

# The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park

Volume 13, Number 3  
October 2018



Profusely flowering *Clivia* have brightened many paths in the Park.

Photo Derek Hughes

This Magazine is made possible through the generous sponsorship of Graphix Explosion

**Memorial Seat Dedication - Heather Allen**

**Adrienne Tatham**



Leaves and flowers in the park glistened, having been cleansed by soft overnight rain as we met to remember the Founder of Friends of Pukekura Park and to dedicate the seat near the lake we had purchased as a reminder of her dedication and enthusiasm for the Park.

Twenty three people gathered on September 16, 2018 at noon for the dedication. About 8 family members took part, the balance being members who had been on a Lynn Bublitz walk. It was an emotional time for the family, and they expressed their gratitude for our effort, saying it was somewhere they could come to remember Heather.

Inspired by the sad condition of the lake, in 1995 Heather Allen and Trish Stewart advertised a meeting to be held in the Central School Hall, where Heather was a teacher. The Hall was full, and concerned ratepayers had formed a committee of 15 by the following day.

They met in her home for their meetings, and apart from lobbying the Council, they formed a working group to weed the park at large on a regular basis. That group has lately been dubbed The Gables Group and continues it's work today with new members joining.

The Friends cared for the park in general and were directed to dead head the rhododendrons at first, then weeded onion weeds from Brooklands and the Bowl area, raked paths and weeded *Tradescantia* and the biggest of them all was taming the Maranui Gully which lies below Highlands School. Full days of weeding were undertaken there where *Clematis vitalba* and other nasty weeds had taken over.

It was Heather who as president planned an annual luncheon for the staff, and influenced the Friends who spent funds on two wrought iron chairs for the Fernery and who bought text books for the staff to refer to.

It was Heather who held the staff for George Fuller on his many ventures of measuring gradients for proposed or existing paths within the park. Up and down the hills they worked for many days.

We remember Heather for singing or humming as she worked in the garden, always there was music in her head. We know she was heavily involved with St Mary's choir and spent her evenings at the Opera House where she served as an usher. She also helped at Pukeiti where she was also a member and volunteer gardener.

I will always remember Heather singing her way through the gardening chores.



Photo Derek Hughes

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## Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*)

Tony Burrell

One of the tallest trees in the Park grows not far from the waterfall. Its height is 33.6m and the crown spreads 37m. Records indicate it was planted in 1895 (123 years old). This could be the tallest *Ficus macrophylla* in New Zealand and is probably a cutting/layering from a tree growing in Oakura at the Mace property (Shearer Drive). The tree is native to eastern Australia and grows from about 400kms north of Brisbane to the south coast of New South Wales. A sub species grows on Lord Howe Island.

Plants and trees have far more challenges when it comes to fertilization compared with animals. Animals can move around and find each other whereas plants are fixed to one location. For pollination there is not one simple solution that has evolved. Various techniques are employed and one of the most intriguing and complex is that of the fig tree.

Unlike most flowers with which we are familiar, fig flowers, both male and female, are extremely small and are produced on the INSIDE of the fruit. The flowers of the Moreton Bay fig are pollinated by tiny fig wasps (*Pleistodontes froggatti*) with which the fig trees share a mutual relationship. The figs depend on wasps for pollination, and the wasps can reproduce only in the flowers of the fig. Each species of fig has a corresponding specialized species of wasp, which carries out the pollination. Incredibly, the fig tree provides all needs for the tiny wasp and in return the female wasp has to pollinate the fig. If they don't do this task there are consequences for the wasp. The life cycle of the fig and wasp starts when female flowers are mature. The entrance hole opens a little and a strong scent is emitted which attracts the female wasps. To keep unwanted pests out, the hole is extremely small and the females have to work hard to work their way into the centre. They have evolved a long bullet shaped head with little appendices along both sides which act like ratchets. They use these and their strong legs to push/lever themselves along. Their wings and antennae are normally ripped off during



Photo Derek Hughes

the entry process. Once inside there is no way out. The fig has some short flowers reserved for the wasps to reach the base with their ovipositor. The longer remaining female flowers which produce seed are out of reach for the wasps. The queen wasps spread pollen then lay male eggs and fertilized female eggs. One egg is inserted into the nucleus of the ovules. Chemicals released when an egg is inserted cause the fig to form a gall around the egg. The fertilization of the female flowers produces endosperm which the developing larvae feed on. With no way out the female wasps die and are digested by the fig. After pollination has occurred the fig closes the hole in the fruit and starts the maturing of the male flowers. They are synchronized to mature at the exact time the young wasps hatch.

