

Updated: 12.09.2020: Diary Of A Bird Watching Addict And Other Notes From Whareroa Farm Whareroa Guardians Community Trust

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Helen, our original bird watcher and bird counter is continuing her reports in a different form.

Helen explains "The Why":

The Whareroa Farm five-minute bird counts (5MBC) 1-5 (2011-2013) 6-10 (2013-2015), plus counts done for the Kapiti Biodiversity Project (KBP) 2015-2018 have ended in June 2018. They have provided a good baseline data for future counts.

In the meantime, I plan to do an 'occasional' survey of the bird population by counting what I see while walking through the farm and noting anything else of interest. This will be followed each time by a report showing bird numbers and species. It is to be hoped that the 5MBCs will resume again in 5 or 10 years time."

Helen's Walk Throughs began on August 9, 2018. We also add in other notes and reports from others if, as and when they are sent to us. Bird watching reports prior to June 2018, you can find here

Enjoy!

BIRDS RECORDED at Whareroa Farm, (Walk Through) - Occasional Report		12 Sept 2020	10 Aug 2020	20 Jul 2020	May 28 2020	Apr 30 2020	Feb 28 2020	Jan 17 2020	Dec 6 2019	Nov 15 2019	Sep 20 2019	Aug 15 2019	Jul 22 2019	Jun 10 2019	May 8 2019	Mar 18 2019	Feb 21 2019	Nov 21 2018	Oct 10 2018	Sep 8 2018	Aug 9 2018	
Date		12 Sept 2020	10 Aug 2020	20 Jul 2020	May 28 2020	Apr 30 2020	Feb 28 2020	Jan 17 2020	Dec 6 2019	Nov 15 2019	Sep 20 2019	Aug 15 2019	Jul 22 2019	Jun 10 2019	May 8 2019	Mar 18 2019	Feb 21 2019	Nov 21 2018	Oct 10 2018	Sep 8 2018	Aug 9 2018	
Belted																						
Blackbacked Gull																						
Blackbird																						
California quail																						
Chaffinch																						
Dunlin																						
Eastern rosella																						
Falcon																						
Fairy tern																						
Goldfinch																						
Greenfinch																						
Greywarbler																						
Harrier																						
Karewa																						
Kingfisher																						
Maggie																						
Mallard																						
Paradise shelduck																						
Pheasant																						
Pukeko																						
Redpoll																						
Rock Pigeon																						
Shining Cuckoo																						
Silvereye																						
Sparrow																						
Sparrowhawk																						
Starling																						
Swallow																						
Thrush																						
Tui																						
White faced Heron																						
Yellowhammer																						
Total Birds		130	61	89	84	57	116	99	79	104	103	61	100	57	65	110	59	70	69	69	62	
Species Count		23	16	17	12	14	17	19	19	18	15	18	18	16	18	17	16	20	14	17	14	

A bit of data crunching from the above table (20 visits up to and including 12.9.20)...

- Between 14 and 20 species have been sighted during most walk-throughs. September 12, 2020 was a big day with 23 species (on May 28, 2020 only 12 were sighted, compared with 18 in May 2019 - nature is fickle sometimes...)

- 3 species have been seen at each walk-through: Blackbird, Tui & Fantail (Chaffinches and Grey Warblers have been off shopping during separate visits, otherwise they would be in this exclusive group too)
- 11 species were sighted during at least 70% (14 or more) of visits: Bellbird, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Fantail, Grey Warbler, Magpie, Paradise Shelduck, Pukeko, Silvereye, Sparrow & Tui (Eastern Rosellas were sighted during 13 visits)
- Most sighted: Silvereyes (183), Blackbird (163), Chaffinch (155), Tui (138), Fantail (136), Sparrow (103).
- Not yet sighted by Helen during these walk-throughs (but have been sighted in past years in Whareroa): Shining Cuckoo, Rock Pigeon.

For information on past counts prior to August 2018, see...

