

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1:

Commitment pays off

PAGE 2:

Laura's word
Working together to protect our coast

PAGE 3:

Working together to protect our coast

PAGE 4:

Watch out for weeds
Spotlight on wiwi

PAGE 5:

Restoring Ruakaka's dune lake treasure

PAGE 6:

CoastCare group round-up

PAGE 7:

CoastCare group round-up

PAGE 8:

What's on our beach
The legend of pingao

WHAT'S ON

Join us at:

www.facebook.com/CoastCareNorthland

to find out what's on around Northland over the coming months or phone the CoastCare

Co-ordinator on

0800 002 004.

Commitment pays off

The dedicated efforts of hard-working members of the Taipā community are paying dividends with the whole Taipā foreshore slowly being transformed.

The regeneration of the foredunes – with plantings of both spinifex and pingao – and overhaul of the public reserve area directly behind the dunes has been an ongoing project since 2006 when the Taipā Beach Improvement Society was formed.

Graham Lutze is one community member who has been involved from the start and says it's the dedication of volunteers that has made the difference.

"It's still very much a key number of people from the community, many of whom are from the older generation who have put in thousands of hours of time – so many it's hard to believe sometimes," he says.

The society is supported by Taipā Area School and – since 2009 – supervised groups of men who are doing community service.

"The (community service) boys have made a huge difference," says Graham. "They have helped with building the accessways, planting and weeding and I don't think we could have achieved so much without them."

Various other groups and organisations have also lent their support over the years, including the Northland Regional Council and Far North District Council, both of which have provided ongoing funding. The Department of Conservation has also supported the project.

Weeding is a battle for the volunteers with both kikuyu and ice plant major problems.

"I've been spraying ice plants as they just take over everything and we've found weed wiping with a wand is working to keep kikuyu off established areas of natives," he says.

Hand weeded kikuyu has proven to be an issue with the roots remaining in the ground and the creeping grass quickly taking over again.

Taipā 2008



Taipā 2011



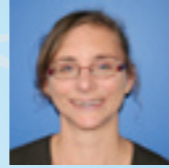
Thousands of native spinifex and pingao have been planted and still more will go in. Pōhutukawa trees are also being planted behind the foredunes – provided by Project Crimson.

Preventing vehicles from accessing the dunes – by building first bollards and then post and rail fencing – and building public accessways, has made the biggest impact according to Graham.

"Keeping people off with the fencing and designated walkways has really made a difference and most regular beach walkers now pick up any bits of rubbish they find off the beach as they go along as well."

Northland Regional Council CoastCare Co-ordinator Laura Shaft says the work being done in Taipā is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when a community takes ownership of their foreshore area.

Laura's word FROM THE COASTCARE CO-ORDINATOR



Kia ora and welcome to the winter edition of CoastCare News.

We had another busy summer on the beaches and the great news is we've once again had a reduction in complaints relating to vehicles on beaches incidents.

In the Bream Bay area the number of complaints received by the Whāngārei District Council (WDC) dropped from 40 over the summer of 2009-2010 to only 12 this summer.

WDC says this reduction is due to a combination of the Vehicles on Beaches Bylaw (2009) – which included a 30kph speed limit and a no vehicle zone at Ruakaka – and to the safe beach driving awareness programme.

Beach patrols were again held around the region and a number of events were attended to raise awareness of dune protection and safe beach driving. New signage has also been produced with each sign giving one key message for safer beach driving. These have been placed at and near key beaches including Ninety Mile Beach (Te Oneroa a Tōhē) and Ripiro Beach.

Baylys Beach Society held their annual "Baylys Beach Bonanza" event on Waitangi Day. It was well attended with fun for all the family including a beach volleyball tournament, kids' races, a sand sculpture competition and Circus Kumarani displays – a community-based group that uses circus and all that entails to develop children's skills.

The Northland Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Police and Kaipara District Council were also there providing information about CoastCare and safe beach driving, and carrying out beach patrols.

As part of Seaweeek in March, KiwiNorth organised a schools' workshop at One Tree Point Primary School. The event was attended by representatives of schools from around the Whāngārei Harbour. CoastCare workshops were run as part of this event with the students learning about dune plants and how we can all help to look after our beaches and dunes.

As always there will be lots of dune planting happening over the next few months. Taipā Beach Improvement Society was the first to start with a number of planting days in May. The recently formed group "Friends of Rarawa Beach" also held a dune planting day on Saturday 18 June.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about anything in this newsletter, or CoastCare in general. Don't forget that you can keep in touch with us on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CoastCareNorthland We welcome your contributions and feedback.

