


Bushy Point Restoration Project

Annual Report 2023/24
(1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)



Bushy Point Project

GROWING FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES




ARE YOU ON HERE?
Let us know!

It was the year 2000 when Otatarā Landcare Group **volunteers** started planting at Bushy Point.

In **2019** we shall celebrate the milestone of **30,000** native plants!

Our website explains how you can help:
otataralandcare.org.nz

BUSHY POINT BEFORE & AFTER



You can help! Find out how at www.otataralandcare.org.nz

2023/2024 - 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.

- **Planted 1200 locally grown native plants and covered with combi-guards for rabbit control.**
- **Maintained the previous 23 years plantings**
- **Managed major pest control operation (6km of trap network for possums, mustelids and rats over 90 hectares) with volunteers every 2 weeks from 2007.**
- **Work on tracks continued throughout the year**
- **Continued weed control (particularly gorse)**
- **Continued grazing horses and pasture management (no baleage 2023)**

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 2023/24 including compilation of trapping statistics
- Annual accounts separate Bushy Point income and expenditure. Audited accounts to 31 March 2023 presented to the OLG AGM on 16 May 2023.
- Corresponded with DOC over Community Conservation 3 year grant
- Corresponded with DOC over Pest Permission and new Community Agreement
- Updated OLG website to add Pestbusters to OLG Website content and updated publications and news and events.

3. Caretaker

- Caretaker Barry Smith spent 201 hours working at Bushy Point during the year.
- Main jobs included: plant area maintenance, releasing and weed control, tree planting, supervising pasture and track maintenance, preparation for planting – positioning plants, track preparation, and planning activity for public planting day 10 September 2023). Pest trap line maintenance and pest rabbit work. Planning and organising for other visits.
- Liaison with landowners, grazers, Invercargill Rifle Range, DOC, Local Authorities, schools and report writing and maintaining monthly activity spreadsheet.
- 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 (in addition to Oreti Totara Dune Forest track work).
- 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 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 visits.

4. Restoration and Planting

- Plant maintenance and weed control continued throughout the year.

- The 10 September 2023 major planting event (1200 plants) was successful with 94 people attending including a bbq. A big thanks to Central Baptist Church for attendance.
- A grand total of 35542 plants have been planted at Bushy Point since the year 2000.
- A number of ceremonial plantings have taken place for Joyce Telford, Glenda Graham, a picnic table for Maymie Laidlaw and seats for Glen Webster and Russell Evans.
- Preparation spot spraying of Living Legends 2023 area by Barry and release spraying of the previous years' plants.
- Growing of 1200 eco-sourced plants by Southland Community Nursery, Otatara
- Combi-guard plant covers bought and used to cover plants for rabbit control.
- In February/March 2024 weeding sessions were organised by Douglas Black and plant maintenance continues to be an issue as it is not as popular an activity as planting!

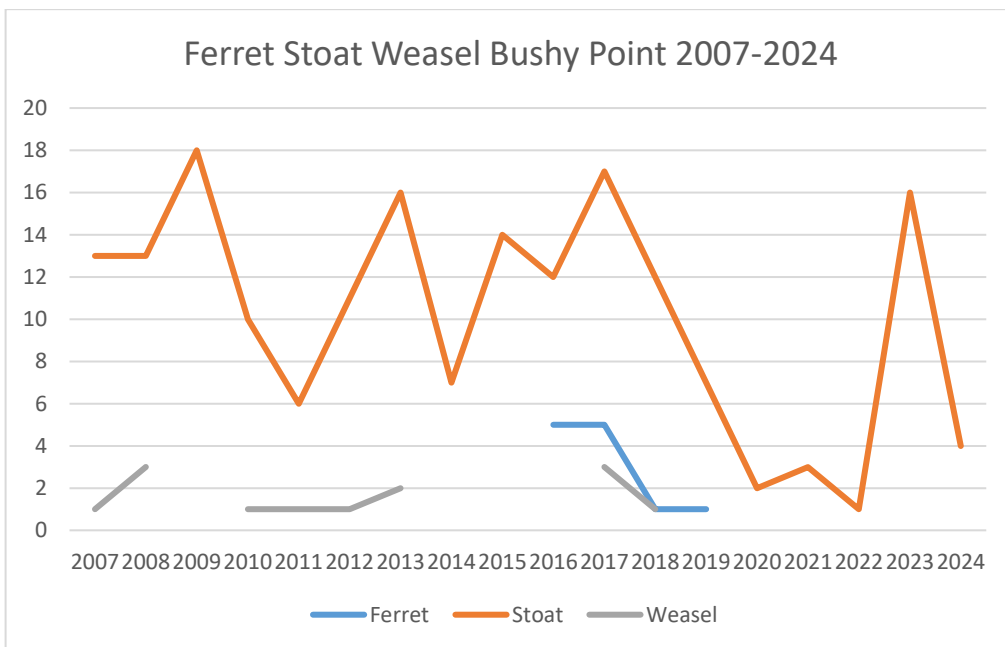
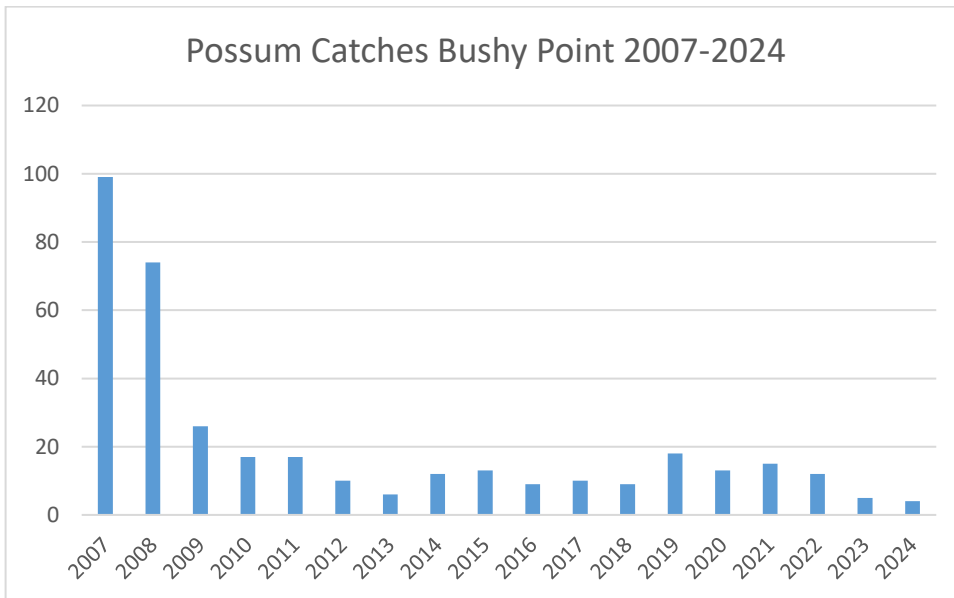
5. Animal Pest Control and Monitoring