Males hatch first and do two things:

1. Burrow down, cut through the gall case and mate with the female.
2. Burrow out an exit hole through the fig wall for the females to exit.

The males are a stripped down version compared to the females. They have large mandibles for the job they have to do, primitive eyes providing next to no vision and no wings.

Once the Moreton Bay fig females are released from their galls they collect pollen and place it in special pollen pockets on the sides of their body. This active collection of pollen is rare in insects. The young queens only have a lifespan of between 1 to 3 days so there must be a real temptation to bypass the pollen collection phase. The fig tree has developed a strong incentive for the queens to collect pollen. If it detects the wasps have entered a fig and not pollinated the flowers it aborts the fruits. After pollen collection, the queens then leave the fig, and fly off to find another fig where they can lay their eggs, and in the process, transfer pollen to another batch of young female flowers.

For cross pollination the fig tree ensures its figs are all in sync so none will be receptive when the female wasp exits. The wasps have to go and find another tree which has mature receptive female flowers.



Moreton Bay Figs – Deep purple ones are pollinated and ripe

There are over 750 different species of figs and about half are monoecious with female and male flowers within the same fig. The dioecious fig trees have separate male and female trees. The fig wasps breed in the male tree with the male flowers and the queens transfer the pollen out. The female trees have identical looking figs which some of the queens enter to breed. They pollinate the flowers but unfortunately for them they have been deceived as the female flowers are too long for the wasps to reach the ovules so they cannot breed. Dioecious fig trees have evolved more recently and it is thought that occurred to reduce the impact of parasitoid wasps which attack the larvae of the pollinator wasp.

The fig wasp that pollinated the Moreton Bay fig was not present in New Zealand until it was discovered in Auckland in 1993. It is unknown how it arrived. It is possible it was blown across the Tasman but as the wasp has a very short life there are only a few days each year where the wind speed was high enough to carry the wasp to NZ. Maybe it accidentally came in on an air flight.

The fig wasp is very effective at tracking down the host trees in a region. It normally searches out an area within a radius of 10km during its short life. A single fig can produce around 100 queens and a large Moreton bay fig tree can produce thousands of figs at a time. During windy conditions big numbers will be blown far and wide making discovery of distant trees possible.

Moreton Bay fig trees are recorded as growing as far south as Whanganui. No doubt there are some growing further south. A check carried out in 1996 showed the wasps had located all the Auckland region trees but had not reached Taranaki or Whanganui. We know the wasps are now present in the Pukekura tree and it was discovered in trees in Whanganui Moutoa Gardens and Bason Park in 2007. The Whanganui sites had seedlings growing in palm trees up to 100m from the parent trees. At least two seedlings have been located in Pukekura Park. In NZ the Moreton Bay fig trees can be hundreds of kilometres apart so it is a real challenge for the wasps to survive when the tree is trying to stop self-pollination. It has been found in NZ that a small number of figs on a tree are a little ahead or behind the main synchronized flowering which then provides a lifeline for the wasps to produce the next generation.

Dispersal of the fig seeds is mainly by birds and a range of mammals. In New Zealand blackbirds and possums love the ripe fruits. The fruits ripen after the wasps have left. It is a banyan or strangler fig. The seedlings start as epiphytes in trees. Like the N.Z. Rata it sends a root down to the ground and then surrounds the host tree, eventually killing it.

The ability of the Moreton Bay fig to produce seed raises concerns it could become a serious pest species and have an impact on our native ecosystems. New Zealand does not have the level of pests and diseases, which control the Moreton Bay fig in its homeland. If the trees start invading our forests they will be very hard to control as they mostly start life high in the canopy where possums browse the fruit.

How invasive are these fig trees? Seed has been dispersed in NZ for 25 years now and it hasn't been highlighted as a major pest yet. In Hawaii in 1929 they deliberately introduced *Pleistodontes froggatti* the pollinator for the Moreton Bay fig. They wanted the tree to regenerate forest regions but after ninety years the fig has not yet regenerated those areas but has become a nuisance in built-up areas. They have programmes to remove the seedlings but getting rid of the aerial seedlings is proving challenging.

