

The BASK Bulletin

The Bay Association of Sea Kayakers December 2024 Issue 68



PHOTO ©: Vancouver Island Trip by Dennis Hynes

Club Contacts

Chairperson: Andrew McMullen

Secretary: Jilliene Beale

Treasurer: Helen McMullen

Trip Coordinator: Liz English

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/227309180756061/>



CONTENTS

Wild West Coast	Page 2
Pimp My Kayak SKISLS Session	Page 10
Jean Margaret Kirkham	Page 12
BASK Christmas Do	Page 13
Presidents THOUGHTS	Page 83

BASK Trip Reports

Matariki Magical Weekend	Page 16
Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana	Page 20
Panepane Point	Page 28
Coromandel in Spring	Page 30
Coromandel – Kowhai Quest	Page 33
Waiheke Circumnavigation	Page 36
Whangamata	Page 52
Waikaremoana	Page 62
Lake Rotoma	Page 70
Paddling the Te Ara Moana Kayak Trail	Page 71
Te Ara Moana – Plan B	Page 74
Lake Waikaremoana	Page 76
Coromandel – Tucks Bay	Page 81



Wild West Coast

In July this year I joined a 10-day kayak trip on the wild west coast of Vancouver Island.

We paddled a total distance of 200km from the Brooks Peninsular on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island, through the Checleset Ecological Reserve, the Bunsby and Mission groups of Islands, via Rugged Point Provincial Reserve back to Fair Harbour. Our route included going past private settlement lands transferred to First Nations ownership.



I was booked to paddle this region in 2023. A snowboarding accident in June put paid to that, requiring major surgery to repair my shoulder.

With another trip scheduled for July this year, ACC procrastination left me with just 6 months to complete the rehab (best scenario 6 months but normally 9 - 12 months).

5 months of hard graft and diligently following my surgeon's and then physio's advice had me back on the water with a month left to get paddle fit for the trip.



BROOKS PENINSULAR

Day 1

It was an early start, after staying the night at cabins at Fair Harbour, to load kayaks and gear onto the water taxi which ferried us out to the Brooks Peninsula. Slalomming at speed between islands and rocks in thick sea fog was rather disconcerting. Road sign arrows on the shore pointing which way to turn, was an indication that sea fog is not an infrequent occurrence. The water taxi then returned to Fair Harbour for a second run to pick up our remaining kayaks and kayakers.

We set up camp near a stream at the end of a long white sandy beach, aptly named Paradise Beach. It was strewn with logs and driftwood above the high tide line. We soon found this to be the norm on almost every beach. Apparently, the logs are escapees from the huge floating islands of harvested logs that are towed by barge to their destination.

After we set up camp, we went for a short shakedown paddle for our guide, Jaime, to assess our paddling abilities. We saw giant bull kelp forests, sea grasses, seals and otters lying on their backs with their heads popped up, but no other people.



My skills were soon in question as I found it almost impossible to turn the bow of my kayak into the wind and the effort to hold some sort of line was putting a heavy load on my newly repaired shoulder. I wasn't looking forward to another 9 days paddling such a barge. Luckily, I found the problem when we stopped for a rest. The rear hatch was loaded with 10 days' worth of fresh fruit and vegetables and the front hatch was empty. A quick redistribution and it was a different kayak.

We carried enough freshwater for five days in water bags and gravity filter-sterilised drinking water each day. While we did not use bear canisters, Jaime explained that mice getting in to supplies and chewing their way into tents and through clothes was likely- so we used our kayak hatches as a hub for all our personal snacks and hygiene products like toothpaste and tried to remember not to leave anything in our pockets.

Back at camp we learned the art of pooping in the Canadian outdoors. We were introduced to "The baton". A blue dry bag labelled "toilet" ensured privacy and contained the necessary equipment- toilet paper, trowel, lighter and hand sanitiser.

The act entailed doing the business in a hole in the sand, or under a rock, below the high tide line, then burning the soiled toilet paper and burying the lot, leaving it to the local critters to eventually remove all trace. It was a little disconcerting that we spotted fresh wolf prints in the sand near the designated pooping area.

Day 2

Blue skies day with cloud spilling over the mountains of the Brooks Peninsula. We paddled out to Clerk Point at the southwestern end of the peninsula. At times we battled 20+ knot winds, funnelling down the valleys and around the promontories. A quick look at the wild seas to the North out from the lee of Brooks Peninsula was enough to abandon the plan to try and reach the northwest end.

At the lunch spot, our guides, Jamie and Robert performed magic, extracting folding tables complete with tablecloths, plates, cutlery, bowls, serving implements etc. from the centre hatches of the doubles. They set all this up on the rocks in minutes and proceeded to lay out a 5-star buffet style lunch. With the stunning views, what better

cafe could you wish for? They performed this feat 3 times a day and were still dishing up fresh, delicious meals on day 10. We stayed hygienic and healthy with liberal use of hand sanitiser before every meal.



We arrived back at camp to find that the wind had rearranged our sleeping quarters somewhat. Bill's tent had been pitch poled down the beach requiring some major surgery using up most of the tent repair supplies. Several other tents looked likely to follow, so most of us shifted to more sheltered spots. Then the wind died.

Each evening Jaime used Garmin inReach satellite communicator to get the latest weather forecasts and then we discussed the route for the next days. He used the Navionics boating app on his cell phone for charts.

CHECLESET ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Day 3

Our first full pack of the kayaks was a very slow affair, fitting all our personal gear (1x 20l, 10l and 5l dry bags were suggested), mat, sleeping bag and a small camp chair into one front hatch. Tents were in the back hatches along with water and food. We took turns in the second double and tried out different singles, but left our personal gear in the hatch we had first started in. This made daily packing a bit confusing at times!





A fair amount of cussing and some help from Jaime and Robert finally saw us on our way.

We sauntered along the shore of Brooks Peninsular past rocks with orange and purple starfish and vivid green sea anemones, to the mouth of the Nasparti Inlet in the Checleset Bay. Then there was a wild run across the mouth of the inlet, with the tail wind strengthening, to our camp site tucked around the corner in Nasparti Inlet.

