

Bushy Point Restoration Project

Annual Report 2020/21
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)



2020/2021 - Summary of Progress

This report details the progress made on the Bushy Point Restoration Project. The Project is the flagship project of the Otatara Landcare Group (OLG) – www.otataralandcare.org.nz.

The report also contains some wider OLG information where relevant.

- **Covid-19 affected public events this year, but the public planting event was held on 12 September 2020 albeit with strict requirements and no barbecue. However, a special planting with Kevin Laidlaw and family occurred and a seat commemorating Russell Evans was placed at the pond picnic area.**
- **Planted 1000 locally grown native plants and covered with combi-guards for rabbit control.**
- **Maintained the previous 20 years plantings**
- **Managed major pest control operation (6km of trap network for possums, mustelids and rats over 90 hectares) with volunteers**
- **Maintained entrance area and public walkway**
- **Continued weed control (particularly gorse)**
- **Continued grazing horses and baleage management**
- **Managed a calendar of monthly working afternoons for weeding, putting combi-guards on, track work, planting.**

1. Aim of the Bushy Point Restoration Project

The aim of the Bushy Point Restoration Project is to restore a 14 hectare area of rough exotic pasture between two remnants of nationally significant native totara forest to provide a habitat linkage for native birds and to enhance existing forest remnants and other ecosystems. Also, to raise public awareness of the importance of native forest remnants and to provide a practical long term ecological project for residents of Otatara and Otatara and Invercargill schoolchildren to be involved in.

The project is progressively turning the area of exotic grasses into a functioning, self-sustaining native ecosystem with features and educational opportunities that can be enjoyed by the public of Otatara and Invercargill for the future.

The project is managed by the Committee of the Otatara Landcare Group, an Incorporated Society established in 1999.

The Mission Statement of the Otatara Landcare Group is:

- **To focus attention of Otatara residents and others on the natural features and ecological values of the Otatara environment, especially native forest and wetland flora and fauna.**
- **To promote and, where possible, facilitate the protection, restoration and creation of such features in the interests of scientific appreciation and intrinsic worth and to encourage community appreciation of these values.**

2. Administration

- Annual Report completed for 2019/20 including compilation of trapping statistics
- Correspondence with Environment Southland on annual plan allocation
- Annual accounts separate Bushy Point income and expenditure. Audited accounts to 31 March 2020 presented to the OLG AGM on 13 May 2020.
- Updated OLG website to add Pestbusters to OLG Website content.

3. Caretaker

- Caretaker Barry Smith spent 171.4 hours working at Bushy Point during the year, an increase from previous year.
- Main jobs included: plant area maintenance, releasing and weed control, tree planting, supervising baleage and fertiliser application, track maintenance, preparation for planting – positioning plants, track preparation, and planning activity on public planting day 12 September 2020.
- Liaison with landowners, grazers, Invercargill Rifle Range, DOC, Local Authorities, schools and report writing.
- Caretaker Barry has been a key figure in ensuring the new initiatives have been successful and key ongoing management tasks and liaison is undertaken.
- Main user of the Mulcher Mower machine for track work, weed control and maintenance of Living Legends year 2 planting area.
- Health and Safety continues to be a focus with Bushy Point being looked at in different ways to try and determine differing H&S issues. The 13 hours spent this year reflect the hours specifically looking and fixing H&S issues. Health and safety is always a consideration when other groups are in doing voluntary work, in these instances the H&S time is included in the project associated with the groups visit. This year the main gate entrance was found to be not fit for purpose with a 3.6M Gate in a 3.8M Gap and 2 padlocks (one ICC and one OLG) on the same chain. The area houses 2 x grazing horses. The entranceway was re-

constructed with the installation of 2 x 4.2M gates. The ICC and the OLG each have a separately padlocked gate which has reduced the risk of horses escaping and made the site more secure.

4. Restoration

- Plant maintenance and weed control continued.
- Living Legends main planting public day – Saturday 12 September 2020 - 65 people attended. A bench seat was erected on a site overlooking the pond for Russell Evans – his family attended the planting day celebration. Grand total of 31,686 plants have been planted at Bushy Point since the year 2000.
- Preparation spot spraying of Living Legends 2020 area by Barry and release spraying of the previous years' plants.
- Growing of 1200 Living Legends plants by Linda and Ray Jackson at the Community Nursery
- Combi-guard plant covers bought and used to cover plants for rabbit control.
- Five Minute Bird Surveys by Kiri Pullen undertaken annually, funded by ES
- Rat and Mustelid monitoring continued at Bushy Point by ES.
- A monthly calendar of working bees and events was continued by Sally Duston and has successfully introduced new people to Bushy Point.
- A national science project “Restoration Planting Research” by Waikato University set up vegetation plots in Bushy Point and other urban areas around Invercargill as part of a national study. These plots are monitored every 6 months.

5. Animal Pest Control and Monitoring

Intensive pest control operation continues, taking in the whole of Bushy Point area (90 hectares). The rat, mustelid and possum control at Bushy Point is aimed at protecting the nesting fernbirds, kereru, tui and bellbirds as well as other birds, lizards and insects and plants.

