



Newsletter 7 ♦ September 2010

From the Chair

Since our last newsletter in May, the Society has been busy with a number of key projects centred on Hammond Bush. With spring upon us, we are about to start restocking the bait stations placed in the Bush last autumn. This will reduce rat predation on nesting birds and on the native bats which are now emerging from semi-hibernation. These efforts support both Project Halo (which focuses on native birds) and Project Echo (which focuses on our native bats). Our purchase of two digital bat monitors for use by residents was largely funded by an Environment Waikato grant.

With the withdrawal of Variation 21 (which we saw as an opportunity to change the zoning of Riverlea Rd), our attention has shifted to the current review of the District Plan. I strongly urge residents of Riverlea and the surrounding area to engage with the review process. We need to let the Council know that the only sure way to prevent another noxious industry from trying to gain resource consent for Riverlea Road is to change the zoning to recognise the road's proximity to high amenity value residential and environmental zones.

Your support for the work of the Society is greatly appreciated. As a volunteer organisation, we operate with minimal expenses. However, projects do cost money to undertake. Tax deductible donations can be made using the form below. Thank you.

Stephen Hamilton, Chair

Future use of Riverlea Road

As part of its review of the District Plan, the HCC is seeking feedback about Riverlea Road. We support changing the zoning to something like what it once was: light industrial. To contribute, please go online to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/fastforwardbusiness

The most relevant part of the survey is 'Section 3 Industrial and Commercial', where it's suggested that a range of industrial zones be created, an idea which the Society agrees. There are also other sections that you can engage with to whatever extent you wish.



Rats inflict great damage on birds' nests. *Copyright Nga Manu Images*

For those without internet access, there is also a feedback form in the full review document, available at any of the city libraries.

Bat hotspot

Project Echo is a new initiative designed to showcase and monitor our resident population of long-tailed native bats. We live in a special place: Hamilton is one of the only places in the world to have these bats, and Hammond Park is Hamilton's bat hotspot.

A main aim of the project is to find out where the bats are living. Individuals and community groups can help by borrowing a bat detector from the RES and using it to check for bats in their garden or wider area. The detector translates the echolocation clicks bats use to move around and hunt. If you hear them, start looking and you may be lucky enough to see bats flying.

Sightings (and 'hearings') should be reported at www.ew.govt.nz/projectecho, where there is also information on bats.

We encourage anyone thinking of felling a tree to borrow a detector to check that they are not going to destroy bat habitat.

Very keen punters can even build a 'bat box', which provides a narrow gap for bats to roost in, mimicking the habitat of mature trees. Plans are available through the Society. A bat box will be installed in Hammond Park in the near future, though we have been warned it can take several years for the bats to move in.

Project partners are Environment Waikato, Hamilton City Council, the University of Waikato, and the Department of Conservation.

Waikato Museum is running bat evenings, which are apparently excellent. The evenings begin with a talk at the museum and culminate with a walk with bat detectors in Hammond Bush at about 7.30pm. To book, telephone the museum. The events fill up fast. The next dates are September 29th and October 4th and 6th.

The RES will also be organising a supporters-only bat talk and walk in the next few months. Please telephone or email us if you are interested in attending.

Long-tailed bat facts

- they live in the nooks and crannies of big old trees (native and exotic)
- they eat mosquitoes and other insects
- they are one of only two land-based native mammals
- they are endangered
- they are only about as big as a thumb

Planting

The monthly working bees have yielded a wonderful winter of new planting in Hammond Bush. They continue to take place on the last Saturday of each month from 1-3pm and are very enjoyable. Bring a spade! New faces are very welcome.

All our new plants are eco-sourced – in other words, raised from seed collected in this area by the Hamilton City Council.

Birds in Hammond Bush

The bellbird release was a wonderful success, with many birds remaining around the Hamilton Gardens. Only one bird flew back to its Tiritiri Matangi home! With the breeding season upon us it is important to continue to report sightings to www.ew.govt.nz/hamiltonhalo.

It's exciting to continue to hear tui calling as spring – and therefore the nesting season – progresses. Successful nesting by tui in Hamilton, particularly in Hammond Bush, would be wonderful.

Pest control: Please help!

EcoFX finished their pest control action in Hammond Park in autumn, and unfortunately some residents are now noticing rats around their properties. This comes at a terrible time for nesting birds. The RES is expecting to be given permission to start restocking the poison stations very soon. The stations are cleverly designed so that it is difficult for domestic animals to access the poison bait, but as always please keep dogs on leads. Should a disaster occur, a vet can administer a vitamin K injection to stop the action of the poison (brodifacoum). It takes up to 14 days to kill an animal.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, John Innes of Landcare Research – the country's expert on Tui and Kokako recovery – believes that having rat and possum traps and/or poison on our properties is everybody's environmental responsibility. One option is Newell Road company Philproof (www.philproof.co.nz; tel 859 2943). It sells easy-to-use bait stations for rats and possums and a number of poison baits. There are also rat traps (the trapper T-Rex is easy to use) at half the price of those at hardware shops, trap covers to keep out non-target animals, and quick-kill Timms traps for possums.



Operation SNAP

This time it's about snapping thieves, not rodents! Here is a chance for the Riverlea community to take positive action to deter burglaries. Operation Snap is a system that lets you record the brand, model and serial

numbers of all your major electronic items on a government website.

You can place stickers on your house to warn thieves that your property is traceable by police and second hand dealers and therefore harder to sell and dispose of. If the goods are found by police, they will be able to trace and return them to you.

Supplies of this sticker, and an information leaflet, are available from RES (contact details on this newsletter).

Go to www.snap.org.nz to get started or for more information.

I would like to renew/add my financial support to the Riverlea Environment Society Inc.

Name(s)

Address

Phone

email

signature

Donation per household: \$20 []
 \$40 []
 \$___ []

Receipt required []

*If you would like to donate on-line, our account number is **03-1559-0110053-00**. Please email or telephone to alert us to the deposit so we can give you a receipt.*

Thank you for your support