It should only be planted in Parks or large open spaces as the trees grow to an enormous size with a huge root system which will rip up paths and in-ground services. The oldest trees in cultivation around the world are now over 200 years old and they continue to get bigger. Given the room they spread out rather than grow tall. The Pukekura tree, growing with restricted room due to the slope, has grown tall and is in fact taller than the really big trees in cultivation around the world.

Let us enjoy the magnificent specimen we have in Pukekura Park but root out any seedlings to mitigate the risk of invasion into our native forest areas. They are a tree to admire and be frightened of at the same time.

### References:

New Zealand Geographic – The Fig and the Wasp - John Walsby and John Early.



Photo Derek Hughes

**Mamaku**

**Adrienne Tatham**



Enthusiasm was the order of the day on August 17 when thirteen of our members met Chris Connolly at the Band Rotunda with their spades, eager to once again furnish the perimeter of the main lake with ten new *Cyathea medullaris* plants. Some years have passed since the area was renowned as “the palm fringed lake” described in some early accounts. This view is iconic and is peculiar to the main lake in the park in particular. Tourists are captivated by it.

Chris had already begun to dig the holes where he planned the trees to be planted and after a short warning about not stepping backwards into the lake while we were busy, we all set to, some more active than others, while all the time Derek kept his hands clean while taking photographs.

It was good to be proactive and to help in this way and it all seemed very positive to at last plant more trees, for we are losing some of the older ones on a fairly regular basis now. The atmosphere was very cheerful as we spread out and achieved the task before ending up at the Tea House for a

social time. We have been promised that there are more Mamakus to plant at both lakes before the season ends, but await various projects to be finished before that happens.



Photos Derek Hughes

## Painted Stones In Pukekura

**Chris Connolly**

During recent visits to Pukekura Park I am sure you have noticed the odd painted stone beside the track or partially hidden under a plant. This is a colourful and creative type of treasure hunt introduced to New Zealand in 2016 which is credited to Heather Knox, from Palmerston North.

Heather first saw this done in America. The idea is, you paint a rock then hide it in a park for others to find. When you find a rock you can choose to leave it or hide it in a new place for someone else to find or as I did with this one (see photo) keep it. This activity is all about encouraging adults and children to not only be creative but to get off the sofa and explore our parks and open spaces. The idea has gone viral and now there is a Facebook page with thousands of followers. There are many painted stone groups operating around the country and it is not unusual to see painted stones in public areas and parks around both Australia and New Zealand.

At this stage they have not been causing issues for us in Pukekura and we do get a number of people both old and young plus family groups searching along the tracks for a colourful stone but we don't want people straying off the formed tracks and damaging plants while hunting out the stone. The only site we have restricted them from is the Fernery and Display houses. So when you are next in the Park keep your eyes open for these colourful additions but please also respect the Park and its beautiful plants with sensible behaviour. There is room for both.



Photo Chris Connolly

## *From the Friends*

### Members' Annual Luncheon

**David Laurence**

Hi Friends,

After our walk on 4th September, ably led by Chris Connolly, we repaired to the pavilion for the annual members' lunch. The first thing to be done was to set up the tables etc, and everyone pitched in to help so the job was done in short order. While that was happening, the food from the caterers had arrived, the drink and tea making bits and pieces were arranged and everything was ready for the assembled multitude, which numbered 20 hungry souls, to dispel fears of imminent starvation. Eventually the whistle was blown to start the feast and many raced up to the table to sample the many goodies set out for our consumption, the first course being delicious tomato soup, followed by a selection of savouries, a sweet slice and fruit to finish.

Also, mention was made of Lynn Bublitz and Elise Smith who were recent recipients of the Council's Citizenship Award.

The occasion being largely over at that point, the tables were put away, dishes washed, and the room tidied ready for the next event. Thanks are due to Adrienne and other helpers who helped to organise and bring the lunch to fruition, we all look forward to the lunch next year.



Photos David Laurence



## The Bowl Of Brooklands Conifers

Ian Hutchinson  
Botanical Records Officer

In 1954 the idea of erecting a sound shell in the park was put to the Pukekura Park committee by members of local musical and theatrical circles. The site that was originally proposed was on the southern side of Cannon Hill and would have required the removal of the Band Rotunda. This location was objected to, but in 1957 the New Plymouth Public Relations Officer, Mr Eric Handbury, was taken to view the Brooklands valley by A. B. Scanlan as a possible site for a sound shell and open-air theatre. This site received approval and work on construction of the bowl commenced in August 1957.