Thanks as always to all the CoastCare groups and other volunteers helping to protect our beaches and dunes.

Naku I runga I aku mihi ki a koe
Laura
CoastCare Co-ordinator

WORKING TOGETHER to protect our coast

CoastCare Northland offers an opportunity to get involved in the management and protection of your local coastal area. It involves a partnership between local communities, iwi, district councils, the Department of Conservation and the Northland Regional Council.

Northland's CoastCare groups are helping to protect their dunes and beaches by planting, fencing the dunes, providing access to the beach, undertaking pest control and raising awareness of the importance of dunes.

PLANTING

Most Northland CoastCare groups are – or have been – involved in planting spinifex and pingao on the dunes. Threats such as fire, coastal settlement, off-road vehicles, weeds and browsing by stock and rabbits have wiped out or greatly reduced spinifex and pingao from many Northland beaches. These plants are vital in order for dunes to function properly.



Planting spinifex at Tern Point (Mangawhai Spit).

WORKING TOGETHER to protect our coast continued

FENCING

It is usually necessary to protect new spinifex and pingao plants from being trampled or driven over. Sometimes it is possible to remove the fences once the plants are more established. At other sites it is necessary to have fencing to protect even established plants due to damage from vehicles and feet. Funding for dune fences is often provided from the Northland Regional Council Environment Fund, or from the district council in the area.



PROVIDING ACCESS

When undertaking a dune restoration project it is important to make sure that people can easily access the beach without damaging plants. This is especially important on busy beaches.



TAKE ACTION - GET INVOLVED

If you would like to join a CoastCare group, start a new one, or just find out more contact the CoastCare Co-ordinator on 0800 002 004 or email lauras@nrc.govt.nz

CONTROLLING PLANT AND ANIMAL PESTS

It is very important to keep spinifex and pingao free of weeds as the root systems of plants such as kikuyu will stunt their growth, and they can become smothered.

Rabbits love chewing on pingao and need to be kept under control if plants are to survive. Pest control is also needed to protect shorebirds such as New Zealand Dotterels and Fairy Terns.



EDUCATING OTHERS

An important part of CoastCare is raising awareness about beaches and dunes and the need to protect them. This can be done in many ways, including through school visits, events and signage.



Betsy Young of Te Roopu Wakaoranga O Te Taha Moana teaching Taipā Area School pupils about pingao.

CoastCare interpretation sign at Waipapakauri Ramp.



WATCH OUT for weeds

Pest plants are contributing to the decline of Northland's dune systems and it will take a team effort to get rid of them.

Northland Regional Council Biosecurity Officer Sara Brill says controlling and eradicating pest plants and animals is a significant part of the council's work annually and there's a limit to what can be done.

"Pest plant management is prioritised based on firstly whether the pest can be eradicated – that is, every last plant removed," says Sara.

"If the pest plant is not high on the agenda then it is put on a waiting list. However, back dunes and wetlands are certainly a high priority."

"Weeds are a threat because they take over spaces where natives should be. This means that in areas like dunes, where only a limited number of natives can thrive, pest plants will readily dominate."

Sara says when it comes to dune systems – in fact any area of pest plant management – the council needs the help of the community to make a difference.

"The community needs to take ownership as it's physically impossible for the council to cover Northland's vast landscape when it comes to managing the many pests that are a problem for our economy," she says.

People can join a local CoastCare group or any of the other weed busters in their area and attend weed workshops – which are held during Conservation Week (in September) – to learn how to identify and kill pest plants the right way.

"People often say they will never look at their garden the same way again!"

Key coastal WEEDS

Pest plants end up on our dunes through garden dumping, as garden escapees, from pieces – bits of dropped kikuyu easily take root – dispersed by the wind and birds, and humans who plant them.



Eroding kikuyu bank

The most common coastal pest plants are:

- **Ice plant** – can take over dunes and prevent native sand binders (spinifex and pingao) from growing;;
- **Kikuyu;**
- **Agapanthus;**
- **Marram grass** – often confused with the native spinifex;
- **Pampas** – also commonly confused with a native, the toe toe.

"Each of these can be mistaken as being 'good' for the dunes however they can worsen erosion and will take over from less hardy native species."



Non-native iceplant



Pampas grass

SPOTLIGHT ON wiwi

- Grows mainly in the back dunes, but can also be found growing on the foredunes amongst spinifex and pingao as well as on sandy stream banks and around estuaries.
- It is a very common plant, and is not threatened; in fact it is sometimes seen as a weed! However, it is very useful for dune restoration projects:
 - It can be planted behind spinifex and pingao to form a living barrier to discourage people from walking on the plants.
- It is a hardy plant that is able to withstand salt spray.
- Although it looks like a rush, it is actually a coastal sedge and is classed in the same genus as pingao (*Ficinia spiralis*).
- It is easy to grow either from seed or by dividing plants.

