



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter February 2023



Kaiparoro Trig up in the cloud but no rain, Tararua Forest Park. Pic by Warren Wheeler

Club Nights

Club nights are generally held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. All welcome.

9 February 2023

Rakiura Adventures

Chris Tuffley

Chris will tell us about a trip last year to the southern part of Rakiura/Stewart Island including crossing the Tin Range and completing the Southern Circuit. Expect tall tales and amazing images.

23 February 2023

Navigation Know How

Warren Wheeler

Come along for a practical and fun session on how to use a map and compass to navigate in the outdoors. We will also be discussing the use of map apps that are now available for cell phones and other devices.

Upcoming Trips

4-6 February 2023 Tauherenikau Valley E/M Ernie Cook 027 303 1363

Waitangi Weekend trip. Travel to Kaitoke Road End. Tramp along Marchant Ridge and down Block XV1 Track to camp near Tutuwai Hut. Next day a day trip up Omega Track to bag Omega (1118). Good opportunity to score the vowel 'O". If really keen people could continue along Marchant Ridge, descend Bull Mound, visit Cone Hut and return to campsite. Next day travel down Tauherenikau valley, over Puffer Saddle and return to Road End.

5 February 2023 Beginner Tramp #1 Easy Anne Lawrence 06 357 1695

This is the first of our Beginner series. From Holdsworth Road-end we follow the track to Atiwhakatu Hut for lunch. The track is fairly straightforward but has plenty of variety with some interesting bridges to cross. We'll leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am.

11-12 February 2023 TBA Leader Required

If anyone can lead a trip this weekend please call Warren 356 1998.

12 February 2023 Iron Gates Gorge E/M Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

A classic fun summer trip in the western Ruahines down the Oroua River to the Iron Gates Gorge. We will first follow the sidle track upriver from Pederson Roadend Carpark, passing Alice Nash Memorial Hut along the way. After a couple of hours we meet the Oroua River for a swim and then criss-cross our way downstream to the Gorge. Fairly easy travel with some scrambling and a few pools as well. Depart Milverton Park 7.45am.

18-19 February 2023 Cattle Ridge- Cow Creek M/F Roy Rolston 027 476 7188

Enjoy the long summer days on this trip up to the tussock tops of the Tararuas via Roaring Stag Hut and out via Cow Creek Hut. Give Roy a call to find out more.

BWD 18/19 February 2023 Stanfield Hut E Woody Lee 0210 444 552

An easy tramp to the eastern side of the Ruahines. We will start from Tamaki West Rd and follow the Holmes Ridge track and an unmarked riverbed route to the hut. After lunch we return the same way. We will leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am. *Note – this trip is on Best Weather Day.*

24-26 February 2023 Upper Makaroro Hut M/F Ernie Cook 027 303 1363

Something for everyone. There are several routes we can use to reach Upper Makaroro Hut. I am intending to leave on the Thursday afternoon and camp overnight at Masters Shelter. From there which route/routes undertaken will be determined by the interest and fitness levels of the team. There will be traps to service along the way. Friday night at Upper Makaroro Hut. Saturday a day trip to Kylie's Biv via Totara Spur and more traps. Sunday return to Sentry Box Hut road end via Parks Peak Hut. Six huts and Pohatuhaha and Rocky Knoll high points.

26 February 2023 Ruapae Falls M Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

A bit of a summer offtrack adventure in the eastern Tararuas behind Eketahuna. From Putara Roadend we start by following the track upriver and veer off at the second swing bridge to climb up to an old ridge track that leads us along then down to the upper Mangatainoka River. We will carry on upriver to the falls, which is marked on topo maps. Expect slippery boulders, deep pools and beautiful rest stops. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

2-5 March 2023 Maungahuka Hut Extended Trip M/F Janet Wilson 06 329 4722

A great multi-day Tararua loop from Holdsworth Roadend with lots of huts and high points to bag

for the club scrabble challenge. Planned route is via Mt Holdsworth, Mid-Waihone Hut, Maungahuka Hut, Neill Forks, Totara Flats and back to Holdsworth.

