

# From the Deck

## Newmarket Stream Restoration Project

### Time line

You too can help!

#### March : Access completed to stream

Thanks to working bee on March 24<sup>th</sup>, we have access to the stream via Swinton Close, Ada St (the Hansens), and Middleton Rd.

#### April : Two major events

Contractor will spray morning glory, our major weed pest.

Rat wipe out : Distribution of traps, bait stations and bait from Hansens.

#### May/June/July :

##### Working bees for planting

Help help help. All hands on deck to keep the stream stable and the weeds away through intensive planting of mainly quick-growing manuka and whau.

#### All year : Bird counts

Watch for our emails and flyers notifying dates. Email us (below) with queries.

Brett & Kairan discovered what is living in our stream. Photo: K Hayhurst, 2017

Welcome to our First Newsletter

Updating you on:

Weeding and planting

Pest trapping and baiting

Bird counts

Stream health

Our stream's history



## Contacts

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Susan Buckland - Pest trap recording - [susan.buckland@xtra.co.nz](mailto:susan.buckland@xtra.co.nz)

Annabelle Couldwell - Bird Count Recording - [annieclive@xtra.co.nz](mailto:annieclive@xtra.co.nz)

# ACTION ALONG THE STREAM

We're kicking things up a few notches! This autumn we'll be combating the weeds in our backyards and along the stream. *From The Deck* has been in touch with several contractors to help with clearing weeds and creating an easy access path in the Swinton Close community space. In April, May, June we'll be having working bees to help with weeding and replanting. Replanting is particularly important for maintaining stability of our stream banks and preventing weeds growing again.



The stream near the Hansens (Ada St) and the Blacks (Bassett Rd), with lots of shade providing protection for invertebrates and fish to live.

Photo: K Hayhurst, 2017.

# PEST TRAPPING AND BAITING

We're cracking down on pests to bring the birds back to our inner city oasis! Our neighbours have found unwanted furry foes (think rats and possums) scurrying around their bush. Pests harm flora and fauna around the stream and detract from its potential to support our native plants and animals.

*How can you help?*

Penny Hansen has pest traps ready for purchase. Our goal is to have everyone in the neighbourhood setting traps in several 'pulses' throughout the year. To arrange a trap for yourself please contact Penny, or to find out more ask your Gecko Facilitator, Chelsee.

*But wait, there's more!*

We want to keep track of how many pests we are trapping so that we can monitor improvements over time. Susan Buckland has volunteered to be our 'Deputy Rat Monitor', in charge of recording what has been caught. If you catch anything, record what it, when it was caught, and let her know!

# BIRD COUNTS

Bird Counts are a great way to monitor the ecological improvements throughout the work with our stream and the surrounding environment. As pest numbers go down bird numbers will hopefully go up!

*How can you help?*

All you need is five minutes once a month! Go out to your back yard or deck and record all the birds you can see or hear. We can email charts to help. Please contact Annabelle Couldwell who has volunteered to record our bird counts or, to find out more, ask your Gecko Facilitator, Chelsee. Pass your bird counts on to Annabelle and we'll be able to have a neighbourhood wide track of how our bird life is improving. All contact details on page 1).



# STREAM HEALTH

At the Spring Gathering many of you said you wanted an investigation into the current condition of the stream. In November 2017 Brett Stansfield of Environment Impact Assessments Ltd, conducted a survey into the water quality and ecological health of the Newmarket Stream. This assessment was very useful in clarifying our starting point and what areas we need to work on.

## What did we discover?

- The stream is home to a population of native banded kokopu. The gravel and cobbled stream bed, as well as the shading from trees and plants along the stream create a good habitat for invertebrates and fish.
- Micro-invertebrate communities found in the stream are signs of an extremely polluted and degraded stream.
- Water quality significantly improved after a night of rain, including improvements to: water clarity, temperature, concentrations of dissolved oxygen and specific conductivity (These are used as an indicator of pollutants in the water column).

Brett suggests that increasing the amount of water in the stream, will work to improve its ecological health. Although this is a long-term goal, with the whole neighbourhood involved this could be achieved within a few years. Brett’s suggestions for increasing the baseflow include supplementing the stream with town-supplied water, groundwater pumping or installing stormwater detention devices such as rain tanks or wetlands on your property to allow stormwater to flow directly into your stream rather than being piped away. To receive a copy of Brett’s full report contact Chelsea or Polly from Gecko NZ Trust (contact details below).

Waterfall in Newmarket Gully, 1869

## Our stream’s history

Over the past few months Gecko has been researching the local ecology and history of the Newmarket stream. Our aim is to provide the community with tools and knowledge to care for their environment and grow the network of support for the stream (many hands make light work!). We’ll be sending this out for everyone to see shortly, but in the meantime, here are some of the exciting discoveries we’ve made:

- Before European settlement, a large section of Newmarket was a swamp that drained into a beautiful ‘romantic’ waterfall at the head of the gully.
- Ornate skinks live along the stream including the sections in Newmarket Park and Ayr St Reserve.
- Large scale ecological projects have already taken place in the area, including the Newmarket Park restoration and removal of the old, polluting sewer pipe which ran through Hobson Bay.
- Research by Gecko Trust





The native banded kokopu found during the water assessment  
Photo: K Hayhurst, 2017.