Tent sites were on a sloping gravel bar just above the high tide mark. Some landscaping was required to achieve a level platform for the tent.



Day4

Blue skies again

We paddled back across Nasparti Inlet and followed the shore inland. Jamie was keen to check out Johnson Lagoon, a unique feature left behind by the huge glaciers that carved out Nasparti inlet. The narrow 25m entrance is only passable for a short time at the change of tides, and we waited it out by having lunch at Jacobsens Bay.

We paddled against strong head winds and made it to the head of the lagoon to be rewarded with stunning views back into the snowcapped mountains further inland.

As is the way with sea kayaking our tail wind died and by the time we arrived back at the gap at the entrance the strong inward flow and a steep tidal rapid that had formed once again prevented us from paddling through.

Rather than wait five hours for the next slack tide, Jamie and Robert towed us, one by one, whilst they clambered around the steep rock face, losing some skin in the process.



THE BUNSBY ISLANDS

Day 5

Blue skies. We broke camp – and were getting faster at this. It was a stunning, leisurely paddle through the Cuttle Islets in mirror conditions, with huge seascape views away to the mountains on Vancouver Island.

We were able to get up close to two bald eagles, one above us in the lower branches of a tree and one sitting on rock. They weren't at all phased as we drifted by beneath them. We were serenaded by loons and Jaime pointed out a murrelet, the smallest diving bird in the world.

There was a freshwater spigot in Battle Bay. We "showered" and rinsed our salty base layers. All the available rocks were rapidly covered in gear and clothing drying off in the sun. I experienced cold water shock when rinsing my hair.

Jaime re-visited his favourite kayak fishing spots marked via GPS coordinates (biscuit crumbs) on his map from the years before. This was very successful. The catch included large ling cods with blue green flesh, perhaps from eating squid, caught using a metal lure.

While we were waiting for Jaime to fish, Shaun's kayak got caught at either end in a chute and capsized. Then the giant bull kelp tangled around him making it challenging to get back in the boat. The water temperature was only -7oC. Robert raced in to help.

We camped on the outer Bunsby Island. Some tented on sand, some camped in the bush and others put up their tents facing the sunset on the beach on the other side of the island. There were many large, hungry mosquitoes.

Day 6

Blue skies almost no wind

We were woken by an eagle in trees above camp. The landscape was mirrored in the calm sea. After fried fish on the hot plate and Mexican wraps, we paddled to the outer rocks and came across a gap full of seals on the rocks and bobbing in the water.

We indulged in some tame rock gardening in the small swell. Then meandered amongst the maze of the Bunsby islands on our way back to camp. These islands reminded me of the Many Islands in Dusky Sound, albeit with different trees.

We had a late lunch and chilled out for the rest of the day. We were getting closer to civilisation - a small cruise boat the Cascadia was moored around the corner and used tenders to drop off passengers for afternoon drinks and nibbles on a small island next to us. At the same time, we toasted a birthday of one of our crew with tots of whiskey.



THE MISSION GROUP OF ISLANDS

Day 7

Another blue skies day with almost no wind. The mountains stretched away into the distance with a thin distinct layer of fog.

After we broke camp, we paddled to Thomas Island with a big hole in the rock that can be paddled through at high tide- but not when we were there. This is where the First Nation people held ceremonies for new chiefs. There are apparently Petroglyphs rock drawings, but we didn't land to find them.

Back on the shore of Vancouver Island we scraped and portaged across shallows to avoid a long paddle around the point to get into Clanninick Creek to fill up water bottles and lunched on the shore covered in bright green moss. Fresh drinking water in the region was surprising scarce.

When we arrived at the campsite on south corner of Tle:hoh (Spring Island) there were already 8 other kayakers in residence together with 6 wolves on the island, we were told.

We were left with a very steep beach with limited spaces. We used the strewn logs to hammer tent pegs into. Tent pegs in the sand or gravel were weighed down with rocks and logs. At high tide the larger swells took water within a metre my tent.

Our campsite was in the shade and very cold after the sun went down. Luckily the beach on other side stayed in full sun until the spectacular sunset.

Fresh fish with dinner again

Day 8

Blue skies, very little wind. Bit cooler so wore my DRI suit for the first time. Just shorts and windbreaker jacket required until now.

I shifted my tent in the morning as we were expecting a higher tide and building swell.

It was a leisurely paddle out around the outer rocks and nearby islands. A bigger swell kicking in meant for some impressive shows of power over the rocks. The sea was awash with foam.

We spent time with a mob of sea lions bobbing their heads up in unison.

At the lunch stop we were able to watch a large raft of sea otters (50-70 strong) not far from the shore. Apparently, they were male bachelors hanging out together.

We spotted an amazing blow hole which in the bigger sets were sending up 3 "geysers" at different angles maybe 10 m high.

Shaun and Bill caused some angst for our guides, paddling in the double through a gap in the rocks and almost getting trapped inside. They eventually managed to sprint out between sets.

Jo was caught out by a huge boomer which tossed her kayak in the air, but she managed to ride it out. In the afternoon, we went for a walk across the island over a forest path "The Spring Island Trail" and shot some hoops at a lone basketball court in a clearing.

We had to shift another 2 tents and the kayaks as far up the beach as possible. At the height of the tide my original site was inundated, and a huge "poached egg" jellyfish was deposited in the middle of Shaun and Glenda's recently vacated spot.

Day 9

We woke to wet misty rain. On my way to the long drop there was a wolf standing on the rocks less than 100m away, near where I was heading.

We eyeballed each other until it slowly moved off in the direction of the temporary long drop, other kayakers had constructed.

I waited a while, but nature was calling. It was a rather nervous poo. I took a heavy club with me and made plenty of noise.

The mist slowly cleared to a low overcast day. The winds stayed light.

Our paddle to Rugged Point campground was taking us closer to civilization and Jaime was finding it harder to catch fresh fish for dinner, so it was a leisurely paddle. A humpback whale surfaced several times a couple of hundred metres away. We stopped at a windswept outer island and scoured the beach for rubbish, mainly plastic bottles that had washed up. These were unloaded into the back hatch of a kayak and taken away with us to Fair Harbour.