Intensive pest control operation continues, taking in the whole of Bushy Point area (90 hectares) has taken place since 2007. 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.

The pest control continued as follows

- 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. Added rat traps at each poison station. Bought and placed 2 self-setting traps.
- Over the year 485 voluntary hours spent on pest control in 2023/24 by Ian Gamble, Pauline Mcalpine and Allan Leddington, Don McMurtrie, Brian Rance, Anna Harris and Michael Hargraves, Megan Bogisch and Chris Rance.
- 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 re-invade and rat poison continues to be taken. Rat traps were added to the mix in 2023 while the DOC poison Permission was renegotiated and lots of mice have been caught in them since.
- In addition, an extension to trapping along the estuary edge called the buffer project was established and maintained.
- Five Minute Bird Surveys by Kiri Pullen undertaken annually, funded by ES
- Rat and Mustelid monitoring continued at Bushy Point by Environment Southland.

Possums caught at Bushy Point by calendar year were as follows (note that the 2024 figures are only up to March 2024).



- Trapping results are also recorded on the Trap NZ website. Statistics and maps can now use 18 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.

Otatarā Landcare Group

Bushy Point Restoration project that consists of planting, pond creation, trapping, walkway, interpretation. The planting is over a 14 hectare area with around 90 hectares of trapping in adjacent DOC land. The project is managed by the Otatarā Landcare Group - www.otataralandcare.org.nz
 Chris Rance - Secretary, Otatarā Landcare Group email rances@southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz

Otatarā Landcare Group



Possum Catches from TrapNZ – 2007-March 2024



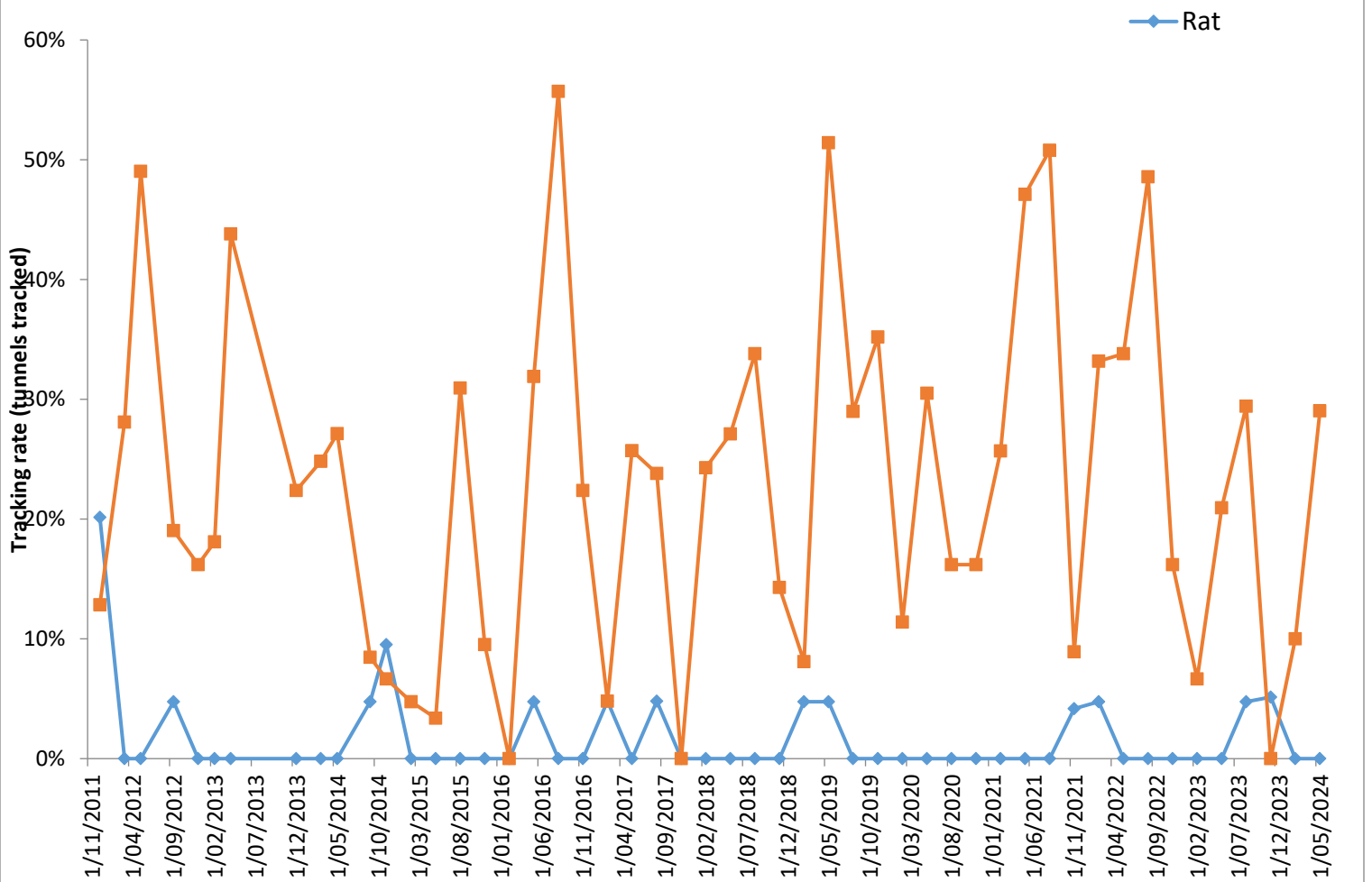
Stoat Catches from TrapNZ 2007-March 2024