September 12, 2020

Helen Reports: A very enjoyable walk through the Ramaroa track to the far end of the bush then back by the new track through the wetland area.

It was a bumper day for 'species seen'! Twenty three, including two bellbirds doing exactly what we expect them to do at this time of year! They simply fell out of a large kohekohe tree and landed, closely attached, at the base of the trunk! An exciting moment indeed!

Tuis were the winners of numbers seen - really getting into the kowhai flowers (see picture below). The kereru was also found munching on kowhai leaves which seemed a bit unusual.

There were crowds of finches at the 'two stiles' spot flying in from the paddock opposite - so a mixture of goldfinches, greenfinches and redpolls.

The Ramaroa bush is lovely and so full of gnarley old trees and wonderful twisted vines which I tried to photograph (see picture below). This is where we saw the bellbirds.

The walk through the wetland area is great - all the planting looking luxuriant and so different from how it was a few years ago when I had a mud bath while planting there!

Any chance of a bridge over the stream by the kahikitea, I wonder? Maybe too hard - a busy little stream

Ann responded to Helen's report & bridge query: Yes, agree the Ramaroa plantings are doing well - love the carex zone. There is an amazing conglomeration of passion fruit vines in lower Matai Bush - almost at the edge, just before where there used to be a blackberry patch.

A bridge was put across the Ramaroa Stream a while ago - it just got washed away - it would have to be an expensive structure with foundations and cables (*Ed: to survive future high waters*)! And even then there's a risk of bank erosion. It would be lovely to have one, I agree but

....

Perhaps as the trees get more established the banks will stabilise. Have you explored to the south of the kahikatea tree - smaller kahikateas are doing well and there is a hidden matai and rimu as well as some totara - a podocarp zone. Must add miro! Also a healthy small milk tree.



Kowhai tucker for Tuis and surprisingly a Kereru, Ramaroa Walk, Whareroa Farm, Sep 2020



Gnarly & twisted vines apparently add inspiration to Bellbirds in Ramaroa Bush, Whareroa Farm, Sep 2020



Gnarly & twisted vines in Ramaroa Bush, Whareroa Farm, Sep 2020

August 10, 2020

Helen Reports: A day too good to miss, so into the Whareroa Farm to stretch my legs and do the 'horse track circuit' which I haven't done for months.

Of the 16 species that I saw, almost all were in the area from the entrance to the hub.

At the start I saw the quail family and near the yards, a white faced heron.

I could hear, for the first time the breeding call of the chaffinch, always notable at this time of year and the Tasmanian Blackwoods along the race were in flower - see below.

Beyond the hub, while checking out the kowhais in the Dell (some buds showing on rather scruffy looking trees!) I disturbed a kereru and again there was another down by the stream feeding on the tree lucerne. At Ngaio Bend I noticed some wonderful flowering clematis up the valley a bit (in Alexanders).

The bird count #8 sign was hidden away behind a forest of gorse - which I have to say is looking fabulous at the moment in all its golden splendor!

Further on, in the loop track, I found the bird count #9 sign that I haven't see for some years! Someone has found it and put it on the side of the track. So I placed it, wedged (hopefully), in a tree about 5m from the cattle stop. It is complete with screws!

On my way back I admired all the planting at the Dell, and the new 'family' seating - so appealing! Also noticed the Taurepo flowering bravely. Finally I was rewarded by the floundering kereru in the tree lucerne as mentioned earlier!



Tasmanian Blackwoods in flower along the farm race, Whareroa August 2020



Paradise shelducks doing what they do, Whareroa Farm, August 2020



Family seating at the Dell, Whareroa Farm 2020

July 20, 2020

Helen Reports: A perfect day for a 'walk through' count today. Lots of activity with the breeding season just around the corner!

I saw or heard 89 birds, 17 species (see the table above), but many more were heard though not recorded.

The first kereru I spotted was in the poplars just over the stile into the Ramaroa track and the next two were roosting on empty branches near the Hub at the start of the Ti Kouka loop.

