



Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc

Newsletter No 7
August 2008

Achievements of the past year

- **Fund Raising**

The Fence Post Appeal was launched in December 2007. Dame Thea Muldoon and Silver fern Leana De Bruin launched the appeal with the help of children from Gulf Harbour School Auckland Regional Councilor Sandra Coney and Councilor Christine Rose and senior parks staff also participated in the launch.

The appeal has raised more than \$33,000 dollars and continues

- **The Fence**

The exact route of the fence has been decided and work to obtain the appropriate resource consents has commenced.

- **Planting**

25th May. 7000 plants planted by 250+ volunteers at Okoromai Wetland

22nd June. 500 of a total of 2500 plants planted in Moko Skink Sanctuary.

31st August. Sand dune planting at Te Haruhi Bay.

The Society greatly appreciates the support given to the May planting by the students of Room 27 and Room 5 of Gulf Harbour School.

The children created large signs to promote the event and presented a music and dance show to the junior school.

Events to Note:

31st August Sunday. Sand dune planting at Te Haruhi Bay planned. Meet 10am at Ranger's station.

14 September Sunday.

11am onwards at the Old Woolshed, Te Haruhi Bay .The process towards creating an Open Sanctuary at Shakespear Regional Park has just begun. Listen to talks from project coordinator Matt Maitland, meet members of the Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc (SOSSI) and learn about how they are helping in the process. Topics include "A pest-free peninsula"; "Threatened reptiles"; "Returning wildlife"

Bookings are required, because the venue is small - please email sue.hill@arc.govt.nz or phone Sue on 09 426 1200

Moko Skinks in Shakespear Regional Park

Moko skinks were once widespread on most off shore Islands and in coastal areas in the north island from the Bay of Plenty north. Now they are mainly found on islands off the east coast of the northern half of the North Island.

A recent media report details that DoC has had to remove a population of the rare moko skink from their natural habitat at Whangamata, in order to save it from the bulldozers at the commencement of the Whangamata Marina development. Shakespear Regional Park is one of the two remaining mainland sites which Moko skinks are known to inhabit

The Moko is one of the 22 known species of Oligosoma found in New Zealand, all of which are endemic to the NZ region. Unlike the other family of skinks in New Zealand Cyclodina, most Oligosoma are diurnal. Their usual habitat is coastal grasslands to open forest. They may be particularly common amongst long grass and flax often basking on logs or wood, or vegetation exposed to the sun.

Moko skinks as with other species are sensitive to predation. This was well demonstrated when the numbers seen on Red Mercury Island increased substantially after the removal of kiore, or pacific rat.

A planting plan was developed in 2006 for the area known as Pistol Paddock within the Shakespear regional park.

This site is approximately one hectare of pasture retired during winter 2005 as a moko skink refuge area



Photo D Craddock

The current management plan has until recently focused on rodent control in Pistol Paddock area and surrounding adjacent Defence Force land as a means of improving the moko skink population. However as suitable habitat for the skink has been extremely limited this planting program should

increase the amount of suitable habitat and will be capable of supporting many thousands of moko skinks and other lizards once plantings have established.

Plant species to be used are those which occur naturally in the area and are known to benefit skinks

The initial plants planted have included *Muehlenbechia complexa*, *Phormium cookianum* and *Cortaderia*.

Planting the Skink Refuge

On Sunday 22nd June, in the pouring rain and high winds 25 volunteers of the Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society planted 500 plants in the Skink refuge in Shakespear Regional Park. At times the rain was so heavy that the holes



Photo A Parker

we dug filled with water before we could get the plants in the ground.

The planting was done under the direction of one of our members Dave Craddock who is an expert on skinks at Shakespear.

The regional park staff provided great support with transport to the site.

The eastern end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula is now one of only two mainland populations of the threatened moko skink and a refuge has been established for them in Pistol Paddock in the park. Pistol Paddock contains ruins of the Public Works Department camp and was used to house workers during the construction of the coastal defences in the 1940s.