- Maintained 8 trap lines through Bushy Point covering over 6 kilometres of track, containing - 90 rat bait stations, 49 possum traps, and 14 stoat traps. Bait stations are set at 50 metre intervals along each track.
- Approximately 216 voluntary hours spent on pest control in 2019/20 by Ian Gamble, Sally and Gordon Duston, Kennedy Family, Becky Goodsell.
- Trap lines continue to be serviced on average every second week by volunteers, with results since start of trapping in 2007 as shown below. Although possums have been markedly reduced, stoats continually invade and rat poison continues to be taken.
- In addition, an extension to trapping along the estuary edge called the buffer project was established and maintained.

Possums caught at Bushy Point by calendar year were as follows (note that the 2021 figures are only up to March 2021). In addition, Dallas Bradley caught 20 possums at one station just outside the Bushy Point area after a call from a resident in January 2021.

Possum Count of Catch	Year									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	99	74	26	17	17	10	6	12	13	10

Possum Count of Catch	Year					2021 (to March)	Grand Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Total	9	7	4	14	14	332	

Mustelids caught by calendar year were as follows (note 2021 up to March 2021):

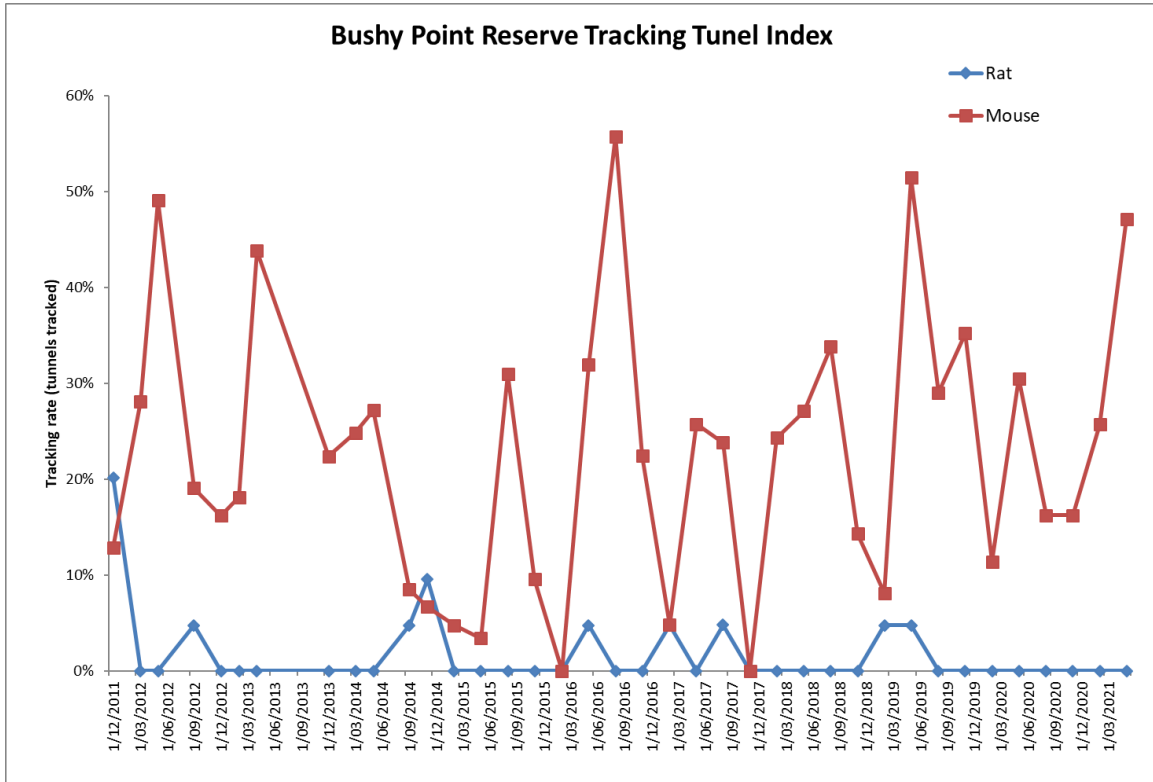
Count of Catch	Year									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ferret					1					5
Stoat Adult (F)	1	1	5	2	2	1	4	1	3	
Stoat Adult (M)	2	3	2		3	1	6			
Stoat Juvenile (F)								2		
Stoat Unknown	10	9	11	8	1	9	6	5	11	7
Weasel	1	3		1	1	1	2		1	
Grand Total	14	16	18	11	8	12	18	8	15	12

Count of Catch	Year					2021 to March	Grand Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020			
Ferret	4	1	1				12
Stoat Adult (F)		3	1				24
Stoat Adult (M)	2	1	1				21
Stoat Juvenile (F)							2
Stoat Unknown	11	4	2	3	2		99
Weasel	3	1		4			18
Grand Total	20	10	5	7			176