We camped at the Provincial Park camp on Rugged Point, complete with a real toilet, be it a long drop, and wolf and mountain lion signage.

During a walk over to the beach on the exposed side of the peninsula, we found more wolf tracks. Jaime and Mark competed to toss the caber (a log) and we sampled wild berries such as salal berries.

I was able to set my tent up on raised wooden platform and avoided the very fine sand.

Day 10

Overcast, with light winds.

This amazing trip was ending too soon.

Up at 4.30am, packed the kayaks for the last time and on the water by 7.15am for the 25km paddle back to Fair Harbour, and the long drive back to Comox.

An eagle in an overhanging tree, was not at all perturbed as we drifted only metres below and made for some great close-up photos.

We joined up with the group of American paddlers for the final run into Fair Harbour.

Kayaks unpacked, personal gear separated from Wildheart gear and packed into the van, kayaks on the roof and it was all over.

Paddlers

Shaun Maclaren, Glenda Ray, Phil and Jilliene Beale, Mark Aspinall, Joanna Putterill, Uta Machold, Bill Haahg and Dennis Hynes

Guides

Jaime Sharp and Robert Bigelow Rubin from Wildheart Adventures www.kayakbc.com

Kayaks

Seaward Tyee and Nimbus singles (7), Seaward Passat doubles (2)

PHOTOS ©: Dennis Hynes

Pimp My Kayak SKISLS Session

14.07.2024

The stars: Jim, Aidan, Danusia.

The onlookers: Millie, Tom, Dawn, Liz, Andrew, Helen, Laraine, Jovan, Steve



SKISLS this month was far from the sea.

At the pre-appointed time, the kayaks arrived. Jim's workshop had been converted into a surgery for the day.

Doctors Frew and Matthews were hard at work. The old kayak in front of them, initially suffering from an extreme case of flaccid bungee cord, had its vitality restored after a successful transplant.

Arthritic rudders had their range of motion restored with the application of essential oils and vigorous working of the joint.

Deck lines with the comfort level of taunt piano wire were sheathed in luxurious rubber hose that pampered even the most delicate hand.

Due to the judicial placement of foam, owners found that they were attached to their kayaks in a much more intimate manner.



Ados solvents filled the air, the battery drill made a nice $\frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter hole in Helen's deck, the pop riveter issued a BANG as another item of hardware was there to stay.

Meanwhile Danuśia was the welfare officer; rushing vital fluids to where they were most needed - a fluffy coffee here, a black tea there.

Eventually the unremitting kayak repair work took its toll on our hardened operators as well as the brave onlookers, who had by now come dangerously close to depleting all of Dawn's muffins. The only course of action left open to us was to make a coordinated retreat to the dining table to recharge and converse.

Danuśia allowed us to regain our strength with either quiche or pie. Most people wanted to take no chances, so had both. Thus fortified, it was back to watching Jim and Aidan at work. We eventually set off home with an improved version of the kayak we had arrived with, after a most enjoyable and worthwhile day.

Thank you to Jim and Danuśia Matthews and Aidan Frew for your various skills and the effort you put in.

Andrew

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Jean Margaret Kirkham

16 MARCH 1932 - 2 AUGUST 2024

FAREWELL TO JEAN KIRKHAM

A lovely memorial service was held for Jean at Te Puna Quarry Park on Friday 9 August. I knew Jean a little and had enjoyed a couple of chats with this lively little woman with the sparkly blue eyes.

I had taken my seat in the Gallery when I saw a familiar face walk in – but I had to do a double-take. Was this Andrew, our BASK President? Yes it was! Dressed in his finest including jacket and tie, he looked quite different to the way we usually see him, in his kayak gear. I was impressed.

Several of Jean's family spoke of their memories of Jean – a feisty lady who obviously lived life to the full. Following the family, Andrew rose to tell those gathered of Jean's long history with BASK and her attending and speaking at our 20 th anniversary shindig at Athenree in 2017. Andrew did a great job and I think the family appreciated BASK's acknowledgement of Jean's contribution to kayaking in the Bay of Plenty.

- Laraine

BASK Christmas Do - Bob and Meg's Place - Ohiwa

6-8 December 2024

Bob and Meg, Aiden, Jim and Danusia, Lorraine, Lois, Helen and Andrew, Jillien and Phil, Dennis, Jovan, MaryAnne, Steve N, Jay, Shaun and Glenda, Paula, Doug, Phil A, John and Colleen, Partrick and Theresa, Liz, Michael, John G, Aaron , Roger, Alan, Millie, Grant, Stacey, Greg D.

By the time we arrived, the mown pathways, the clifftop promontories and shady dells were filling fast with a selection of camping paraphernalia including - wheeled, pitchable and inflatable dwellings. But that was no concern of mine as I was escorted straight to the presidential suite, a palatial wagon, both sheathed in and scented with recently sawn *Macrocarpa*. The Friday evening activities were simple - taking in the surroundings, having a jolly good chat and ensuring your body had taken in enough calories to make it through the night.

Two mighty smoked schnapper added to the feast and every last edible morsel was dislodged and eventually vanished from sight.

Saturday morning and the mood had changed. The crowd had assembled at the water's edge and was ready for action - but wait; what is this - a spot quiz, 10 quick questions on what safety accessories can you quickly have to hand. Well 'B Team' only bent the rules a little and emerged victorious.



And now for the paddle proper. The legendary '*Three Island Cruise*' which sets off past the harbour entrance and takes in the sights and atmosphere of Ohiwa Harbour. Unfortunately the trip still remains in the realm of legend, as it turns out that the third island is impossible to navigate around. This was in spite of Aaron and Phil's heroic attempt to carve a route through the mangroves in the fashion of an icebreaker.

Our party reformed on the shore-line having managed the '*Two Island Cruise*' as Aidan took over our entertainment and education as part of *SKISLS* session. The discussion included the concept of warming up with various paddle strokes; the connection of tow lines; kayak entry in thigh deep water, and helping your buddy back into their kayak in deep water. This later skill went well beyond the level of discussion and many on the party arrived back at their take-off point in a moist condition.

Not to worry, there was a hose from which fresh water gushed, the afternoon was still young so there was time to freshen up, rest up, read a book or simply contemplate the receding tide.



