

Leaves from the Brook



Returning Nature to the Nelson Region

Winter 2014 -

Only 200k to go!

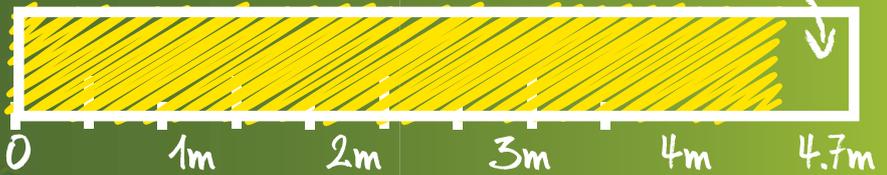
Thanks to everyone who has
contributed and
'Got Behind The Fence'



**Thank you
Nelson, we're almost
there. Please get
behind the fence**

Sponsor a fence post
www.saveourbabies.co.nz

ONLY \$200k TO GO!



GET BEHIND THE FENCE

2014 Beech Mast Year Update.



DOC ranger Joris Tinnemans shooting beech seed in the Maruia Valley

What's up - must come down.

The beech seed is well and truly starting to fall now. The recent wind events confirmed the amount of seed still on the trees in the higher elevations of the Sanctuary. DOC use shotguns to shoot down the high branches, this monitoring of seed has confirmed the current South Island wide heavy seeding or 'mast'. This Heavy seeding is accompanied by a rodent plague and subsequent stoat population explosion. This in turn leads to decimation of bird populations especially species vulnerable to predation such as kiwi, mohua, kakariki etc.

The Sanctuary trapping data is starting to indicate an increase in rodent catches. Personal observation along the top ridge shows very high number of weka, probably feeding on mice, and huge flocks of finches feeding on seed in the canopy which confirms the amount of seed available. If you have ever been involved as a trapper or are able to help to try and reduce the impact of this increase in pest numbers then please contact us.

volunteer@brooksanctuary.org



GET BEHIND THE FENCE

www.brooksanctuary.org

Show your support

get a bumper sticker or fridge magnet now!

Just a gold coin donation.

From the Visitor Centre or the campaign office in Morrison Square.

Pest Proof Fence Update



Hudson Dodd

While fund raising for the fence has continued, the Trust has been hard at work planning, so that construction can commence as soon as the other pieces of the puzzle are in place. In addition to the funding 'puzzle piece' the other key hurdle the Trust needs to clear in order to be able to start building the fence is the signing of a long-term exclusive use lease for the site with landowner, Nelson City Council.

On 5th June, Nelson City Council approved a 33-year (maximum term allowable under the Reserves Act) lease to the Trust for the sanctuary site. Once signed, the lease passes responsibility for the sanctuary site to the Trust, including liability, maintenance, and improvements. The lease allows for exclusive use within the area of the planned fence line, and also includes provision for shared use in the area immediately surrounding the fence, where the Trust will be required to develop and maintain a public pedestrian track around the perimeter of the Sanctuary. It's anticipated that this track will provide improved pedestrian access to the upper Brook Valley catchment, including improved mountain bike access between the Tantragee/Fringed Hill trail system and the Jenkins Hill/Involution trails.

The Trust has, through a robust open tender process, identified preferred suppliers for the fence project, including: Opus International Consultants, project management; Xcluder Pest-Proof Fencing of Rotorua, fence design/build; and Taylors Contracting of Brightwater, earthworks and arbour works. These companies' proposals for the project showed them to be both the most qualified for this specific project and the best value for the community's funding. Each company is programming the fence project into their work plans for the second half of 2014 through 2015.

Further project planning has occurred this autumn—both on the ground to finalise details of the fence line, and in satisfying the various conditions for the Resource Consent held by the Trust for fence construction. Current timelines for the project are for earthworks to commence in/near September, and fence construction to commence in/near November. This phased approach will allow the bench platform to be developed in advance of fence construction, and allow for new side cut sections to settle. Anticipated completion of physical works is in the first half of 2016, with exact timing to be dictated by weather—less rain over the project period will allow for earlier completion.

Meanwhile fund raising for the fence project's \$4.7m target continues, as we seek to close the final \$200,000 gap in our funding before fence construction commences. Several significant funding applications are under consideration at the time of this writing, including: Ministry of Environment's Community Environment Fund, Department of Conservation's Community Partnerships Conservation Fund, Mainland Foundation, and Pub Charity.