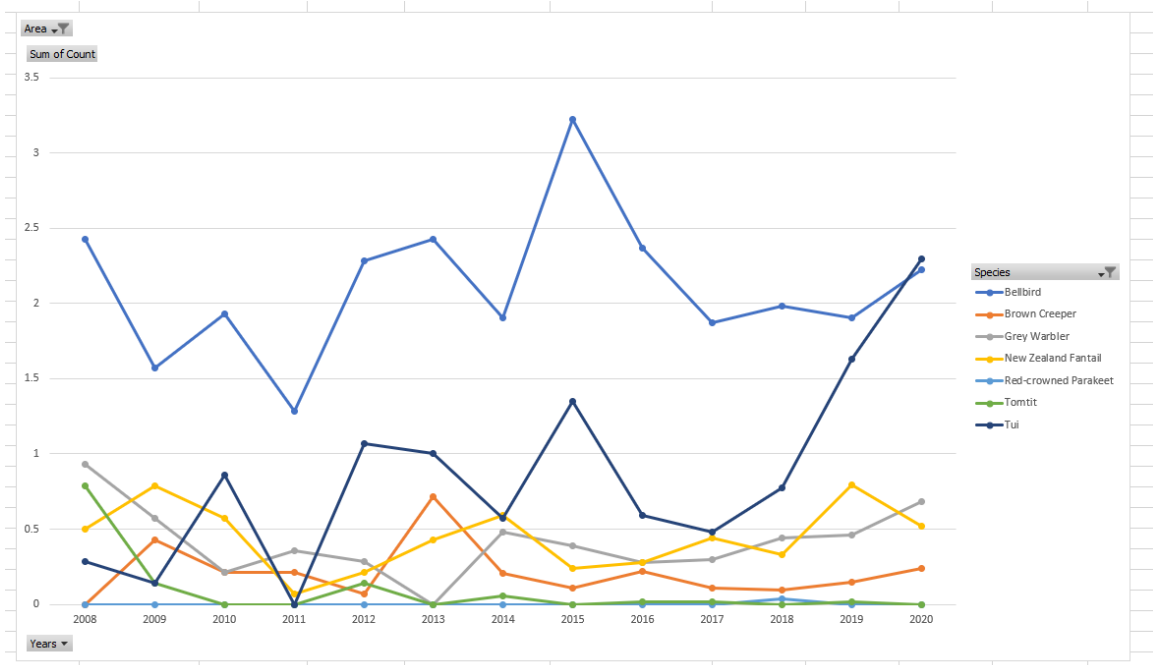
- Trapping results are also recorded on the Trap NZ website. Statistics and maps can now use 14 years of data to establish trends in trap catch at Bushy Point. Information on trapping is collected in the form of spreadsheets and this information is available for further analysis.
- Lizard artificial covers, weta motels and seedfall traps are still in place but monitoring by Environment Southland has ceased.

- Bird count stations have been set up and are monitored by Kiri Pullen for Environment Southland every November. These counts are done in association with counts at Mores Reserve, Bluff Hill, and Omaui Reserve.

- Rat, mouse and stoat monitoring by Environment Southland continued with the results below.



BUSHY POINT BIRD MONITORING 2006-2020



Thanks to Mark Oster, Becky Goodsell and Ali Meade of Environment Southland for ongoing support and advice with pest control in 2020/21.

Wider Otatara Pest Control – Otatara Pestbusters

Otatara Pestbusters (which encourages pest control on private land by their owners), was continued throughout 2020/21. This project (a sub-group of the Otatara Landcare Group) now run by Dallas Bradley has nearly 300 members, most doing pest control. The project builds on the 90 hectares of control at Bushy Point and has been supported by Environment Southland funding which has enabled the group to supply traps and bait to property owners at a subsidised price. Each person actively engaged in pest control receives a letterbox sign and regular newsletters.

Since 2013/14 Invercargill City Council Reserves at Otatara have been brought into Pestbusters and traps are being serviced by volunteers in those locations.

In 2012 negotiations began to include Otatara South Scenic Reserve into intensive pest control. Department of Conservation funding ensured that this reserve has been intensively trapped for possums, stoats and rats since 2015/16. Thanks go to local resident Peter Simpson for spearheading the pest control in Otatara South Scenic Reserve and now Chris Bowen and Colin Lawrence supported by Pestbusters.

6. Weed Control

- Gorse, broom and blackberry control continued, particularly at the Bryson Road entrance to Bushy Point
- Hand weeding of plants by volunteers each month – organised by Sally Duston.
- Spot spraying of areas in preparation for Living Legends 2020 planting – by Barry Smith.
- The mulcher mower utilised for gorse control in the plantation area
- The OLG ran the annual Chilean Flame Creeper removal evening at Bowman Bush on 25 January 2021.

7. Infrastructure

- Bushy Point Track mowed as required, track improvements made.
- Equipment shed, and tractor shed
- Track around pond maintained.
- Posts and track markers for self-guided activity trail
- Posts for new track alignment and interpretation
- The mulcher mower utilised for trackwork
- Muddy part of the track beyond the pond improved by sand (but more work needed)

8. Interpretation and public access

- The Bushy Point walkway continues to be used by individuals and groups.
- Five Interpretation Signs maintained on-site
- Annual Living Legends planting – 65?? people attended main public planting day 12 September 2020.
- Doggy do bags provided at the entrance to the Bushy Point Track.
- Geocaches including a multi geocache were placed in Bushy Point in 2015

General Information and Advocacy

- Otatara Pigeon Post Newsletter published and delivered to all Otatara residents April, July, Sept, December 2020 – hard copies delivered thanks to ICC funding and digital versions on website at <https://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/publications/>
- OLG website updated regularly with events, and to include a “Pestbusters” section

9. Volunteers and Public Involvement

- Covid Lock-down continued until the latter half of May 2020 when trapping and site maintenance re-started but the challenges posed by Covid continued. Our hours of effort put into Bushy Point this year of 850.5 Hours is the second lowest of the previous 10 years and about 225 hours less than the 2019/20 year.