Dinner preparation and entertainment had started hours earlier as the frozen meat was delicately cut up with a reciprocating saw. The canine crew would no doubt appreciate the 'sawdust' when it thawed out.

. But now, all was done and dinner was served. Meat and potato were care of Bob and Meg, flounder care of the bountiful waters beneath us, salads care of the guests. Dessert followed, and I sensed an atmosphere of contentment as the fires were lit.



Greg took many of those gathered on a spiritual world tour. Judging by the gasps, he was able to successfully astonish his audience with the exotic tastes available.



Sunday morning arrived, kayaks were loaded, tents were packed and off to the West End of Ohope beach we went. Through the surf then around the coast, either embracing the rocks or avoiding them until we landed on a little beach just before the entrance to Whakatane Harbour. We then retraced our steps, with people again poking their crafts into places where they felt comfortable or just a teeny bit ill-at-ease. Finally a dash through the surf and we were done.



And so ended a highly successful weekend, enhanced by good weather, but made possible by our hosts and heroes Bob and Meg.

Report - Andrew
Photos - Mary-Anne Hoseason



PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart

Matariki Magical Weekend 28-30.6.2024



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson

Ten green bottles hanging on the wall... the head count went down, up and sideways. But, in the end we had five staying at Rose Cottage, Mangakino, and with head chef Shelley, juggling the menu and filling in the gaps, everything worked out perfectly. Every day was different, every day was magic.



We arrived on the shores of Lake Maraetai just as the temperature rose above 7 degrees and the fog started to lift. In the time it took to get organized, we faced gorgeous clear skies, calm waters, and crystal reflections with views to the distant Pureora forest and one of its curiously shaped peaks. Was it Titiraupenga?

We worked our way up to and past the Mangakino Stream and chased off some swans from our lunch venue. On the lake it was noisy, with the cross-country bikers having fun, swans and Canadian geese honking, but once we entered the Mangakino stream and went past the road and bike trail bridges, there was blissful silence.

No matter how many times I paddle this stream...it's always special, a surprise how quiet it instantly is... and how mesmerizing the reflections are: towering multi-coloured sheer cliffs, submerged forest, islands of tufty grasses. After half an hour, it was time to turn around. Between the cliffs, the winter chill was arriving, the sun had disappeared. Back on the lake it reappeared and so did noise. Speed boats, music pumping, wakeboarders jumping, sunlit reflections on the slowly undulating wake, we returned.



PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson



PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart

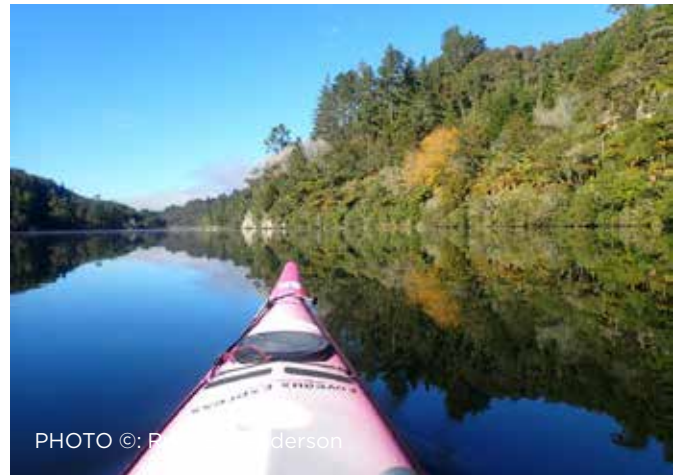


PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson

At our cottage, we soon got the fire going, beds sorted, tested out the spa...Mary-Anne disappeared for a bike ride, I into a book, Shelley into chef mode... we were all happy.

The next day started in dense fog and 3 degrees, so we delayed departure for Lake Waipapa till 10am. The fog persisted till we were up in the hills, above our days destination, then like magic, it disappeared. We almost had the lake to ourselves, but after launching we never saw the tinny again. In contrast to Maraetai this lake was absolutely QUIET and STILL.

The stark silver barked deciduous trees, the crew-cut reeds, Chinese poplar trees still in autumn clothing, the cliff reflections, and a dead pine

silvered with age casting a silver fern reflection were worth a picture or two.

Locating a lunch spot is always a challenge on Waipapa when the river level is high. But we found one, corresponding to a historic mark on my map. Homeward, still no wind, how amazing is that?

Back at the cottage we were met by ex-kayaking friend Jude, visiting from Taupo, who'd been walking with Frances and was now ready to go for a bike ride with Mary-Anne. The rest of us jumped in the spa, cranked up the heat pump, lit the open fire, and just chilled. It was that sort of place. Another delicious joint meal and talk of travel adventures past and future ended day two.

Our destination on our final day was Pokaiwhenua Stream, the rest of the team had never been there. Wanting only a short paddle we launched at Horahora Domain. The skies were a bit overcast and gloomy, the temperature CRISP but once we got going, it was just fine, we were toasty.



PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart

Opposite Finlay Park we turned into the stream, and as most of you know, were soon in an enchanting wonderland. I'd told the others of the "Glow-worm Glory" trips I'd lead for Yakity Yak - the bon-fires and drifts under a full moon I'd done over the years...but did not expect to see glow-worms in the day. With the aid of our polarized glasses Shelley and I could distinguish between water droplets and twinkling worms on the towering moss and fern covered chasm walls. Wonderful!

On the way back to the cars, the light was rather sultry, the reflections somber making for moody water colour pictures. Then I spotted poetry in motion and took a wee movie clip of Andrea rhythmically, steadily, consistently...dipping her blade in, out and repeat. Sadly, the long weekend was nearly over, there were no more eat-sleep-paddle 'repeats' and we had to deal to the pests.

The most obvious was a pair of white-faced herons, crapping on cars. The invisible ones - particularly the freshwater golden clam - were on our radar.