The Get Behind the Fence Campaign crossed the \$300,000 threshold in May, thanks to generous donations from the community—a strong demonstration of the public's support for the vision of a pest-free wildlife sanctuary and visitor attraction on Nelson's doorstep. We're still counting on additional public support, so please continue to encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to sponsor fence posts!

Business Sponsorship

In each newsletter, we feature some of our over 200 business sponsors, and highlight the ways in which they support the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary. In this issue we focus on sponsorship through recurring donations—that is, businesses that regularly contribute to the project. This can take the form of regular donations of product, recurring donations of cash, or donating a percentage of sales.



A growing number of businesses support the Sanctuary through recurring donations both in cash and in kind. Long time recurring sponsors such as Pic's Peanut Butter, Bays Brewing, Anchor Print, NZ Nature Co and Ewing Poultry have more recently been joined by the likes of BNZ, Downing Design, Honda NZ, and Waimea Estates.

Please support our business sponsors, so they can continue to support the Sanctuary.

Departing and Arriving Trustees

Derek Shaw, Acting Chair

This autumn the Trust has accepted the resignation of Trustees Eugene Crowe, Fiona McLeod, and Bruce Thomas. Eugene served as treasurer for a three-year term, guiding the Trust through the high-stakes growth period of our major capital fund-raising campaign for the fence project. Fiona provided invaluable legal advice to the Trust during her year on the Trust, before departing to spend more time with her young family. Bruce served as treasurer for an interim period, before deciding to retrain for a new career and move back to Christchurch. The Trust is very grateful to each of these individuals for donating their valuable time and professional skills during this crucial time in the organisation's development.

We are pleased to welcome the addition of two new faces to the board table: Mark Davies and Sian Holden. Mark Davies is a 12-year resident of the Nelson region and a tax advisory principal at Crowe Horwath in Nelson. As such he brings a wealth of experience in tax law, management in a multi-disciplinary business, and governance in the areas of strategy and risk management. "One of the highlights of my day," Mark shares, "is leaving in the morning and getting home at night to the song of bellbirds in the large old totara and beech trees on my property." Mark's love for New Zealand's bird life is an important factor in his decision to join the Trust. He's also made it clear he intends to contribute to the board's strong deliberation. "I believe to get optimal decision making there has to be robust decision making processes, and that these robust decision making processes necessitate robust, professional discussion of issues."

Sian Holden is a 22-year resident of Nelson and a commercial property lawyer and a partner at Pitt & Moore Solicitors. Her background in contractual, property and lease matters will serve the Trust well. Her membership in the Institute of Directors demonstrates a strong commitment to good governance, which the Trust will continue to rely on as we navigate the next stages of the organisation's development. "I have spent many happy times in the hills and bush areas that we are so lucky to have on our doorstep," Sian tells us. "On a personal level I am, therefore, very supportive of the aims and aspirations of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust and in particular, the environmental, educational, employment and commercial opportunities that it will provide for this region and the wider community."

The Trust extends a warm welcome to Mark and Sian.

Public Events



The public events team have been involved in a number of events since our last newsletter in February.

A special Brook Sanctuary presentation by Ruud Kleinpaste on 15 March was a sell out and raised over \$2,000. The ever-entertaining "Bug Man" delighted attendees with his humorous and insightful presentation. Relaxing chat over drinks and canapés after the talk ensured that the evening will be slated as one of our most popular events.

Our open day was scheduled for 16 March but sadly had to be cancelled because of dangerous wind conditions due to cyclone Lusi. A great deal of preparation time was devoted by many volunteers beforehand, so many thanks to all of those who were involved... Your efforts were very much appreciated! We held an impromptu gold coin donation BBQ a few days later and managed to recoup around \$800 to help offset cancellation losses. Although nowhere near as elaborate as the open day would have been, the BBQ was a lovely evening of food, friends and fun.

Quiz nights at the Sprig & Fern on Wednesdays during March. The Sanctuary once again was a successful charity of choice and raised over \$1,800 in entry fees and raffle ticket sales. Thanks to the many kind business donors who provided the array of raffle prizes over the four weeks, and to Dick and Babbie Joyce who took the helm.

