



Jan-Feb, 2020 Newsletter

2020 and Beyond

Our Strategic Plan Summary

Our Strategic Plan, which is set to guide us over the coming years, is up on our website ready to share with you. It's a bold and ambitious set of goals and actions to start us on our way towards an Aotearoa where we can *all* thrive in a healthy, safe and ecologically sound environment. In this Plan we make it very clear that we advocate **The Precautionary Principle** as **THE** guiding principle that must be followed when making decisions involving risks to people, wildlife and the planet.

We hope you find this document exciting and inspiring - a breath of fresh air in a stuffy room. Independent and collective inspired action is needed now more than ever. We need to come together in unity and see beyond petty differences if we to truly stop the continued harm to our planet, people and wildlife.

Let us know what you think

Read our Strategic Plan [here](#) and some further details on projects including The People's Inquiry 2020 and Nature's Verge in this newsletter. We'd also like to give a huge thank you to all those who have supported us over our first year as an incorporated society and who continue to support and believe in the work we are doing. We are keen to hear from you and get your feedback. Email us at floraandfaunaotearoa@gmail.com

Kia Kaha,

Asha, Felicity and Di - Trustees, Flora and Fauna of Aotearoa



Stand Tall Like a Kauri, Northland

Waitangi Day -Thursday 6th February

Are you joining in the Waitangi Day celebrations? Our three trustees will be at The Waitangi Treaty Grounds this Waitangi Day at the Flora and Fauna of Aotearoa stall. We will be there to chat with people and have some scheduled activities throughout the day. The theme this year is **Trees**. There will be a talk on the role of trees and how to plant a tree so it has the best chance of thriving. Manuka saplings have been kindly donated by a local native plant nursery and will be given away to kids who join us for the talk. Hope to see you there!



The People's Inquiry 2020 - *into the Impacts and Effects of Toxic Chemicals and Poisons on our People, Wildlife and Environment* is going to be launched very soon. The Inquiry will be accepting written submissions from people throughout the country and will culminate in a Public Hearing in Auckland with Commissioners later in the year. All written submissions will be given to Commissioners, who will also hear Oral Testimonies of those who wish to share their experience in person. The Commissioners will then focus on producing a final report and recommendations.

The Inquiry is being run by a team of people including Flora and Fauna of Aotearoa, the convenors of the [People's Inquiry of 2006](#) into the spraying of Auckland suburbs with pesticide Foray 48B and Clean Green NZ Trust.

If you have been harmed or have witnessed harm from toxic chemical or poisons you might like to consider writing a submission and sharing your experience. We will share more details on how to submit once the website is live and the Inquiry is launched! Watch this space.

EPA Reassessment of Hi-Cane, hydrogen cyanamide Consultation Now Open

Calls last year to have Hi-Cane reassessed have now resulted in the EPA opening a national consultation on the reassessment of the chemical's use. Currently Hi-Cane is used on kiwifruit vines and some apple orchards annually to stimulate uniform bud break, but there are major concerns over the chemical use as spray drift from orchards has been found to harm wildlife, pets and people. You can read more on the process here and how to submit. The EPA states:

"We are looking to receive any relevant information from industry, users, other interested parties or the public relating to the use, practices, and effects of hydrogen cyanamide-containing substances.

This includes any information relating to the effects of the substances, positive or adverse, such as toxicology, ecotoxicology, economic impact, environmental fate studies, or monitoring results."

NZ Herald - [Northland campaigner wins first round against controversial spray](#)

NewsHub - [Spot testing of Northland kiwifruit orchards for toxic chemical spray Hi-Cane](#)



New Zealand Gamekeepers Possum Fiber
 As an alternative to the use of inhumane poisons, entrepreneurial Kiwis are building a local, sustainable possum fibre cottage industry.

“Possum - merino yarn now available, in hanks of approximately 120g. This is 25% possum and 75% NZ merino, suitable for hand knitting. It can be made softer and fluffier by first placing it into a lingerie bag and then gently hand-washing it in wool wash and then drying on low in a drier. Selling for \$26 NZD per hank. Please visit our online shop if you would like to buy some.”

[Online Shop](#)
[NZGKPossum Fiber Website](#)

What can you do with New Zealand possum fibre?



This fibre is from New Zealand possums - not related to North American opossums. There is a sad back-story: in New Zealand, in the 1800s, possums were introduced from Australia. Now, when their numbers become too high, they are a threat to native species. They are deliberately killed using 1080 poison, dropped by helicopters into the forests. But the poison kills other creatures too, including birds, deer, horses, dogs, cows, pigs, bees, insects, - and humans - and contaminates the soil and groundwater.

Death by 1080 poison is extremely cruel and slow. Many New Zealanders including us, think that trapping done with a proper Gamekeeping philosophy is a much better way to cull them: it's **swift** and enables recovery of the beautiful fibre, fur, leather and meat. We hope you'll consider using NZGK Possum Fibre (a trade name of NZ Gamekeepers Ltd) to help us to pay trappers properly and to help us grow into a viable alternative to 1080 poison, so that the poisoning can be stopped.