The first performance on the new stage at the Bowl of Brooklands took place on the 25 February 1958 and marked the start of the first Festival of the Pines, a week-long festival of arts, drama, song, music and merriment. The event was an outstanding success with 45,000 people attending during the week and ticket sales amounting to £22,500.

The presence of conifers in the Bowl is important because of the Festival's name. George Fuller explains it particularly well in one part of a letter to Karl Rossiter, the then Chairman of The Friends of the Bowl of Brooklands Trust Inc, on 21 February 2008.

George wrote: "Festival of the Pines' origin and perpetuation – "At the outset the skyline behind and to the right of the stage as seen by the audience was dominated by an outstanding dome-shaped stand of *Pinus radiata* planted near the boundary shared with the Racecourse. This unique feature became the symbol chosen to advertise the early summertime programmes. JWG (J. W. Goodwin) was notable for being able to anticipate the needs of the community several generations ahead and in this case, aware that the pines had been planted by the racecourse administrators not for ornamentation but for the ultimate value of their timber, foresaw the prospect of them being felled. He took action to safeguard the integrity of the 'Festival of the Pines' title in longevity by planting a comprehensive pinetum of species not only representing botanically many diverse growth habits but also many countries of origin. To ensure that there was no possibility of his intention being overlooked, the planting was made as close to the amphitheatre on and over the ridge following the right hand side of the drive down to the Bowl. Numerous dwarf species were removed relatively recently when this boundary was cleared and shifted back to provide more viewing area but larger species have thrived and are now skyline pines in their own right. As JWG anticipated, the original stand was felled several years ago and a second generation in the same site is now laying claim to that skyline. The presence of this and of the pinetum mean the integrity of the title 'Festival of the Pines' is safeguarded if there should be a desire to perpetuate that historic and appropriate term into the future."

The first conifers were planted in late August 1961 near the bridge over the lake. They included a *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Tetragona Aurea', and some *Thuja occidentalis* 'Pyramidalis'. The latter were removed around 2000 or 2001 but the *chamaecyparis* is still going strong.

During the following month, September 1961, the pinetum was planted up with a collection of pine species, many of which came from the Christchurch Botanical Gardens. The Christchurch collection included one of each of the following: Japanese Red Pine, *Pinus densiflora*, *Pinus densiflora* 'Globosa', Mountain Pine, *Pinus mugo*, *Pinus mugo* subsp *mughus*, Black Pine, *Pinus nigra*, Ponderosa Pine, *Pinus ponderosa* (mistakenly thought to be *Pinus armandii*), Red Pine, *Pinus resinosa*, Chir Pine, *Pinus roxburghii* (syn *Pinus palustris*), Japanese Black Pine, *Pinus thunbergii* and Mountain Pine, *Pinus uncinata* (syn *Pinus mugo rostrata*). A Mr Collins from Dannevirke was another source of plants, supplying three *Pinus densiflora* and three *Pinus thunbergii*; Duncan & Davies provided a Patula Pine, *Pinus patula*; and lastly from an unknown source came a Canary Islands Pine, *Pinus canariensis*. The pinetum collection from 1961 that you see today is as listed above and, quite amazingly, has lost only two species from the original plantings, a Limber Pine, *Pinus flexilis* and a Macedonian Pine, *Pinus peuce* which were both part of the Christchurch Botanical Gardens' collection of plants.

The next planting was a row of dawn redwoods, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, on the edge of the Lily Lake. The concept was the idea of Trevor Davies, one of Sir Victor Davies's sons, and the trees came from Duncan & Davies Nursery. Dawn redwood is a deciduous conifer native to China between Hubei and Sichuan provinces that was at one time thought to be extinct until a remnant was found in 1941. Seed was collected in 1947 and sent to the Arnold Arboretum in the USA, from where it was distributed to botanic gardens around the world. This resulted



in this species coming back from the brink through cultivation as a garden ornamental. They were planted on 5 September 1966. Two days later a row of swamp cypress, *Taxodium distichum*, were planted and what you can see today is what remains of 25 planted by Mr J. Goodwin to help stabilise the southern shoreline of the Bowl Lake and to create a screen. The plants were a donation from Duncan & Davies Nursery. Swamp cypress is a deciduous conifer from swampy areas of North America, particularly around the everglades, and they have specialised root structures called pneumatophores (cypress knees) to absorb oxygen into the roots, which helps them to survive in waterlogged conditions. If you look down at the roots beside the water's edge you will see what look like knees, which are examples of the pneumatophores. The last of these particular plantings were some golden hinoki cypress, *Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Crispii'*, which are over near the toilets at the south end of the Bowl.

