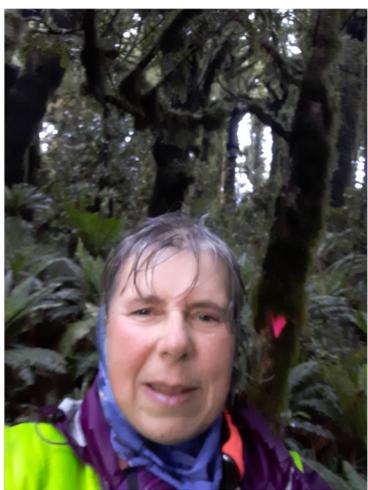
THE REMU-TALKER

Survey Selfies

If there is no selfie did it even happen? Well thanks to Susan Ellis we captured two of the hard working acoustic survey team out in the field battling the winter elements.



Ned Bruno - RCT volunteer in the Mist



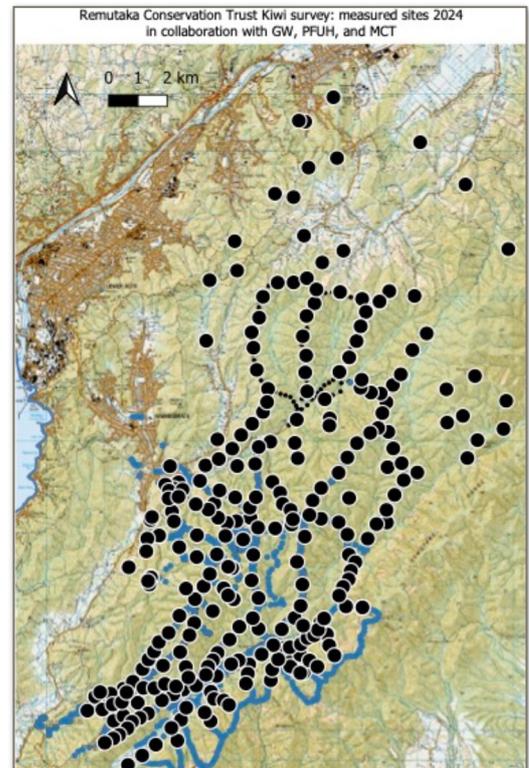
Susan Ellis - "when you're soaked through to your skin, it's time to go home"

Kiwi Acoustic Survey Update

Susan Ellis

RCT monitoring volunteers have been hard at work putting out (and bringing in) DOC acoustic recorders to listen for kiwi calls. We run this survey about every 3 years in order to (1) make sure that no holes have opened up in the existing kiwi zone (that might indicate a problem e.g., a pair that were once there are no longer there); and (2) monitor the spread of our kiwi through the park and surroundings. We leave the recorders out for 2-3 weeks at each site (programmed to switch on at 6pm every night and record for 8 hours). The recordings are then scored to tally the number of male and female kiwi calls.

The plot shows a map of the Remutaka Forest Park and adjoining regions. The black dots are all the points we've measured so far during this winter's survey. Some of these points have been measured in collaboration with the Moa Conservation Trust (on the eastern side of the Ōrongorongo River) and the Pest Free Upper Hutt group (Whiteman's valley region). A few points are in progress, but we are gradually winding down. The plot does not show the results, just all points measured.



Susan Ellis will be giving a talk to reveal this year's results at the Trust AGM on Tuesday 22nd October, so hope to see you there- they are looking very encouraging so this will be a good chance to celebrate the ongoing success of our kiwi project.

A Helping Hand

Five new recruits from the Defence Force's Joint Military Police Unit joined the conservation efforts in the Remutaka Forest Park.



Working with DOC and the Remutaka Conservation Trust, the personnel spent four hard days deploying new predator traps and controlling wilding radiata pines.

Thanks to Cullum, Emily, Cheyenne, Silva and Toyah, the Remutaka Conservation Trust trapping network - established to support a growing kiwi population - now has new traps and the goal to eliminate all wilding pines from public conservation land in the Catchpool Valley is a step closer.