We set off for Lake Karapiro Mighty River Domain, to test out its cleaning station. Using the high-pressure hose, we blasted our boats inside and out and did our split paddles, but still needed to scrub our hulls to remove the lake crud. Our consensus was that we could do this job just as well at home. At home, we knew we needed to wash our clothing and make sure it was thoroughly dry before using it again in freshwater and then either freeze or soak in hot water our booties, gloves, sponges i.e. all the stuff hard to get really dry between use. It wasn't a hassle, but it might pay to alert your spouse or family to what appears to be your latest insanity: frosty booties.

Participants: Ruth H (organizer/leader), Shelley S, Mary-Anne H, Andrea P, Frances K.

Story: Ruth H.

Photos: Ruth E. Henderson, Shelley Stuart



Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana Trip

Report: Weekend 26-28 Jul 2024

Participants: Helen & Andrew (leadership team), Paula, Milli, Greg, Sylvia, Patrick, Shaun, Tracey, Cornelius, Aaron, and Steve.



Friday

We all met up on Friday afternoon at Kariri Point Boat Ramp and were on the water by about 14:30, blessed with beautiful clear skies and calm waters. We paddled across Lake Tarawera to the DOC Hot Water Beach Campsite, an 8km journey at a leisurely pace that took us about 2 hours. Aaron, the overachiever, had arrived at the campsite a couple of days earlier, bringing our group to a total of 12. We quickly pitched our tents and then paddled a short distance along the shoreline to soak in the hot water pools.



Saturday

Saturday morning started early, with a departure at 8:30 in the fog for an adventure like no other. We paddled a kilometre to the start of the Rotomahana Isthmus Track, then portaged the kayaks over the 1.2km track to relaunch in Lake Rotomahana. Our quest was to find the Pink and White Terraces and explore the lake's old geysers, steam vents, and bubbling hot water.



Nature's Beauty

The wattle trees, a pest cleared from sections of Lake Tarawera, adorned Lake Rotomahana's shoreline in pale yellow blooms. In the sheltered arms of the lake, we silently sliced through pollen-coated waters, eager to explore every bend.

Unexpected Encounter

On Rotomahana, we encountered two paddlers on a sit-on-top kayak and later their guide, Clint, the Waimangu marketing manager. One can only imagine their surprise, expecting to have the lake to themselves, only to be joined by a group of enthusiastic kayakers.

He was amazed at our vigor in getting our kayaks over the mountains and into the lake. He mentioned a restaurant at the end of the lake that would give us a deal if we mentioned his name. Then he set off in search of his two now-vanished clients.

Challenge and Team Spirit

The portage over the steep, windy track was challenging, with obstacles like logs, roots, ferns, slips, and branches. Everyone cheerfully helped one another navigate the track safely, overcoming overturned kayaks and broken wheels. The team spirit was exemplified by Milli's gratitude for Cornelius and Patrick's assistance in strapping her kayak to the trolley.



Personal Achievement

Completing the portage and exploring Rotomahana had been on some of our to-do lists for a long time. It was a splendid weekend, with stunning weather and great company.





Highlight of the Trip

One of the most spectacular moments was witnessing a geyser shoot water 5 meters into the air, surrounded by vibrant steam. The bubbling hot water added to the mysterious atmosphere.

Relaxation and Reflection

After exploring Lake Rotomahana, we enjoyed a relaxing soak in the natural thermal water back on Tarawera. For some, like one participant, staying overnight at the campsite allowed them to deeply appreciate its beauty even after visiting on day trips 3 times previously. Paddling in the dark from the hot pools was a unique and amazing way to experience the wilderness, as well as watching the shooting stars while basking in the hot water.

Favourite Spot

Rotomahana, with its tranquil spots and abundant volcanic activities, became a favourite for many. We enjoyed getting up close and personal with the volcanic features, including the steaming cliffs and bubbling waters.

Sylvia's Highlight

Sylvia's highlight was a sneaky paddle to the little lake (Green Lake) at the end of Rotomahana with Steve. The high rock wall cliffs hiding behind the lake were even more impressive from this side. Due to the higher water level in the big lake, Steve managed to manover over the small bank without even getting out of his kayak.

Funny Incident

Patrick had an unexpected encounter with a nocturnal thief—a rat pilfering his refuse bag and a packet of nuts during the night. His detective-like investigation the next morning successfully located the stolen items on the beach, though the nuts were fully consumed.

Saturday Night



Some heated their dinner in the super hot water running near the camp.

Saturday night's dinner was preceded by an array of exotic pre-dinner snacks in the gathering gloom, which included apple cake, salmon, olives, dolma, squid, and various beverages. The feast was illuminated by a sudden switch of LED lights, which expired just as quickly, leaving Greg's giant lolly bag as the only beacon.

Sunday

Sunday was a lazy start, with more soaking in the hot water pools before late breakfasts and packing up to leave around 11:00. We paddled around the shoreline back to Kariri Point Boat Ramp, with a lunch stop on a nice beach along the way. We were off the water by 15:00.



Final Stop

With not far to go, we had our final stop on a sandy beach where Helen's apple cake and Cornelius's chocolate chip cookies met their end. Aaron entertained us by igniting his cooker with a rain of sparks from his ferrocerium rod, while Tracey shared tales of true-life drama from the accident and emergency department.



Thanks to all participants, this trip report was a group effort with everyone submitting their contributions, ChatGPT doing all the grunt text work, and Steve skillfully copying and pasting text and images, with photo credits to Aaron and Patrick. And thanks again to Helen and Andrew for organising the trip.



Panepane Point

17.08.2024

Helen, Andrew, Aaron, Janet

A mist covered the face of the earth with only a vague hint of sun visible. We set the compass for a magnetic bearing of 10 degrees. The four of us set off in dead calm. Five minutes later the compass had outlived its usefulness as Motuhua Island appeared as a misty outline. Initially battling against the tide, we rounded the northern tip of Motuhua into the current, which swept us along towards the harbour entrance. Winds were predicted early afternoon so we had a slight sense of urgency to get along, and so without stopping we reached Panepane Point after a couple of hours. Late morning tea combined with early lunch was enjoyed on the beach while the tide reversed its flow. Fog had disappeared entirely and the water remained flat calm. Perfect for paddling and on-water chatter.