Sometime in the early 1970s, two plants of *Taxodium distichum var imbricarium 'Nutans'* were inter-planted amongst the existing swamp cypress trees. These trees were the result of grafting by George Fuller, of scion wood from Felix Jury onto swamp cypress, *Taxodium distichum* rootstock. This form of swamp cypress tree has less droopy branches and foliage and is generally more upright.

In 1978 a group of trees were planted adjacent to the fenceline near the ticket box at the top of the Bowl drive. They are bunya bunya, *Araucaria bidwillii*, klink pine, *Araucaria hunstenii*, and Taiwan fir, *Cunninghamia konishi*, and were all planted on 10 September 1978. These were raised from seed from Peter B Dow & Company, Gisborne and all share one thing in common: very prickly foliage. We added two more *Araucaria hunstenii* in June 2008 to this group of trees.

1991 saw the addition of another deciduous conifer into the Bowl collection, namely a Chinese swamp cypress, *Glyptostrobus pencilis*. This is located near the bridge over the lake on the racecourse side and is peeking its head above the neighbouring *Elegia capensis*. *Glyptostrobus* is a monotypic genus native to subtropical south-eastern China and potentially grows up to 30m tall and, like a related genus *Taxodium*, forms pneumatophores especially if growing in water. In the wild, *Glyptostrobus* is nearly extinct so it is a good thing that we have this growing as it helps with conservation of the species. This species can also be seen in the Kunming Garden.

As foreseen by Mr Goodwin the skyline pines, *Pinus radiata*, were removed in 1994, and replacements were planted during the winter of 1995 using a cutting grown forestry clone of *Pinus radiata* "GF28" sourced from Shem Kerr, Inglewood. This area where the replacement pines were planted was renamed in 2004 as Scanlan Lookout, in honour of A. B. (Brian) Scanlan. Because of his interest in the park and its history, Scanlan authored Pukekura: A Centennial History of Pukekura Park and Brooklands.

In June 1999 a Caribbean pine, *Pinus caribaea*, was added to the pinetum collection. The following year the perimeter fences near pinetum were repositioned to increase the capacity of the venue and at the same time the pinetum underwent a revamp. The plantings that occurred in October 2000 included plants such as Montezuma bald cypress, *Taxodium mucronatum*, western red cedar, *Thuja plicata hiba*, *Thujopsis dolobrata* and incense juniper, *Juniperus thurifera*, which were all sourced from the local conifer nursery Cedar Lodge Nurseries.

June 2001 saw the planting of a monkey puzzle forest on the northern slope below Scanlan Lookout. The forest was the idea of park manager Bryan Gould, and monkey puzzle, *Araucaria araucana*, was chosen because he wanted to build on the representation of genus *Araucaria*, already present in the Bowl, and by association outside the Bowl the Norfolk Island pines, *Araucaria heterophylla*, at Brooklands.

The most recent conifer plantings in the Bowl are all situated in or near the pinetum and occurred during the latter half of the 2000s. The first is a grouping of a dwarf form of the Weymouth pine, *Pinus strobus*, planted in January 2007, which are situated on the top of the bank directly behind the toilets. The needles on this species have a lovely blue-grey tinge. The next and the most significant of these plantings took place on 9 March 2009 when members of the King family planted a patula pine, *Pinus patula*, near the top of the slope overlooking the Bowl and adjacent to the pinetum steps, to mark the 75th anniversary of the gifting and handover of Brooklands to the city of New Plymouth to become part of Pukekura Park. Lastly, in June 2010 we planted a chir pine, *Pinus roxburghii*, which had been planted at Lake Mangamahoe but was not thriving there so was relocated to the park to add to the pinetum collection. It is located on the slope above the drive with the 1961 pines as a backdrop.

## *From the Botanical Records Office cont'd*



References: A. B. Scanlan: 'Pukekura' A Centennial History of Pukekura Park and Brooklands  
Scot Medbury: I.D.S. (1984 and 86) recording report for NPDC Parks & Recreation Department  
Friends of Pukekura Park - Its Ecology and History (G. Fuller letter)  
NPDC: History of Brooklands  
'Bowl of Brooklands': Friends of the Bowl of Brooklands Trust Inc.