“In September our usual planting day did go ahead with the help of a large number of volunteers from the Central Baptist Church. We worked in smaller groups of around 5 or 6 people, each assigned an area. Unfortunately we felt that we could not hold a bar-b-q this year and keep safe social distancing practises. The day was fine and pleasant and our plants got in the ground; total for the whole year 1070 plants. Our total for Bushy Point since inception now stands at 31,686 plants. It was also great to see Kevin Laidlaw, our Living Legend out assisting along with some of his family. One of the really good things about his visit this year was that I was able to take him to the plaque that was erected at the time of the first Living Legend planting day in 2011. It is the first time he had seen it since then and the first time he had a really good look at it and the first time he realised that his name was actually on it” – Barry Smith.

- Number of hours for the year – 850.5 hours (over 16753 hours in total for the project).
- School visits – One of the early casualties of the lock-down was that there was no visit by Southland Girls’ High School Year 7 students this year. This contributed to our hours being down and the slight reduction in plant numbers being planted.
- 8 Pest lines (over a 90 hectare area) maintained every 2 weeks by a group of dedicated volunteers.

- Monthly workdays organised by Sally at Bushy Point throughout 2020/21 and Douglas and Kathy held evening weeding sessions in summer.

10. Grazing/pasture management

- Horse grazing has continued in 2020/21.
- No sheep grazing, but balage taken off.

11. Funding

- Successful long term plan funding of \$10000 from Environment Southland (\$1000 to SCN, \$1000 to Bush Haven).
- A successful application for funding for three years for Bushy Point, Otatara South and Pestbusters was made to Department of Conservation in 17/03/2020

12. Expenditure and Income

- General expenditure for Bushy Point 2020/21 was \$14994
- Public Liability Insurance was \$554
- Pest Control Expenses were \$5417 (incl Otatara South Reserve)
- Total grazing and baleage income for Bushy Point 2019/20 was \$5200

13. Key Tasks for 2021/22

- Preparation for Planting Event 12 September 2021
- Release spraying previous plantings
- Preparation spraying for 2021 plantings
- Weed control, as required, for previous 20 years of plantings
- Continued track maintenance – look at solution to muddy sections
- Continue to work with schools at Bushy Point, in particular Southland Girls High School, Otatara School, James Hargest and other schools for Living Legends School planting.
- Weed control particularly gorse paddock, broom on boundaries and releasing of planted plants
- Maintain with volunteers all pest lines every 2 weeks from spring.
- Continue work to extend pest control over wider Otatara area particularly new estuary edge area
- Investigate using self-setting rat traps in place of poison at Bushy Point
- Continue to support the Otatara Pestbusters initiative
- Continue with the monthly calendar of events.
- Consult Environment Southland on the health of the New River Estuary
- Support work at Oreti Totara Dune Forest (a number of our committee members also on that Trust – Maurice, Dallas, Brian, Chris and Cathy).

14. Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, surrounding landowners and volunteers for their efforts in making 2020/21 another very busy and successful year for the Bushy Point Restoration Project.

Barry Smith, Chair OLG – 14 December 2021

Bushy Point Habitat Restoration Project

Twenty-second Annual Report – April 1st 2020 ~ 31st March 2021

This year will remain in our memories for quite some time due to the effects of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. Our pest species present in ever decreasing numbers in Bushy Point got a reprieve for a couple of months as no work was allowed to be carried out in the area during lock-down. No Problem really. Bushy Point was still open for walking within your own bubble and socially distancing. I took the opportunity to walk the area a couple of times, not as caretaker, but as a member of the local public. Probably for the first time ever it gave me a totally different perspective of the place although I was particularly looking for areas where safety may be a concern.

One of the early casualties of the lock-down was that there was no visit by Southland Girls' High School Year 7 students this year. This contributed to our hours being down and the slight reduction in plant numbers being planted.

Lock-down continued until the latter half of May 2020 when trapping and site maintenance re-started but the challenges posed by Covid continued. Our hours of effort put into Bushy Point this year of 850.5 Hours is, the second lowest of the previous 10 years and about 225 hours less than the 2019~20 year. Normally we sit around the 1000+ hours mark a year. However considering virtually nothing happened during lockdown, coupled with reduced hours throughout the year, this is understandable. Our total work input for Bushy Point since its inception: 16,753.6 hrs

In September our usual planting day did go ahead with the help of a large number of volunteers from the Central Baptist Church. We worked in smaller groups of around 5 or 6 people, each assigned an area. Unfortunately we felt that we could not hold a bar-b-q this year and keep safe social distancing practises. The day was fine and pleasant and our plants got in the ground; total for the whole year 1070 plants. Our total for Bushy Point since inception now stands at 31,686 plants. It was also great to see Kevin Laidlaw, our Living Legend out assisting along with some of his family. One of the really good things about his visit this year was that I was able to take him to the plaque that was erected at the time of the first Living Legend planting day in 2011. It is the first time he had seen it since then and the first time he had a really good look at it and the first time he realised that his name was actually on it.