The plants selected for planting occur naturally in the area, assist natural revegetation and are known to benefit skinks.

Pest predators at Shakespear Regional Park.

The Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society was formed in 2003 to support the creation of a wildlife sanctuary within the Shakespear Regional Park. Our major endeavor is supporting a pest proof fence that will keep cats, possums, ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs stoats, rats and mice out of the open sanctuary.

Our membership may be interested to know more about the size of the problem of predators and the figures on current trapping of pests will help to put this in context. At present the Park has two lines of Traps which are located on the periphery of the park and which are checked at two week intervals by park volunteers and a monthly tally is kept at the Rangers Office within the park and can be viewed on the wall of the volunteer lunch room.

In addition to these two trap lines volunteers from the Waitemata fish and game club run trap lines on defence land.

The defence land and Rodney district council Waste Water Treatment Site will be included in the Sanctuary and inside the fenced area. These

two agencies are both very receptive to the Open sanctuary and cooperate by carrying out pest control, both animal and weed pests.

The pests being caught regularly include Norway and Ship Rats, Weazels, and possum. Less frequently caught includes mice, Stoats and Ferrets. Some cats are also trapped around Army Bay. Rabbits are also frequently seen, and a night shoot in April included 100 rabbits and 1 possum.

Since the program began in 2000 over 2000 Norway and Ship Rats, 256 Weazels, 115 Stoats and 4179 Rabbits have been killed.

Thanks to Steve Burgess, Shakespear Regional Park ranger for this information.

Pest Predators at Shakespear Regional Park.

	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08
Mouse	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway Rat	13	3	11	19	24	2
Ship Rat	6	9	12	30	28	2
Weasel	1	2	0	1	1	0
Stoat	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ferret	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rabbit	13	6	4	4	102	0
Hedgehog		2	0	3	7	0
Possum	1		2	1	1	0
Other		7	1	1		3

Other Fund Raising activities.

- **Presentations** to the Horticultural Society, The Air Force Association, Kings Empire Veterans and 60 up Movement
- **Promotional Displays and a Trading Table** at Whangaparaoa Mall, Centrestage Orewa, Whangaparaoa Library and the Hobbs Wharf Festival. Our next planned promotion is at the Auckland Zoo in December as part of a larger event for schools.

To date \$500 has been raised from sales of Cards and envelopes made by Rita (“Wilkraft”) as well as the Bird Call cards which have been donated to Sossi from Wildcard New Zealand.



Sossi Contacts

Allan Parker	50 Everard Ave, Army Bay,	424 5055	Chair
Alison Wesley	1393 Whangaparaoa Road, Army Bay	424 2258	Vice Chair Newsletter Ed
Jean Bell	1448 Whangaparaoa Road, Army Bay	4240407	Secretary
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Matt Maitland	PO Box 332, Orewa	09 426 4200 09 426 1200 0274555445	Sanct. Project Co-coordinator

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Subscriptions are now due for the 08/09 year if still unpaid.

SHAKESPEAR OPEN SANCTUARY SOCIETY (Inc.)

Membership Subscription for 08/09

SURNAME.....

FIRST NAMES.....

ADDRESS:.....

POSTAL ADDRESS (if different from Above)

.....

PHONE NO

(Pvt):.....(Bus):.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:.....

Membership: Single \$10.00

\$.....

Family \$20.00

\$.....

(The subscription year is from the 1st April to 31st March)

DONATIONS\$ 5.00 and over are tax deductible

\$.....

(receipt issued automatically)

Cheque payable to: Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc.

To save time, costs and effort, receipts issued on request Yes/No

I am happy to receive the newsletter by email Yes/No

Update – I am willing to help with:

(please tick)

Tree planting

Administration

Promotion

Leaflet distribution

Fund raising

Send to Sossi

PO Box 790

Whangaparaoa