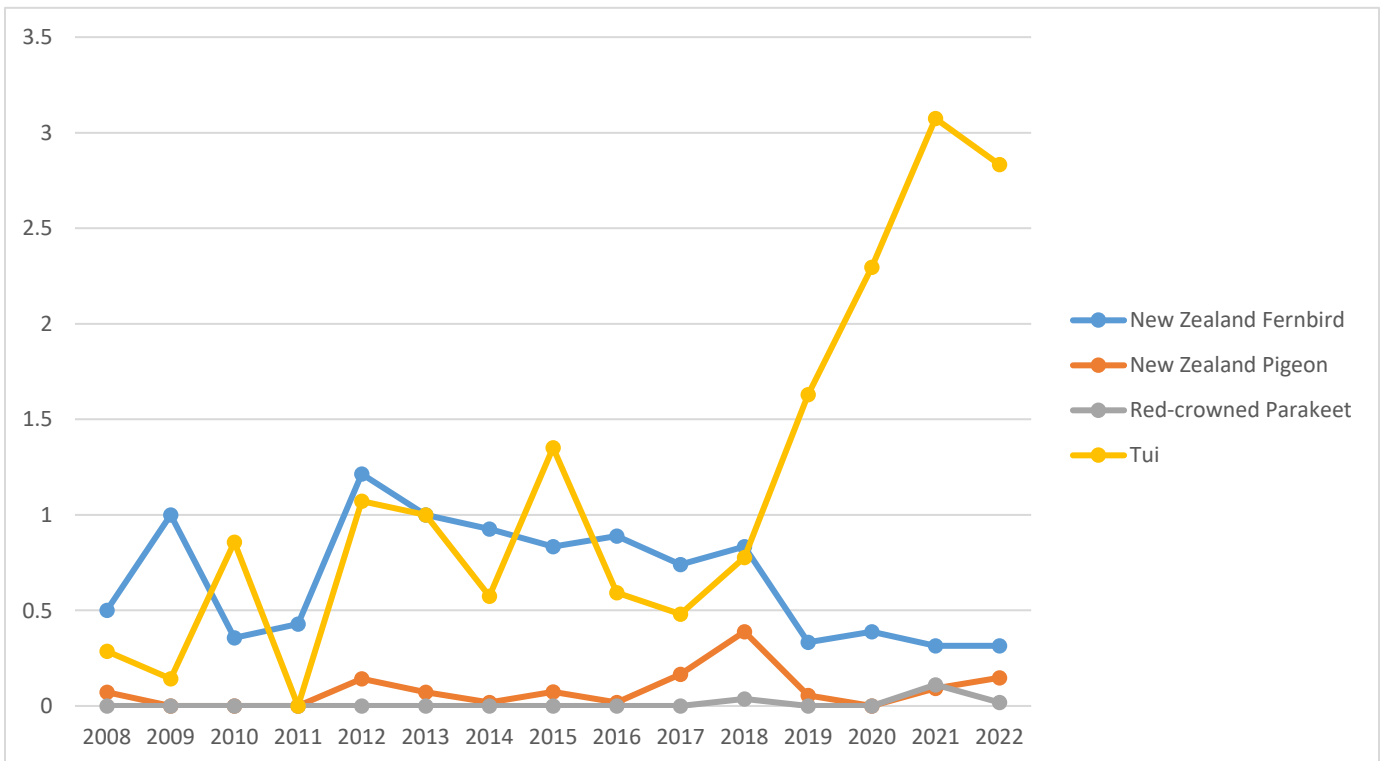
Monitoring

- 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 (results below)
- Rat, mouse and stoat monitoring by Environment Southland continued with the results below.
- Thanks to Anna Harris, Michael Hargraves, Megan Bogisch, Raoul Thomas and Ali Meade of Environment Southland for ongoing support and advice with pest control in 2023/24.

Bushy Point Reserve Tracking Tunnel Index



BUSHY POINT BIRD MONITORING 2006-2022



Wider Otatara Pest Control – Otatara Pestbusters

Otatara Pestbusters (which encourages pest control on private land by their owners), was continued throughout 2022/23. 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 Otatara South Scenic Reserve was included into the 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 Peter Simpson for initially spearheading the pest control in Otatara South Scenic Reserve and now Colin Lawrence and Dave Toole supported by Pestbusters. Dallas provides a lot of advice to residents.

6. Weed Control

- Gorse, broom and blackberry control continued, particularly at the Bryson Road entrance to Bushy Point
- Hand weeding of plants by volunteers in February/March 24 – organised by Douglas Black.
- Spot spraying of areas in preparation for 2023 planting – by Barry Smith.
- The mulcher mower utilised for gorse control in the plantation area
- Continued maintenance at other times by volunteers in their own time
- OLG members Chris and Brian Rance continually advising residents on weeds by visiting their properties

7. Infrastructure

- Bushy Point Track mowed monthly 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
- New picnic area constructed near pond with picnic table and chairs

8. Interpretation and public access

- The Bushy Point walkway continues to be used by individuals and groups.
- Five Interpretation Signs maintained on-site, new brochures for Bushy Point produced by Cathy McFie and Helen Stewart walks placed at Bryson Road entrance
- Geocaches including a multi geocache were placed in Bushy Point in 2015

- Group visits include Orienteering events, Number 10 and Reforest Southland Groups, Southland Ecological Restoration Network.