Planting time and preparation work accounted for some 280 hours for the year with a further 121 hours of maintenance of the plants in the way of weeding and spray releasing. Between Brain Denny and Myself we have applied just under 780 ltrs of spray in all aspects of Bushy Point from weed control of major gorse, broom and blackberry areas to site preparation for planting to spray releasing.

Our Team of Trappers: Sally & Gordon Duston, Becky Goodsill, Brian Rance and Ian Gamble amassed some 303 hours of work for the year between them.

Pathway management had an input of nearly 62 hours this year. Mostly this was mowing but also some time was spent in hardening areas where the track was soft. Total Mower usage for the year was 45.5 hours. Our mower was out of action for nearly 3 months, sitting in the workshop in town awaiting parts from Europe to arrive – delays caused by the severe Covid-19 situation in that part of the world. This necessitated me using my own mower to keep the grass down on our pathways. It was a good reminder of why we have an industrial strength mower rather than a normal ride-on as Cabbage

tree leaves suddenly became a problem again as well as sticks and other things sitting just above ground level. I had to do some maintenance on my own machine after every visit to Bushy Point

It will be noted in the financial report that the income from Bushy Point is about 5 times what it was last financial year. This is due to the sale of hay / bailing / silage with both the previous and current year's sales of about \$2000 for each of these years occurring in this financial year. The other part of our income, grazing for 2 horses has continued at a steady level

The main gateway at the entrance has concerned me for some time. We have had a shared gate with the ICC up till the present and the way it has been kept secure has been of concern. In January I replaced the 1 x 3.6M gate with 2 individually accessed 4.2M gateways. This makes each of us responsible for the security of our own gates.

One job I really enjoyed doing this year was the upgrade of the lookout point on the eastern side of the pond. This area in the upgrade was bordered, sand infill was then applied to level out the area and a top coating of about 50mm of Dunite finished the project before replacing the picnic table and the chair dedicated to Russell Evan back onto the site.

In Mid-July we received a visit from Dr Liz Craig (current list MP for Labour in Invercargill). I had wondered whether this was something to do with the upcoming election, however, there was no fan-fare, no troupes of reporters or in fact anyone else.... Just her and I and when I asked what her visit was about she said she just wanted to catch up on what was going on around the place with Bushy Point. I am very happy to show anyone interested in BP around and the great work everyone has done and also explain the un-seen, the results of the work carried out by our team of Pest Busters both at Bushy point and also around the Otatara area.

Bushy Point has been used by other organisations throughout the year. We have the Orienteers, LandSAR (Search and Rescue – doing some practise) and FMC (Federated Mountain Clubs – using the area for a Navigation Course).

Health and Safety: Every year I look at the furniture and the site to ensure there are no exposed nails and that screws and bolts are tight and the furniture is safe, or things on the ground that could cause an avoidable accident. This year there were 2 cabbage trees which I removed. Both beside the track, one dead and had the probability of falling onto the track, the other still alive but with a significant lean out over the track. The main entranceway was another hazard that I tackled, The concern here being that if horses escaped then the potential for a serious accident with traffic would have been serious. The final observed hazard for the year with having heavy machinery on site making hay, a task that occurred over a 3 day period (from cutting, rowing, bailing and carting).

The Trees we have planted are growing. A recent visit to the site of the 2011 (first year) Living Legends plantings has shown that natural regeneration is occurring. Under one Pitto, in an area less than 0.5 M2 I counted 11 Totara Seedlings growing, the birds are doing their job.

Other aspects of Bushy point Life have continued as normal. This has been due to the work carried out at times by our committee and our vast team of volunteers who turn up periodically for monthly work days, or weeding projects, or planting days etc.

Thank you to the OLG Committee and other volunteers for contributing. Any omissions let me know and I will add it to the report before filing.