The song thrush was making itself heard everywhere, fantails darting about, many pukekos seen and four bellbirds heard - at Ramaroa and in the kohekohe forest.

I walked along the 'new' Ramaroa track (below the reservoir). The growth here is impressive - I also noted some cow dung and hoofprints which aren't meant to be there. ? :-)

I returned through the forest and the toeotote flats and came across very luxuriant hangehange covered in buds (hence the pics - see below). Soon we will be aware of the strong 'musky' scent when the flowers open. (*Ed: See also... and*)



Hangehange in Whareroa, July 2020 1/2



Hangehange in Whareroa, July 2020 2/2

May 28, 2020

Helen Reports: Just got in quick before May disappears! Another stunning day - clear blue sky and not a breathe of wind.

Today my route took me via the Kohekohe forest to check out the flowers. You will see from the photos (below) that there was very little to see, but the pics show how the flowers sprout out from the main trunks and branches, which is intriguing and unusual. (*Ed: Here is a bit of background to the Kohekohe*)

The bird song in there was really wonderful! On through the Gums to join the Carex Valley track which had just been 'weedeaten' by DOC and so, spurred me on to the head of the valley.

Then back again and of course, a compulsory visit to the Dell. Here I was rewarded by 4 fantails and a kereru who swooped over my head from the old ngaio tree.

Top scorers today were the silvereyes (40) and the fantails (16). Seeing another kereru in the Tasmanian blackwoods beside the farm race, was also a highlight.



Flowering kohekohe in the Kohekohe Bush



Path, cold but partially cleared



Flowering kohekohe in the Kohekohe Bush

April 30, 2020

Helen Reports: Today I had a very pleasant meander for a couple of hours. Really good to be back in the farm after a gap of a couple of months. I must say things were pretty quiet - though I was pleasantly surprised to see two white faced herons foraging among the cattle beside the farm race. Not usually seen there.

As I set off I wasn't so pleasantly surprised (not surprised at all!) to see two very well-fed looking rabbits in the picnic area, probably making the most of the lack of human interference.

The best moment of the day was in the Dell when I heard the continuous 'kek kek' call of the Karearea, not once but at several intervals, and then I saw it fly off up the hill at speed, perching finally on the fence post above and west of Bernard's track. The last time I saw a falcon here was about 4 or 5 years ago perched on the very same post!

Despite the dry bush the tracks were wonderfully lush and green - worth a comment, and the trees are becoming like forest!

The milk trees (turepo) beside the gums are looking magnificent, attractive shaped trees. That spot must suit them.

Coming back through the kohekohe forest I noted that some were in bud, but not many - may be we will have to wait for another year for a bumper show? However, there are a couple of months to go, so who knows!



Find out about the Karearea here...<http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/new-zealand-falcon>

April 29, 2020

Ann Reports: Today I noted that the milk trees by the gums are flowering for the first time.

Note: these rare trees were planted in October 2014 by the very generous Otari Native Botanic Garden Group, who gifted the plantlings and did all the hard work to plant them (a copy of the original FB posting is below)



Milk Tress planted in Oct 2014, flowering for the first time in April 2020 (1/3)



Milk Tress planted in Oct 2014, flowering for the first time in April 2020 (2/3)



Milk Tress planted in Oct 2014, flowering for the first time in April 2020 (3/3)



The original FB posting you can find here...

February 28, 2020

Helen Reports: Another beautiful, warm day with a light Northerly wind. 17 species counted and 116 birds seen or heard.

Today's route began in the Ramaroa track to the far end of the Ramaroa Bush. Most of the birds counted were in this area, particularly greywarblers, tuis and fantails.

Then I retraced my steps to the Kahikitea tree and took the 'new' wetland track which was just great. Here the only birds I saw were sparrows in the toetoe which is looking splendid right now. The growth in the wetland area is impressive - it doesn't seem that long ago that we were planting there.