Photo credits: James Wright

From the President's Desk

It's been a busy year for the Trust with our major focus being the trap audit and replacement project led by Ingrid Greenslade. With most of our traps around 20 years old, this work had become a high priority. The three-year project aims to replace our entire trapping network, realign current trap lines and possibly add new ones. This year's phase, which involved helicopter deployment of new traps, was completed successfully and under budget.

Financially we are in good shape, which meant we could get the recent trap replacement underway. We are especially grateful to Save the Kiwi, Pharazyn Trust, and the Hutt City Council for their ongoing funding support. We are excited to announce that Pub Charity has just approved an \$18k grant towards the next trap deployment. The Trust is not government-funded - We fund ourselves entirely through grant applications, membership subscriptions, donations, bequests, and the goodwill and kindness of our community.

We have completed two key surveys in the Park since last spring: the diurnal bird survey and the kiwi acoustic monitoring survey, conducted by Winifred Long and Susan Ellis respectively. The results of these will be crucial for assessing the impact of our activities and guiding future efforts in the Remutaka Forest Park.

We continue to work closely with DOC who were particularly helpful with the first phase of our trap replacement project. Their support with helicopter operations, sound advice and attendance at committee meetings is greatly appreciated.

The draft of our proposed new constitution has been distributed and will be presented for ratification at the upcoming AGM. This new constitution will allow us to re-register as an incorporated Society under the new Act however it has minimal impact on our regular operations.

Conservation Week runs from 2-8 September 2024 with the theme 'Take action for nature'. If you are passionate about nature and keen to take action, we need you! I've been serving as interim President but can't continue beyond the AGM due to work commitments. The President leads the organisation, chairs the committee meetings, and is normally the public face of the Trust. Previous membership of the Trust or service on the committee are not pre-requisites for this position. The success of our teams of dedicated volunteers depends on a functioning committee and we hope to secure a new President before the AGM on Tuesday 22nd October.

Warm regards,

Malcolm Arnot
President, Remutaka Conservation Trust

What's in a name? Catchpool Valley

The Catchpool Valley and Stream are named after Edward Catchpool (1805– 1874). He was a New Zealand Company settler who chose land along the Coast Road area. He then sold the land to the Grace family hence we have "Grace's Stream" and "Mount Grace."

A master printer in London, Mr Catchpool briefly ran a steam flour mill in Wellington before leaving in the 1850s to become the first residential Government officer in Napier. He served as Chief Postmaster and later Collector of Customs.

Early maps incorrectly named "Catchpole Stream" however it was officially corrected in 1928 at the request of a descendant.

The Catchpool Track was established in 1881 by surveyor James Daniel Climie (1850– 1928) utilising an existing Māori track.

The Government purchased the land from the Burdan family in 1969. In 1970 the Catchpool Valley road was put through and the Gutbuster Track fell into disuse. The Gutbuster had been used since the early 1900s to access the Five Mile Track. True to its name it was steep, long and unforgiving.

The Remutaka Forest Park was officially established in 1972 encompassing the Catchpool and Ōrongorongo Valleys.

Sources: 1) Jeremy Foster's excellent historical research on Wainuiomata see ttc.org.nz 2) Built Heritage Of The Ōrongorongo Valley by Cochran, McLean, Sheppard 3) [Papers Past](#)

Catchpool Remediation Project

Ian Armitage

Radiata pine forest that was planted on about 300 hectares of the lower Catchpool Valley and in an adjoining part of the Wainuiomata Valley in the 1970s was logged between 2000 and 2023. In a significant, recent and welcome policy change, revenue earned from the logging operation in 2023 has been retained to provide an opportunity for the Dept of Conservation (DOC) to fund conservation restoration work on the logged sites. The long-term aim is to establish native trees and shrubs upon the cleared land over the next 10 years.