General Information and Advocacy

- Otatara Pigeon Post Newsletter published and delivered to all Otatara residents quarterly, 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 includes a “Pestbusters” section - www.otataralandcare.org.nz

9. Volunteers and Public Involvement

- Number of hours for the year – 1065 hours (19768 hours in total for the project).
- No School visits in 2023/24
- An Orienteering event was held on 3 September 2023 with 100 individuals attending
- 8 Pest lines (over a 90 hectare area) maintained every 2 weeks by a group of dedicated volunteers.
- From December 22 to February 23 a volunteer Ron Hielkema spent many hours cutting back trap lines JKLMN
- Douglas and Kathy held weekly evening weeding sessions in February/March 24.
- A Reforest Southland Group visited on 28/9/23

10. Grazing/pasture management

- Horse grazing has continued in 2023/24
- No sheep grazing, no baleage taken off 2023/24.

11. Funding

- DOC Funding finished in 2023 and no funding was applied for in 2023/24
- A successful application for funding for 2024/25 was made to Environment Southland’s Environmental Enhancement Fund.

12. Expenditure and Income

- General expenditure for Bushy Point 2023/24 was \$22200
- Public Liability Insurance was \$901
- Pest Control Expenses were \$1673
- Plants and covers were \$8584
- Labour and Materials were \$9263
- Pigeon Post Newsletter \$4782
- Total grazing and baleage income for Bushy Point 2023/24 was \$1127

13. Key Tasks for 2024/25

1. Annual Planting Day – Sunday 15 September 2024
2. Other planting as the opportunity arises – with Otatara School 5/9/24
3. Integration of existing and new planting areas (Removal of fences / weed control)
4. Spray releasing of recently planted areas
5. Work days – plant and site maintenance
6. Caretaker and Track work – Barry. Track mowing as and when required
7. Hardening of tracks in the southern bush area (On-going)
8. Continued refinement of the track system in all areas.
9. Creation of a track through the Northern section of bush. Start of the process. Completion by Silver Jubilee of OLG (Late 2024 / early 2025) – (Note: As time and Funds allow)
10. Look at better directional signage within Bushy Point
11. Health and Safety – yearly facilities check (Picnic Tables / Seats, Constructed hardened areas etc). H&S Briefings for volunteers on site
12. Up to 4 Orienteering events, first on Sunday 3 September 2023
13. Other advocacy events as part of restoration events, school visits and workshops
14. Pest Control (under separate DOC agreement) has ceased for the winter, will recommence September 24
15. Trapline maintenance (ES work group?)
16. New Interpretation Sign on restoration Planting (in conjunction with Oreti Totara Dune Reserve). New directional signs as funding allows
17. Annual Report for 2023/24 to be completed by December 24
18. Annual DOC Meeting
19. ES Funding spending on additional traps, caretaker work and reporting for 2024/25 (complete by May 25).
20. Address whether monitoring can be continued (traplines and bird counts) as ES informed OLG in August 2024 that they will discontinue monitoring in 2024 after doing it since 2007.

14. Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, surrounding landowners, OLG Committee, Bushy Point Caretaker Barry Smith and volunteers for their efforts in making 2023/24 another very busy and successful year for the Bushy Point Restoration Project.

