

Newsletter # 2 / July 2019

Pub Charity supports NB wetland planting!



1. **Wetland planting** is moving ahead with the support of a \$4,140 grant from Pub Charity for the purchase of wetland plants. Thanks to Dianne and Neil for their hard work in pushing this along and a **HUGE THANK YOU To Pub Charity** for providing the funds to help us get there!

2. **Predator trapping** has benefited with the addition of a new 1km line on the eastern side of the Link pathway, towards Picton. This brings trap numbers in the Bay up to 98! Since trapping started predator catch is now 141 for rats and 205 for mice.

The red GPS dots on the map show the locations of traps around the Bay area. Let Dianne know if you'd like to have traps on your property.

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3. **Our website is being updated.** The Association's website dates back to when it was formed and several items have changed or need updating. This will take place over time and the Committee welcomes any feedback and suggestions from our members.

4. **Minutes** of AGMs are now on the website. If you want to know more about what the Committee is discussing, just email Julian for a copy of Committee minutes.

5. **Marlborough Roads** has agreed with the plan to locate a bench viewing seat at the eastern lookout. Norm Gourdie has volunteered to build it.



6. **What do you think?** NBCA has been going for about a decade and we felt it was time to find out from members what they thought about the way it is run. A survey was conducted through Monkey Survey, an online surveying tool, and 27 members responded.

- About two thirds of respondents said reasons they were in the Ngakuta Bay is because it is a great get-away place, they like the environment, the Bay is peaceful and they like water activities.
- A half said they had good knowledge of the Association's aims and what the committee has been doing over the last couple of years.
- About a half said they could recognise most of the Committee members, a third said just few members and a fifth said none.
- A half of respondents say they learn about the Bay and the committee mainly through newsletters and emails.
- Two thirds of respondents get our newsletters, are satisfied with them and meet their interests. Almost all read them.
- A half say they are not interested in more organised activities, with a fifth expressing they would like more.

In general, the responses were positive, and indicated where changes could help – something we can work on. Thanks to members for taking time out to contribute.

7. **Working Bees** have kept volunteers really busy and made significant improvements in the Bay. A DOC worker with a digger cleaned the drain on western side of the trailer park and moved rocks back in place to strengthen the sea wall.

On June 8th volunteers repaired the sea walls near the jetty with concreting.

Weeding and plant pruning was done across the foreshore to enhance existing plantings, and remove gorse among other invasives.



Thanks to all volunteers for donating your time, enthusiasm and energy!

8. **Swimming Platform's** biannual service (mooring number 1099) has recently been completed by Marine Services NZ Ltd.

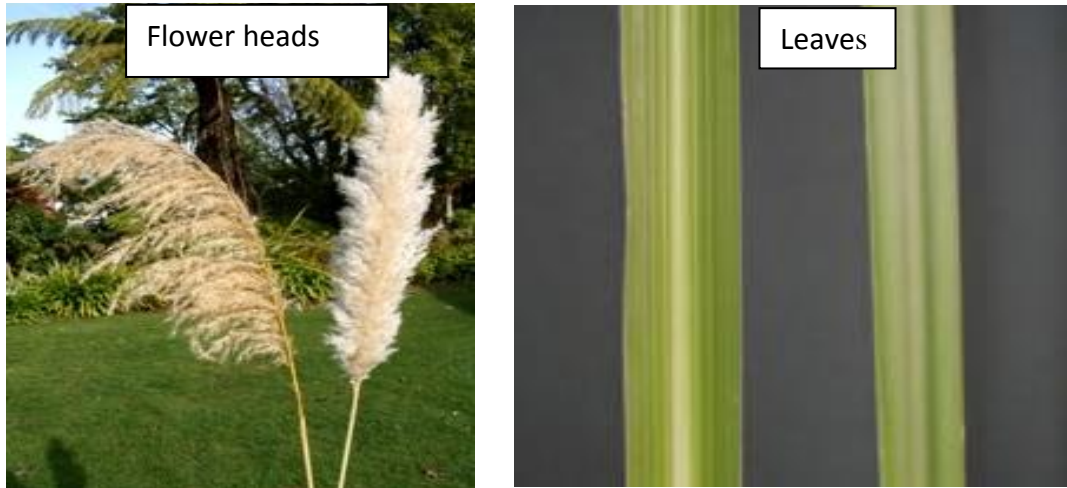
This year the ground chain and a number of shackles were replaced which doubled the cost (approx. \$1,000) but we can be assured that the mooring is in good condition. An additional ongoing cost is the Annual Compliance Monitoring fee to the Marlborough District Council. (\$40)

The swimming platform attached to the mooring, and enjoyed by swimmers of all ages, will be taken out and serviced before the summer

9. **Toetoe or Pampas grass?** (Pictures below will help identification)

One is a native species; the other an invasive plant pest.

One has white-creamy, drooping flowers (L); the other has erect, pink-ish flowers (R). One has leaves with distinct veins (L); the other has only a prominent main-rib (R). When tugged, one has leaves that resist breaking (L); the other has leaves that break (R).



In these pictures the native, droopy toetoe is on the Left. The invasive, exotic pampas grass is on the Right. Colour and droopy-ness can overlap but the resistance of leaves to breaking does not.

