



No. 3: 2025
21st. August, 2025

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Dear Members and supporters,

In this issue: AGM, Fairy Tern News, Kenny, Waipu, Iti – the book, ESF – Sandmining, Notornis, TVNZ item, Subs due

First, welcome to new members: Susan Clayton of Mangawhai, Yasmin Davis of Hamilton and Ellen Webb of Waipu.

Annual General Meeting

Date: Sunday, 14th September, 2025 at 2 p.m.

Venue: Senior Citizens' Hall, Fagan Place, Mangawhai Heads (behind the Wood St shops).

After presentation of the annual reports and election of the committee,

**Guest speaker, Surenya Hilton,
will share her observations of Fairy Tern activity in the Kaipara Harbour**

After the meeting there will be light refreshments and a chance to catch up with fellow “terners”.

Please join us. **All welcome**

Please consider joining the committee – there is plenty to do.

Membership Fees Due

We really appreciate your support and hope you will continue to support us with your membership fees.

Please see details at the end of this newsletter.

Fairy Tern News

Preparations for the coming breeding season are well underway. All the Rangers for the various sites have been appointed and will shortly be going through an intensive induction programme. There will be an induction day for volunteers at Mangawhai – see the notice below for details. Researchers and volunteers are still seeing fairy tern/tara iti around the Kaipara Harbour, but many birds are also checking out the East coast breeding sites. Darren Markin saw 19 at Mangawhai on one visit!



At the beginning of this month ***Darren Markin*** photographed the Waipu pair, that bred last season, in the territory they used last year (pGM-YB) and (WM-KW)





Volunteer Induction Day: Thursday, 11th September

About Tern is the name given to the groups of volunteers who support DOC in the management of tara iti at Waipū and Mangawhai. In Mangawhai we have about 20 people who have a variety of roles depending on what is requested by DOC staff.

Two boat skippers take volunteers

across the Mangawhai Harbour to the Sand Spit, the main breeding area for taraiti. We work to support the DOC rangers, and tasks required vary with the time of year and the season, e.g. the last 2024/2025 breeding season was extremely busy with up to 12 nests at one time. Volunteers were asked to observe nesting fairy terns from a hide as the birds incubate their eggs – both parents are involved in this, with (usually) the male either bringing in a fish for the sitting female, or for a changeover to occur, when the male sits on the eggs while the female flies off to fish for herself. Once the chicks hatch, volunteers observe that fish are brought in by the parents, usually one at a time while the other parent keeps guard. They also keep an eye out for aerial predators such as kahu/hawks or great black-backed gulls.

But volunteers undertake other tasks too. Events coming up include a weed action foray onto the spit at the end of August. Volunteers will tackle lupins, boneseed plants, Sydney golden wattle and small pines, all pest weeds that are proliferating on the spit.

Volunteers actively engage with the public to educate and provide information about taraiti and other shorebirds such as Caspian terns, dotterels, variable oyster catchers, bar-tailed godwits and others that are present in the harbour. For the up-coming season they will begin to collect data about these shorebirds for DOC. A more recent volunteer activity has been to support DOC and Zoo staff at the aviary for the captive rearing programme.

On Thursday 11 September there will be an induction day in the Mangawhai Sand Spit for volunteers, facilitated by DOC staff. If this interests anyone please contact the volunteer coordinator at: dawne.sanson@xtra.co.nz

***Photos: Darren Markin
Mangawhai 16th August***



Kenny

It is with great sadness that we report the news that Kenny, Reg Whale's beloved cat dog has died.

Kenny, a Sydney Silky has been Reg, the trapper's faithful companion for many years. Kenny succeeded his father, Monty; both were trained cat/pig detection dogs and fully certified in the predator detection conservation programme.



In recent years, Reg has mostly been trapping at Tern Point, providing a valuable buffer so that fewer predators reach the Refuge on Mangawhai Sandspit. Kenny became a firm favourite with all the Tern Point residents.

Bryan Clark, one of our trustees and a resident of Tern Point, found these images of dear wee Kenny for us to remember this special friend of the Fairy Terns!



They spent most of their working lives on the Mangawhai Spit and environs protecting tara iti/fairy terns and other ground nesting birds. Their fame was such that Reg was asked by DOC to take them further afield to sniff out hard to catch problem cats.





Waipu

If you're in Waipu township, see if you can find this pavement art spotted by sharp-eyed Jane Vaughan.

Iti, the Hungry Fairy Tern.....

..... is the title of a children's picture book we've been working on.

The Trust is sponsoring its publication and we've been working with DOC, the author Monique Rowe, the illustrator Rebecca Gibbs and the publisher David Ling to put the book together. Based on actual events, it tells the story of an orphaned fairy tern/tara iti chick and how it learnt to fend for itself.