Barry Smith

OLG Caretaker – Bushy Point

Barry Smith

Barry Smith

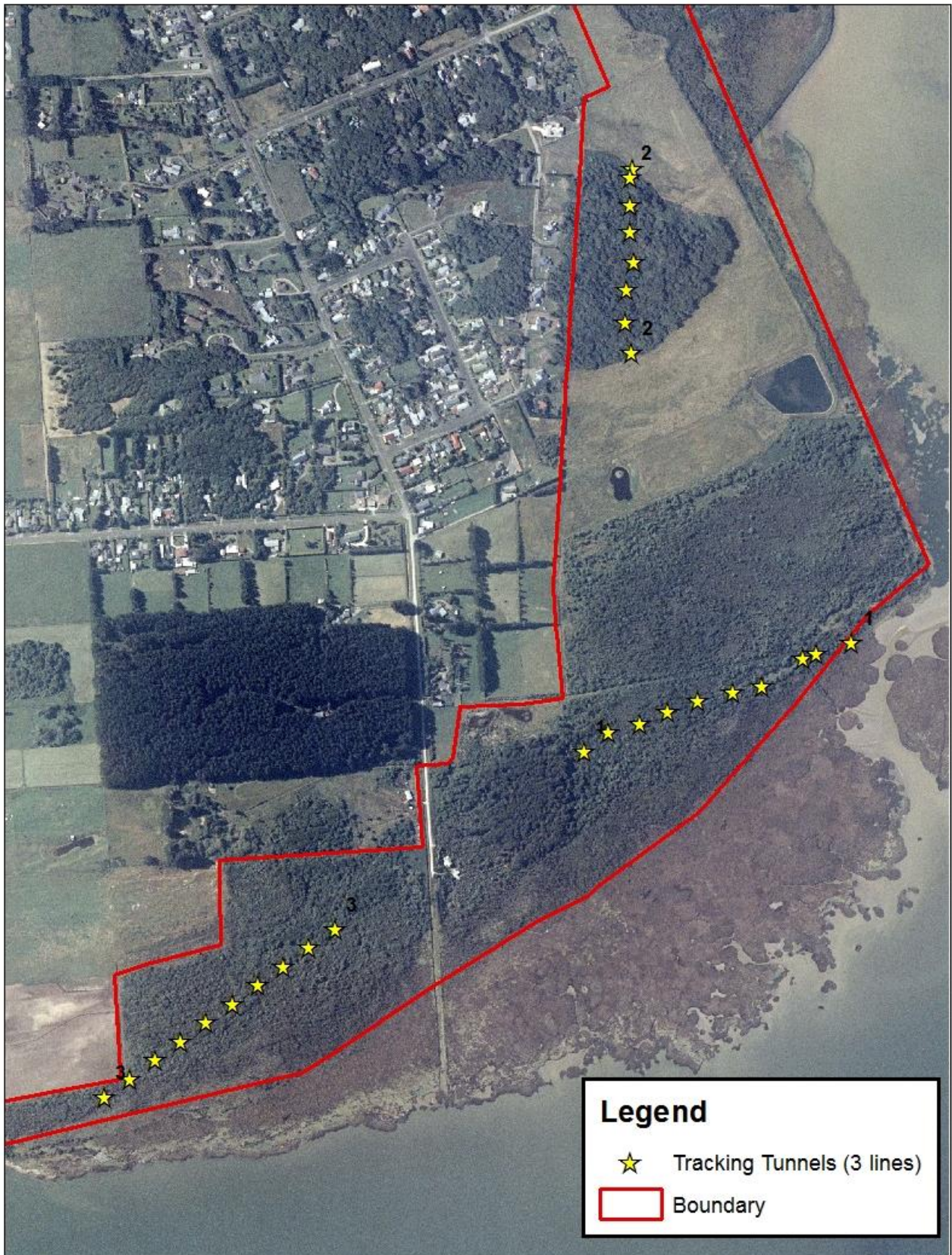
- ω Table this report
- ω Table a copy of the time sheets for the year



Planting Day 12 September 2020



Rodent Monitoring lines at Bushy Point



**Bushy Point/Otatara Rodent
Tracking Tunnel Monitoring**
Date: 05 November 2012



Cadastral information derived from Land Information New Zealand. CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED. Aerial Photography dated 5/2/2007 to 14/03/2008. Copyright Terra Link International Limited

DISCLAIMER: Environment Southland cannot guarantee that the information shown is 100% accurate and should not be relied on in any manner without proper consultation.

Map of Bird Count Locations at Bushy Point 2017/2021



Legend

Active

- Yes
- Reserve Boundary



Bushy Point Otatara
5 min bird count stations
Date: 29 October 2014



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Bushy Point Pest Control 2007-2021



Possum Hot Spot Map 2007-2019



Urban Research – Bushy Point Restoration Sites – Waikato University

People, Cities & Nature

Restoring indigenous nature in urban environments

<https://www.peoplecitiesnature.co.nz/>

What is People, Cities & Nature?

People, Cities & Nature is a inter-disciplinary research programme with six projects across New Zealand that are working towards restoring indigenous biodiversity in urban environments. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. People, Cities & Nature is led by Professor Bruce Clarkson and managed by Catherine Kirby. The six projects are as follows and Bushy Point is under the Restoration Plantings project.

- [Restoration plantings](#)
- [Urban lizards](#)
- [Mammalian predators](#)
- [Māori restoration values](#)
- [Green space benefits](#)
- [Cross-sector alliances](#)

Plantings

Planting of native species to restore forest in urban centres is an important conservation activity that has been gaining momentum in New Zealand for over 40 years. Early projects were few in number, largely isolated from each other, and weren't based on scientific knowledge. In contrast, today's urban forest restoration projects are numerous, increasingly linked by conservation networks and knowledgeable communities, and are often on the cutting-edge of our ecological understanding.

Our **Plantings** research is addressing the demand for new information on best practice in urban ecological restoration to support these projects. We are studying plantings throughout nine New Zealand cities to better understand the requirements for efficiency and success of restoration efforts of city councils and community groups.