Richard Johnson, Chair OLG – September 2024

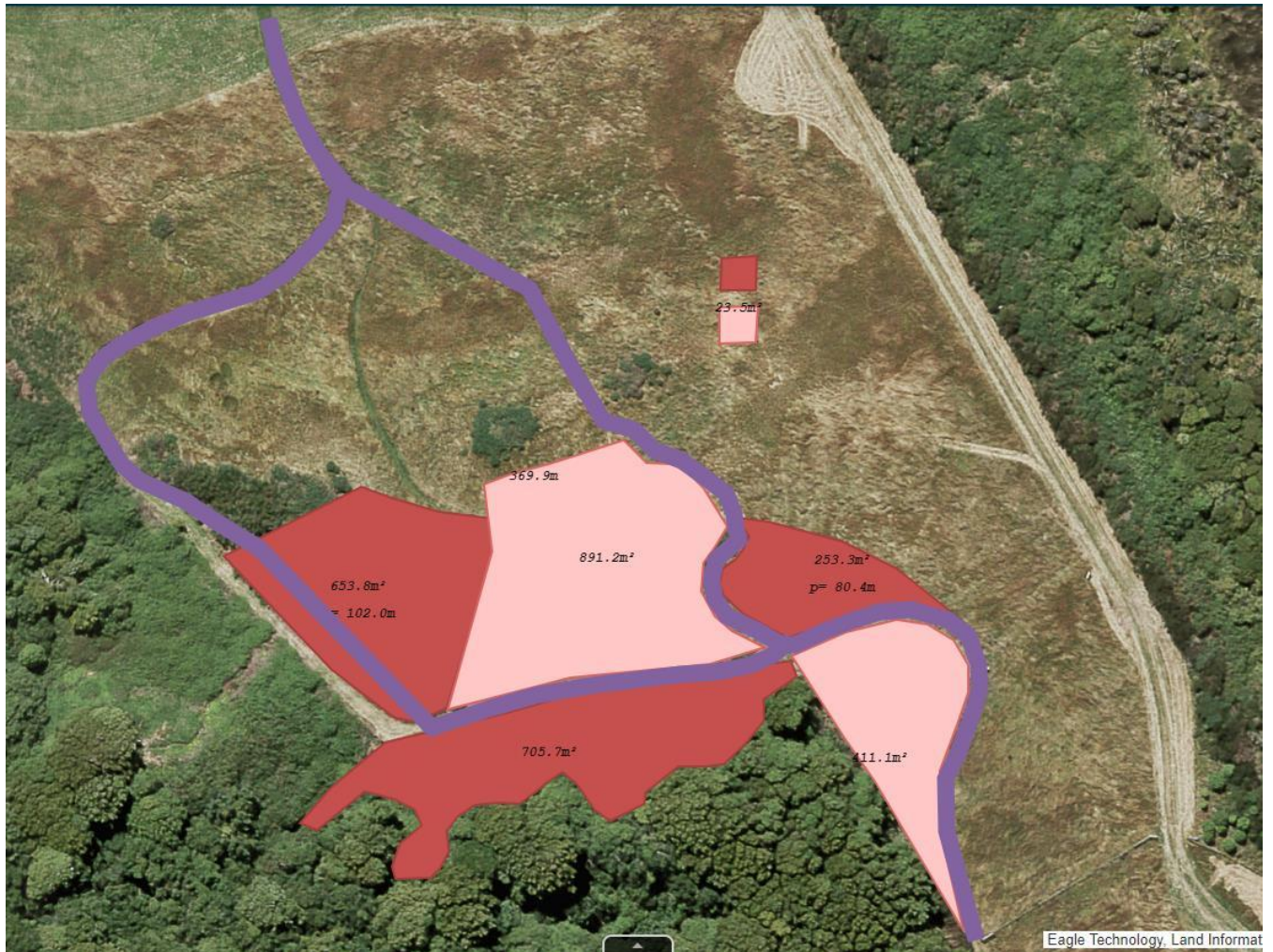
Preparation for Planting Day 2023



Planting Day 10 September 2023



Planting area 2023



Restoration Planting Before and After!