Wiwi growing in the back dunes at Tokerau Beach.



Restoring Ruakaka's dune lake treasure

A dedicated group of volunteers is making a difference to the last dune lake of its type on Northland's east coast.

Restoring the Ruakaka Dune Lake – an area that was previously grazed by horses – has been a joint project between the Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust and local iwi Patuharakeke since 2008.

Marilyn Cox – who has been involved since the project began – says work started after the Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust received funding through the Northland Regional Council's Environment Fund to fence off a piece of Department of Conservation (DOC) land on the western side of the lake.

"We now have a committee with representatives from both the Coastal Care group and local iwi which plans and organises the work," says Marilyn.

The group holds public working bees and has planted a range of drought tolerant plants from material sourced on site.

"Most of the trees we plant are grown for us by volunteers at the Shadehouse Nursery in Kerikeri," says Marilyn. "We collect the seed and the trees are supplied to us for just the price of the potting mix they are grown in."

"We have an agreement with DOC that we will only plant trees grown from seed sourced in the Waipū Ecological Area."

A rare species of kanuka – "we call it sand kanuka" – which is common in the Ruakaka back dunes is being extensively planted on the site.

"It is much smaller and finer than the forest kanuka and suited to growing in a low nutrient, sandy soil near the coast," says Marilyn.

"The site is particularly difficult as the ground is sand and gets very dry in the summer. We have discovered through trial and error that we need



Dune Lake Committee Chairman Spencer Cummings (left) with group member David Lourie working at the Ruakaka Dune Lake.

to plant drought tolerant plants, get the trees in early in the winter with Alcosorb crystals (a water retention product) underneath them and mulch heavily."

Some of the work of mulching has been done by community service teams and a group of forestry trainees completed this year's planting in late June.

The group has invested in a water pump and tank after the drought of 2009-2010 wiped out most of their trees – the pump ensured a good survival rate last year. They also decided to plant fewer trees each year – 1000 instead of 2000 – so they are properly looked after.

Marilyn says she believes they are restoring something very beautiful and hopes that in time rare native species will be attracted back to the area.

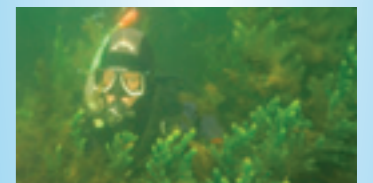
"I also believe in the value of public land and here we have reclaimed a piece of public land that was being used for a private purpose."

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Join a CoastCare group or form one to look after a dune lake near you – contact Northland Regional Council CoastCare Co-ordinator Laura Shaft to find out what's happening in your area.
- Check your boat and trailer – and all equipment used in the lake – for any weeds after you've been on the water.
- Appreciate the fragile nature of dune lakes and spread the word!

THE FACTS

- Dune lakes are mostly found along the west coast of the North Island and are formed by the effects of wind and weather on dune systems.
- Between ancient inshore dunes – where the water table is high – swamps, wetlands and even large coastal lakes form.
- According to ongoing surveillance by the Northland Regional Council many of Northland's dune lakes are in a good state and some – like Kai Iwi Lakes – have exceptionally high water quality.
- Populations of the endangered native fish dwarf inanga can be found in 13 lakes in the Kaipara area including Kai Iwi.
- Pest aquatic plants – like *egeria densa* (oxygen weed) and hornwort – are a major problem in some dune lakes.



CoastCare group round-up

CoastCare groups have been working hard throughout Northland. Here's a quick update on just some of what's been happening around the region. All issues of CoastCare news are available at www.nrc.govt.nz/coastcare

TAPEKA RATEPAYERS GROUP

(Check out the article in issue 5)

- Dune reshaping, stream realignment, planting;
- Plants doing well, walkways working well; and
- Hope to extend dune restoration on other side of stream.



WAIPAPAKAURI COASTCARE GROUP

(Check out the articles about group/project in issues 2 and 6)

- Planting every winter; there will be fewer planted this winter, probably just a couple of hundred plants to fill some gaps.
- Dunes north of the ramp – which were badly eroded in the storms of 2007 – are building up well.



FRIENDS OF RARAWA BEACH

- This newly formed group aims to increase community awareness about taonga found at Rarawa Beach including Dotterels, salt brush (*Atriplex*), pingao and spinifex and help to protect and restore the physical environment of Rarawa Beach – dunes, stream and spit, through community participation.
- Stoat traps have been set and rabbit control is planned.
- A planting day was held on Saturday 18 June.