The beautiful Joyce Jones hand crafted quilt raffle raised \$1,720 and was drawn at the end of March. It was won by Beverly Brown of Stoke, who was delighted with her good fortune.

We had a presence at The Great Kiwiana Bike Ride on 22 March thanks to enthusiastic volunteer Katrina Marwick who wore a fun kiwi costume that was kindly loaned to us by Forest & Bird in Wellington. Apparently the results were rather comical with Katrina's attempts to ride her bike whilst wearing the outfit!

Thanks to Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce and Bowater Honda for including the Brook Sanctuary in the Chamber's Business After 5 event on 25 March. It was great exposure for the Sanctuary project.

Bird Monitoring

The bird monitoring team continues to be dedicated to quarterly five-minute bird counts within the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary. Up to and including our last survey of 2013, the first 14 count sites lay within the trapped area while the remaining 5 were beyond it. As trapping has now begun along Toutouwai Ridge above and below count site 20, 2013 was the last year a valid comparison could be made between trapped and untrapped areas of the sanctuary. The graphs opposite show the average numbers of bellbirds, tui, fantails, grey warblers and kereru recorded during five-minute bird counts in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Of these five species, bellbirds and tui appear to be the prime beneficiaries of trapping, though one can't rule out other environmental influences affecting their numbers. Bellbird numbers also appear to be increasing over time throughout the Sanctuary. Counts of grey warblers have remained consistently higher at the untrapped count sites, which I personally find intriguing.

Not shown on these graphs, but also recorded during five-minute bird counts, are a multitude of other species: robins, tomtits, NZ falcons, wekas, shining cuckoos, kingfishers, riflemen, brown creepers, blackbirds, song thrush, chaffinches, silvereyes (which is the most common species), paradise shelducks, welcome swallows, California quails and moreporks, among others. For robins, tomtits, riflemen and brown creepers, the numbers counted during five-minute bird counts are too small to conclude if their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Wekas, on the other hand, appear to benefit greatly from trapping. Of the 35 wekas recorded during five-minute bird counts, only 1 was counted outside the trapped area. Last November, Keith Marshall, Stu Hanchet and I encountered this inquisitive character on e-line between count sites 8 and 9. He followed us the next $\pm 30\text{m}$ to site 9, thus ensuring he was included in our next five-minute bird count and immortalized in the data.



Schools - 'Get behind the Fence'

Schools raise funds to sponsor fenceposts

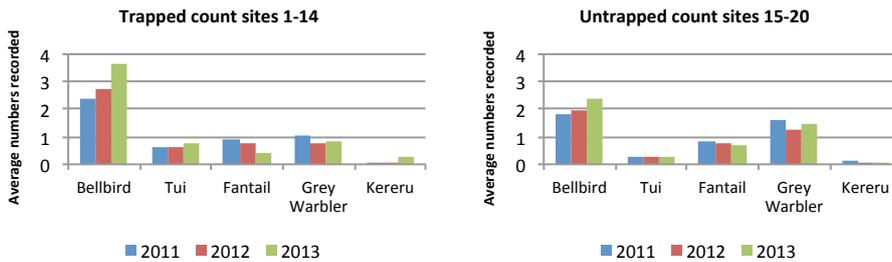


did you know that ?

Weka

Weka mate for life. Where the populations are territorial, they have been known to travel up to 60km seeking company.

Five-minute bird count results from 2011, 2012 & 2013: Bellbirds, tui, fantails, grey warblers and kereru



Old Mans Beard Seeds that have blown into the Sanctuary. OMB is self fertile and the seed can last for up to 10 years in the ground. It has been estimated around 30000 viable seed per m² in the canopy.

Invasive Plant Control

The team spent spring and summer clearing the fence line strip up The Classic. It will probably need another visit to spray any new growth before the fence construction begins.

Since then, we have been working in the old Douglas Fir block on the western side of the valley. The Track Cutting Team kindly tidied up the western access track and cut a new contour track between West A and West B along the lower reaches of the block so that we could work between it and West C. More recently, we have been working between West C and West D at the northern end of the block, gaining access by going up the western boundary. The regeneration in the block is dense with many weed species now being overgrown with natives although many wildling Douglas Firs remain and the OMB infestation is heavy with very mature vines every few metres and large patches of tangled vines in the foliage. It can take an hour to make one pass between the two trapping lines because of the time and effort required to find, cut and gel the vines.

