

CoastCare News

Issue 3 — Spring/Summer 2007

Summer time to look back on progress

Summer kicks off in Northland with a huge amount of progress on the CoastCare front.

There are 15 CoastCare groups, with more people interested in setting up new groups. Many thousands of sand-binding plants have been planted in erosion-prone areas and there has been a lot of progress in weed clearing, fencing, signage and beach clean-ups.

CoastCare groups have proved keen to share their knowledge, with some members visiting schools and helping with networking.

CoastCare emphasises the importance of ecosourcing and some groups have set up shade houses for plant propagation so

they can grow and plant pingao and spinifex from locally sourced seed.

A new CoastCare kit is being launched this summer as a resource for groups.

The kits contain information to help groups get started and maintain momentum. Each CoastCare group will get one kit, but more are available on request.

A new Northland CoastCare Code leaflet has also been produced, giving 10 ways to help protect the beach. These are available from the NRC office and website. Contact Laura, 09 470 1138 if you are interested in becoming part of a CoastCare group, or want to start a new group.

Seed workshops

An expert in growing native sand-binding plants is visiting Northland for seed workshops.

Naturally Native's Mark Dean, of Tauranga, will show how to find viable seed and give tips on propagation of spinifex and pingao.

New CoastCare kits will also be launched, and there will be an opportunity for groups to meet and share their experiences.

The seed workshops are being held on Saturday 1 December, at Ruakaka Race Course and Sunday 2 December at Taipa Area School, from 10am until about 3pm. Bookings are required for catering purposes.

Contact Laura on 09 4701138 or lauras@nrc.govt.nz.



BABY NEWS: Claire gave birth to a baby boy, "Ben" on 11 September, a bouncing 3.8kg (8lb 7 oz). Congratulations to Claire and Tony.

Introducing Laura



After all Claire's hard work in setting up CoastCare in Northland, it was important to keep the ball rolling once Claire was on maternity leave. I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to take on the position of CoastCare Co-ordinator for a year.

I first went boating when I was just a few weeks old and since then have spent a lot of time in and on the water: boating, snorkelling, diving and swimming.

From a very young age I

developed a passion for the sea and the coast and have retained this all my life.

During my travels – which included sailing to New Zealand from England – I have seen a range of coastal areas and so can really appreciate what we have here in New Zealand.

Although a lot of New Zealand's coasts have been modified, we still have the opportunity to protect and restore the natural of many of our beaches. I feel very proud to be part of this.



CoastCare Co-ordinator Laura Shaft

Caring for Northland
and its environment

**NORTHLAND
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**



PROFILE:

Tauranga Bay CoastCare Group

Residents at Tauranga Bay have formed a group to investigate protecting nesting dotterels from inappropriate vehicle use on the beach.

The group was formed as a sub-committee of the Tauranga Bay Community Association.

The group is working towards forming a strategy to deal with disturbance faced by the dotterels.

There are now 15 resident dotterels and seven baby chicks were fledged over the 2006/2007 season.

This year the first set of eggs were lost in the stormy weather, but have now been replaced by a second batch.

There has also been an increase in the number of oyster catcher chicks surviving through the fencing and care that the group has taken to manage vehicles and dogs at Tauranga Bay.

The group is now looking at the Far North District Council reserve to determine if any protection works can be undertaken to prevent further erosion as well as managing vehicle and pedestrian

Beach planting helps birds and dunes



About 1500 sand-binding plants will help stabilise the foreshore at Tauranga Bay.



access from the reserve to the beach and undertaking a planting programme on the spit. The group has noticed a large increase in the number of sand-binding plants becoming established in the fenced area.

These have already managed to accumulate sand and have the potential to form small sand dunes.

Students learn about seeds

The CoastCare message was spread to students at two Far North Schools recently, with the help of Betsy Young, of Ngataki,

Betsy has been working with a number of schools to raise awareness of the importance of pingao to help stop dune erosion.

Northland Regional Council CoastCare Co-ordinator Laura

Shaft joined her on two of these visits, to Ngataki School and Taipa Area School, where the students got a chance to learn about CoastCare and then got a chance to try sorting pingao seeds from some of Betsy's plants. The kids, Betsy and Laura all enjoyed the visits, and hopefully some will help in future CoastCare projects.



Laura Shaft & Betsy Young at Ngataki School.

Vehicle damage major threat to dunes

One of the biggest threats to Northland's sand-dunes is irresponsible use of vehicles.