At the reservoir I disturbed a small flock of swallows flitting about at great speed. Over to Ti Kouka next to visit the 'Urban hut' - what a wonderful site, with a view! Once again I was treated to a flypast kereru as I made my way back through the Kohekohe forest enjoying silvereyes and the tui song.

Your stories, Ann, of 5 Kereru in the ngaio at the Dell and of ruru in the early morning are a hard act to follow!! One day, maybe, I'll manage a much earlier start and experience the same :-)

February 20, 2020

Ann Reports: Kereru spotted feeding at the Dell, Thursday morning, 20.2.20

Kereru feasting



Five kereru were enjoying a large crop of ngaio berries in the Dell early Thursday morning, balancing delicately, reaching out to pluck each berry – see berries in picture below.



February 10, 2020

Scott Reports: Unexpected numbers of California Quail spotted at the shed early in the morning. The photo quality is not too great as they were fast moving and keeping their distance



California Quail sighted at the shed (1)



California Quail sighted at the shed (2)

January 17, 2020

Helen Reports: This morning I had a very leisurely 'walk through' - calm and sunny. The route today was Ramaroa track to the stile then back to farm race and along to the Dell, then returning through the Kohekohe forest - which was silent!

Best moment was seeing 2 bellbirds in the old Kanaka tree at the Dell lookout, then hearing another towards the Carex Valley. I eventually spotted a kereru flying over the Kohekohe forest which I was pleased about because I thought I had drawn a blank there.

Also noted the increase of quail families at the entrance and also up at the lookout in the Dell - very unbothered by people it seems!

Also, I saw all the greywarblers that I listed today, which doesn't often happen. I was impressed by the plum tree in the orchard - and apples coming on too :-) And enjoyed the beautifully mown paths in the Dell, thanks Ann!

Happy New Year!!

Ann Reports: A suggestion for the future: You can now travel from Ramaroa picnic table across to the Cairn track below reservoir - and even traverse across to Ti Kouka Loop by heading east just below reservoir then up the hill a bit below the pines.

I have been hearing bellbirds in the Dell pretty consistently. Also saw a kereru last weekend. And often a pair of grey warblers are hanging about.



Californian Quail at the Shed, January 2020

December 6, 2019

Helen Reports: Not much to report today - the usual wonderful place to be! I expect you already know about the fallen poplar, Ann (*Ed: see Dec 5, below*), it must have been a spectacular crash. I hope no one was near it at the time!

I had a pleasant walk from the entrance to the Carex Valley uphill bike track and saw or heard 79 (less than usual?) of 19 bird species. I surprised a pheasant who panicked out of the grass along with two very small chicks. Growing numbers of pheasant, I think! No kereru today and surprisingly few tui but they may be busy nesting.

I was pleased to manage to do two counts for the NZ Bird Atlas out of my obs today. So for me that was a plus.

Findout more about pheasants here... . Those pheasants chicks are the cutest :-)



Pheasant chick... <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/common-pheasant>

December 5, 2019

Ann Reports: Some developments at Whareroa...

Whareroa Farm Observations 05 December 2019

Ann and Lynette had an active morning

1. Fallen poplar branch



The tree had a double leader, one has split off. Lying across top fence wire and unfortunately has smashed one of the posts of the Marinenz sign. Luckily it did not hit the historic pillars or break the sign.



Upper Ti Kouka Plantings

Grass growth around planting is vigorous but many trees are emergent. Staked totara look good, lemonwoods particularly good. Time will tell whether the carex in valley floor survive.



Whau



Flowering manuka

Grass (and weed) growth this year has been phenomenal.

The poplar poles are sprouting - with variable amount of leaf growth. Some look very good, others struggling. A lot depends on how dry it will be this summer.

November 15, 2019

Helen Reports: At last I have managed to get back to the farm! (*Editors Note: Helen was out of action due to a knee injury, probably picked up during Judo practice. Thankfully she has recovered and is back out there enjoying the natural beauty of NZ*)

A lovely day - a bit of cloud to begin with, then sun! The quail were first to be seen - they must enjoy the 'new grasslands' at the entrance.