An encouraging aspect has been that, while the area is heavily infested with mature vines, there has been very little evidence of new seedling. However, the recent storms have caused considerable damage so that there is now much more light intrusion. Given the size of the block, the time taken to get up there and return, and the small number of volunteers able and prepared to make that effort, I expect that we will be working up there for a very long time.

In part because of the physical demands of working up in the Douglas Fir block, Grace Sutherland has begun working bees for people who are available for less arduous work in the lower areas of the valley. As well as the usual Saturday morning time, she also holds one on a Wednesday afternoon. This initiative is most welcome and will help spread the load of trying to keep on top of the many heavily-infested areas we have. - Mike Murphy



As part of the education programmes we offer to school groups we have been able to encourage many to raise funds for the sponsorship of fenceposts for the pest proof fence.

This is a great way for students to support the project and tangibly invest in the goal to 'Return Nature to the Nelson Region.' From movie nights at Stoke Montessori, BBQ and bakedays, through to mufti days at most of the secondary

schools. Funds have been raised in so many different ways by so many schools.

If you would like your school to visit and learn about the Sanctuary and 'get behind the fence' please contact:

education@brooksanctuary
or phone Rick on 035394920
or book online www.brooksanctuary.org.

Hunting Report

Keep a look out for goat, deer and pig in the BWS



The animal numbers in the Sanctuary appear reasonably low with no goats seen (by me at least) for over a year although a few pigs haven't made it home.

I am trialing a new automatic bush camera. This should help with where and when animals are about. At present it is monitoring the pig trap. You can see a shot from it above.

Please report any animals seen or heard plus location in the Sanctuary to hunting@brooksanctuary.org or



Fresh water aquarium

Our visitor centre's freshwater aquarium has hosted thriving populations of native fish species such as Redfin and Common Bullies since it was established in February 2012. We recently experienced an outbreak of a parasite appropriately called 'Ich' (*Ichthyophirius multifiliis*). The koura survived the outbreak in stride, but the fish species did not fare as well. We will be introducing new native fish soon.

Track Development

The team is nearing the completion of a walking track on H Line joining Tuatara and Falcon Spurs at 540 m above sea level, and the Sanctuary now has 15km of safe and comfortable walking access to many of our places of beauty and interest. With an exciting year ahead for the Sanctuary we have a busy schedule and would greatly welcome new members to the tracking group, to assist with two main projects. First, work has begun on a substantial upgrade of the lower valley loop track as we expect it to be the most heavily used pathway for casual visitors. The surface and layout of the path will be designed for safe use by the physically impaired.

In addition to the points of historical interest and the development of an open air classroom at the Beech Glade, there will be landscaping and enhancement of the track-side vegetation with botanical plantings planned by the Planting Group. Work on this project will mostly take place on Fridays and with its easy accessibility, it will be suitable for those who would like to get involved with track work but with perhaps less than a full day's commitment in mind.

We need new members too for

the team pushing ahead a further 20km to complete the 100m grid of operational lines throughout the Sanctuary. These tracks will be cut to a lesser standard and it is envisaged that they will proceed comparatively rapidly. This work is also carried out on Fridays, but usually involves a full day's commitment.

Please consider joining this great team – get fit, meet like-minded people and be part of an amazing project. To get involved, please contact Team Leader, Peter Hay: 546 7901, or Membership Administrator, Raeonie Ellery: membership@brooksanctuary.org



Historic structures from the 1868 waterworks after being cleared by members of the track cutter team.

Hedgehogs - cute or killer

In spite of the endearing "Mrs Tiggywinkle" image created of hedgehogs by predominantly British popular culture, they should be treated no differently to stoats, possums and feral cats here in New Zealand. This is not to suggest we should attack any hedgehog snuffling around our garden at the first opportunity;

they are remarkably difficult to dispatch quickly and humanely and the death of an individual hedgehog is likely to achieve negligible conservation benefit. On the other hand, a coordinated and sustained pest management programme using effective traps such as the DOC 200 found throughout the Sanctuary is likely to make a difference. Hedgehog control should be a priority along with the 'usual suspects.' Particular care should be taken in controlling hedgehogs where there are ground-nesting birds; small or fragmented populations of lizards or threatened invertebrates and where managed sites border un-trapped grassy areas where hedgehogs are likely to be most abundant.