“NZGK Possum Fibre is the flagship product and trading name for a New Zealand company called NZ Gamekeepers Ltd, co-founded in 2018 by Guy Savidge and Elisabeth Frankish. This company is a stepping stone towards a future nationwide cooperative of trappers, called 'NZ Gamekeepers Cooperative'.

Our mission is to develop an alternative to our current government practice of aerial 1080 poisoning (which means dropping poisons out of helicopters into the native forests), to kill possums, for conservation reasons.

Our government has said they will continue to use 1080 until there is 'a viable alternative'. And so, our mission is to develop that viable alternative.” - NZGKPossum Fiber Website

Natural Verge

One of the core values of FFA is the non-use of poisons in our environment. We believe that slowly New Zealanders are poisoning each other and all the flora and fauna in our country, under a legal process at national and regional levels. We also believe that positive, solution-based advocacy is the only process we want to be involved in, to promote change.



For this reason, we are launching an exciting campaign to convince our local governments, starting close to home, here in Northland, that our roadsides and recreational spaces do not need to be sprayed with poisons. Our new project NATURALVERGE envisages showcasing a designated area that can be seen by many, in which the roadside is left to its natural state, without being dominated by poison sprays. The second example to be actioned is choosing another area, in which wildflowers will be sown to replace what some people regard as 'unwanted weeds'. Our third showcase will be an area where a natural alternative, more cost-effective solution will be applied.

This new FFA project is a tool to convince our government representatives that innovative and environmentally sound methods are not only the safest measures, but also potentially more cost-effective, and certainly more beautiful than the morbid dying vegetation that we see all through our beautiful country. We would be delighted to receive any suggestions on areas to be chosen and wildflowers to be planted. In summary, we would love to have your input and support, remembering that only through the application of innovative ideas, as solutions, is the pathway to change. Killing roadside weeds with toxic poisons is not a solution to public space maintenance.

Want Your Region to Adopt Natural Verges?

We are looking for people who would you like to see Natural Verges adopted in their area.

Get in touch with Felicity to help make this a reality.

Email: floraandfauna@gmail.com Phone: 021 081 34252



Shared from [Roadesque](#): Texas Roadside wildflowers / Bee Photo: Laura Jerome

How are the birds and the bees...and the snails at your place?

2019 has been an interesting year up at our forest sanctuary. It's our fifth year on the here and the birds are as abundant as ever. The dawn and evening chorus is loud and full at the moment and species we rarely see have been visiting more frequently. Our regular daily sightings (and listenings) include a large number of piwakawaka, tomtit, waxeyes, grey warblers, chaffinch, ruru, rosella, kiwi and more. We've counted 26 species in total, which only covers the ones we see and can recognise - there are others! This year the number of tui has increased significantly and we are getting frequent visits from Welcome Swallows which has only happened one other year I can recall. This year I also saw our first fern bird which made a cute twit, twit, twit sound as he hopped around in the reeds.

Our forest sanctuary is a novel ecosystem of mature native trees, notably towhai, kahikatea and various tree ferns, regenerating manuka and kanuka, as well as a few wild pines. It is full of life. The manuka has just finished flowering and boy was it buzzing with thousands of honey bees. It looked like a beautiful light dusting of snow, or icing sugar sprinkled over the forest. The grey warblers love flitting to and fro in the manuka and gorse looking for insects. We've been hearing the kiwi call each other at night over the past few months too, it sounds like two birds down in the gully and another further away. Back in August I was cleaning in the garden and found baby *Paryphanta*, kauri snails! It was exciting as I have seen quite a few and even rescued adults (see *photo*) from the dusty roadside before, rehydrated them and set them on their way, but I've never seen their babies!

The forest is also home to rats, mice, hedgehogs and possums as well as wild pigs. It shows a balance can be found without poisons or extensive trapping of introduced species. We are always looking for better ways to support species, especially natives. This means planting more habitat and food sources as well as looking into things like bird boxes to support nesting. Another challenge is recording and documenting what we see and hear in the forest. We plan to invest over time in quality audio and camera equipment, maybe even some binoculars and a bird watching platform.

What about you? How's the flora and fauna doing where you live? What's the make up of the forest near you? Do you use technology to monitor wildlife or do you do it the old fashioned way?



Environmental Values Survey

What do people think about their relationship with the environment? Is our environment being looked after properly? And are we being heard by those creating the policies that dictate what is and isn't ok?

FFA is focussed on clarifying the relationship between national and regional government policy and the fundamental opinions of New Zealanders in reference to the natural environment.

We want real answers from real sources to know the reality *about you and your environment*.

The relationship between people and their environment is central to perfecting our information transfer to governing bodies as to what New Zealanders really desire for the management and care of natural resources, wildlife and spaces.

As a small nation, with extremely limited land size, it is imperative we care for the natural environment, to preserve New Zealand for the generations to come. It is vital that governing bodies, who ultimately decide on policy regarding the use of chemicals in our natural spaces, are alerted to the real thoughts and views of people in our communities, because we can no longer depend on the information, set out by the government, relating to this critical situation.