We want to discover the most efficient pathway to restore an urban forest, from first plant in the ground, to a mature ecosystem that self-regenerates. There are two main ways we are doing this. First, we are using a nation-wide chronosequence approach, whereby space is substituted for time, for surveying to determine how regeneration dynamics of restoration plantings vary with microclimate and vegetation composition among cities. Second, we are planting and monitoring enrichment species such as rimu and tawa to test how to facilitate urban forest succession. Findings from this work will help to improve wildlife habitat and ecosystem service provision through successful restoration of long-lived, self-regenerating urban forests.

Vegetation & Environment Surveys

Our surveys use permanent vegetation plots to quantify the structure, composition, and environmental conditions of urban vegetation. We have developed methods that will provide detailed understanding of the short-term (1-10 yrs) to medium-term (10-40 yrs) successional dynamics of restoration plantings. Our data help us answer questions like: when exactly does canopy closure occur so that competing weeds die back? and, which environmental conditions are most important for trees to regenerate successfully? Hard data on these important ecological processes is currently unavailable for New Zealand cities.

Understanding how light, microclimate, and understorey conditions change over the first 40 years of development will provide councils with critical information for long-term planning to maximise efficiency of resource allocation. City councils will be provided with improved restoration planting guidelines to maximise both immediate and long-term success of projects.

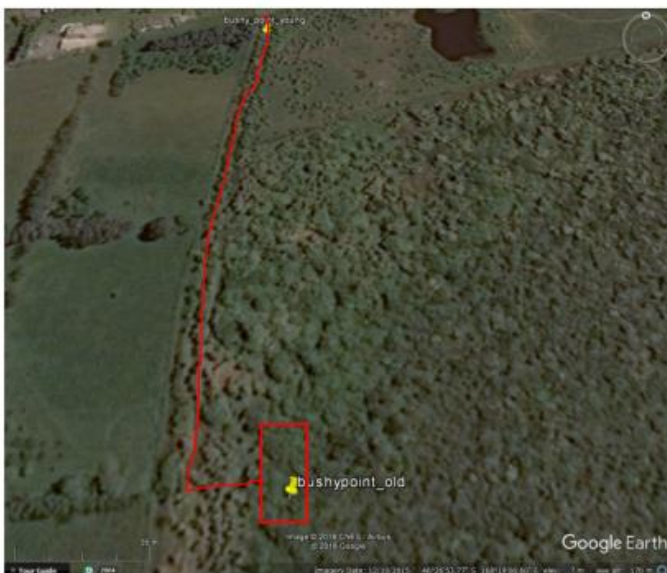
Study sites

The study sites for the Plantings research project are in nine cities:

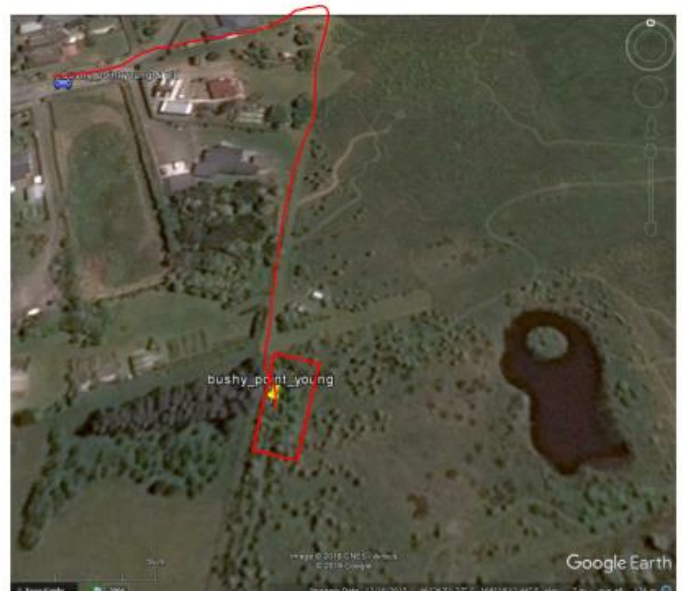
- Tauranga
- Hamilton
- Napier
- New Plymouth
- Wellington
- Nelson
- Christchurch
- Dunedin
- Invercargill