It was so good to see a kereru, in the swampy area near the kahikitea (by the gums).

There was plenty of bird song - many chaffinches, silvereyes and blackbirds, and lots of activity.

I still haven't heard the shining cuckoo despite hearing so many greywarblers but Ann (*Editors Note: see below, Nov 3, 2019*) has, so I'm pleased we have that on record!

Everything is looking very green and lush after all the rain - I can see why more volunteer weed-eaters are needed! DOC were busy weed-eating further up the valley.

Kamahi, mahoe, cabbage tree and whau are all in full bloom and the flax is opening now, for the tuis. Today I saw or heard 104 birds (18 species).

There's lots happening at a very successful Whareroa Farm!

You can find out more about california quail here... and also about the extinct New Zealand Quail here...



California quail. Adult male. Wellington, February 2016. Image © Arindam Bhattacharya by Arindam Bhattacharya © www.ArindamBhattacharya.com

November 3, 2019

Ann Reports: A Shining Cuckoo was heard in the Dell on Sunday, November 3 at around 10am. The first of the season reported in Whareroa!

You can find out a lot about these migratory birds here...



Shining cuckoo. Adult feeding on gum leaf skeletoniser (*Uraba lugens*) caterpillar from gum tree. Mapua, Tasman district, October 2016. Image © Rob Lynch by Rob Lynch

Also happily, the first Kererū of summer are being sighted (approx. mid October).



New Zealand pigeon. Adult perched in tree. Wanganui, August 2008. Image © Ormond Torr by Ormond Torr

September 20, 2019

Helen Reports: Beautiful day in the farm today. Car park quite full - bikers and walkers making the most of a fine Sat.

I walked up the Ramaroa track and then across to Ti Kouka. On my way I was astonished by the phenomenal growth each side of the stream. It's a while since I have been there.

There was plenty of bird activity, most noticeable were the many fantails just everywhere, and also the greywarblers. I wonder if anyone has heard the shining cuckoo yet?

At Ti Kouka I was entertained by Harriers, two of them calling and performing an aerial display. Interesting because they are mostly silent at other times of the year.

The kowhais are looking magnificent - the tuis are enjoying that!

I had hoped, of course, to see at least one kereru seeing it is the week of the Great Kereru Count - but no!



<http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/new-zealand-pigeon>

August 15, 2019

Helen Reports: Yesterday (Thursday, 15.8) began bright and sunny but at 10am the cloud moved in and it turned out to be cold and grey - and calm. So what I have recorded were largely those I *heard* rather than what I *saw*!

The breeding season is underway now and I had expected to see more activity.

The chaffinches and song thrush were in full cry everywhere, also grey warblers who are awaiting the arrival of their predator 'friends', the shining cuckoo! They will be heard in a week or two - usually mid September.

I heard the greenfinch () for the first time this season. Their 'dzwee' call is often mistaken for long-tailed cuckoo at this time of the year.



Greenfinch, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_greenfinch

July 22, 2019

Helen Reports: The birds were loving the sun today after so much rain! 18 species and 100 birds seen or heard :-)

Obvious change this month was the vocalising chaffinch, now with the male breeding song (find out more here...). The other contender for top spot was the tui - they were everywhere! (more info on Tuis you can find here...)

It shows that the bird population is on the rise, thanks to all the planting and trapping I am sure!

Route followed was around the carpark, along the Ramaroa tk to the Kahikitea, along the farm race to Ti Kouka (surprisingly little seen here), to the Dell and into the start of Carex valley and back through the gums and the kohekohe forest to carpark. Two hares seen en route at Ti Kouka and below the Matai bush. Fabulous day here today - *really* soggy in the farm, streams gurgling along happily.