5 March 2023 Beginners Tramp #2 E Anne Lawrence 06 357 1695

For our second Beginner Tramp we are going to Sunrise Hut in the Eastern Ruahines. It is approx 2 hours drive from PN. From the carpark we follow a relatively straightforward track (ie easy to follow and a good surface). It involves a fairly steady climb all the way to Sunrise Hut. The hut is a comfortable spot with great views (assuming good weather of course!) - a good place to have lunch. For those of us who are feeling keen and energetic, there is the option of carrying on from the hut, following a ridge for 15-20 minutes to Armstrong Saddle. This option is very weather-dependent as the ridge is quite exposed. We'll all return down the same track to the carpark.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs	Other Grades:
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs	Family (Fam)
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs	Technical skills (T)
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs	Inst (Instruction)

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips usually leave from Milverton Park. A charge for transport will be collected on the day.

Gear for trips

Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, over-trousers, gloves, warm hat, torch, toilet paper, matches or a lighter, sunblock, first aid kit, and a survival bag or space blanket. Each person needs to be equipped to survive overnight.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone Martin Lawrence 357 1695 or Graeme Richards 021 149 8267.

New Members

Welcome to Heather Knox (and family) and Adam Matich.

Heather is world famous for starting Palmy Rocks on Facebook to encourage children to play outside and explore the outdoors.

Adam has been a keen local trumper with MTSC and now looks forward to some challenging trips with us.

Notices

Change of Club Gear Custodian

Anne and Martin Lawrence have taken over as the Club Gear Custodians now that Warren Wheeler has inconveniently moved out of town into the Pohangina Valley. If you need to hire any gear please phone them on 06 357 1695.

Trip Reports

28-30 December 2022

Pourangaki Hut Circuit (The Pegs)

Reports by Various

Trip members: Janet Wilson (Leader), Blair Peterson, Monika Coles, Brendan Corner, Roy Rolston, Kirsten Olsen, Stephen Legg.

28 December 2022

Day One to Pourangaki Hut

by Janet Wilson

The idea for this trip came about early last year when Monika was looking for trips to do over the summer. PNTMC hasn't been offering summer holiday trips recently and it seemed like a good idea to see if there was enough interest. Turned out there was plenty.

I was feeling that revisits to Pourangaki, Kelly Knight and possibly Purity Hut were well overdue - access issues had made these huts harder to reach in recent years. We would have to take a longer and harder route but there are plenty of hours in long summer days to accomplish this. The weather played its usual games and I moved the planned start day forward to the 28th Jan to take advantage of what appeared to be a very good 3-day weather window.

To go via Range Hut or not was the question - it was fully booked on the night of the 27th so I ditched that plan and we started from the more northern Mania Track earlyish (8am) on the 28th. After an easy start over the farm land, we were soon climbing steadily. There were a couple of hunters camps in the bush to check out on the way up - maybe an early starting position another time. It was a bit of a plod in warm conditions. Once out of the bush I was pleased to find a reasonable ground trail leading through the tussock - mostly easy enough to follow.

I like to tramp to "office hours" so there was a morning tea break around 10 and we stopped for lunch before the top around 12pm. We seemed to be travelling rather slowly and once at the top we had a team discussion - would we go to Plan B - a visit to the much closer Triangle Hut. It was Monika pointing out that we had plenty of daylight hours to use that got the team heading north.

The travel is faster up there and most of us were soon standing on our 1st scabble points - Maungamahue high pt. Continuing on, we passed the turn off to the Te Hekenga crossing - which certainly looked tempting to me on this windless day. We enjoyed great views while walking to the sign posted turnoff to Pourangaki Hut where we had an afternoon tea break. I pointed out the route for the next day on to the "Hawkes Bay Range" and around to Iron Peg etc I think there was some disbelief amongst the team. The descent is rather overgrown until you reach the tree line - I remember it as being a well-cut wide swathe but that was some years ago now. Once back in the bush the track is in good condition - we arrived at Pourangaki Hut around 5pm to find it tidy and empty. We were soon joined by Jeff from Napier - a rather tired lone 73 year old tramper. We were all soon revived with cups of tea or soup and a swim/wash in the river.



Stephen, Blaire, Kirsten and Monika posing for Janet (the photographer) on Maungamahue.

It was special to hear a robin repeatedly calling near the hut - there were quite a few other small birds around.

Thanks to Kirsten/Stephen for trip stats (see below) - I can't believe we spent so long not moving! Thanks to Blair for carrying the communal fly on days 2 and 3 - I was certainly pleased to lose the weight from my pack.