Bushy Point Sites

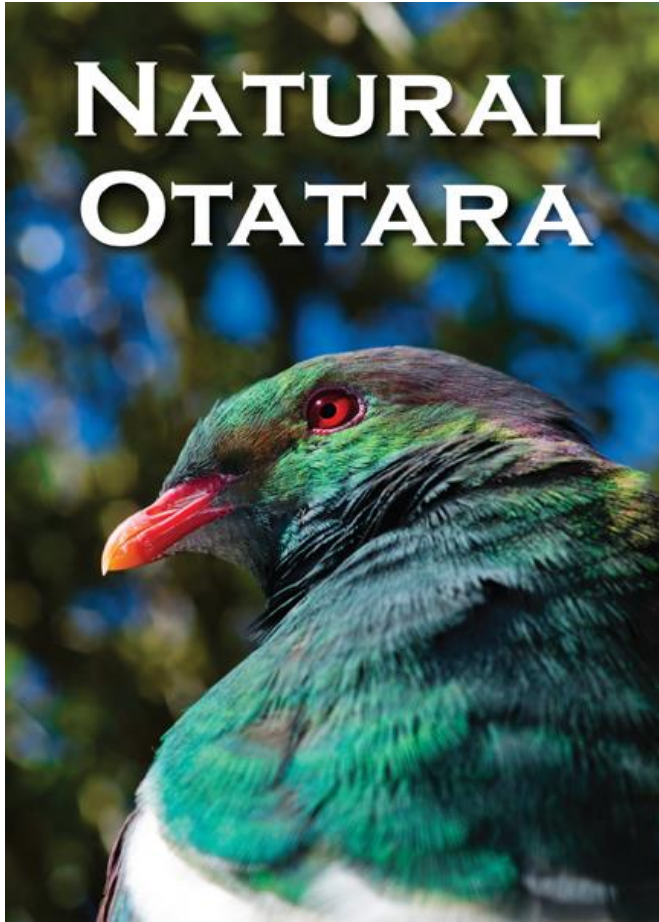
5) bushy_point_old, 2000



4) bushy_point_young, 2006



General Advocacy - Natural Otatara Booklet, Kereru Road Signs, Otatara Pestbusters, Otatara Pigeon Post Newsletter



Otatara Landcare Group
PIGEON POST
Newsletter of the Otatara Landcare Group

Issue 61, Summer 2020-21

Once again we bring you a Christmas edition of Pigeon Post albeit a rather sober one, in keeping with the times.

It's been a strange year not the least because of the pandemic, but also because we are facing an environmental crisis that no nation seems to be taking seriously and a changing world order that could have ramifications for years to come. All this of course is outside the circle of influence of we humble Southlanders, or is it?

This issue tells tales of what small groups of individuals can achieve by working together often in seemingly overwhelming circumstances—whether it is saving a forest, releasing thousands of tree seedlings from strangling grasses, or protecting the birdlife of NZ from creatures that prey on them. The decisions we make on a daily basis have a roll on effect for the future and if enough of us make the right ones then there is hope for the generations that follow.

Getting involved with the Landcare Group, volunteering at the Nursery, donating to the Education Centre or taking up pest-busting on your property, could make all the difference to what that future looks like for us all.

Editor-at-large

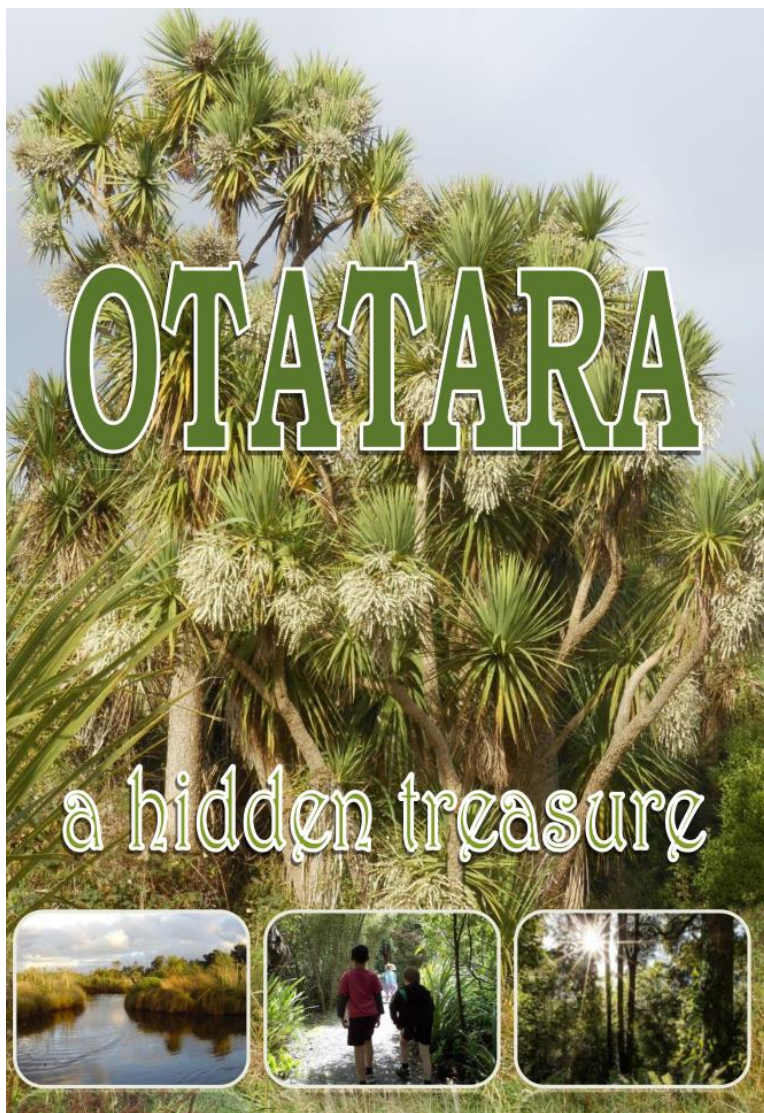
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Click on the titles in "In This Issue" to go to a particular article or simply scroll through the pages. The silhouetted kereru in the top right of each page will bring you back to this page so you can easily navigate your way around. Simply click any underlined web link, page or email address to go there, such as our [website: otataralandcaregroup.org.nz](http://www.otataralandcaregroup.org.nz)

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