Chaffinch. Adult male singing. Anderson Park, Taradale, Napier, November 2011.
Image © Adam Clarke by Adam Clarke

More info here... <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/chaffinch>



Tui. Adult. Dunedin, August 2009. Image © Craig McKenzie by Craig McKenzie

<http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/tui>

July 7, 2019

Ann Reports: Sighting of 2 Karearea near 5-Ways. Karearea are classified as "recovering". You can find out more here...



Karearea, NZ Falcon

June 10, 2019

Helen Reports: Today Tony and I had a leisurely walk on the farm, from the carpark, the Ti Kouka loop, the Dell and back through the Kohekohe forest.

I saw 16 species and counted 57 birds. Bird numbers were down a bit, maybe because it was a rather dull day and, after all, it is winter!

Fantails took the prize for being the most sociable and tuis followed a close second in the numbers stakes. The small showing of kohekohe flowers still enticed the tuis and bellbirds into the forest which was great, and the bird song heard while walking up the farm race was lovely.

I suspect goats have been using Bernard's new path in the Dell, judging by the footprints:-([*Ed: Jason the Goat Culler has been informed. If you see goats on Whareroa, please send an email to Jason (jasonbohmer@gmail.com) or let us know on FB and we will forward it to Jason. Let him know when, approximately where and how many goats you saw. Jason is approved by DOC to cull goats on Whareroa. Wild Goats on Whareroa are sadly a quite destructive pest and turn up at irregular intervals in varying numbers.*]

May 8, 2019

Helen Reports: Calm, warm and with high cloud made perfect conditions for bird spotting. However, it was very quiet - noticeable absence of small birds (finches and silvereyes).

My route took me up the main race and along the bike track to the sand-trap, then over to the remnant bush opposite. Here the bird song was great and there were tuis and bellbirds everywhere. I also saw 2 falcon (karearea) giving a short aerial display which was a fleeting bonus!

I came via the Ti Kouka loop on my return (to inspect the new 'bridge' and hopefully see Kereru) and was accompanied the whole way by two fantails.

No Kereru today. 18 species and 64 birds seen or heard.

Also find 3 pics taken on the way. Mahoe specially lovely with it's purple berries and Kohekohe berries starting to crack open.



Kohekohe berries starting to crack open



Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*)



Mahoe specially lovely with it's purple berries

March 18, 2019

Helen Reports: Really beautiful day for it. I spent quite a while in the Matai Bush listening to wonderful birdsong - tuis, bellbirds, silvereyes, kereru and fantails.

The Kahikatea at the top of the Ti Kouka bush area was laden with fruit, so tuis, starlings and silvereyes were having a field day, coming and going.

here was plenty of activity today from the picnic area at the start to Carex Valley (not so much) and the Dell - the recent rain has made a difference I am sure. Seventeen species recorded and 110 birds seen or heard

Ann Reports: Good to hear that kahikatea seeds are ripe - we will go to gather some. We have found ripe totara seeds - under 4 different trees so far so building up knowledge of which are male and female - they produce much less fruit than the kahikatea.

[Link re native trees and shrubs seed collection and propagation from DOC:](#)

[Link to information on kahikatea seeds...](#)

February 20, 2019

Helen Reports: First walk through the farm for ages! Warm and calm - and very dry, so bird activity was pretty quiet. When I arrived at the car park there was a California quail perched like a sentry on the gate post to the Information shelter. So unlike his normal panic behaviour, he just stayed put as I walked past, still as a rock!

I saw and heard a total of 56 birds and counted 16 different species. My route included Ramaroa to bird count site #1, up the bush track parallel to the farm race, the Ti Kouka loop, to the Dell and back through the Kohekohe forest. I was pleased to see a kereru by the gums. Otherwise the most prevalent bird was, of course, the blackbird - then silvereyes, fantails and tuis.

On the way back through the Kohekohe forest I noticed that there were quite a lot of fruit/seed pods still on the Kohekohe trees - so I wonder if we will get a good flowering in June this year ?



