



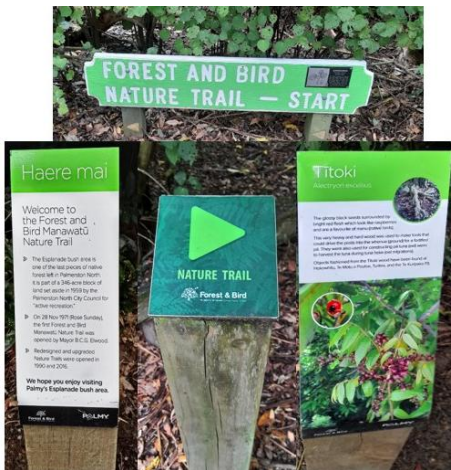
## APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

### Contents:

- Message from Chair
- April Monthly Meeting and AGM
- April 2025 Trip
- Nature Trail sign
- Hedgehogs
- NZ 2025 Fish of the Year
- May Monthly Meeting

### Message from F&B Manawatū Chair

Great news to report this month.



Back in 1971 a Forest and Bird Nature Trail was established in the bush reserve area of the Palmerston North Esplanade. The old signage became damaged and outdated.

So the good news is that PNCC has recently upgraded the F&B Nature Trail with a nicely painted new sign at the beginning of the trail (near the carpark close to Wildbase) and installed 19 new signs giving information about the native trees and shrubs. The trail is clearly marked with new direction posts.

The Nature Trail is an easy walk and wheel and pushchair friendly.

That's all for this month

*Margaret*  
Chairperson

### “NEW LOCATION AT THE LIBRARY FOR OUR MONTHLY TALKS”

From this month's monthly talk, our meeting room location has changed at the Library - we are still holding our monthly meetings at the PN Central Library, but..... we will be on the [Mezzanine Floor just inside the main entrance](#). You will not longer be able to access the Library from the George Street entrance.

## APRIL 2025 MONTHLY MEETING AND AGM

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April @ 7.30 p.m.

PN Central Library, Mezzanine Floor (Main entrance)\*\*Note new location\*\*

**The Manawātū Branch AGM will start at 7.15 p.m.**

followed by the Monthly Talk

(The talk only will be streamed via zoom – see the link below)

**Talk:** Mokomoko Dryland Sanctuary and the lizards of Central Otago

**Speakers:** Anna Yeoman, Ranger at Mokomoko Dryland Sanctuary and author



Photos: provided by Anna Yeoman



Otago Skink

The native drylands of Central Otago are home to a rich diversity of geckos and skinks, many found nowhere else on the planet. Sun-basking on the schist rock outcrops, and foraging in the fruiting native shrubs, these species were a huge part of the native fauna. However, due to habitat loss and predation by introduced mammals, they're now increasingly endangered. Mokomoko Dryland Sanctuary, a community-run sanctuary near Alexandra, is focused on restoring the ecosystem and reintroducing lizard species. Seven years into operation, they're beginning to have some success.

**Zoom Link:** <https://forestandbird-org-nz.zoom.us/j/82250818112?pwd=NiG86DP9ldZElyW60i2IHMiEXe2rfD.1>

All welcome. Gold coin donation appreciate

## F&B MANAWATŪ APRIL 2025 TRIP

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2025



Ngāwakahiamoe Bush Trust given permission for  
F&B Manawatū to use these photos

Ngāwakahiamoe Bush lies on sand dune and swamp land between Levin and Foxton.

It is of rare size as a viable remnant of 'critically threatened' Kahikatea-Pukatea lowland forest ecosystem (WF8). It is recognised as a 'high priority site' by Horizons Regional Council. Ngāwakahiamoe has many trees that are hundreds of years old, and is thought to have the best Pukatea stand In Horizons Regional Council area.

The dunes had some mature Matai, Rewarewa, Kanuka, and Rimu, but were extensively felled a century ago. The Trust is now restoring the Totara and other species, with plants grown mostly by Forest & Bird Horowhenua. Re-establishing bush on dunes is hard work.

**DEPT. TIME: 0900 a.m sharp**

**MEET & CAR POOLING** from-

**Palmerston North** Opposite Salvation Army shop, Church St. Palmerston North

**Feilding:** Railway Station carpark

**WHAT TO BRING:** strong walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, walking stick (if you use one), water, lunch, and do not forget your camera. Suggest gumboots or gaiters – you will be walking through some long grass, which can be wet, so another option is leggings.)

**Required fitness level:** Ngawakahiamoe's "tracks" are not DOC standard, and are full of tree roots and the occasional vine to trip over. There are a couple of small climbs up grassy embankments, otherwise it's fairly flat.

**A koha** towards upkeep of the bush would be gratefully received (suggest \$5 or \$10).

**TO REGISTER FOR TRIP** – please contact:

Rosemary: 021 147 6731 or [cullenrjr@gmail.com](mailto:cullenrjr@gmail.com)

## NATURE TRAIL SIGN IN THE PN CITY ESPLANADE

# Kawakawa

(*Piper excelsum*)

A common shrub in the bush and unpalatable to most grazers, Kawakawa is tasty fare for two species of small looper caterpillars responsible for the holes in the leaves.