Photos Derek Hughes

## The Rifle Butts

Adrienne Tatham

During the unsettled times of the Land Wars every able bodied man was drafted to defend the fledgling town of New Plymouth and the town was protected by an inner line of trenches and forts, but the valley of the park was a weak point where attackers could sneak into the town. It was a trying time, and in 1864 a settler who ventured out to check his farm, a Mr Gilbert, was ambushed by a group of Maoris who crept out of the Pukekura Valley.

A blockhouse was built on the ridge of Victoria Road on the eastern side, and two sentries were posted on guard each night across the valley. Fort Herbert lay on the hillside east of the sportsground and this spot was a village for friendly Maoris. At night a group of militia or volunteers was stationed here.

A rifle range of 600 yards (548 metres) was employed before 1860, and it has always been assumed that the firing was done from the blockhouse in Victoria Road. A newspaper report states "One wet night the sentries were the late Mr Joe Ward and a Mr Wolfe. The latter had occasion to leave his post for a few minutes. In returning he incautiously came by a track different from that which he took when he left. The sound of steps in this direction alarmed Ward, who challenged the newcomer. Wolfe, hearing the challenge and supposing it referred to a Maori, ran forward to his post. Ward fired in the darkness, shooting Wolfe, but not fatally."

A large number of the town volunteers and militia of that time formed an association to improve their shooting and practiced on Mondays from the range in Victoria Road spending time from 1 to 5 pm every day except Sunday. At this stage it was not wise for armed men to not have the skills to use their weapons, men being scarce enough without losing more.

A notice from January 1868 states that the Taranaki Cavalry Volunteers could have the use of the rifle range on Mondays and Saturdays at 2 o'clock, and that an officer would be on guard to superintend the firing. Competitors for the Colonial Government Prize Firing assembled at the Target Practice Ground a few weeks later.

Another report states that before the lake was formed in 1878 the valley had been used as a rifle range and the target butts are still plainly evident under the giant pines on the hillside to the east of the Poet's Bridge. Very little is known of this range but presumably firing was done from Cannon Hill or from where the Bandstand is now situated (approximately 200 yards). Above the site could be seen part of the embankment which was raised to protect Brooklands from stray bullets.

Much later on, pines were planted above the butt area and when these were felled, some of the timber landed on a few of the diggings of the butts, destroying them. (Fuller).

Now, two venerable and dying pines are due to be felled in this area within a few weeks, they are growing above the site where the rifle range was situated.

References: Fuller collection including Scanlon. Taranaki Herald Papers Past.



The likely line of fire from the base of Cannon Hill.

## Connecting to Conservation at Brooklands Zoo

**Eve Cozzi**

**Brooklands Zoo Coordinator**



Brooklands Zoo visitors have been busy connecting to local conservation initiatives. Over the past few weeks the Zoo celebrated Māori Language Week. Māori words for our ngā kararehe (animals) within the Rawhi Whakaaturanga (zoo) and Māori translated posters on who were on display for visitors.

We celebrated Conservation Week with two talks on little blue penguins. Elisa Robb, project lead for Finding Little Blue, a Citizen Science Penguin Project, shared her knowledge on these beautiful creatures and how we can help protect them. She shared interesting information, fun facts and even played a few games!

October is Save Kiwi Month. To learn more about our iconic national bird and how you can help kiwi in the wild, there will be information displayed all month and the Taranaki Kiwi Trust, a charitable trust that works to protect wild western brown kiwi, will be giving talks throughout October. Kiwi are considered nationally vulnerable and without help they are likely to be extinct in the wild within two generations.

And it's been a year since Brooklands Zoo became an official Toyota Kiwi Guardians site! The zoo is part of the Toyota Kiwi Guardians programme which aims to get kids interested in conservation through downloading the Zoo's site map, completing the activities and then going online to enter the code word from our Guardian Post in the zoo to earn a free medal and certificate! So far there have been more than 300 redemptions for medals from our site. To celebrate our first anniversary; keepers handed out spot prizes at their keeper talks. Visit [kiwiguardians.co.nz](http://kiwiguardians.co.nz) to find out how your little Kiwis can learn more about conservation.