Volunteer!

Much of the Sanctuary activities rely on the input of keen and dedicated volunteers.

Currently all areas are keen to have more volunteers join their teams, especially pest plant control and trackcutting.

SIGN UP TODAY!

www.brooksantuary.org

To find out more phone 546 2422

Trapping

By Team Leader Arthur Jonas

The number of rats and mice caught in the valley has shown a gradual upward trend during recent months. Early indications in May however are that there will be a sharp increase, particularly of rats. This could be the start of the anticipated pest explosion following the recent heavy beech seeding. Possum numbers in the valley have been consistently low for some time!

There are factors which influence the number of pests caught other than pests on the ground, not the least important being the number of times traps are checked. There are two higher altitude lines, one outside the proposed fence line, on the east valley rim, from The Fringe southward, with rat and possum traps, the other, a two kilometre line one hundred metres below the main southern ridge, East I, with only rat traps. Both these lines catch very few rats. The Fringe line however is recording a consistently high possum catch, with the 19 traps recording an average 25% trap occupancy weekly. The introduction of this line two years ago coincided with, and could be responsible for, the decline in possum numbers caught in the valley.

A new line, on Toutowae Spur, with both rat and possum traps has also caught very few rats, but it too, has a high possum catch rate, averaging nearly 50% per week over the four weeks on which it's 10 traps have been checked

Effect of the recent storm

Several trap lines in the valley were affected by wind thrown trees following the recent storm but not so badly as to seriously interfere with trapping. The very prompt remedial work by the Track Cutters has ensured business as usual has been maintained. The one line outside the proposed fence line did not fare so well, and it will be some time before mountain biking on The Fringe will resume!

Health & Safety

At the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust we hold the health and safety of all of our volunteers, staff, and supporters as our highest priority. As an important step in fostering an organisation-wide culture of health and safety, we're initiating a health and safety update as a regular feature of the Trust's newsletter.

This autumn our general manager, Hudson Dodd, and our facilities development manager, Bo Stent, completed a certificate course in 4WD operation, provided by Master Drive Services in Blenheim. These staff members join project coordinator, Rick Field, in holding a certificate level qualification in 4WD operation. These, combined with key volunteer team leaders with 4WD training, mean the Trust has a robust cohort of personnel trained to safely operate on the Sanctuary vehicle tracks.

The Easter weekend storm that hit Nelson with high winds spared the Sanctuary site the level of destruction we experienced in the 2008 wind storm, but did topple numerous trees throughout the sanctuary. Mike McConchie is the Trust's lead chainsaw operators, who holds suitable training qualifications in chainsaw operating, with Peter Hay, have led the big effort to clear fallen trees from the Sanctuary's public and operational track networks. Along with the support of numerous other volunteers hauling branches out of the way and clearing small downed trees with hand saws, the team has

succeeded in removing the majority of the windthrown trees from the tracks to allow the safe passage of our field volunteers.

If you encounter further downed trees across the sanctuary's tracks, please contact project coordinator, Rick Field on the visitor centre's phone line (539 4920) or email rick@brooksantuary.org. Please provide as accurate a location as possible, with GPS coordinates and/or the nearest trap number. Please also remember that only qualified chainsaw operators are allowed to use a chainsaw in the sanctuary.



The Brook hilux in action



South Island Tomtit

Like the Robin the Tomtit in the Sanctuary are restricted in range to the beech forest in the upper elevations starting at about 600m. They are not as prevalent as Robin but are very vocal when you move through their territory. They are particularly susceptible to predation by ship rats and often females will be taken on the nest as well as the eggs or brood. In the absence of predators once the fence is completed they will be able to perhaps raise three clutches of chicks with up to 12 chicks fledging in one season. They should recover very quickly to high numbers and return right down to the valley floor of the Sanctuary.

Photo Courtesy Craig McKenzie



GET BEHIND THE FENCE
Sponsor fence posts today!
www.getbehindthefence.org.nz

Telephone: Campaign Office 03 546 2422
Visitor Centre 03 539 4920
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