Stats for the day: Distance - 14.3 km; Ascent - 1074 m; Descent: 1162 m; Time from carpark to Pourangaki hut - 8 hours 19 minutes; Moving time - 4 hours 49 minutes. Bird species observed: 24.

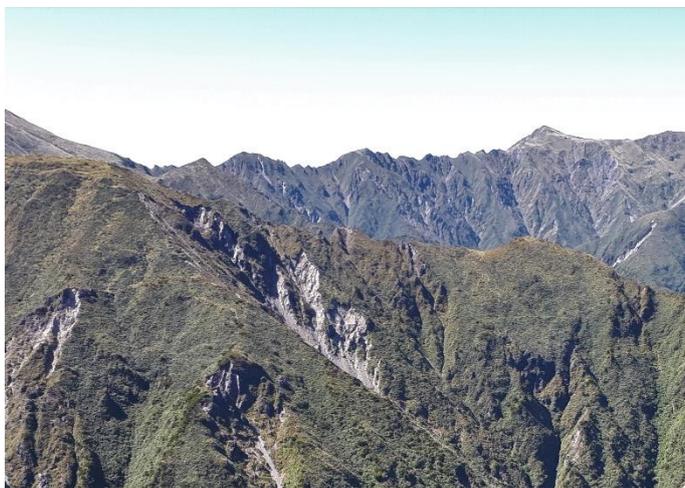
29 December 2022 Day Two over the Pegs to Kelly Knights Hut by Kirsten Olsen

Before we left Pourangaki Hut we saw a North Island Robin sitting in the top of a dead tree behind the hut. That was really one of the bird high points from the tramp. We had heard it the night before but were not fully certain that it was a Robin. Very cool to get it confirmed.

We left Pourangaki hut before 8am. There is a short ascent to the track that then descended to the swing-bridge over the beautiful Pourangaki River. It looked quite gorgy downstream and I imagined how it could rise quite fast and be dangerous after heavy rain. Then there was a very steep ascent of the first 250 (vertical) meters. Then it becomes less steep but still quite steep. We were all soaked with sweat when we reached the bush line. It was particularly humid at the beginning of the ascent. We stopped frequently on the way up to keep the group together. That gave time to listen for the birds. We heard 2 Robins singing at the beginning of the ascent.

We had a really good view of the ranges when we came above the bush line in particular Sawtooth. We passed a big slip to the north west and were at a point where we had to turn north on the Hikurangi Range.

The ranges became more ridgy but it was generally not too difficult to walk along. There



Sawtooth Ridge seen from the track. (Photo by Kirsten)



Looking back at the gap where we had to cross the slip. (Photo by Kirsten)

were a few places where it was a bit tricky. At one point we came to a gap in the ridge with two steep rocks on both sides. It was just before we could see Waterfall Hut. Here we had to carefully scramble down the side of a slip to the west to find the best place to cross it.

It was a bit difficult to get foothold here and a few of us had some difficulty getting across, which took a bit of time. We all managed to get across “with a little help from our friends” 😊. At this point it had also become a bit windy so we continued until we found a place with shelter from the wind where we could relax and eat our well-earned lunches.

After lunch we continued to Iron Peg and claimed “I” for the club scrabble challenge. Here we had a deliberation on whether we should climb Mangaweka the highest peak in the Ruahines.

A few of us had not felt fully energetic during the day, so it was time to consider whether we all could manage an extra hour walking.



Posing for Janet (the photographer) on the top of Mangaweka.

We all decided to make a push for the top without our packs and managed to get there in less than half an hour. We happily claimed our “M” for the scrabble challenge. We were back at Iron Peg a quarter past 3pm and still had a long day in front of us. We walked to Wooden Peg, claimed our “W” and began our dreadful decent through ‘holey’ giant tussocks. It was very slow and difficult to see the waratahs that should lead us to the bush line.

I think most of us fell in one or two holes on the way down. On the tops we mainly heard Skylarks. We gathered at the beginning of the taller trees where there was some shade and had our late afternoon tea.



Descent through the holey tussock. (Photo by Stephen)

The bush was so beautiful and the track was very easy to walk on, thus we quickly descended to the turn to Kelly Knight Hut. The last bit was very steep and slow to descend. We finally arrived at Kelly Knight Hut at 7pm and claimed our “K”. It was a nice surprise to hear Karearea/New Zealand Falcon at the hut. Most of us went straight down to the river to wash of dirt and salt and then begin cooking. There is a small stream close to the hut where we could get water (nice not to have to go all the way to the Pourangaki River to get water).

