

Napier Branch Visits Rodney Coast

During Labour Weekend 2002, nearly 50 members of Napier Forest and Bird visited the Rodney District, north of Auckland. Organised by Liz Carter, they stayed at Camp Mahurangi at Snells Beach.

On Saturday, they took the mail-boat trip to Kawau Island, where many members saw wallabies. Matakoho Museum was their focus on Sunday, followed by a walk through the Dome Valley in the rain, and a visit to Scott's Landing.

On Monday morning they joined the new glass-bottomed boat, Aquador, on its inaugural trip in the Goat Island marine reserve at Leigh. They also visited Tawharanui Regional Park.

— JENNY ENDERBY

Members of Napier Forest and Bird joined the new glass-bottom boat, Aquador, to explore the Goat Island marine reserve, near Leigh. Fifty members spent Labour Weekend exploring the Rodney district, north of Auckland.

Membership Cards Abandoned

The Society will no longer issue membership cards, thus saving thousands of dollars in printing and mail costs, according to the general manager of Forest and Bird, Lyn Bates. Instead, members wanting some acknowledgement of their annual subscription can request an acknowledgement by ticking the box at the bottom of the membership renewal form.



JENNY ENDERBY

Getting to Grips with Farmed-Deer Escapes

Deer are a huge threat to native forests, grazing palatable seedlings and preventing regeneration. Every year, new deer populations become established in previously deer-free forests, some deliberately introduced by unscrupulous hunters, and others accidentally established when farmed deer escape.

A recent Landcare Research study mapped 166 new populations of deer. Of those where the source of the population was known, more than half had come from farm escapes. So it is prudent that Forest and Bird should ask for stringent controls on farmed deer under the Resource Management Act.

In the last few months, Hastings and Gisborne local councils have, at Forest and Bird's instigation, included

strict fencing standards in their District Plans. They also require mandatory identification tags for farmed deer.

Gisborne District Council, where deer farming is a permitted activity, will in future oblige new deer farms to be notified to the council. This makes sense, as standards are of little use if the Council isn't even aware of the existence of the deer farm!

These measures are useful precautions to reduce the invasion of yet more pests into our beleaguered native forests, and they may set useful precedents for other Forest and Bird branches to put forward to their District Plans.

— ANNE GRAEME, Forest and Bird staff.

Bird Watching on the Kaipara Harbour

Waitakere Forest and Bird ran a trip to the Tapora coastal dunes on the Kaipara Harbour area to mark the return of godwits, knots and other migratory wading birds from the northern hemisphere. The trip was led by fairy-tern researcher Gwenda Pulham from the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. The trip followed a similar trip last spring, when a number of Auckland branches and other organisations combined for a field trip to Tapora led by a visiting specialist from the Netherlands, Dr Theunis Piersma.

Participants on both field trips were rewarded with sightings of international migratory birds, which visit the area each summer, and native coastal birds, which breed at Tapora. The area also contains rare native dune vegetation and spectacular scenery.

The Tapora coastal dunes are within the area of the Kaipara Harbour that Forest and Bird is campaigning to have recognized as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

— SARAH GIBBS, Northern Conservation Officer.

Birdwatching at Tapora on the Kaipara Harbour.



SARAH GIBBS