The Regional Council Patrol Boat intercepted us, informed us that we were pretty much the only craft on the entire harbour, complimented us on the safety equipment we were carrying, and warned that bad weather was soon to arrive. Onwards we paddled on a millpond-like harbour following the channel markers to Te Puna. The water became alive with what ChatGPT informs me was a 'fever' of stingrays, obviously overjoyed to see us, flapping and darting in all directions. We arrived back at Te Puna just as the drizzle began.

Nothing heroic today, but the four of us had a very pleasant paddle, the threat of bad weather no doubt limiting our numbers.

Words: Andrew

Photos: Aaron and Helen





Coromandel in Spring

21.09.2024

Whanganui Island

Rather typically it rained and blew the week and the day before, and then at the anointed hour – the sun rose and promised to shine. But at 7am it was a rather blustery Westerly, so we congregated at the camp kitchen to discuss options. I introduced a Plan B idea and suggested that those who like it a bit rough stick to Plan A.

That's how 9 of us ended up launching at Wyuna Bay and John G, Aaron and Cornelius at Long Bay. The bay looked idyllic, the tide was big and full, lapping at the seawall.

It was rather pleasant chatting and cruising along the peninsula, hugging the coast, past the gnarly old pohutukawa and boatsheds, and some rather 'flash' homes into McGregor Bay. Once at the mangroves and Long Bay Road, we turned around and headed for Makariri Bay, our designated morning tea spot. The radio crackled, the boys were thru Little Passage and wanted to join us. Twelve boats on a beach is rather a pretty sight! Fed and watered, we all headed up the Southern side of Whanganui Island.

The rock formations were intriguing. John G told us "The rocky coastline exposed a range of volcanic rocks the age of which ranges from 11-16 million years old. Whanganui Island itself was a volcanic centre with steep volcanic cones made of lava flows, broken-up blocks of andesite lava and volcanic ash – similar in character to Mt Ruapehu and Mt Taranaki today. We saw pyroclastic rocks which refers to blocks of (older) lava that has been broken up by later (molten) lava flows. A violent eruptive past that has been substantially eroded down."





PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart



PHOTO ©: Shelley Stuart



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson



There are plenty of easy landing bays on this side of the island with Norfolk Island pines lining the foreshore, providing stock and us with shade. We went as far as the rocky end of the Island then returned to the most western bay for lunch. Afterwards, the boys continued their circumnavigation while we returned to Wyuna Bay near enough to low tide. A big high tide equals a big low – I knew that. However, I'd never launched from there before and the map, unlike say Shelley Beach, doesn't show it to be extremely tidal. Well... I'll let Patrick's pictures

do the talking! Thank you, team, for not complaining but just helping each other. And thank you to the nice man across the road who bought us buckets of water and when he saw the state of myself, and John P in particular, offered us his garden hose.

Cleaned up, we headed out to the Top Pub - good food, drinks, full blast evening of rugby with All Blacks close to being dealt to by the Wallabies and a pool table. A perfect way to end an exceptional day.

Participants: Ruth H (scribe, organizer/leader), Helen A, Shelley, Patrick M, Cornelius, John G, Collen and John P, Milli, Terumi, Aaron, Mary-Anne.
Photos: Patrick, Shelley, Ruth



PHOTO ©: Patrick Malloy



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson

Coromandel – Kowhai Quest

Sunday 22 September 2024

Te Kouma Harbour

Launching just past the Sugar Loaf on Te Kouma Road, we wove our way through the moored boats, past mussel farm buoys, then John P got on his VHF - “DOLPHINS!” A pod of eight sticking tight, came right at us, and around us.



They came close, they were huge. It was glorious. No sooner had I stowed my camera than boom, a huge single dolphin came right at me, so close I could have poked it with my paddle.



Heartbeat back to normal, we rounded Te Kouma Head, got bounced about a bit by the frisky water, then... more excitement, more dolphins! It was hard to know which way to look. Finally, they left us to tootle on, admire the rock art at the point before we sidled into the first bay for our morning tea break and Milli's swim.



Crossing to the far side to inspect the earthworks and building site we moseyed on to the ‘best spot’ for kowhai flowers. I was a little disappointed as they were past their prime, but the overall hue was yellow! with a topping of white from Clematis vines. Conscious of the tide running out, we only explored to about the halfway mark, before crossing the harbour and heading back to our previous beach front site for lunch.



The rebounding waves at the Head were benign, the wind was non-existent and by about 3.00pm we’d all landed safely. I’ve been doing “Kowhai Quest” trips for years – this was the BEST, not for flowers but calm seas and wildlife. John G’s tally was “16 dolphins, 3 stingray, two seals, oystercatchers, shags, dotterels, blue penguins.”

Participant’s: same as Saturday but minus Mary-Anne and plus Laraine.

Story: Ruth E. Henderson

Photos: Shelley, Patrick, Ruth

Maps: John G.

Ruffin Peninsula – Whanganui Island COROMANDEL



Mudlarks (Green) Team -Wyuna Bay to Long Bay Road thence southern side of Whanganui Island and return.

Ace (Red) Team -Long Bay along Ruffin Peninsula through Little Passage to meet up with the Mudlarks thence circuit of Whanganui Island and return.

Te Kouma Harbour



Waiheke Circumnavigation

Mission accomplished!

5 nights on Waiheke Island, 5 paddle days and we circumnavigated the whole island.

8 paddlers car pooled and took the vehicular ferry to Waiheke so we could paddle the island in sections doing car shuttles to make it work.

We had the perfect base for our Waiheke trip, a bach right on Oneroa Beach, just below the town with a view straight out to sea.



On our 1st day we met at the Oneroa bach and decided on a 12km afternoon paddle from Onetangi Beach back to Oneroa Beach. It was our toughest day. Breaking out through the surf I lost my sponge and water bottle off the deck and got a front full of cold water. Once out through the breakers we set off into the 1m swell which was quite a challenge, hitting us from the side. Not many photos were taken as we concentrated on staying upright. We stayed away from the coast, passing Palm Beach from a distance and were glad to see Oneroa. Not so glad to see the impending surf landing which flipped me and took my other water bottle. A nice hot shower awaited at the bach just across from the beach.