Pampas grass is a pest because it tolerates heat and frost, salt, wind, wet and drought, moderate-shade, most soils - and what's more seeds are windborne, it recovers quickly after a burn off. So native species don't get a look in!

MDC is concerned about the spread of pampas grass in the Sounds and would like to see more control/eradication before it gets impossible to manage.

Control methods

Physical control: Dig or grub out seedlings or small plants. Chainsaw small plants and remove sizeable plants by bulldozer. Compost or leave on site to rot down.

Burn or bury any flowerheads

Spray: Gallant (150ml/10l + crop oil) for most sites or glyphosate (100ml/10L + penetrant) for very dense sites. Use a marker dye to avoid wastage and a foaming agent to help prevent spray drift. Leave the plants in the ground until the roots have died off.

weedbusters.org.nz/weed-information/weed-list/pampas/

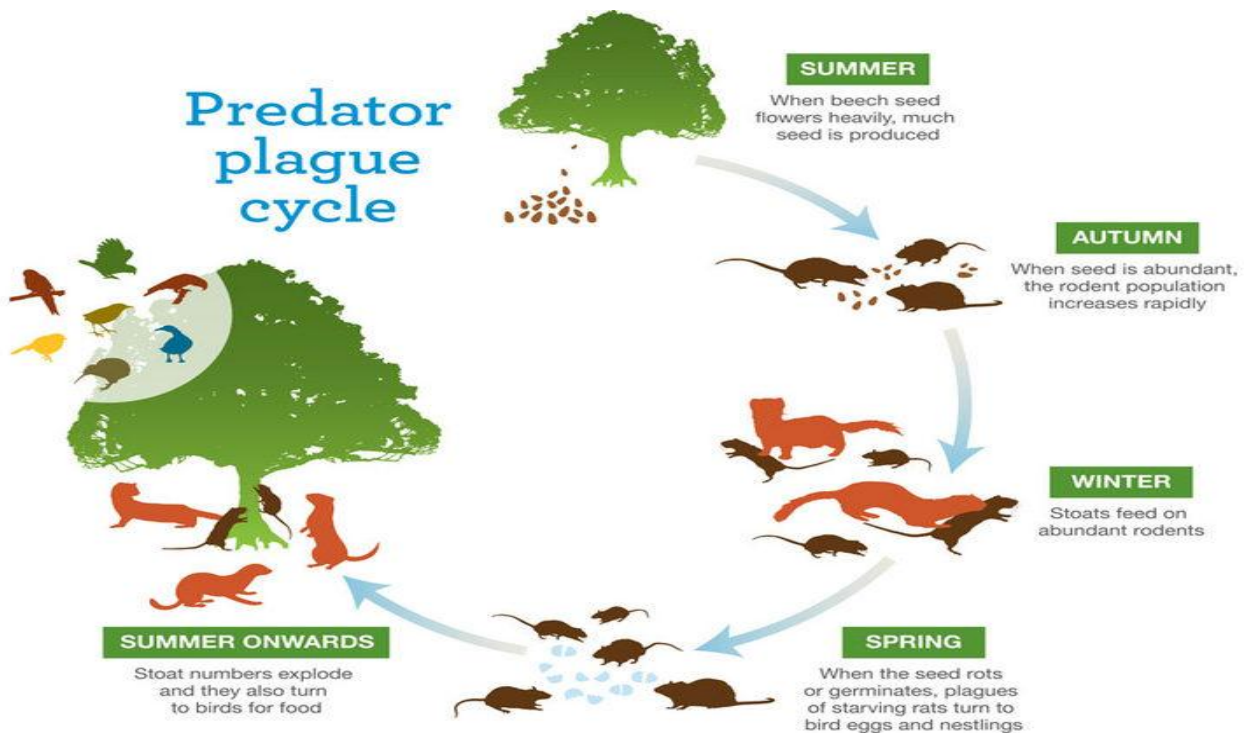
10. **Beech Mast Year** is an event when native plants, like beech, produce an abundance of seed, setting off a chain of events that lead to more predators and decline in threatened species. DOC says this is the biggest beech mast for more than 40 years with exceptionally heavy seed loads in South Island forests.

While the heavy seed drop does fuel the growth of birds, it also increases rodent numbers, which provide prey for mustelids (ferrets, stoats and weasels). Next spring and summer we can expect high predator numbers, and when seed supply drops off to normal levels, predators turn to birds!

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/383718/all-signs-pointing-to-predicted-mega-mast-which-will-fuel-predator-numbers>

We can't do anything about the beech mast, but we can help birds by supporting DOC and local groups' predator control programmes. Back-yard trapping also helps.

Mast events are not all bad, they provide food for insects, lizards and birds and boosts breeding for forest birds. It's only when we get the addition of exotic predators to the mix that mast seeding becomes a problem.





11. **Our Community Agreement** with DOC has been formally signed and now in place. There is an option in this Agreement for us to negotiate minor changes to the terms if we think it is needed.

Andrew

Newsletter scribe

BTW - we are always looking for pictures for the newsletter.

Ngakuta Bay Community Association

Julian Hawken, Chairperson – Email: tim4him@securenym.net
2303 Queen Charlotte Drive, Ngakuta Bay RD 1, Picton, 7281. Tel (03) 5739270