We slept very well that night, although it took a while for some of us to fall asleep because of aches in our legs.

Stats for the day: Distance - 15.4 km; Ascent - 1380 m; Descent- 1530 m; Time from Pourangaki hut to Kelly Knight hut - 11 hours 38 minutes; Moving time 4 hours 56 minutes. Bird species observed: 18.

30 December 2023

Day Three back over the tops

by Stephen Legg

What a special day! A happy day!

I arose with a fresh dip in the river. Others did not – no never. After picture posing and some re-posing, we started ascending. Some tired legs needed a nudge as we climbed. Some poles were shared. For each other we cared. We soon passed Pourangaki for our ‘P’ points. Yes, more points, that’s what we wants! Blisters were afoot. Some stopped to look. Plaster applied, onward we plied, with sweaty mops, ever upward on the tops. Some with sunburn were ailed. As before, bright sunshine prevailed. We re-joined our upward route at highpoint 1614 (one six one four), quite tired to the core. But more was in store. Onward and upward to pass Maungamahue once more. Mir ‘M’ points, Mmmmm, mir Mmmmm, but no coffee, only water or electrolytes for tramping acolytes.

But now it was slowly down, down, down from the tops all abrown towards the forest all agreeen. We were taxed negotiating some tricky descending. Careful hilltop navigating amongst the tussocks took us along the right ridge, or was it the left edge?

After some distance, not that far, at afternoon tea we shared a special chocolate bar. Not at all like a cake, but our hunger it did sate. Number of pieces there were eight. Since there were seven in our party, I was allowed the extra piece which, with alacrity, I ate.

With weary legs and sore feet we plodded on for what seemed like weeks. Surely the end was coming nearer? By now, I was merely following the leader. Blue sky, skylark and pipit gave way to forest dark, tui and tomtit. The long descent, by general assent, was characterised by soft beech forest. At last.

Many of us were low on water, despite starting with two and a half litres. We had a short break at a flat campsite. Then, at a second such site, our venerable leader reasoned there must be water nearby, so - just on the fly - searched and found a spring close by. Bottles were swilled and bellies were filled for the final push through the verdant bush to the carpark. What a lark!

It was a special day. It was my birthday.

Stats for the day: Distance - 15.9 km; Ascent - 1690 m; Descent - 1670 m; Time from Kelly Knight hut to carpark - 10 hours 20 minutes; Moving time - 5 hours 20 minutes. Bird species observed: 18.

15 January 2023

Sunrise Hut Plus

Report by Duncan Hedderley

Palmerston North had good weather over Christmas, but Hawkes Bay got steady rain, and we could see the results on the country road into Sunrise; flood debris caught in fence wires, and the remains of a slip across the road.

Sunrise gets a lot of visitors (you are advised to book a bunk), and the carpark was almost full when we got there.

We stopped at Triplex (or Triple-X?) Hut on the way up, so that Michelle could bag letters for the Hut Scrabble competition.

The weather was overcast but still, which made for a pleasant walk. At the junction where the Waipawa Forks track splits off, Martha decided she couldn't go further, so Martin stayed with her and they went back to the cars.

The rest of us pushed on to the hut and lunch. It was in the bottom of the cloud when we got there, but by the end of lunch it was sunny, so we went on to Armstrong Saddle. Neil and Adam talked about the route around the saddle and dropping down a gravel slope into the Waipawa valley. Adam and Anne restacked some of the stones in the cairn at the Saddle.



View from Armstrong Saddle north-west to Mt Ruapehu

Heading down, we passed a group Heather knew, mums and children going for an overnight trip. Neil spotted a sorry coloured, robin sized bird.

The Ongaonga shop was shut when we got there (just before 4), so we stopped at the Four Square in Dannevirke for ice cream.

We were Anne and Martin, Michelle and Neil, Adam, Heather (the Palmy Rocks lady), Martha, and Duncan.

20-24 January 2023

Te Potae Trapping Extended

Report by Various

Introduction by Janet Wilson

The Te Potae O Awarua project in the North Western Ruahines has been trapping predators to protect the Whio population since 2007. It provides an opportunity for volunteers to get flown in to this lovely area while doing some worthwhile conservation work.

