

## ABEL TASMAN BIRSONG TRUST – ANNUAL REPORT

May 2009 – June 2010

Kim McGlashen – Chairman

5<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Following the good work of the inaugural Chairman Bruce Gilkison I am pleased to present my first report as Chairman and the third annual report on behalf of the Trust.

### OVERVIEW of ACTIVITIES

Field activities during the year included:

- Release of South Island Robins on Adele Island – May 2009
- Field visit to Adele Island 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009
- Regular trapping coastal track area – 162 rats, 26 stoats, 2 mice /12mnths to March 2010.
- Establishment of 60 Tracking Tunnels for pest monitoring February 2010

Without doubt the release of the Robins on Adele Island provided the highlight for the year. It heralded the first significant restoration activity by the Trust in the Park and a subsequent field trip for volunteers in November observed that the robins have settled into their new habitat successfully. The field trip was followed by a barbeque at Peter and Pam Holyoake's and provided a welcome social environment to share enthusiasm for the Trust's recent activities. Volunteers were presented with safety vests carrying the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust colourful logo so that they can be readily identified by visitors along the tracks.

While we have running totals of catch data from the trapping programme we recognise the need to establish base-line predator levels and bird-counts so that these can provide reliable data trends over time. The Trust has welcomed the assistance offered by the Ornithological Society to begin bi-annual 5-minute bird counts at sites within the Park. We have also contributed to the purchase and establishment of tracking tunnels in 6 lines around the Torrent Bay area that can be monitored at least twice per year.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Following the first full year of funding from the foreshore levy and other donations our financial accounts recorded over \$20k in funds as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010. This provides the Trust with sufficient resources to expand our current tentative program of restoration work and predator control. The Trustees recognise the need to get runs on the board with other significant projects and have published a Draft Strategic Plan focussing on the next 5 years. The thrust of the plan is to extend the trapping programme into a "land island" adjacent to Adele Island starting with 25ha across the Pitt Head peninsula. Control of weed species and restorative plantings are part of the plan beginning with the planting of Northern rata as the first step in September 2010 as part of Project Crimson. Awaroa residents recently planted 200 Rata as part of Project Crimson in July 2010.

The Trust is also likely to lead a major control programme for wilding pines by first concentrating on their removal in the Pitt Head-Anchorage environs and later in the Park as a whole.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The trustees have acted on the need for good communication with stakeholders and the public at large. During the year we engaged Rick Coleman of "Site Productions" to upgrade our web-site as the key focal point for information transfer of the Trust's activities. We encourage volunteers to share photographs and insights on the regular blog within the site to keep it up to date and interesting for visitors to the site.

Tom Horn has communicated directly with volunteers via an emailed newsletter during the year.

Media spokesperson for the Trust, Sandy Stephens, has been actively promoting the Trust's activities through media releases. Perhaps the most publicity (good and bad!) has been gained from the media debate surrounding the proposal in January 2010 to establish a privately funded loop track in the Pitt Head area.

Signage has been erected at both ends of the coastal track (courtesy of DOC) conveying the Birdsong Trust's conservation role in the Park to users of the tracks.

## GOVERNANCE

Two new trustee's K. McGlashen and S. Stephens were nominated to the Trust in August 2009 to replace retiring trustees Bruce Gilkison and Rudy Tetteroo.

Jim Coleman accepted nomination as a trustee in October 2009. New trustees bring independence and management experience to the Board and join with IWI and commercial representatives to provide a sound governance team. I thank all trustees for their commitment and contributions throughout the year.

## DOC

The Trust operates as a partnership between tourism operators, the community and the Department of Conservation. The authority for the Trust to operate within the Park is recorded in a 5 year Management Agreement that was signed off in July 2009.

Rudy Tetteroo in his "ex-officio" role for DOC has continued his close association and guidance for the trustees. Gavin Udy (Bio-diversity officer) and Martin Rodd (Manager, Motueka Office) have also worked with trustees to develop future plans and conservation opportunities for the Trust. We thank them for their support and resources such as meeting rooms.

## VOLUNTEERS

The ability of the Trust to achieve its aims rests heavily on volunteer effort. We have in excess of 20 active volunteers who make a sizeable contribution to the ongoing trapping and monitoring program. I want to thank them on behalf of the Trust and encourage them through their feedback to help define the future directions of the Trust.

## OPERATORS AND COMMUNITY

Our work continues with a funding base from visitor movements across the foreshore administered by the Tasman District Council and supported by all the major operators. The foreshore levy is crucial to funding the Trust's activities and by demonstrating visible progress with enhancement projects we hope that future confidence will develop in the volunteer work leading to greater support in the future. I would also like to acknowledge the generous assistance given to the Trust, efforts by the major operators who freely transport volunteers to worksites within the park.

END