Day 2 was a day to avoid the wind. A 16 km paddle from Oneroa to Blackpool. We launched with caution, spray skirts on at the shore and our handy boys pushing us out when there was a lull in the surf. Heading out from Oneroa we left behind the houses lining the beach and paddled towards views of Rakino and the Noises. Then around the corner Motutapu. The west side of Waiheke is less populated with large houses on large sections of land with large views. Further around the coast Rangitoto comes into view and then the skyline of Auckland city with the Skytower.

Our morning tea stop was at Matiatia where the ferry from Auckland comes in to a sheltered bay full of moored yachts. The biggest drone you've ever seen was spraying the roof of the Ferry Terminal with Wet and Forget.

After morning tea on the lawn, we set off southwards where rugged rocky cliffs often changed to lush green lawns flowing down to the coast then back to rugged rocks.

6 of us ended our paddle at Blackpool a tidal bay where the tide was surprisingly not too far out and our shuttle car was waiting for us. Our 2 intrepid boys Greg and Aaron decided to paddle back the way they came. The boys weren't too far behind us but we still beat them into the shower.

Jilliene and Phil who were keen to try the vineyards, thought it a good idea to go to Te Motu where there was a promise of a free bottle of wine as a reward for finding a cell phone down the side of a bed in our bach. After a very pleasant wine tasting with the vineyard owner, we were given our promised bottle to take home and drink.





On day 3 we headed to the far eastern end of the island to avoid the westerly winds. It's a 35 minute drive with the last part on narrow unsealed roads. Passing a lot of farmland, you realise just how big the island is. We didn't do a car shuttle this day but left our cars at Man O War Bay and did a return paddle down the east coast to Orapiu wharf and back again. 17km.

Heading out of Man O War Bay there are lines of mussel buoys and beyond that, the islands of Pakatoa and Rotoroa. Further south is Ponui Island. The coast here is dotted with sandy beaches and older style white houses with jetties and boat sheds and no doubt they are privately owned beaches and not for day trippers. The westerly wind was fierce at Orapiu so back we went to find a secluded beach without a white house for our lunch stop.

One of the white houses had purchased a sculpture from the Sculpture on the Gulf exhibition. A giant white bath plug, floating in the sea. Fortunately, no one had pulled the plug, so the ocean was still full of water.

On Tuesdays Man O War vineyard is closed so on our drive home we stopped at The Heke for a tasting session. They make spirits and beer and the tasting room is stacked with tall walls of barrels. They serve tasting combinations of beers and spirits and of course we ended up purchasing some to take home. Maybe the girls had sampled a few too many as they couldn't resist bouncing on the giant rubber bouncy pillow with the sign that read NO ADULTS.







Day 4 was the day we had been waiting for. The wind was right for paddling the remote north/east coast. Reportedly the most spectacular and with few places to land and no road access.

The sea was hospitable and allowed us to negotiate narrow gaps through the rocks and poke our noses into the many caves. The rocky coast was spectacular and the bird life was plentiful. The shags had made their homes obvious with white shag shit covering the rocks.

Our dolphin magnet Ruth, once more had the dolphins surface right next to her kayak. A giant sized seal raised his head and watched Greg paddle close to his rock. That seal's seen it all before!

Jilliene even saw a turtle swim by. This coast certainly didn't disappoint.

There are a few white sandy bays punctuating this rocky coast. The prettiest and most secluded is Garden Cove but we carried on to the larger Owhiti Bay for morning tea. We all had to pick up plastic from the beach and deposit it in the soggy sports shoe on Shelley's boat before heading for the northern tip of the island – Thumb Point. Around the point we paddled into Hooks Bay for lunch. The bay faces east and is surrounded by rolling green farmland in stark contrast to the rocky coastline we had just come from. This was our last stop before a long paddle around Kauri Point and down to Man O War Bay. On Wednesday the vineyard facing the sea is open and we were in time for wine and delicious pizza and snacks. A welcome treat after our 24km paddle.

Another treat back home came in the form of Greg's selection of miniature cocktails and Roses chocolates.







The Seal





Day 5 was our last chance to complete the circuit. As luck would have it there was a 20 -30 knot northerly predicted which meant our last section along the southern coast would be protected. We launched at the Wharf Road Boat Ramp near Ostend and headed out through the sheltered Putiki Bay heading to Orapiu Wharf. Greg left us here and paddled back to Auckland via Beachlands. We paddled on marvelling at the vibrant turquoise coloured sea and the beautiful blue day. We wanted to check out the campground at Rocky Bay for future reference. It's a nicely mown flat camping area, sheltered, surrounded by trees, with good facilities and a beach edged with Pohutukawa. A nice spot for morning tea and definitely worth a future camping trip. The next big inlet is Awawaroa Bay. Paddling through rows of mussel buoys we found a beautiful white and pink shell covered beach for lunch in the sun. Our last push on to Orapiu Wharf passed by Passage Rock – that's where our Coastguard Nowcasting comes from. With Ponui Island straight ahead we rounded Orapiu Wharf for our last landing. We had been lucky to complete our circumnavigation always paddling on the sheltered side of the island. There was no time for vineyards this day as we had a concert to attend in the local hall. We discovered a group of containers selling fast food with outdoor seating in a nicely planted setting near Ostend. So it was fresh fish and chips in the sun. The concert turned out to be too loud for everyones ears. Ruth lasted the first 3 songs out of 3 bands and 3 hours. It was not like the pleasant concerts we had experienced in the Raglan local hall! Shelley stuck it out to hear the main act – a quirky French singer who'd come from Mexico.



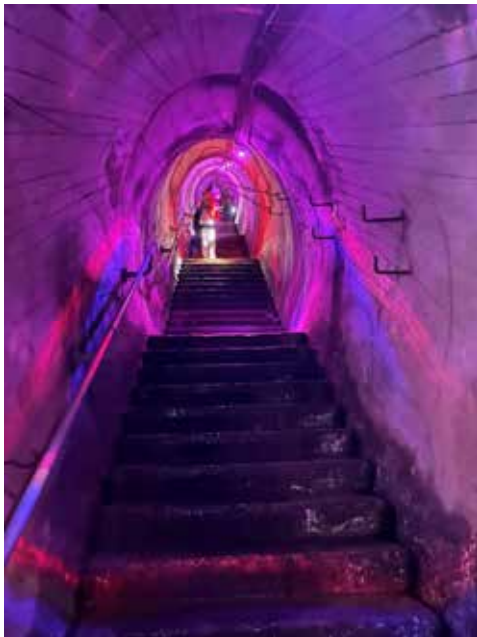






On day 6 we cleaned the bach and drove to Surfdale for a last coffee and pastry together at the not to be missed Bisou Café. Most had a ferry to catch but Aaron and Terumi had the day on Waiheke exploring the tunnels at Stoney Batter.