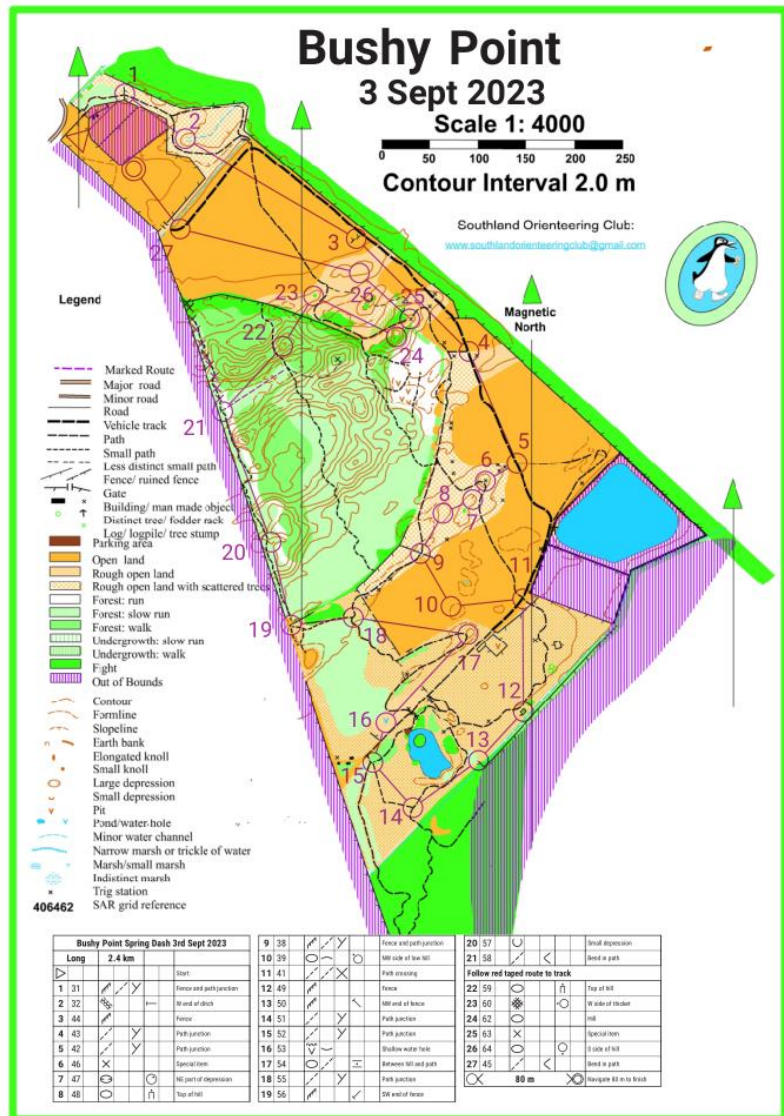
BUSHY POINT BEFORE & AFTER



Weeding Nights February/March 24



Orienteering Event – 3 September 2023

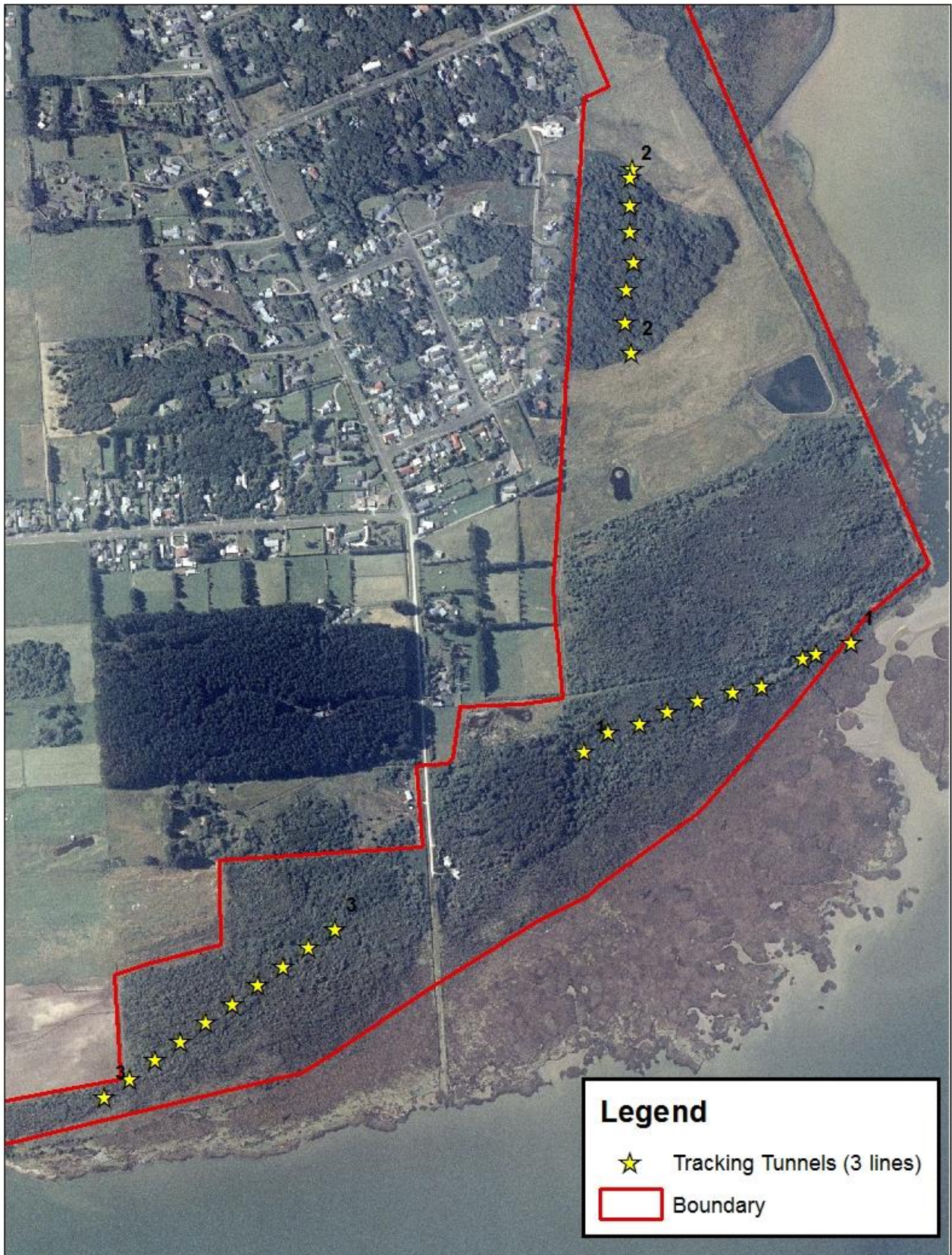


On behalf of Southland Orienteering Club,
I just wanted to pass on our appreciation and
thanks for letting us use Bushy Point again for
our event.

43 groups, representing approx 100 individuals
navigated their way around Bushy Point on a short
and long course. Some even managed to get lost!
A great day, appreciated by everyone.
Thank you. – **Sally Duston**



Rodent Monitoring lines at Bushy Point



Legend

★ Tracking Tunnels (3 lines)

□ Boundary



Bushy Point/Otatara Rodent Tracking Tunnel Monitoring

Date: 05 November 2012



1:7,500

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 in any manner without proper consultation.

Map of Bird Count Locations at Bushy Point 2017/2023



Legend

Active

- Yes
- ▭ Reserve Boundary



Bushy Point Otatara 5 min bird count stations

Date: 29 October 2014



1:8,000

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

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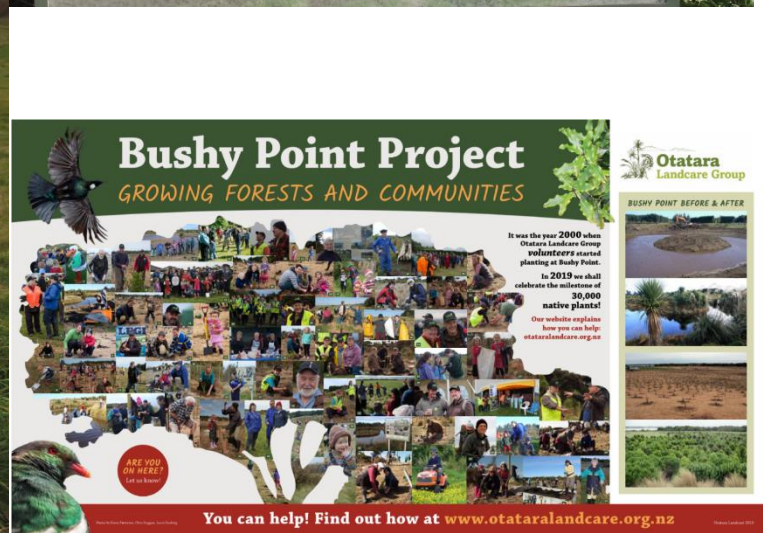
Bushy Point Pest Control Traps and Bait stations 2007-2023



Bushy Point Tracks and Infrastructure improvements 2023



Interpretation Signs



Animal Pest Control at Bushy Point

The Otatara Landcare Group is protecting bush birds like tui, kereru, bellbirds and ground-nesting birds like the rare fernbird.

We are also protecting nationally significant totara forest, kahikatea swamp forest, estuary edge vegetation and restoration plantings.

Possum eats vegetation, but also eggs and chicks on the nest

Rat eats eggs, chicks, insects, lizards, birds, fruit

Stoat eats eggs, chicks, insects, lizards

Did you know? All these predators are mainly active at night - so you rarely see them.

Traps and Bait Stations At Bushy Point, there's an extensive network of traps and bait stations covering about 50 hectares. (see photos) (see map)

Ferret eats ground-nesting birds

Possum Master Kill Trap for possums

'Pied Piper' bait station for rats

DOC 200 Kill Trap for stoats, ferrets & weasels

Tui

Kereru

Tui & Chicks

Bellbird

Fernbird

You can help!

Help us to look after Bushy Point by:

- volunteering
- donating money for traps & bait

www.otataralandcare.org.nz

- joining the **Otatara Pestbusters**

- doing pest control at your place

<http://otatara-pestbusters.org>

Otatara Landcare Group

Warning! Please do not touch traps or baits. Baits are toxic to dogs - keep on lead at all times!

Walk Brochure Bushy Point

A place of history and a living legacy

This is a walk that provides an insight into Otatara as it used to be. It highlights current activities and introduces the restoration project that is progressively restoring paddocks back to native forest and wetland.

Walking times: One-way from Bryson Road at a leisurely pace:

- To viewpoint: 10 minutes
- To pond and interpretation sign: 30 minutes

1 Pest control

Introduced animals harm both native plants and wildlife. A study of Otatara's tūi and kererū showed that 86% of their nests were attacked by predators. The interpretation panel shows the pests we are controlling over the 90 hectares of land around Bushy Point. Monitoring since 2007 has shown consistently low number of rats and increasing bird numbers. Poisons are used in bait stations; please keep dogs on leads.