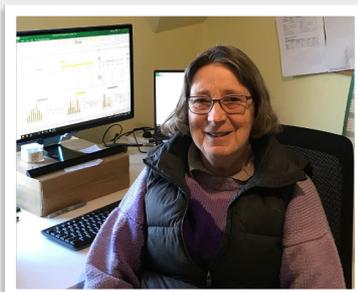


A Catchpool Remediation Project Governance Group was set up in April 2024 to provide oversight and guidance to this work and comprises representatives of the Remutaka Conservation Trust, the Moa Conservation Trust, the mana whenua Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and the Dept of Conservation. Revenue retained from the commercial sale of logs has been transferred by DOC to the Remutaka Conservation Trust because the four parties who are directly involved recognise that we are a trusted and dependable volunteer organisation having a long history of conservation achievements in the park. Funds will be disbursed to pay for restoration work in accordance with an operations plan that will be implemented by DOC. The governance group does not have executive or operational responsibilities, but it is contributing to the formulation of the restoration plan.

Operations carried out in autumn and early winter have included shooting of deer and goats in the Catchpool Valley and ground poisoning of wilding radiata pine trees, blackberry and Old Man's Beard clematis (*Clematis vitalba*). These operations are both technically important and necessary and are likely to be repeated in 2025. A newsletter will be circulated from time to time to keep all stakeholders up to date with progress with restoration work.

Volunteer Profile - Winifred Long

Now resident in Dovedale, Tasman, Winnie continues to support the Trust through her role as trapping data manager and analyst, a role she can do remotely.



A number cruncher from early days, Winnie has progressed from being an accountant counting dollars, to a university space planner counting square metres, to conservation analyst counting rats and mustelids. In this latter role she not only supports the Trust but also several other conservation groups in the lower North Island and Nelson regions.

As a self-professed “data junkie”, Winnie believes that it’s a great way of contributing to conservation as a retirement, from paid employment, hobby as there’s lots of data collected that’s not always used to its fullest potential.

A highlight of the role is the contact she has with trappers through their trapping reports as they often have interesting observations and notes about their trips into the bush.

The Trust count ourselves (pun intended) fortunate to have Winnie crunching the data so that we can track and evaluate our conservation efforts in the Park.

Art Meets Conservation

Volunteers and members of the Remutaka Conservation Trust gathered at the end of July to enjoy a presentation by Phillip Waddington. Phill’s theme for the evening was “Art meets Conservation”.

Although Phill is widely renowned for his art, he is probably best known in conservation circles as the inventor of the DOC series of predator traps as well as the Trapinator for Possums. These innovative traps have proven highly effective in the humane killing of the pests that threaten our native wildlife and destroy our forests. The trapping products are used extensively throughout NZ and are being exported globally.



Phill took us through his early involvement with DSIR animal ecology division in the Orongorongo Valley 50 years ago, and his work designing and testing the early DOC200 traps in the Remutaka Forest Park. His traps were part of the first predator trapping network which provided a safer environment for kiwi to be released into the Park in 2006.

Through this work, Phill was asked to carry Lorenzo, one of the first (and still surviving) kiwi in the park. Later, Phill donated a painting of Lorenzo and a couple of other works to be auctioned to raise funds for the Remutaka Conservation Trust’s trapping programme.

The early development work Phill undertook on his traps is now preserved in the care of the Museum of Technology and Transport (MOTAT) who have featured his work for Conservation Week: [“Protecting taonga species through innovation”](#)



The Flax Hat, Phillip Waddington.



Lorenzo, Phillip Waddington.

Remutaka Conservation Trust Membership

Are you wondering how to further support our conservation efforts?

Annual memberships are available for individuals, families or organisations. Your contribution helps fund vital projects aimed at protecting our Remutaka wild kiwi, restoring native habitats, and combating predators.

Enjoy updates on conservation projects, invitations to special events, access to our annual reports and voting rights at the AGM.

All membership contributions and donations go directly to hands-on conservation work. Your support ensures that our efforts are sustainable and impactful.

Sign up today via our [website](#) or by emailing membership@remutaka.nz

Already a superstar member? Spread the word with your family and friends.



Young Trappers Tackle Streamline

In June, Moses (then 8) kitted up in official RCT hi-viz and swung into action to help mum Bridget and sister Francie (6) check the traps along the Streamline trapline. This trapline is part of the “eco hotspot” - our intensified network of predator control within the Catchpool Valley for the benefit of both native birds and lizards.