The book will be launched in Mangawhai and we hope it will be ready in time for Christmas

From our friends at the Endangered Species Foundation:

Today we launched new research that proves seabed mining in Pakiri, Mangawhai and Te Akau Bream Bay is 100% unnecessary.

Land-based sand alternatives are already here, and they can supply **more than demand** without destroying our oceans.

Meanwhile, McCallum Bros propose to dredge:

- 8.45 million cubic metres from Bream Bay over 35 years
- Up to 9 million cubic metres from Mangawhai-Pakiri over 35 years

This will devastate fragile marine ecosystems – where scallop beds are currently rejuvenating – for no economic or practical reason.

In contrast sand alternatives can create jobs and support regional development, reduce carbon emissions and protect marine ecosystems and fisheries worth millions for local and national economies. And it's already working: Allied Concrete has been producing 100% manufactured sand concrete since 2024 – with stronger results than marine sand.

 **Read the full report [here](#)**

The communities of Te Akau Bream Bay are busy holding meetings and protests opposing these proposals.



Notornis

Next March, *Notornis*, the journal of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand will publish a special edition devoted entirely to tara iti/fairy tern. The Trust has been asked to contribute a paper about its contribution to tara iti conservation. We had far too much material for a scientific journal, so we thought you might like to read some of what we've had to cut, starting with early years of volunteer work...

1982 - 2008

The designation of the Mangawhai Spit as a Wildlife Refuge in 1982 increased the public interest in shorebird protection but exposed the area to increased recreational use. By the early 1980s DOC monitoring indicated that humans, vehicles and dogs were the greatest threat to nesting birds. With the approval of DOC, then editor of the local *Mangawhai Memo*, Joanna Roberts, initiated the setting up of a volunteer group rostered to assist with education, advice, and to carry out summer patrols on the harbour shoreline and Mangawhai Spit. A simple pamphlet was created, available at all local shops, which combined information on Caspian terns and fairy terns, dotterels, variable oyster catchers and other shorebirds, and pointing out the need to prohibit dogs, horses and vehicles on the Spit.

Mangawhai Memo issues from 1985 to 1998 highlighted the importance of protecting the nesting birds on the Refuge from the effects of storms which destroyed tara iti nests. Several eggs and a chick were relocated to the incubation unit at Auckland Zoo after a storm in November 1997. A large area of nesting Caspian terns had been fenced off to protect their nests (Joanna Roberts, pers. comm.).

Ornithological Society New Zealand (OSNZ) volunteers assisted DOC wardens at Waipū, Mangawhai and, later, Pākiri when taraiti began breeding there. In 2005, Jane Vaughan noticed a small advertisement in the *Mangawhai Memo* asking for a ride across the harbour to the Sand Spit once a week. This request was made by Audrey Williams, a member of the OSNZ from Whangārei who, with a small group, visited Mangawhai and Waipū during summer to check on the tara iti, walking several kilometres along the ocean beach from Pacific Road.

Meanwhile, after seeing another small advertisement, Jane attended a meeting of interested people at the Te Arai Camping Ground. This was led by Gwenda Pulham of Auckland OSNZ, who also checked on the tara iti. Jane Vaughan, Sioux Plowman and several others met and formed the core of the volunteers at Mangawhai in time for the 2005/2006 season, calling the group “About Tern”. A fortnightly article was written in the *Mangawhai Memo* to keep local residents up to date. For the 2005/2006 season, rides to the Spit at Mangawhai were provided for volunteers from the Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society, encouraged by DOC. Whatever small dinghy available was used but eventually a small rubber ducky was donated with a dedicated volunteer skipper.

Both Audrey and Gwenda taught the volunteers how to observe the tara iti, how to behave around all the birds, write reports, and survive in the harsh environment. One DOC Ranger, Kelly Brogtrop, managed both the Mangawhai and Waipū breeding areas. This was difficult and volunteers were called upon more often to go out and check independently, often by kayak.

Next instalment: Setting up the Trust

TVNZ item

Did you see the item about fairy terns on TVNZ Seven Sharp last night? If you missed it you can find it here:

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/seven-sharp> Look for the 20th August show.

The shows are available for 6 days.

We'd love to see you at the AGM if you can make it.

Best wishes,

Heather Rogan and the Trust Committee

Membership Fees Due

Please make your payment by direct credit to our bank account,

Account name: New Zealand Fairy Tern Charitable Trust

Account number: 12-3094-0197257-00

Please include your name and type of membership – life, individual, family, junior, corporate.

Fees for each category are:

Life Membership: \$200

Annual Subscriptions:

\$20 individual membership

\$30 family membership (2 adults plus children aged 15 years and under)

\$5 junior membership (15 years and under)

Corporate membership: \$50 small firms \$150 medium \$500 large

Some people choose to supplement their membership fees with donations which are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!