

# Pīpipi

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Maurice White Native Forest Trust  
Newsletter from Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula  
Aotearoa / New Zealand

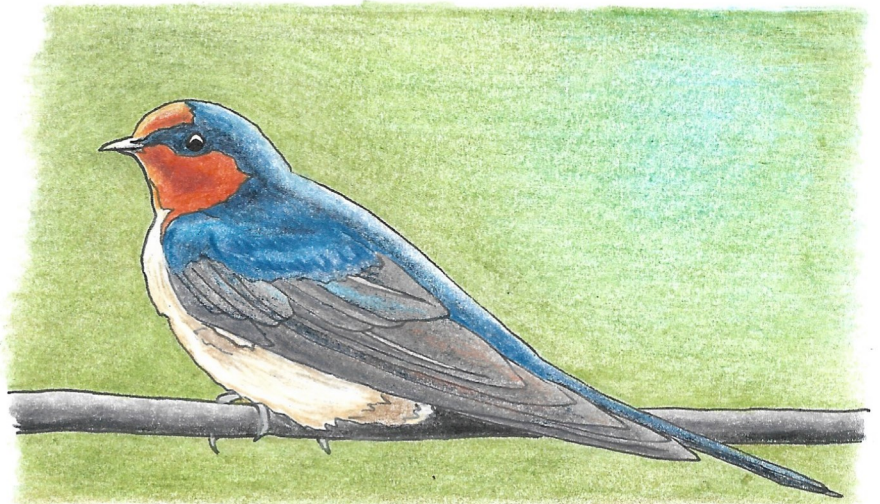
R.D.3 Akaroa 7583

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November 2021

## Winter and Spring

Do you recall that Pīpipi 53 ended on a dry note? Pūtakitaki Pond was halved, streams were dwindling, headland springs had shrivelled. The last three days of May tried to make



Welcome swallow

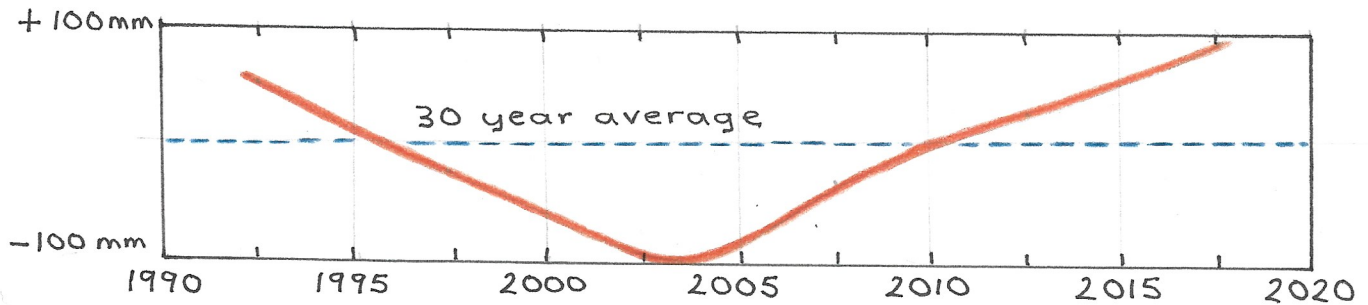
amends. Wet and windy weather arrived abruptly from the south-east. Indeed, it was so wet and windy that a state of emergency was declared across Canterbury. We were doused, but not damaged, luckier than many to our west. As May rolled in to June Pūtakitaki Pond brimmed full, spilling water over its tiny weir in to Long Stream.

And what of the kōwhai trees, blatted two years running by caterpillar pandemics? Most (not all though) burst in to glorious golden bloom as mid-winter sauntered in to Spring, delighting innumerable korimako [and numerable tūi - Ed.].

## More or less?

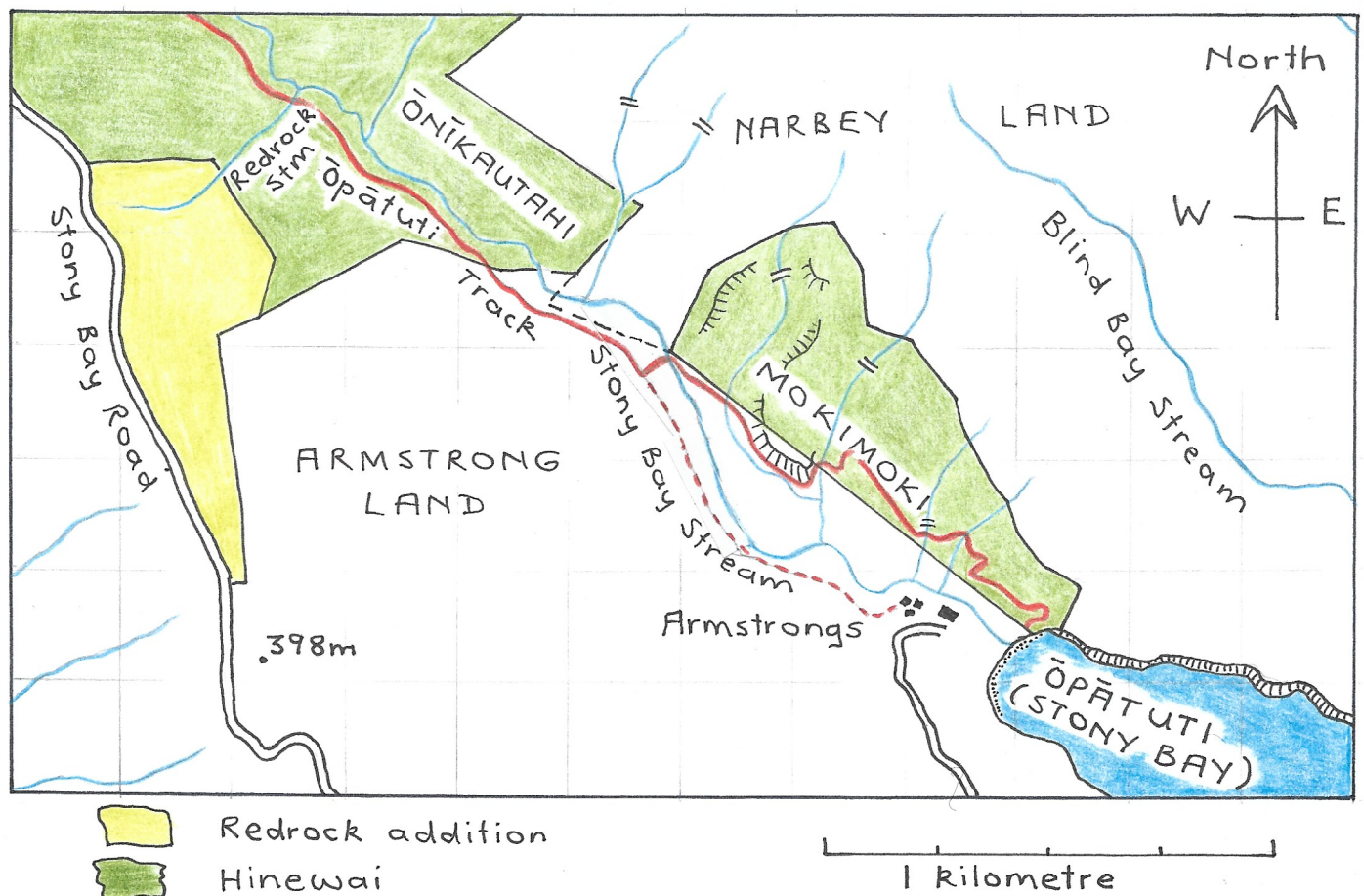
Weather seems chaotic and random, but NIWA reckons a diminishing rainfall trend can be detected in data from across the whole country over the past three decades. Hugh doubted that Hinewai's

2 data endorsed this computer-figured decline. So he graphed our rainfall trends from 1990 to 2020, using his own brain and a pencil [this could explain the discrepancy - Ed.]. His sums show a decline from the early 1990s to around 2005, but then an increase from then:



### Bigger and better

Ōtepihi's 31 hectares transferred to our Trust in late May. At the same time, 20 hectares along Stony Bay Road were signed up for addition to Hinewai in November. That extension will streamline our boundaries in the southern corner of the reserve, but more than that, it encompasses outstanding outcrops of red volcanic rock and some nice copses of native trees.



## The cracked old manager's house

The old house on the original 109 hectare Hinewai farmlet is not all that old, and not all that cracked. It was built by Doug Lloyd, of poured concrete, around 1966. Hugh dwelt happily there for 25 years while his whānau increasingly told him it was cold, damp and unhealthy. He thought they were joking. So Nature stepped in, as She does. The 2010-11 earthquakes left both the manager and the house shaken and a wee bit shattered, although engineers deemed the damage [in both cases? - Ed.] cosmetic rather than structural. After much discussion, the Trustees decided that the future would be better served by building a new manager's house, on nearby Papakaika Meadow. The old manager moved in, early in 2013, and has been even happier there ever since.

When Andrew Youngson left Hinewai in 2020, the Trust again mulled over the housing of future workers, and decided that the best plan was to revamp the old house. We are so lucky that unique local builder David Brailsford, and his partner Jan Cook, both staunch conservationists,

agreed to take the project on.

In recent years David re-invented the Rod Donald Hut along the Peninsula's Te Ara Pātaka Walkway, the Packhorse Hut under Mount Bradley, and the accommodation on Ōtamahua / Quail Island in Lyttelton Harbour.

Work started on our old house on a bleak wet



4 morning in late June. Paul Newport shuttled tools and equipment down a soggy Wahanui Track in electric "Pip". There was one major structural failing. David fixed that first. Large quantities of building materials trundled down by "Pip" or wheelbarrow, and on return journeys an astonishing accumulation of dead appliances and debris at last migrated upwards to the recycling and rubbish skips at Wahanui Gate. David explained this phenomenon by his



Theory of Gravity. Large items like stoves tend to gravitate down Wahanui Track but not up when they die. Slightly embarrassed by the temporary stockpiles of jetsam beside the track, Hugh made interpretive signs for visitors. "Not a rubbish dump" said one, "not an art installation. Briefly resting here on way to recycling or disposal."

Progress was slowed more than once, by pandemic lockdowns, and a nasty dose of shingles. Every now and then David roped in local specialists such as electricians and plumbers, and a family affair of industrial vacuum cleaners who sucked the old vermiculite insulation, liberally laced with rat poo, out of the roof. They expressed delight at the surroundings. From the roof the wooded Ōtānerito Valley falls away to the bay, and the sea horizon far beyond.

### Will it work?

The next big challenge is to find the right person to join our tiny workforce, for the second half of this summer. We are advertising the position in "New Zealand Conservation Jobs." Bruce Hansen [brucehansen@xtra.co.nz,

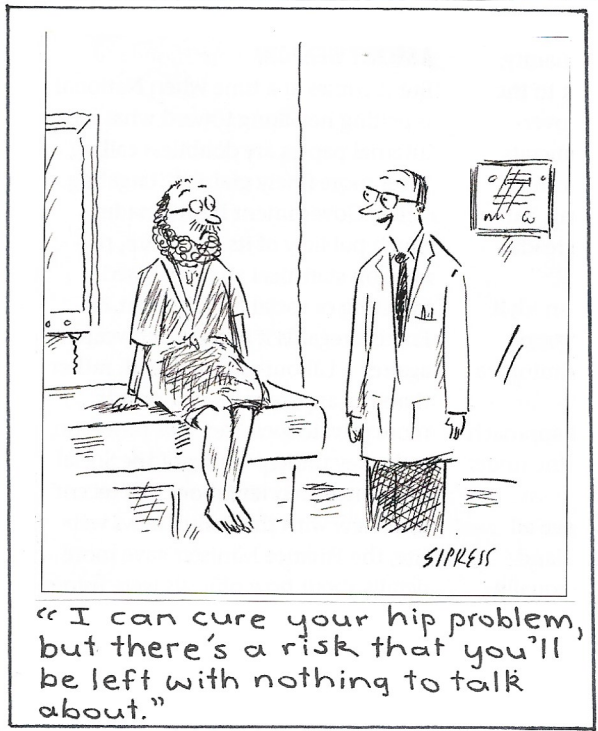
phone (03) 354 2207] will help you find the ad or send you a printout if you are not owned by a computer or a cellphone.

Some might wonder why we are advertising a paid position rather than seeking volunteers. We have indeed enjoyed some marvellous unpaid helpers and continue to benefit from a tried and true few. But for many reasons we use volunteers sparingly. Nearly all the work on the reserve we have found is best done by a properly employed, fully trained, efficient, compact little team.



An ageing hippie

The need for extra person-power received a bit of a kick up the backside from Hugh's lower left limb. He has a worn-out, worsening hip, now lined up for a bi-ionic replacement in early November, covid-willing. Meanwhile he continues to operate on the theory that the more he pushes the joint along the fitter he will be on the operating table and the faster should be his recovery. There's no denying though that Hinewai's current workload is being carried more heavily on Paul Newport's broad but not unlimited shoulders. Hugh's leg is not expected to be leaping about like a teenager's again until around mid-December. By the start of 2022, when we hope to have hired extra hands [and legs and shoulders-Ed], there will be some catching up to do on tracks, weeds, pests and boundaries.



A whakataukī (Māori proverb): He peke

6 tangata, āpā he peke tītoki [a man's limb, it's hardly the equal of a tītoki branch].

### Getting ahead in the office

When Hugh shifted Hinewai's office out of the cracked old manager's house 8½ years ago, lots of books and files, more archival than needed daily, missed the bus. All now had to be sorted and whipped away ahead of builder David's whirling workfront. We built extra shelves in the new house and wheelbarrowed loads across Papakaika Meadow. Margaret Quigley, Hugh's older sister and hardworking city agent for the reserve, helped reshelve the influx. One afternoon Hugh was about to add some screws to stabilise a top shelf already laden with books. Worksafe New Zealand would be shocked at what happened next. The shelf tipped. Far below [1 metre to be exact - I measured it - Ed.] fourteen hard-covered volumes of "Small-leaved shrubs of New Zealand" avalanched on to the city agent's head. Margaret's efforts are entirely unpaid, but we decided that the mishap should be recorded in our "Accidents Register." "Was this an accident, an incident, or a near miss?" asks the Register in its efficient manner. "Hardly a near miss" we replied, "more like a direct hit. All the books landed squarely on top of the victim's head." Recognising Margaret's sterling and uncomplaining efforts, the Manager unilaterally doubled her salary (\$0.00) without even consulting the other Trustees or the Financial Officer.

### Phasing out flagging photopoints

Taking pictures each October from fixed photopoints has built up an informative, fascinating file of vegetational and landscape change. Hinewai's reiterated snapshots date back to 1988.

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Somewhat regrettably, plants not only grow, they are also supremely good at blocking out views altogether. At Photopoint 3, for example, high on Le Lievre Spur, bushy māhoe trees have proliferated in thick bracken. They look wonderful, but obscure all four view-lines. The marker post itself is completely enveloped in verdant foliage.

Uncowed, Photopoint 1, looking south-west from Long Bay Road, has for 33 years faithfully documented an unobstructed vista of the upper Ōtānerito Valley.



From Photopoint 1, 13 October, 2017

### Healthy and green

Old-growth forest on Banks Peninsula (what little remains of it) comes in two main guises. Beech forest occurs only in our own south-east corner. Remnants of ancient beech occupy about 4 percent (about 50 hectares) of Hine-wai's 1300 hectares. Podocarp/hardwood forest once covered nearly all of the Peninsula, but now, alas, holds on to less than one percent. Podocarps are the tall gymnosperm ("softwood") trees which in mature forest tower over diverse lower storeys of angiosperm ("hardwood") trees,

8 tree ferns, shrubs and ground cover. The four common podocarps on Banks Peninsula are lowland tōtara, thin-bark tōtara, matai and kahikatea. Individual trees of each survive on Hinewai – old and precious beyond our naïve comprehending – and all are regenerating well, within a mosaic of mixed hardwood forests at every stage of development.

### Rusty and ill

Myrtle rust is an alien fungal disease native to South America, first noted in Aotearoa in Auckland in 2017. It had reached Australia several years before that, and no doubt blew easily across the Tasman Sea from Oz to Us. The disease has inflicted enough damage on Australia's profusion of myrtles (including eucalypts) to give us real worries. Five species of Myrtaceae are native to Banks Peninsula – kānuka, mānuka, a climbing rātā, rōhutu, and shrubby rōhutu. News in May that the rust had reached Christchurch was expected but scary. Low temperatures deter its spread, but this is cold comfort in times of global warming.

### Covid, climate and kākāriki

In mid-August the radio reported a community case of covid in Auckland, the start of an outbreak that seems determined to transition Aotearoa from elimination strategies to vaccine-mediated control. As I write this, the South Island still has no known cases, touch wood [and jab arms – Ed.].

A month earlier, the Minister for Climate Change [the Minister against Climate Change – Ed.], Greens co-leader James Shaw, visited Hinewai on a beautiful sunny winter's day to see the regenerating forest and talk with the Banks Peninsula Carbon Group. They covered a lot of ground, first in the Visitor Centre and then out along West



Track, discussing low-cost, high value natural regeneration, pernicious pine trees, and carbon credits. 9

Among many other group visits, "Te Ara Kākāriki" came to Hinewai. Their kaupapa is to foster bushy wildlife corridors across the plains from the mountains to the Peninsula. Their name translates as "The Green Pathway" but the Māori word *kākāriki* is doubly apt. Literally it means "little parrot", and is the name for New Zealand's native parakeets. The plumage of these exquisite birds seems like a distillation of all that is green and lovely about the New Zealand bush, and thus "kākāriki" is synonymous with "green". The team called in on Paul's kākāriki aviary at Ōtānerito and were suitably wowed. But what we all dream about is that one day, wild and free, kākāriki will make their own way back to Hinewai's re-established forests along the emerald paths.



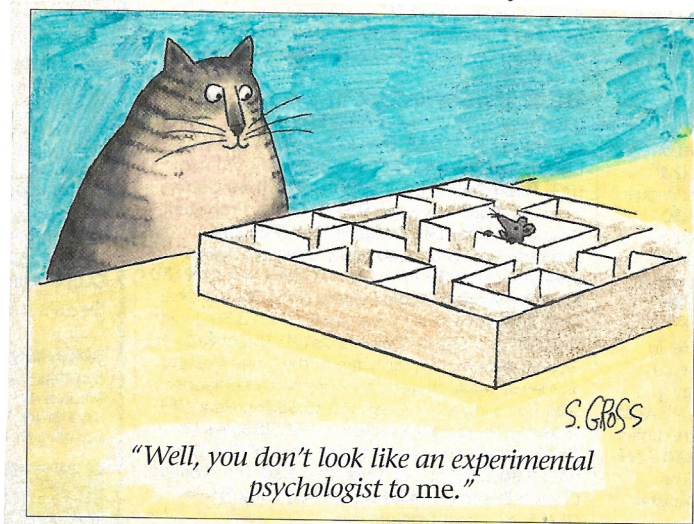
### Pest-free B.P.

Pest-free Aotearoa by 2050? No more possums, mustelids, feral cats and rats savaging native flora and fauna? [And a stabilised climate? - Ed.]. It all seems an impossible dream. Some proponents see it at least as a motivating aspirational goal. Some think

10 the way will become clear if only the will is there. Some believe technology will bound over barriers to success. Anyway, there is substantial national funding, and work is underway.

The Banks Peninsula team's initial goal is ambitious but perhaps achievable. They aim to eliminate possums from "The Wildside", designing their methods so that rats too are diminished in the same operations. Hinewai lies in the heart of the Wildside and, although we have voiced some doubts, we are happy to co-operate with the trials. For the last few months fit and committed teamsters have been carving extra access tracks, mostly through gorse, to link (cryptically) with our established track network. In the meantime our own local contractors continue to ensure that possum numbers stay low - Tristan and Max on Hinewai, Viola and John on Purple Peak Curry Reserve.

It's a complex situation. Rats are the worst and the most ubiquitous of all these introduced



predators. Alone they would render the return of birds like kākā and tīeke well nigh impossible. On Hinewai we know that cats, stoats and ferrets prey heavily on rats and almost certainly check their numbers. Nearly all their

scats contain hairs, not feathers. If you see predated bird remains on the reserve, these are more likely to be victims of native falcons than of cats or mustelids. This is not to minimise these disastrously misplaced mammals, but just to note that the facts are tangled. Despite everything, native fauna that has survived so far is flourishing here. It is often better (we think) not to interfere in long-altered ecologies that we only dimly comprehend.

Nonetheless, ridding the Wildside of possums // seems wholly positive, except for the intensive effort and disturbance needed for any hope of success [and not a great experience if you are a possum - Ed.]. Just as urgent for us is to end the unfolding nightmare of feral deer, to ensure that goats never re-invade, nor that wild pigs ever descend on us like a plague.

## Missing Rosie

Dogs are banned from Hinewai for several sound reasons. There are exceptions. Well-trained pest-control canines are regarded as wildlife officers, and guide dogs as essential workers - such as beautiful Fletcher who visited in October with her blind human, accompanied by the organisers of the November Walking Festival. They were all sussing out a good route for a sight-impaired ramble. Hugh was allowed to give Fletcher a friendly scritch behind her ears.

A note was found, at the start of September, pinned to the Beechgate Information Board.

Spoodle Rosie had gone missing off Curry Track near Browntop Saddle. Well, hello Rosie (we thought), what were you doing on Curry Track in the first place? Possumer Viola and Wildlife Officer Buster later described Rosie's rescue. Caught by the tip of her tail in a possum trap she was returned to her humans, chastened but unharmed. It wasn't really Rosie, though, who needed that lesson.



Murray is caught desecrating the secret appliance burial grounds.

## 12 Missing donors

Hinewai is sustained by a matchless multitude of supporters who love and cherish her in varied and vastly valued ways, including generous donations. Our sophisticated shoe-box address-card database secretly sequesters details on most of this angelic host, but not all. We love to thank personally everybody who contributes financially. Large or small, donations are hugely helpful and it is a buzz not a burden to send a tax-relevant receipt and a heartfelt thankyou card. Of course, you may wish to remain anonymous. But if not, perhaps someone could provide contact details, preferably a postal address, for any of these unsung heroes, missing in action: Gilbert Potts, A.J. Horn, Construction Tr., Nigel French, E.K. Arthur-Moore, Davi Fitzjohn, F.M. Clayton, Vivien Pybus, D.C. and S. Robertson, R.A. Crookbain and K. Hamer, P. Marasti, Johanna Mills and family, N.H. Vickers, S.J. Lequeux and Cornelius d L, M.A. Smith, Mrs J.H. Blackmore, Mr G.M. Brackenbury, M. Reynolds, Ronald Helen Trust - Ian Archer, Davi Stafford, B.S. Buchanan, N.F. Cope, Zoe Buxton.

## Beyond

Away to our west the highest peaks of the Peninsula are now in "public ownership". A bit closer to Hinewai another 536 hectares near Little River have been secured for conservation by a consortium of conservationists. Much nearer, in Hickory Bay Valley, Warren Begley has safeguarded 110 biodiverse hectares abutting DoC's Ellan-gowan Reserve.



Pīpipi appears twice a year. There is no sub and no obligation to donate, but donations of any size are hugely helpful and appreciated. We will post a receipt but need your postal address.

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ADDRESS

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