For the January trip this year 10 volunteers took part with 7 of them being club members – Chris, Ernie , Kirsten. Stephen, Roy, Graham and Janet. Here is a trip report from a couple of the team members.

#1 Te Potae Trapping Maroepa Forks to Colenso

Report by Ernie Cook

Team Janet Wilson and Ernie Cook, plus meet up with Roy and Ian

Friday 20 January

Text from Janet "Confirmed..we are flying tomorrow." That's good as I am on my way and nearing Woodville. At Pohangina the perishable and non perishable cargoes are loaded into Graham's vehicle and trailer respectively. We travel the Vinegar Hill route to Mangaweka and check into the camp-site at Awastone. After pitching our tents on the lower level we stroll back up to the cafe for a very enjoyable evening meal sitting at an outside table. After a chocolate biscuit supper we retire to our tents.

Saturday 21 January

Up at 5 a.m. and on the road shortly after 6 a.m. we travel to our helicopter rendezvous at the Mokai Road end where we are soon joined by the early risers from Palmerston North. Another member of the team soon arrives after re-locating from the newly opened car park at the beginning of the route across Mokai station. Another vehicle pulls in alongside. A hunter hoping to get flown to McKinnon Hut. Frustratingly there is low cloud blanketing the hill tops causing what we hope will be a temporary delay. The cloud comes and goes-looking promising one moment then not so good the next.

Mid morning it is proposed that because we are here, even though we may not be able to go there, we should go some-where but not just any-where. The helicopter is duly summoned and the first team members dispatched. This "scouting" mission shows us that it is possible to access our intended landing zones.

Four flights safely dispatch team members to their preferred locations and despite the delayed start we are hopeful of completing the days work. Soon after it clouds in again and the hunter will not reach his

destination. Janet (drawn the short straw again!) and Ernie are deposited at an empty Maroepa Forks Hut and after a hot drink set off to check the thirty traps up one branch of the Maroepa River at about 1 p.m.



Working together, Ernie had not previously checked double traps, we made our way up river. A nice wide river bed with a lot of trees littering the bed. One trap in particular was partly filled with silt and beneath it all-a very decomposed rat! Returning to the hut at about 5 p.m. we discover

an adventure runner in residence. We set off up the other branch and in order to be more efficient Janet races up to the last trap whilst Ernie works his way up towards her.



We are back at the hut at about 7 p.m. and Ernie cooks dinner. Conversing with our fellow hut occupant a series of commonalities are soon established. He had once lived in Oamaru, (Ernie's home town.) Ernie's daughter had been good friends with his ex wife whilst in the Air Force at Ohakea. Janet and the runner struck common ground around engineering and motor bike racing. Also common acquaintances in the Kimbolton area.

Sunday 22 January

Today we have about 120 traps in front of us. Luckily Ernie realises that that will not see us arrive at Colenso Hut and that he must keep another hours walking in mind. Leap frogging traps as we go we ascend Puketaramea hill where we have morning tea.

A short diversion allows us to enjoy grand views from the high point and we discover that Roy has rebaited the half a dozen or so traps down to the track junction. We traverse a nice long ridge sometimes overgrown with fern and descend to Unknown Campsite for lunch. A conversation with a tramper ex Iron Bark Hut confirms that Roy arrived there and that Ian did indeed get flown there the previous day.

A short section of river travel ensues with the traps sometimes difficult to locate and a scramble required to reach them. Soon we leave the river bed and clamber up onto a bit of a terrace. This trapline is unfamiliar to Janet and certainly very new to Ernie though he has previously traversed these paths with Warren.

Another climb and we are rewarded with nice views over Lake Colenso as we descend steeply to the track junction with the Iron Bark to Colenso Hut route. Trap work completed for the day we trudge the last bit to Colenso Hut where Kirsten, Stephen and Graham are in residence. Graham soon has some welcome hot water ready. We walk the short distance to have a close up view of Lake Colenso.

Monday 23 January

Today I join with Ian and Roy to work back towards Iron Bark Hut replacing rusted trap mechanisms as we go. Kirsten and Stephen check traps around Lake Colenso and Janet and Graham do like-wise up river from

the hut. At the large slip Ian and I watch as Roy literally hammers a series of secure foot holds directly across the long term slip. A conversation with Doc representatives flying in the next day informs us that they are planning to secure a safe permanent path over the slip.