Kohekohe trees in the Kohekohe Bush, February 2019

Ann Reports: Wednesday afternoon there were two kereru doing aerobatics near Gums. Last weekend watched a pair of grey warblers in ngaio tree in Dell for several minutes. The Rosella flock seems to have grown - busy in totara up Carex Valley - there are seeds on some of those trees as well as the big one above the Dell.

December 2, 2018

Ann Reports: A long-tailed cuckoo flew into a house window in Raumati South and was immediately killed. Long-tailed cuckoos are migratory birds and rare to find. More here...



Long-tailed cuckoo. Adult calling while perched. Blowhard Bush, Hawke's Bay, November 2014. Image © Adam Clarke by Adam Clarke

Follow-up report seen by Ann, December 20, 2018 in the Dominion Post of another long-tailed cuckoo flying into a house window and dying, this time in Strathmore...

November 21, 2018

Helen Reports: I've just come in from Whareroa, having spent an hour and a half walking through the Toetoe Flats, the Ti Kouka Loop and the Dell.

Perfect day for seeing and hearing birds with hardly any wind and some light cloud.

I counted 70 birds and 20 species.

Bellbirds were often heard in and near the kohekohe forest - and I was pleased to see at least one of them.

Also heard California quails, Eastern rosella and two Shining cuckoos.

I mention these because they don't feature in the list of birds SEEN - so many birds HEARD!

On my way in I spotted raucous Starlings, who have made home in the information centre - hungry nestlings waiting for a parent with a beak full!

On my way out I saw a Swallow family with one fledgling near the exit gate.

It is a great time of year, with all the nesting birds - they are very busy!



California quail. Adult male. Wellington, February 2016. Image © Arindam Bhattacharya by Arindam Bhattacharya © www.ArindamBhattacharya.com

October 10, 2018

Helen Reports: I had a walk through Ramaroa and over to Ti Kouka last week (10/10/18).

I counted 69 birds and saw 14 different species.

There was plenty of activity at the two stiles with many vocal greenfinches and goldfinches. I was rewarded with hearing a shining cuckoo near there too.

The walk through the Ramaroa Bush was surprisingly quiet, though out in the open chaffinches were often seen and the breeding song of the male continually heard.

At Ti Kouka I saw two kereru - a good way to end!

The tuis will be getting excited about all the flax flowers which are about to burst forth, looking great!

September 9, 2018

Helen Reports: I spent a morning at the farm yesterday to see what I could see of the bird population!

It was good to see 2 kereru, 2 bellbirds (sounding exactly like Tuis!), and hear many grey warblers (and see 2) which will bring in the shining cuckoos any minute. I thought I might have been lucky but no. Birding NZ tells that the first cuckoo was heard in Auckland about two weeks ago. There were lots of chaffinches and I heard the pheasants again, first for a while (for me, that is). So lots going on :-)

Most of the birds I counted were seen between the entrance and the Hub, it was surprisingly still up top - coming and going.

I noticed that cattle have been in at the top of the horse track :-)

On a more positive note, I saw the most prolific display of clematis just north of Ngaio Bend - looking fantastic!

August 10, 2018

Ann reports: Liffet said she heard a shining cuckoo a few days ago. The "Morning Walkers" heard a Ruru.

August 9, 2018

Helen Reports: As I am suffering from 'bird count' withdrawal I decided to have a walk and count all birds that I could see on my way. So here is the result. It is quite unofficial and may be of no use but I thought you might like to know about it.

I am keen to do more of this during the breeding season so expect more of the same! Probably earlier in the day, though :-)

14 species and 71 birds counted - most prolific were fantails and most heard were song thrushes. I also heard the first male chaffinch song (for me, that is) which is heard during the breeding season. The male birds are looking fantastic now with brightly coloured red chests. Strangely enough I didn't see any silvereyes (though I heard one or two).