2 Check out the view!

The white trig structure on the hill marks one of Invercargill's high points, 20m above sea-level. The rolling hills are all that remain of sand dunes which date from the stabilisation of sea levels after the last ice-age some 6000 years ago. Most of the dunes were levelled around 1910 with sand removed as fill to create the embankment that carried a tramway across the estuary from Stead Street to Otatara. The work was done using prison labour.

The estuary is fringed by salt marsh. Jointed wire rush/oio dominates the tidal zone then gives way to coastal scrub, including cabbage tree/tī, mānuka and flax/harakeke. Listen for a short metallic 'tchick' which gives away the presence of rare fernbird/mātā (left).

3 Tōtara forest remnant

Tōtara forest on sand dunes is a nationally significant ecosystem and we are lucky in Otatara to have some of the best remaining examples in New Zealand. Tōtara is a highly significant tree to Māori and its uses are many. Tōtara lives for hundreds of years and provides food in the form of berries and nesting sites for a wide range of native birds and insects.

4 It's planting time!

In September 2011, a three year "Living Legends" national planting project was sponsored by the Tindall Foundation. The project here at Bushy Point saw 10,000 locally grown native trees planted over that time. Planting continues to this day with a total of over 30,000 native plants planted by local volunteers since the year 2000. Check out the Otatara Landcare Group website for planting dates and how you can help!

5 Creating a pond

In September 2006, a pond and wetland area was created. The pond margin features flax/harakeke, sedges and scattered shrubs, including thickets of coprosma to attract fernbird/mātā. As planting extends outwards, it will provide a vegetation sequence from the pond to adjacent wetland and podocarp forest. The wetland is already attracting waterfowl, white-faced heron, black and little shag/kōau and kingfisher/kōtare. Two picnic areas have been created by the pond.

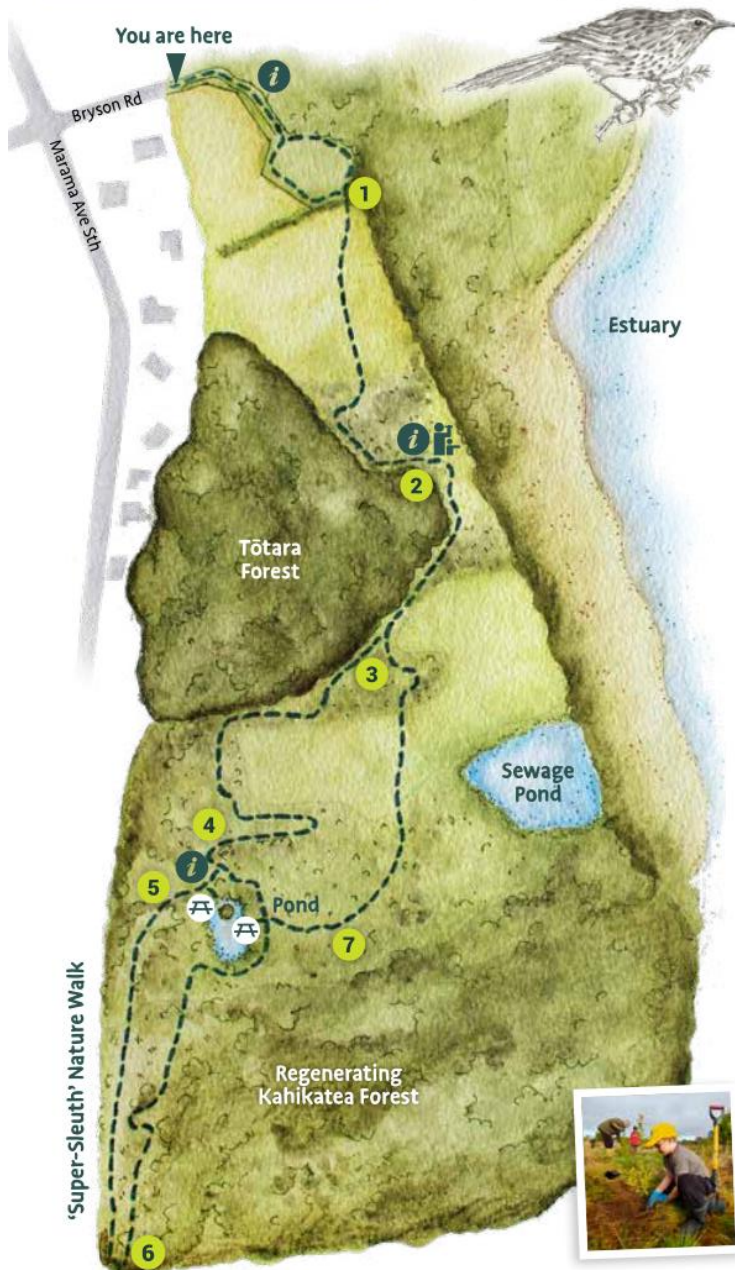
6 Views of the original forest

From here you can look south to see tall kahikatea, mataī and rimu - a reminder of the original podocarp forest that once covered much of Otatara. You can be part of restoring this.

7 Get Involved!

Otatara Landcare Group volunteers have now planted over 30,000 native plants at Bushy Point. Volunteers also service pest lines surrounding Bushy Point every two weeks. If you can help with weeding, planting or pest control, please contact us through our website, below.

www.otataralandcare.org.nz



Learn more about Bushy Point

Follow the yellow topped posts. You'll find interesting information in this brochure specific to each site.



Once you've reached the interpretation sign by the pond, pick up another brochure for our 'Super Sleuth' walk. Follow the fantail numbered posts.

Learning activities

See our website for more fun activities you can enjoy while walking at Bushy Point or at your place:

www.otataralandcare.org.nz



Scan this QR code on your smartphone to take you straight to our website



This project would not be possible without generous financial and material support. Contributors include:

- Department of Conservation
- Environment Southland
- Community Trust of Southland
- Invercargill City Council
- National Parks and Conservation Trust (Transpower)
- ILT Foundation
- Pub Charity



Please return this brochure to the dispenser for other walkers to enjoy

Photos by Jason Hosking, Chris Rance, Janet Hodgetts; Sketches by Gordon Duston, Lloyd Esler; Watercolours by Helen Stewart

Bushy Point

Past, present, future

A self-guided walk

Public conservation land managed by

Otatara Landcare Group

OLG Website - www.otataralandcare.org.nz

Otatara Landcare Group

Website Sponsor

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Let's Explore **Bushy Point Restoration** **Otatara Pests** **Publications** **News & Events**

Otatara is a very special place to live.