We soon reach our turn around point and begin working our way back removing the old mechanisms, cleaning the traps and installing and checking that the new mechanisms are working. We lunch near the bottom of the hill and continue on back towards Colenso Hut.

Nearing the hut we meet the other team members working towards us having kindly replaced a couple of mechanisms for us and rebaited the traps. Back at the hut mid afternoon we are on leisure time having completed some very worthwhile tasks.

I enjoy a can of Ginger beer generously provided by Janet and Graham and chilled as per my instructions by Kirsten.

Tuesday 24 January

A Squirrel helicopter came and returned us to the road end from where we travelled home with a pleasant lunch stop in Hunterville.

Thanks Janet for the opportunity to visit this lovely neck of the Northern Ruahines and for the pleasant company enjoyed.



**#2 Te Potae Trapping Ohutu Ridge - Ruahine Forks – Colenso
Team Graham Peters, Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen**

Report by Kirsten Olsen

It is a fantastic opportunity to be able to volunteer to rebait and clear traps on this club trip. We are so lucky to be flown in to and out of the hills by helicopter. Stephen and I drove with Janet, Graham and Ernie to Mangaweka Campsite on Friday night to be a bit closer to our helicopter pickup at Mokai on Saturday morning. Pickup was scheduled at 7:30am. Unfortunately, the clouds were hanging low over the hills so we were delayed for at least three hours.

We were divided into teams. I was in Team 2 with Stephen and Graham. We were flown in to Ohutu Ridge where we landed at 11:50am. We were dropped on the ridge and had no trouble finding the track. Graham went north along the ridge. Stephen and I turned right and down from the ridge towards Waiokotore Stream. Most of the traps were easy to find and we progressed well. We counted the birds we heard and saw, and entered them into the New Zealand Bird Atlas as we went along.

There is a “ladder” just before the stream, which I would call a ‘stair case’. It was very easy to climb down. From the “ladder” we walked below a cliff face on our right, whilst on our left we saw bits of Waiokotore Stream. The most exciting was a quite wide waterfall. We had lunch at Waiokotore biv (which does not exist anymore) around 2pm. We decided to take off our boots before crossing the stream so we did not have to walk up the steep and long hill to Te Potae ridge with wet (and heavy) boots. We enjoyed sitting by the stream eating our lunches and drinking from the stream.

The first part of the climb from Waiokotore Stream is quite steep and a bit muddy. It is then nice that you can have a little break every 100 to 200 m when you rebait the traps. Stephen and I took turns rebaiting. We were pretty tired when we reach Te Potae ridge and sat down for a snack. DOC were going to replace all the traps on Te Potae ridge the following week so we only had to empty and reset the traps with catches, which made it a bit faster to reach Ruahine Corner Hut.

Further along the ridge we sat down to have an apple. At this point five rifleman gave us company. They fluttered around in the canopy - very nice. There were lots of whiteheads and long-tailed cuckoos along the ridge. Very nice to hear so many birds.

We arrived at Ruahine Corner Hut 7:20 pm. Graham had been there for more than two hours and was just finishing his dinner. Graham boiled some water for our soup and then we started cooking. Then we all turned in. We slept sweetly in the happy knowledge that we had emptied 17 traps with kills: weasels, stoats and rats.

On Sunday Graham, Stephen and I went along Potae ridge and climbed the big rock on Te Potae to be able to claim our “P” points for the Club Scrabble challenge.



Graham and Kirsten on Te Potae rock. (Photo by Stephen)

We continued down the spur to an unnamed stream that runs into the Mangatera River and then along this stream to the river. There were a couple of slips along the little stream, but it was generally not too difficult. We had lunch in a nice sunny mossy spot when we reached Mangatera River.

There were a couple of places along Mangatera River where we had to climb rocks and squeeze through gaps between rocks. Later on, the valley opened up more and there were flats we could walk across. We saw one Whio/Blue Duck on Mangatera River. That was really cool. On the flats Graham took his rifle out to be ready, in case we saw a deer. But we saw none.

We turned up another unnamed stream towards Colenso Hut. This stream was rather full, so we were not able to climb a small waterfall at the beginning. We had to climb around the side of the hill. We arrived at Colenso Hut at 2:45pm. It had been a nice day where we only had to reset the traps with catches, because the traps were going to be replaced the next week by DOC.