July 14, 2018

Jason reports: while out on pest control activities on Whareroa Farm, he was closely observed by a Kereru that didn't mind him getting up very close



July 14's relaxed and observant Kereru

June 17, 2018

Ann reports: Theo and I saw the shag (see below) Sunday morning (June 17) 8.15am flying across from Ramaroa and up the main valley as we were going through the double gates taking plants.

This fat sleepy kereru seen Sunday after planting about midday - would have been easy to snare if I was hunting as in earlier times - I wandered quietly quite close and it didn't bat an eyelid. S/he was sitting in that small poplar tree near the bottom of the reservoir track as I chugged down in the LUV.



June 17's fat sleepy Kereru

June 14, 2018 (this was Helen's last Bird Count report for the Kapiti Diversity Project)

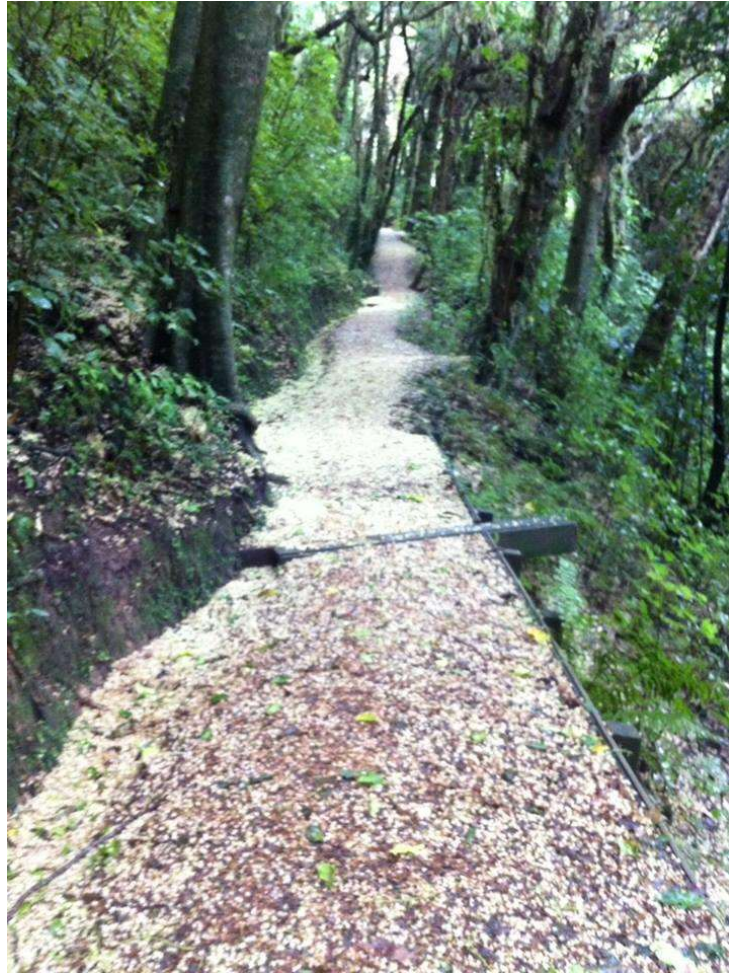
Helen Reports: An interesting day in the Farm. The ground was very saturated and the streams well up, in flood. There was wonderful birdsong from the kohekohe forest and a lot of activity in the valley generally, with flocks of silvereyes and other introduced passerines.

An unusual thing was seeing a young 'Black Shag' on the Carex Valley track. It took off up the valley then we saw it fly away to the south. The cloud came down on the way up the horse track and everything became very quiet.

At #9 I saw two kereru, one of which swooped past at head height, coming from behind, at great speed (unusual !)

At #10 (Dell) it was great to see and hear two bellbirds, in the old kanuka - where I just about always see them, not in the kohekohe which must be much more delicious, I think! Also lots of fantail activity.

Returning through the kohekohe forest was the most magnificent, thick carpet of kohekohe flowers



The kohekohe forest most magnificent, thick carpet of kohekohe flowers