For this reason, we have developed an Environmental Values survey, which is up on our website, encouraging as many people as possible to submit their valuable opinions on our environment. The results of the survey will be shared with policymakers and the general public alike. We urge you to participate so as our role in transferring the real information from a wide spread opinion base to governance, is conclusive, convincing and functional. Please take the survey and then share with family and friends.



Make sure your voice is heard

>> [TAKE THE SURVEY](#) <<

Flora and Fauna of Aotearoa is made up of volunteers.

It runs off the passion and contribution of people like you.

It also runs off the kind donations of people like you.

Thank you for supporting our brave new voice.

Your donations are gratefully accepted.

Direct Credit to: Flora and Fauna

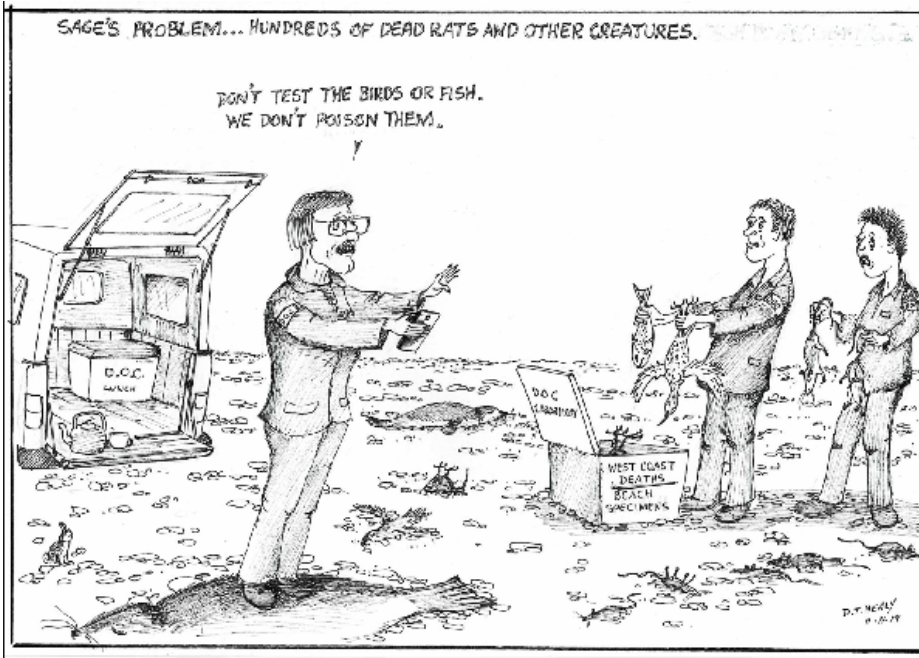
Account: 12-3091-0037573-00

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Investigation into the Westport Catastrophe and Independent Testing

In November in collaboration with Clean Green NZ Trust we were able to carry out independent testing of a number of species that washed up dead on North Beach in Westport, on the West Coast of the South Island. After torrential rains hundreds of rats, along with fish, crayfish, birds, octopus and other species washed down the river and onto the beach. Volunteers collected and bagged a variety of species and we were able to connect with an independent laboratory capable of testing for 1080 poison. The



reason for testing being the rarity of such an event and The Department of Conservation's apparent lack of concern. With such a large and diverse number of animals washing dead up downstream of an aerial poison operation weeks earlier, independent testing was crucial.

Reports from the independent lab confirmed the presence of 1080 poison and several of its chemical markers, namely fluorocitrate and the green dye used in the pellets. Shortly after the results were made public, the government lab Landcare Research issued its results com-

missioned by the Department of Conservation - stating no 1080 poison was found in their samples and thus the animals didn't die from the poison. This saw a series of press releases issued, calling out DOC for using flawed testing methodology. They instructed Landcare to test for fluoroacetate 1080 and not the chemical breakdown substances which the poison quickly metabolises into. This seriously calls into question the testing methods used by government run labs and all previous testing they have carried out. Read the results and press release in the [News](#) section of our website.

New Book by Reihana Robinson

Rural Revolt In Defence of Coromandel's Wild Kingdom tells the story of environmental struggles. Where big money and bureaucratic self-interest tear at the fabric of traditional rural communities and their threatened way of life. This book is the companion to *The Killing Nation New Zealand's State-Sponsored Addiction to Poison 1080* and is divided into four parts. *First They Came for the Wild Goats* tells of the government's "Wall of Death" program against the feral goats. *Don't Fence Us In* describes the attempt to enclose farming families and others behind a divisive "predator-proof" steel barrier. *Save Our Wild Pigs* exposes the stealth attack by local government to take wild pigs off the local menu. *Coromandel Voices: Poison Peninsula* presents the struggle for humane wild animal conservation policies. The book is set on the northern Coromandel peninsula of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The struggles are ongoing. - The book is available on [Amazon](#).

Reihana has several books on this topic available on Amazon.

Photo: Reihana Robinson