A couple of hours later Janet and Ernie turned up. They were quite hot and had had a long and not-so-easy day. Later Roy and Ian turned up. They had replaced mechanisms in some of the traps from Iron Bark Hut.

We had the eight-bunk hut to ourself. After dinner some of us went down to Lake Colenso to count birds. We heard a North Island Robin, but did not see it.

We were divided into three teams on Monday. Ian, Roy and Ernie were going to replace the rest of the mechanisms in the traps towards Iron Bark Hut. Janet and Graham were going up the river from Colenso Hut to rebait the traps and Stephen and I were going around Lake Colenso to rebait the traps around the Lake.

We were not really sure how well the “trapping track” around the lake was marked so Stephen and I were equipped with a GPS to make sure we could find our way, and the traps. We passed the toilet and took a bearing on the first trap. I went a bit to the right to follow what looked like a track and there I saw the first pink triangle. After all, it was not too difficult to find our way around. We did make use of the GPS to steer us on to the track when we lost it a couple of times, but it was quite well marked. It was really nice to walk in the forest and not feel that we had to hurry.

We had plenty of time to count the birds. The Robin was there again. Lots of Whitehead, Tomtit, Tui, Silvereyes, Blackbirds and Chaffinches. At night time we saw and heard a fledgling and an adult Morepork at the hut and heard TuIs calling to each other.

When all three teams arrived back at the hut, we all went out to set up a cat trap. We all had a go at setting it so we were prepared for next time (next year maybe!). We had a party in the hut that evening with Ginger beer, popcorn, chips, chocolate and liquorice all sorts.



Lake Colenso (photo by Stephen)

On Tuesday we flew out in a larger helicopter. We all enjoyed a well-earned lunch in a nice café in Hunterville.



Some of the team at Colenso Hut (Photo by Janet)

Some new members of the Club (Adam, Julie, Brent) joined some old hands (Warren, Janet, Stephen, Kirsten) at Milverton Park for a prompt 07.30 am start to drive to Kaiparoro Road end near Mt Bruce in the Tararuas. Setting off at about 0900, we first crossed a temporary forestry bridge, which saved us getting wet feet, and then ascended steep and extensive forestry slash for the sharp uphill towards Kaiparoro Trig. This soon changed to verdant wet native bush along an easy track to the trig, which was reached in short order by 10.15 (Warren - maybe add your Trig Photo here). Kirsten was counting birds for the National Bird Atlas Survey and, *inter alia*, heard four Long Tailed Cuckoos.



Stephen at the site of the 1952 plane crash site

After a brief snack and photo shoot, Warren led us off-track downhill in denser wetter bush, in grizzly mizzle, to the site of a RNZAF Airspeed Oxford aircraft which had crashed in transit from Wigram airbase in Christchurch to Ohakea Airbase near Bulls, in bad weather on 5 July 1952. At the beginnings of a small stream, we found two engines, a seat, a couple of fuel tanks, partially overgrown, and a scattered assortment of metalwork (see photo). A cross had been erected for the dead pilot. It was a sombre sight (site).

After retracing our steps to the Trig Track, where we had lunch at 12.30, we descended via an alternate ridge route, again joining a

muddy forestry road amongst extensive slash.

The weather brightened before we returned to our cars.

Kirsten observed 16 bird species (most common were Silvereye, Long Tailed Cuckoo, Greenfinch and Chaffinch, less common were Tomtit, Whitehead, Tui, Bellbird and NZ Pigeon), which were added to the Ebird national and world database.



Expansive views through felled pines

A very convivial second lunch was taken in the café at Pukaha Mt Bruce National Wildlife Centre, where we saw a rare captive Takahe and Kaka flying about. We were impressed by two short dioramas in the centre's display area. One depicted depopulation of New Zealand's native fauna by rats and deforestation by fire and agriculture. The other was a semi-holographic depiction of the life cycle and demise of the sexually dimorphic extinct Huia. We were all home by afternoon tea.

Participants: Warren Wheeler (Leader), Stephen Legg, Kirsten Olsen, Janet Wilson, Adam Matich, Brent and Julie Barrett.



PNTMC Newsletter February 2023

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- Change of Club Gear Custodians
- Trip reports: Pourangaki Hut Loop, Sunrise Hut, Te Potae Trapping, Kaiparoro Trig

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