The area is a natural playground with a rich variety of plants and birds. It has native forest, bush walks, sand dunes, a river, estuary shoreline, pine forests, many restoration projects – all this in an area shared with over 1000 households, close to Invercargill City.

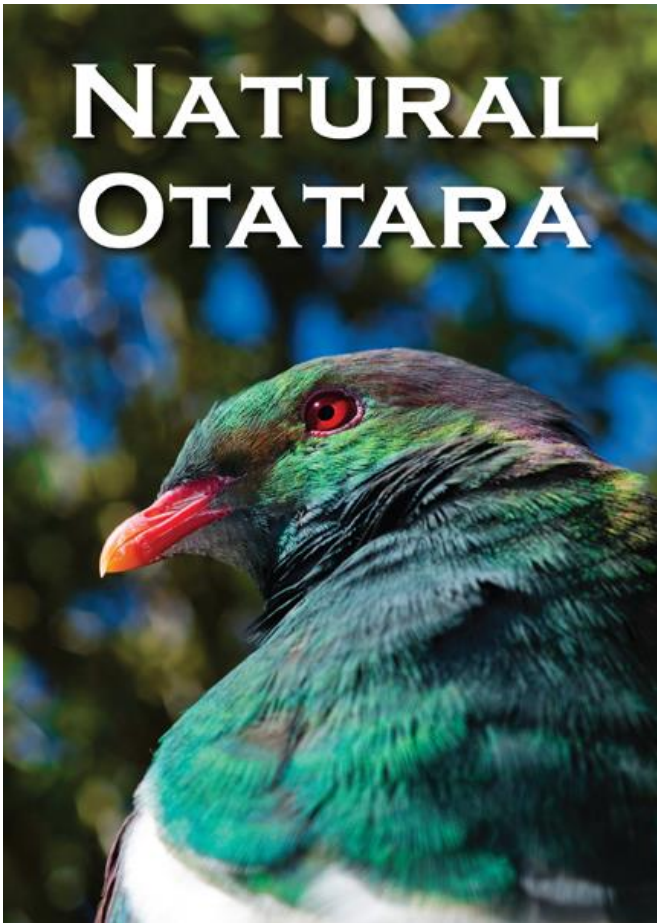
Latest News & Events

The Autumn Pigeon Post in full colour

The Autumn Pigeon Post is out in full colour here

[Read more...](#)

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



Otatara Landcare Group

PIGEON POST

Newsletter of the Otatara Landcare Group

Issue 71 Winter 2024

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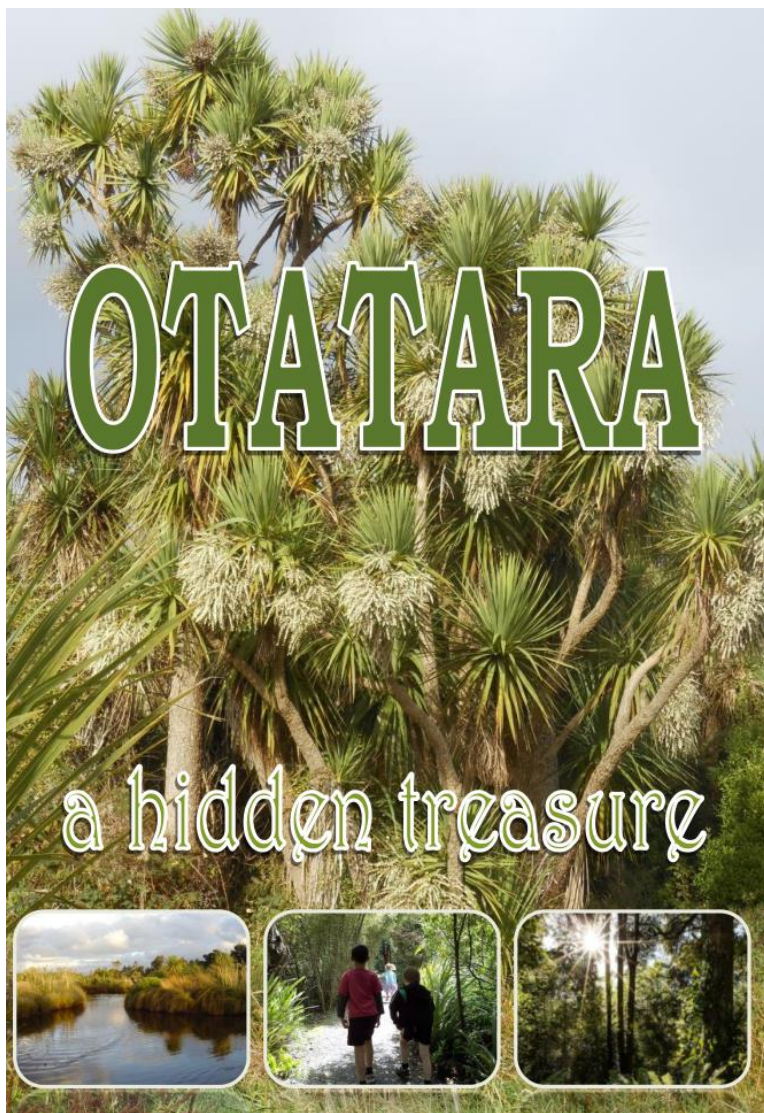
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The full colour version of this publication is available on www.otatara.landcare.org.nz under 'publications'.

Otatara school students have been drawing inspiration for art from nature around them in the Otatara scenic reserve, and have produced some really great pieces of work. The piece above combines different leaves to tell a story through clever design. More on page 2.





<https://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/publications/>