Moses, who recently turned 9, tells us: “Helping on the trapline is quite fun. The best bit was peanut buttering the (Victor rat) traps and learning about the air gun trap. The worst bit was walking around in the mud. When we found dead animals in the traps it was creepy but cool. I felt like ‘awesome’ and ‘oh no’ at the same time. I didn’t mind touching them but I didn’t like throwing them away for other animals to eat. But I know that’s what you have to do. We are in Malaysia at the moment and I haven’t seen any traps here but I would very much like to go out checking the traps again when we get back to New Zealand.”

Younger sister Francie says “I liked it. I like that the pests get trapped so the good animals don’t get eaten. I was allowed to put peanut butter in some of the traps with a knife. I like walking around in the bush and the sound of it. The best bit was spending time with my family. The worst bit was that my legs ached from walking up the hills.”

A big thank you to the team for sharing their thoughts with our readers. I think even the most seasoned of trappers will relate - from the “creepy but cool” feeling to the aching legs!

Ka pai tō mahi Moses, Francie and Bridget.



In Memoriam Shaun Barnett



Photo credit: Kathy Ombler

In June, long-time RCT volunteer Shaun Barnett passed away after battling a brain tumour. Shaun joined us in 2016 and was offered what he felt was an easy trapline for an experienced trapper. His 2022 [Wilderness Magazine](#) article chronicles his journey from miffed to mesmerised as he truly connected with his patch of the Park.

Friend and fellow trapper Kathy Ombler says "Shaun really came to love being up there on that line, the more he got to know it, and it was a delight to have shared it with him."

Shaun was not only one of New Zealand's top natural landscape photographers but also authored guides and historical books on tramping and the outdoors. His passion for tramping was inspirational - [The Post](#) article shared that he had tramped in every national, forest and conservation park in the country.

On the next page, you can admire Remutaka Forest Park through Shaun's skilled lens.

Our heartfelt thoughts go to Shaun's whānau and friends at the loss of a wonderful man.

Ungulate control in the Remutaka

Cr Quentin Duthie, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Our new Long Term Plan focuses on maintaining existing public services in the face of rising costs. One of the very few new investment areas is an additional \$4m for pest control and a key plank of this is a change in approach to ungulate (deer, pig, goat) control in the Wainuiomata/Ōrongorongo catchment.

GW have undertaken sustained goat and pig control there for many years, keeping pest populations low in order to protect the quality of water collected to supply our taps, and the quality of the biodiverse old-growth forest.

A feasibility study on goats in 2022 found that eradication of goats was possible, but without barriers re-invasion would occur from surrounding forest. Zero density - where populations are reduced to zero or near zero and invasion is regularly controlled - would be more achievable and just as beneficial.

Planning will be undertaken this financial year, and I have asked staff to engage with Remutaka Conservation Trust to link in with your important work. I'm sure staff will be interested in sightings of ungulates or their sign, and encourage you to record using iNaturalist including GPS location and photos.

The extirpation operation will come next financial year, with contract ground hunting, buffer area hunting, pig trapping, fencing, cameras, DNA analysis and use of judas animals. The results will help assess whether the method could also be expanded into Pakuratahi, and in cooperation with DOC it may be possible to one day achieve near-zero goats across the entire Remutaka Range.

Other pest control investments include more effort to protect vulnerable bird species at Wairarapa Moana, rabbit/ferret control at Pukaha, and a new fund to support volunteer community group pest control efforts.



The photo shows a catch by a GW contractor and his dog Moose in Kaitoke Regional Park.

For a copy of the 2022 goat eradication feasibility study, or any other questions, please contact me on 021337262 or Quentin.duthie@gw.govt.nz

Remutaka Forest Park, photographed by Shaun Barnett



Bark on rimu tree, McKerrow Track



Silver beech line near top of the Clay Ridge Track



Trap box, Clay Ridge Track



Kidney ferns, Clay Ridge Track

Thank you to the following key sponsors as well as all of you who sponsor kiwi, transmitters, traps and trees for your continued annual support



Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui

