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# Pīpipi

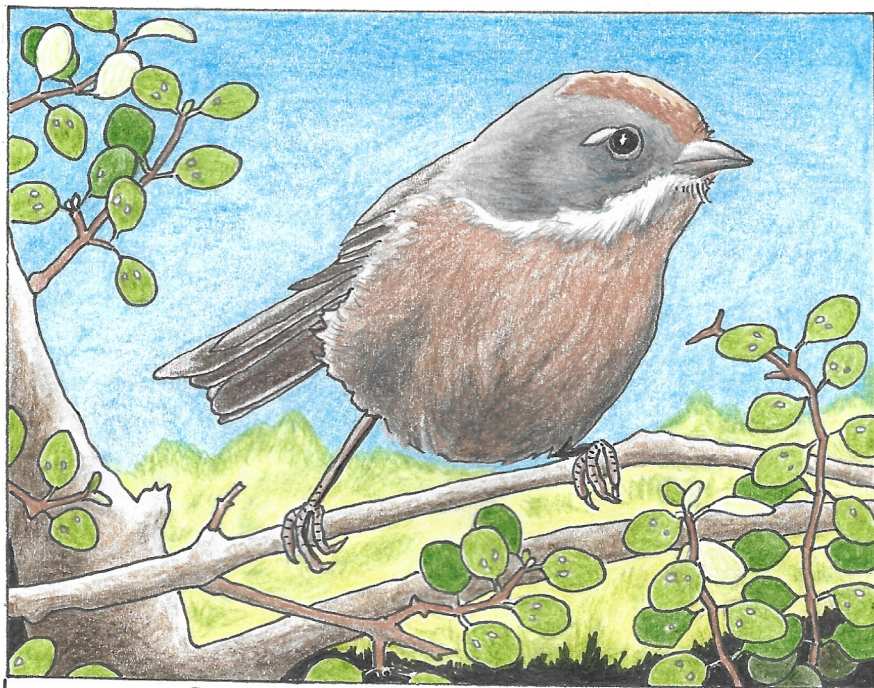
Maurice White Native Forest Trust  
Newsletter from Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula  
Aotearoa / New Zealand

R.D.3 Akaroa 7583

# 56

November 2022

## New clothes for bare ground



pīpipi / brown creeper  
— an abundant little bird on Hinewai,  
forever chirruping away about how  
good life is on the reserve!

The disastrous December Deluge described in Pīpipi 55 disturbed some readers, but Hinewai had, of course, seen landslides before. The first one noted in the log book was in October, 1989, only two years after the reserve's début. A steep, scrubby, rain-soaked slope slumped in to Hinewai Stream downvalley

from Ghost Falls. We eagerly set up a photopoint, but by October 1995 the slip was indistinguishable from the regenerating bush on either side. Mid-January 2002 set a new daily rainfall record at Hinewai weather station (148.5 mm). It triggered twelve significant slips across the reserve. The most dramatic one gutted North Mānatu Gully on the northern flank of Taraterehu, spilling out across Brocheries Flat. Conspicuous in the October 2002 image from Photopoint 1 it was completely vegetated by October 2004 and is now pretty much indiscernible from the

2 surrounding steep hillsides of regenerating trees.

Neither this nor other pluvial episodes, such as the sodden June of 2013, came anywhere the scale of the 2021 disruption, nor can anyone alive on Banks Peninsula recall anything remotely similar. But a bit of time travel would soon [ha ha - Ed.] show that it is far from unprecedented. For example, the huge alluvion described in Pīpipi 51, nearly a kilometre wide and more than a kilometre long [the landslide, not the newsletter - Ed.], completely altered the topography of the upper Ōtānerito Valley thousands of years ago. Vast quantities of material have been eroded off the Akaroa Volcano since eruptions ceased eight million years ago, halving its height, not just by gradual weathering and streams but also undoubtedly by innumerable mass-movements.

Around 70 hectares of regenerating forests vanished overnight in December 2021, leaving bare earth, rock-strewn open water courses, and huge tangles of flayed and broken trees. "Will you replant the slips?" some visitors asked. "Nature's already on to it" we answered. Indeed, within a month the twinned cotyledons of germinating gorse seeds were appearing on many surfaces, along with grasses, sheep's sorrel, vetch and clover. Fifty days after the

deluge, native bracken rhizomes were sprouting new fronds, and poroporo seedlings were emerging. Two months from the trauma, millions of tiny wineberries were everywhere. Three months on, expanding green cover was visible from afar. Another three months, and innumerable poroporo bushes were up to a metre tall. Some native tree species - especially māhoe,



23 Aug. 2022

sevenfinger, karamū and fuchsia - were sprouting not only from fragments but also from freshly germinated seed. Tiny seedlings of kānuka were common. The two most prolific colonising species overall were foxgloves and gorse (both from Europe), joined by inkweed (from Central and South America) at lower altitudes.

Deeply eroded surfaces, such as slip headwalls, and long trenches gouged down the centre of landslides, remain largely bare, looking pale and naked from afar. Devastated stream beds ~~are different~~ again, with many plants, native and naturalised, establishing among bared boulders on finer sediments, exposed to full light and the open sky since the forest canopy had been so rudely ripped away.

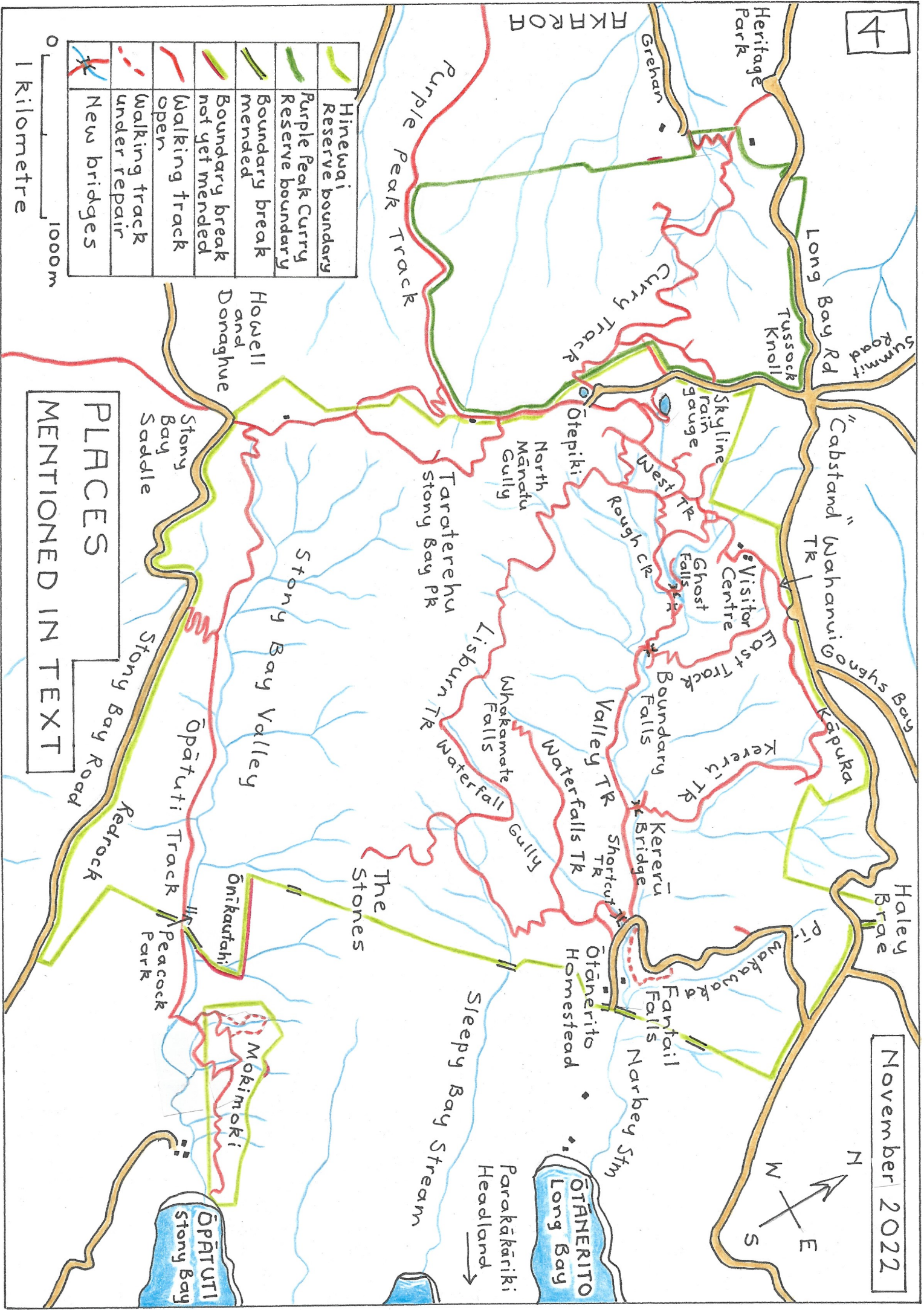
Through Winter and Spring Hugh was writing back to donors and inquiries: "Despite the disaster, Hinewai is looking as lovely as ever, albeit a bit battered and scarred - much like me!" [the battered and scarred bit - Ed.].

Restoring tracks

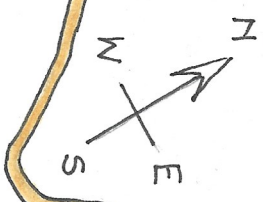
While Nature busied Herself with the real work of replanting, She had no truck with our tracks, bridges or fences. If we insist on such inconsequential trivia, we have to do it all ourselves. This has kept us off the streets and out of mischief for months. Most of the track network is now walkable again. As Hugh's mum used to say: "It may not be perfect, but it's a good deal better than it was." Initially we thought some routes were write-offs, but exploration suggested otherwise. By the end of August Ghost Falls and Shortcut Tracks were revived. Waterfalls Track was again negotiable all the way to Whakamate Falls. During October Paul Newport worked away on lower Valley Track, while Hugh and Max scouted, flagged, cleared and benched a new traverse in to Piwakawaka Stream, bypassing the mayhem in its lower reaches and linking up with much longer stretches of surviving Fantail Falls track than we

	Hinewai Reserve boundary
	Purple Peak Curry Reserve boundary
	Boundary break mended
	Boundary break not yet mended
	Walking track open
	Walking track under repair
	New bridges

0 1000m  
1 kilometre



PLACES MENTIONED IN TEXT



OPĀTUTI Stony Bay

ŌTĀNERITO Long Bay

first suspected.

### Rebuilding bridges

Once the priority bridge at Boundary Falls was completed, Paul launched in to replacing Kererū Bridge, spanning Narbey Stream at Woodcutters Clearing. The key was to concrete mid-way piles in to the river stones. One June day on Valley Track seventeen unsuspecting Pegasus Trampers came tromping past and were immediately press-ganged [they showed no resistance whatsoever - Ed.] in to hefting heavy timbers upvalley to the construction site. Later in June a friendly whānau from Ōamaru offered to carry decking timber there. No press-ganging at all was needed. Paul put the finishing touches to Kererū Bridge at the start of July. Later that month, as part of the re-invention of Shortcut Track, he slung another little viaduct across Waterfall Gully Stream which had naughtily changed course just above the road. Meanwhile Hugh, Peter, Ash and Max had installed two small spans across Rough Creek on the revamped route to Ghost Falls.

### Reforming waterways

When Narbey Stream strayed from the straight and narrow last December it obliterated the Ōtānerito ablutions block, the Weather Station, Tricia's extensive vege garden, the footbridge, and lower Valley Track. It came within a rat's whisker of wiping out the homestead. River engineers sussed out the situation, so that June saw Des and his big digger skilfully working away day after day, deflecting Pīwakawaka Stream with a heaped-up bund [a sort of enormous bank - Ed.]. Narbey Stream was also ordered to behave itself; its bed was deepened and diverted, away from the road and house, though not from the damaged and still-at risk workshop upstream.

### Reinstating roads

Council contractors Fulton Hogan Ltd. rose to

6 what seemed an impossible challenge - repairing the ravaged rural roads. This even involved temporary traffic lights on Long Bay Road - a sight we had never imagined in our weirdest dreams. Under Haley Brae's lacerated landscape a line-up of road cones reminded occasional cars and cyclists to avoid the precipitous edge above Pīwakawaka Stream. A late May bike ride to Ōtānerito saw Hugh streaking [really? - Ed.] along newly laid, watered and rolled shingle. Northwards, the rebirth of devastated Goughs Bay Road seemed almost miraculous.

Sharen Graham, of the New Zealand Native Forest Restoration Trust, visited in August, partly to suss out on site a suggestion from the road contractors that Tussock Knoll, beside "The Cabstand", would be the ideal place for a much-needed roadworks depôt. After the magnificent road repairs we were reluctant to sound obstructive or difficult, but we were not at all keen on having this special place compromised. Sharen and Hugh talked it through with contractor boss Nathan at the Knoll. To our relief the QEII National Trust covenant across all of Purple Peak Curry Reserve firmly safeguards the land for conservation purposes - in this case regenerating snow tussock across a wonderful viewpoint. But we also suggested alternatives that seemed just as practical and much less intrusive.



## Worrisome weather

The road to restoration was not always smooth. Weather had not finished with us yet [it never will - Ed.]. No fewer than three more "150 year rain events" in the single month of July filled the valleys with the deep-throated roar of desperate streams, trying yet again to send surfeits of water to the sea. Rainfall records crashed; July 2022 at Skyline rain gauge totted up 769 mm, at the Visitor Centre 664 mm. This time, though, in contrast to December, rain totals tailed off downvalley in a much more normal pattern. The July total at Ōtānerito was 446 mm and at Parakākāriki Headland it was 245 mm.

Despite this prodigious dampness, additional damage was surprisingly slight. A fresh slip blocked Lisburn Track in Waterfall Gully. On East Track, further slumping in to the northern landslide carried off half the track width for about ten metres. We put up signs and a safety barrier, as we had done months ago at a similar slump on West Track. Frenzied Narbey Stream again slammed in to the upstream corner of Ōtānerito's workshop but failed to inflict much more harm. Wahanui Track down to the Visitor Centre required substantial repairs (and extra water channels) for the third time in seven months. But all our bridges, old and new, stayed put.

It seemed weird that our wet-weather woes played out against a background of extreme drought, heat and dwindling rivers in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

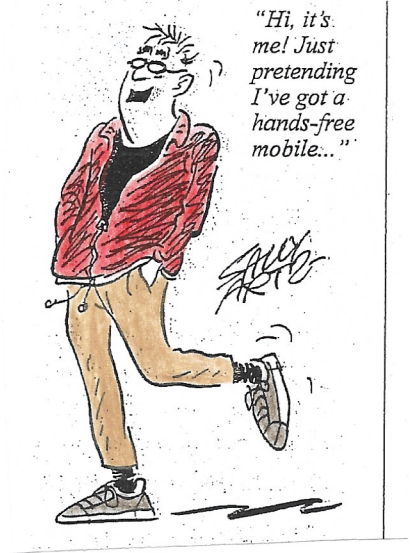
## Reconnected

Huge waves, washing inland up Narbey Stream in May, again cut phone links downvalley. They further eroded the inland edge of Ōtānerito Beach and threw driftwood almost up to Huka-whoppa Bach and the Beach House gate. A phone company contractor knotted the frayed cable

8 ends together again in another "temporary fix."

## Revamping Ōtānerito

Bit by bit the chaos that Nature inflicted on Paul and Tricia's home at Ōtānerito is being remedied. They created another productive garden from scratch, closer to the homestead and further from the stream. A new sewage system has succeeded the one that was totally annihilated. As a back-up to the stuttering supply from Waterfall Gully Stream, a 30,000 litre tank, rain-fed from the workshop roof, now provides what Tricia describes as "wonderful water." Plans are underway for a publicly accessible ablutions block near the cabins to replace the flood-smashed facility nearer the stream.



## No offence

Hinewai and Purple Peak Curry Reserve's 1500 hectares are surrounded by farmed cattle and sheep. Their exclusion is crucial to our regeneration goals. Alas, the integrity of our boundary defences continues to be jeopardised by the year's extreme



Fencer Guy at the Narbey / Ōnīkautahi boundary, Stony Bay Valley, 7 June 2022

weather events. Sheep and cattle invaded in several places. They find themselves in a bovine and ovine heaven, spread with banquets of fivefinger, māhoe, fuchsia, Kawakawa and ferns. Paul Newport and Brian Narbey



tackled several breaches at Ōtānerito and Sleepy Bay Stream. Mark Le Lievre of "Pest-free Banks Peninsula" secured the Hinewai / Narbey boundary in Stony Bay Valley below The Stones. Mark Armstrong of Stony Bay fixed fences at Redrock and on the valley floor. The biggest single challenge, though, remains the Narbey / Hinewai border at Ōnīkautahi, where much of the 870m of flimsy fencing was overwhelmed by landslides. Our trusty fencer Guy Johnston walked the whole line with Paul and Hugh, then detailed the scale and challenge of a practical rebuild. As an interim measure Guy constructed a barrier across Stony Bay Stream at Peacock Park, which prevented stock incursions upvalley. Further repairs were needed after the dumbfounding downpours of July, not just at Peacock Park but at the Ōtānerito flood-gates across Narbey Stream. Hugh discussed some Ōnīkautahi options with the Narbeys, who are keen to reference strictly along the legal line.

### Welcome back!

Undeterred, both of last summer's workers are coming back for more. Max started again on the 10th of October. Ash will return on the 5th of December after completing winter work with Te Ara Kākāriki and visiting far-off family, unseen but not forgotten for four years.

### Enchanting encounters

One midwinter day at Wahanui Gate Hugh met three keen birders who had just arrived from the Ornithological Conference in Christchurch. Perfectly timed a calling falcon flashed overhead to hassle a harrier hawk near Mikimiki Knob. "That's a great start!" exclaimed one of the visitors. Hugh bumped in to the birders again hours later. They were still enthusing, this time over close encounters with pīpī / brown creepers.

10 In an out-of-the-way corner of Stony Bay Valley, Jess Helps of "Pest-free B.P." met a pair of Kārearea. They attacked her fiercely. Most people would be a bit put out having their heads hit hard at high speed by furious falcons, but Jess felt supremely blessed. "I'm sure they're breeding there" she said.

### Repelling varmints

Straying farm stock are bad enough, but elusive feral mammals, munching vegetation that Nature never intended for them, are nightmare material.

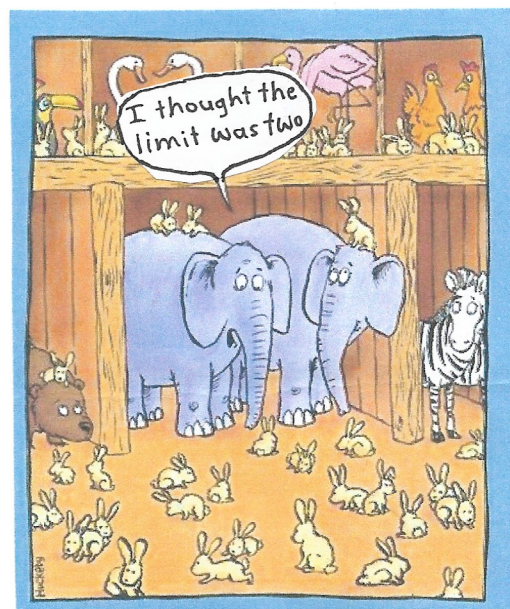
Pest-free B.P. workers, cutting access tracks for an approaching onslaught on possums, rats, mustelids and cats, found further deer sign in the Stony

Bay wilds. Mark and Megan, newly Raitiaki of 400 hectares in the Kaituna Valley, shared horrifying stories and alarming pictures of feral pig infestations in this central region of Banks Peninsula to our west.

### A polar blast

After our warmest, wettest winter ever, Nature brought on Spring with an ironic twist. By early October, Spring is usually well underway - tender new shoots are expanding, grass needs mowing, birds are nesting. Snow falling to sea level is not expected. The 5th of October, however, produced gale southerlies, straight off the Antarctic ice. Next day the accumulating snow pack was 15-20 cms deep around the Visitor Centre, drifting to at least 30 cms. Hugh's water supply froze for a day, for the first time in at least 20 years. It was the deepest snow by far since 2015, and the deepest October snow ever in our 35 years of weather observations.

By the 8th of October warmth had returned and the snow dwindled, although remnants persisted until



DAY 39 ON THE ARK

the 14th. On the afternoon of the 9th Hugh was cheerfully mowing grass that, only the day before, had been under a 10cm snow pack. Thomas Tomtit was back on the balustrade, supervising, looking none the worse for wear.

Plants suffered though. None looked worse than the fuchsia trees – all looked dead, their new foliage frizzled as if sprayed. One is tempted to ask Mother Nature if She knows what She's on about with kōtukutuku. What's the point of being deciduous if new season's leaves emerge so vulnerable to sudden Spring chills? Well, yeah no. ["Yeah no" is Kiwi English, but no-one seems to know what it actually means – Ed.]. We have seen this happen before. Despite a significant setback for new growth, shoots reappear. Later in summer the trees will look lush and leafy as if nothing unusual had happened.

Cold damage was obvious on many other species too – sevenfinger, poroporo, kawakawa, fivefinger, ongaonga, *Coprosma robusta* and *rotundifolia*, wineberry, māhoe, koromiko, native groundsels, developing flower stalks of *Phormium*, even young growth on cold-hardy horopito.

### A near miss or two

When Hinewai's City Agent (Hugh's sister Margaret)



picked up five boxes of Pīpīpi 55 from *printing.com* on Ferry Road she found, on arrival home in Bryndwr, only four boxes. Fortunately a young builder working on Manchester Street saw the c\*r boot spring open and the startled box bounce out on to the busy road. Daniel had the nous to find Hugh's landline number inside. Christchurch City is undoubtedly a perilous c\*r-infested Swamp, but also

12 evidently a friendly helpful one.

No-one noticed Hugh, though, when a fence trapped him, possum-like, between Kāpuka and Hinewai. He was on a mission to despatch a rogue pine and a mere sapling of a sycamore. Deferring to age, he decided not to risk the barbed top wire but instead to squeeze between two unbarbed lower ones. Stuck fast, he was thinking it a bit unfair that this taut, tough fence, impenetrable to all manner of large mammals, lay between Kāpuka and Hinewai where it was not needed, rather than along the fraught frontier at Ōnikautahi. Eventually, realising that no young Daniel was about to rescue him, he managed a reverse exit. The sycamore and the pine were sniggering, but not for long. Hugh tried again, this time feet first, made it through, slew the aliens, and shoved himself back through the wires.

### He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

We have new neighbours, west of Stony Bay Saddle. Rachel Howell and Sean Donaghue have bought the 47 hectare Kimberley / Delaney land, delighted that it has a long-covenanted centre-piece of beech forest.

### Cold comfort

One chilly winter day, Peter and Hugh chanced upon a pair of jewelled geckos, motionless on the ground, either too cold to get on with mating, or exhausted from having just done so.



Pīpipi appears twice each year. There is no sub and no obligation to donate, but donations of any size are hugely helpful and much appreciated. We will post a receipt but need your postal address if we don't already have it.

NAME  
ADDRESS

Direct credit BNZ  
02 0832 0044225 00

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HUGH'S PHONE (best evenings)  
03 304 8501

Pīpipi 56  
CC 11107