**Tap the stems and you might see the caterpillars dangle by a thread.**

The image is a composite graphic for a nature trail sign. It features a green header with the title 'Kawakawa' and its scientific name '(Piper excelsum)'. Below the header, there is a circular inset showing two orange caterpillars on a green leaf. To the right is a large photograph of a Kawakawa leaf with numerous holes eaten into it. Below the circular inset is another circular inset showing a green caterpillar hanging from a stem by a single thread. The main text describes the plant's characteristics and the caterpillars that eat it.

### Underrated Predator: 5 surprising facts about hedgehogs

(Taken from an article in PredatorfreeNZ by Ruby Fenwick, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2025)



Hedgehog in the forest at night.  
Image credit: Paul Williams



Hedgehog eating an egg.  
Image credit: Experience Pūrangi

Hedgehogs were first introduced in New Zealand in the 1870s to make British settlers feel more at home. Now, 150 years later, the impact hedgehogs have on our native species has earned them the title of “the most underrated predator”.

**1. The hedgehog population in New Zealand** is more numerous than in their native homeland, the United Kingdom

**2. Hedgehogs are mountain climbers**

A hedgehog was spotted nearly 2,000 metres up a mountain in the Mackenzie Basin during summer, to researchers' surprise.

**3. One hedgehog was found with 283 wētā legs in its stomach**

**4. Hedgehogs eat more than just slugs and snails**

They eat a varied diet of meat that can include lizards, skinks, mice, bird eggs and chicks.

**5. Hedgehogs prey on birds and eggs**

Hedgehogs are a major threat to river birds, particularly breeding ones like banded dotterel, black-fronted terns and pied oystercatchers. They eat their eggs and kill the chicks

For more information click on the link

[https://predatorfreenz.org/research/predators/5-surprising-facts-about-hedgehogs/?utm\\_medium=paid&utm\\_source=fb&utm\\_id=120219276521920481&utm\\_content=120219276522120481&utm\\_term=120219276522060481&utm\\_campaign=120219276521920481&fbclid=IwY2xjawJSnLlleHRuA2FlbQEwAGFkaWQBqxrLiJfCgQEdb\\_iJTIND8vzm7RB424il-DjRCoap\\_H8BTMWRuuQz66wafzLvTt3y\\_Pn\\_aem\\_xICw49DjwUzMhe-Qf88dQ](https://predatorfreenz.org/research/predators/5-surprising-facts-about-hedgehogs/?utm_medium=paid&utm_source=fb&utm_id=120219276521920481&utm_content=120219276522120481&utm_term=120219276522060481&utm_campaign=120219276521920481&fbclid=IwY2xjawJSnLlleHRuA2FlbQEwAGFkaWQBqxrLiJfCgQEdb_iJTIND8vzm7RB424il-DjRCoap_H8BTMWRuuQz66wafzLvTt3y_Pn_aem_xICw49DjwUzMhe-Qf88dQ)

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## NZ 2025 Fish of the Year



📷 When pulled out of the water, sudden decompression causes the blobfish (right) to become misshapen (left). Composite: Kerryn Parkinson / NOAA/MBARI, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

It was once crowned the [“world’s ugliest animal”](#) and now the disgruntled-looking gelatinous blobfish has a new gong to its name: New Zealand’s fish of the year.

The winning species of blobfish, *Psychrolutes microporosus*, lives in the highly pressurised depths off the coasts of New Zealand and Australia and has developed a unique anatomy to exist. Blobfish do not have a swim

bladder, a full skeleton, muscles or scales. Instead, their bodies are made up of blobby tissue with a lower density than water that allows them to float above the seafloor.

The species is believed to be able to live to 130 years old, is slow growing and slow moving, says Konrad Kurta, a spokesperson from the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust that runs the annual competition.

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## MAY 2025 MONTHLY MEETING

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May @ 7.30 p.m.**

**PN Central Library, Mezzanine Floor (Main entrance) \*\*Note new location\*\***

(The talk only will be streamed via zoom)

**Talk:** The ecology of Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatu-Tararua Highway

**Speakers:** **Caitlin Lavery** | Site Ecologist, Te Ahu a Turanga Alliance



Images taken from the March 2024 drone flyover of the Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatu Tararua Highway..  
Video taken by Construction Manager Mike Cassaidy and link is: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/te-ahu-a-turanga/>

The Te Ahu a Turanga project stretches 11.5 km between Ashhurst and Woodville and after 5 years of dedicated work the road is soon to be open.

Alongside the impressive new infrastructure is a plethora of positive ecological outcomes including; planting over 1 million native plants, protection of QEII forests, avoidance and monitoring of At-Risk species, creation of offset sites, bush retirement, years of pest control to protect native species and the protection of waterways across the project scope. Due to the support and dedication of project iwi partners, construction and environmental teams, Te Ahu a Turanga has been able to leave the environment of the project in a better state than what is was found in and create positive ecological benefits for years to come.

This talk explains how vulnerable environments and species were protected over the years of the project and what this means for the area going forward.

All welcome. Gold coin donation appreciated

## THE WONDERS OF NATURE



That is all for this month. Hope to see you at our meeting in April 3, 2025

Best wishes

*Anthea*

Anthea McClelland

Editor

**F&B Manawatū Branch**

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