RANGIPUTA RATEPAYERS GROUP

(Check out the article in issue 7)

- Since planting in winter 2009, plants are thriving.
- The group has recently replaced the temporary fence around the planted area.



TAURANGA BAY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

(Check out the article in issue 3)

- Group undertaken pest control – stoats etc.
- There were losses to the dotterel nests over the summer due to disturbance, but there are still currently more than a dozen birds on the spit.
- More planting is planned this winter, and it is hoped they will be able to extend the project in front of the campground area.



TE ROOPU WHAKAORANGA O TE TAHA MOANA

(Check out the article in issue 6)



- Latest book out now!
- Working with the Taipuna classes at Taipā Area School on a pingao programme.
- See the group's website for more information and to order their books: www.whakaoranga.org.nz



BREAM HEAD CONSERVATION TRUST – SMUGGLERS COVE

(Check out the article in issue 9)

- A trial is underway in a prominent area of the beach where foredunes are currently absent.
- Recently large driftwood logs were hauled up to help trap sand and then in June/July spinifex will be planted amongst the piled sand and logs. The spinifex will develop and grow allowing sand to accumulate. As long as rabbit numbers are kept low and the area is not trampled, a continuous frontal dune will be formed.



MANGAWHAI HARBOUR RESTORATION SOCIETY

(Check out the article in issue 1)

- Planting was undertaken last winter with a massive 15,000 spinifex and 3,500 pingao on Mangawhai spit.
- More planting is planned for this winter.

"What's on our beach?" Shore Skink | *Oligosoma smithii*

HABITAT:

Always found near the shoreline, preferring open areas such as driftwood at high tide level or nearby vegetation.

DIET:

Food is likely to be small insects found on the beach, under driftwood and weed mats.

STATUS:

Protected.

This lizard is active during the day (diurnal) and spends most of this time hunting for food or basking in the sun. If it is disturbed it will quickly hide.

It is small, growing up to 8cm and is very well camouflaged, i.e. you can't see it among the undergrowth. It can be found in a range of colours and is sometimes almost black. The grey, brown and greenish tones as well as the speckled pattern, help it to hide.

Northland's common beach skink was named after Lieutenant Alexander Smith, who collected some of the original specimens in the 1840s.

Rats, cats and native birds of prey are the most common killers of the skink.

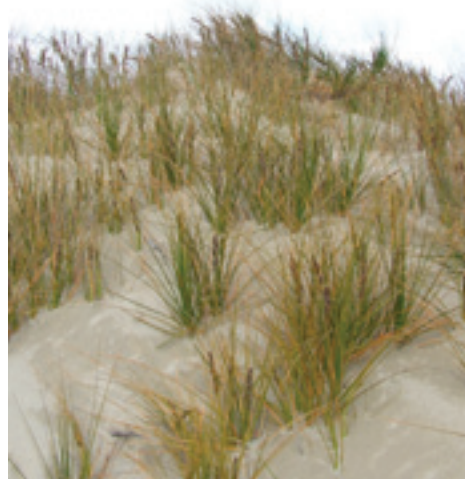
In December 2007, 29 Shore Skink were released on Matakoho-Limestone Island as part of a programme to reintroduce several species of lizard to the island.



The legend of pingao

“ Pingao was one of the seaweed children who lived on the fringes of the sea. From her home she looked up to the land and saw the young and handsome toetoe dancing on the sand dunes. Each time she saw toetoe she fell more and more in love. Finally she asked permission from Takaroa to leave the sea to meet him. Takaroa granted her permission with words of warning that she would never make it.

However driven by blind love, she left the seaweed and crawled across the hot sand. As she struggled up she began to call to the toetoe - but he was interested only in himself. He was in love with his own shape and did not answer pingao's calls. In desperation she called back to Takaroa, who could do nothing but shower her with spray. And there on the sand dunes, the pingao remains to this day. ”



REGIONAL OFFICES

WHĀNGĀREI

36 Water Street
P: 09 438 4639
F: 09 438 0012

DARGAVILLE

61b Victoria Street
P: 09 439 3300
F: 09 439 3301

KAITĀIA

192 Commerce Street
P: 09 408 6600
F: 09 408 6601

ŌPUA

Unit 10, Ōpua Marine Park
P: 09 402 7516
F: 09 402 7510

FURTHER INFO

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



LAURA SHAFT
CoastCare Co-ordinator

Freephone:
0800 002 004

Email: lauras@nrc.govt.nz
www.nrc.govt.nz/coastcare