Motorbikes in particular are able to climb right up on to the dunes and damage sand-binding plants, making the dunes more unstable.

Negotiations are currently underway between Northland Regional Council, district councils, Department of Conservation and NZ Police to develop new bylaws to address the issue of unsafe and environmentally harmful driving on Northland's beaches.

The proposed new bylaws would have little or no negative impact on those who use vehicles responsibly.

This summer the NRC is running a repeat of last year's successful education days about vehicles on beaches. These will take place at Tokerau, Ruakaka, Ahipara-Ninety Mile Beach, Baylys Beach and Glinks Gully in January and February.

Check out the NRC's "Driving on the Beach" leaflet for more information on the damage caused by irresponsible driving on the beach, and guidelines on safe driving to

minimise damage to the sand dunes and wildlife.

The leaflet also tells you how you can make a complaint about a driving incident, and who to contact.



NRC staff highlight the problems of vehicles on beaches.



African feathergrass

African feathergrass is a perennial, clump-forming grass that grows to two metres, with deep fibrous roots.

It forms rhizomes 7mm in diameter, up to 2m long, from which new aerial shoots and roots emerge. Leaves are light green, strongly ribbed, darker green underneath, tough and harsh.

Stems are erect, round, purplish-white, with many fine hairs that break off when touched and can cause skin irritations.

The flowerhead is narrow, cylindrical, spike-like and contains many seeds.

Why is it a problem?

Rhizome spread creates dense, spreading masses in almost any well-lit site. It seeds prolifically and thrives in a wide range of soil types.

African feathergrass competes with native species and is highly invasive.



It is easily spread by machinery and is a fire hazard.

What can you do?

Grubbing is effective for isolated plants but chemical control followed up by establishment of a vigorous grass sward is necessary for larger infestations.

Spot spraying to control seedling regrowth is essential to stop rapid recolonisation.

The best long-term control option in pasture is to maintain a dense sward of grass species and legumes.

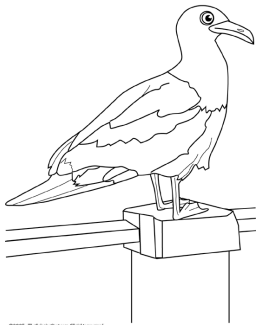
Amenity areas can be controlled by regular mowing and the maintenance of a healthy sward.

Plant characteristics include:

- Plants flower and seed from December onwards.
- Seed germinates in autumn.
- Principal method of reproduction within existing infestations is by growth from rhizomes.
- Grub or spray plants before they flower and set seed.

Please notify the Northland Regional Council of any African Feathergrass infestation.

CoastCare Kids



Word Finder

beach
coast
community
dune
families
kids

pingao
sand
spinifex
together
volunteer
waves

T	H	G	C	S	F	N	M	G	N	Z	W	W	C	R
S	I	U	N	A	G	N	U	A	M	A	X	O	D	E
A	Q	Y	Q	X	C	P	S	D	I	K	M	U	R	H
O	C	N	O	V	E	E	I	H	S	M	N	C	M	T
C	K	O	B	O	I	F	I	N	U	E	H	H	K	E
H	A	O	U	L	Z	H	I	N	G	C	V	I	Y	G
R	H	L	I	U	M	S	I	N	U	A	K	A	E	O
D	A	M	O	N	E	T	T	X	I	J	O	P	W	T
U	A	O	Y	T	Y	S	H	P	A	P	A	M	O	A
F	K	H	L	E	H	C	A	E	B	P	S	X	T	A
O	E	O	C	E	V	B	X	N	O	H	I	W	A	X
S	T	P	R	R	M	Q	D	R	D	Y	C	L	X	K
N	B	E	T	T	C	U	H	Q	T	T	Y	G	K	S

Stuff to do at the beach

Plant some spinifex seed heads.



Find some female seed heads. Scrunch them so that all the spikes are facing upwards. Then bury them in the sand so only about 2cm is left sticking out of the sand.

Plant them near where there are other spinifex plants growing.

Bury all the seed heads in a straight line, because then when you come back in a few months you can tell where you planted them, because you will see your funny straight line of seedlings in amongst all the wiggly plants on the dunes!!

Joke:

What do you get when you cross a squid and a cat?
Octo-puss!

"Ha ha!"

Further information

If you wish to discuss anything raised in this newsletter, please contact:



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