It's unanimous. Waiheke is a truly wonderful place to explore!



Kayakers Shelley, Greg, Milli, Ruth, Jilliene, Phil, Aaron, Terumi

Story by Shelley. **Photos** by Aaron and Shelley

Whangamata

18-20.10.2024

Trip Organizer/Leader: Michael M.

Paddlers: Helen, Andrew, Simon, Lois, Aidan, Dennis, Barry and myself (Allen)

FRIDAY 18TH

Dennis and I arrived at the Whangamata wharf at 10.00am where we embarked in our kayaks heading north along the coast for a couple of kms before heading back to Clark Island where we had lunch. Whilst we were playing in the small surf off Clark Island we spotted Michael, Helen, Andrew, Simon and Lois carrying their kayaks down the beach.

Once they were on the water, we joined them and headed out to "Donut Island" and from there we headed out around the seaward side of the island and across to Clark Island.

Dennis and I left the group and paddled back to the wharf where our vehicles were parked and made our way back to the campground where we were joined in the early evening by Aidan and Barry.

SATURDAY 19TH

Michael informed us that today was his birthday and he had made a group booking at the RSA for dinner.

After breakfast we transported our kayaks to Island View Reserve and paddled south towards Whiritoa exploring the coastline along the way. Aidan was intimately exploring the rocky coastline when he became high and dry on a steep rock which resulted in him capsizing. He tried valiantly to roll up but was unable to do so due to a rock obstructing his roll.

By the time Dennis and I arrived on the scene Aidan was lowering himself back into his cockpit. Unfortunately, Aidan wasn't wearing his drysuit so we made our way to a nearby beach, which had an abundance of fire wood, where Aidan gathered some dry matter which was successfully ignited with several of Helen's matches. After about half an hour Aidan had warmed up sufficiently so we continued our paddle south.

When our designated lunch spot of Waimama Bay, just north of Whiritoa, came into view the group made their way to the beach - except Aidan, Simon and myself, as we decided to paddle

to the "blow hole" located at the Southern end of the Whiritoa Beach. Upon our arrival we found three young ladies body boarding in the surf with one in particular being scantily clad. Her hanker-chief sized attire may well prove to be the new trend for this coming summer season?

The surf was too big and the tide too low to guarantee safe entry into the blow hole so we decided to beach our kayaks and walk the short distance to the blow hole instead.

We rejoined the rest of the crew at Waimama Beach and we made our way back up the coast to Island View Reserve only to find that it was now low tide which meant we had a long trek up the beach to carry our kayaks and gear.

As Michael had planned, we all converged on the RSA for a great meal to celebrate Micheal's birthday where Michael generously shouted everyone a beverage.

A big thanks to Michael for organizing a great weekend of paddling, socializing and comradery.











Whangamata continued **18-20.10.2024**

Trip Organizer/Leader: Michael M.

Paddlers: Helen, Andrew, Simon, Lois, Aidan, Dennis, Barry and myself (Allen)

SUNDAY 20TH

**Sunday dawned grey and wet.
But by the time we hit the water
the skies had cleared.**

Our paddle for the day took us along the coast to the north of Whangamata, some 10km, to a sheltered bay just north of Onemana. A building swell and 10knt N/E wind made for some exciting calapitus under the cliffs, with the tail of our kayaks often tossed sideways without warning and our faces being slapped by the waves.

After a welcome lunch break, we continued north a short distance and paddled through a cave system that has 2 entrances, before heading back. Simon left us here and carried on north to Tairua.

On the return leg, we stopped for a break at Pakahakaha Bay. This required a surf landing whilst navigating the rocks not far below the surface, and a wet launch following the break. There was a strong outgoing tide pouring out from the Whangamata Harbour, further testing some tired muscles. Those of us who chose to ride the waves in across the bar were able to dodge most of it.

A “healthy” late lunch of hot chips, washed down with a cold ginger beer and topped off with chocolate ice creams, in the sun overlooking the harbour topped off the day.

**Paddlers Allan, Aidan, Barry,
Simon and Dennis**







Waikaremoana

4-8.11.2024

Dennis Hynes, Paula Renouf, Patrick Malloy and
Milli Lovell (Scribe)

Despite the drive including 2 hours of gravel road (with potholes big enough to hide half a car tyre), Waikaremoana firmly lodged itself into one of my two top locations in NZ. Unspoilt wilderness, vast and rugged with little sign of civilisation. Clean, clear water ranging in colour from light turquoise blue to aquamarine to emerald greens to almost black as the depth descends to an unmatched (in the North Island) depth 256 metres!





The weather gods were kind to us with sunshine, light winds and only one light shower over the four days paddling.

Our first day, Monday 4 November, took in Rakaiaho Bay, Mokau Point and the fabulous Waihirere Falls which was a curtain of water we were able to paddle behind.

Starting at 1pm we paddled towards then away from the magnificent Panekiri Bluff to reach our destination by 4pm - Tapuaenui Camp, 13kms all up. What a delightful bush camp! During the night we had a stag grunting very close to our tents (I got quite a scare at first!) and Phil reported two kiwi calling.

Day 2, Tuesday, started at 9am with 12km of stunning scenery until our lunch, swim and sunbathing stop at 1pm in a gorgeous bay next to Pakiwaha Bay. Phil, Aaron & Patrick scrambled around a steep point trying to find Tianaputaputa Cave, but it remained elusive.

There were many kowhai lakeside along this section but sadly we had missed their spring flowering. A few patches of brilliant white native clematis and several large kauri seen along the way. Fauna spotted included one trout each day plus teal, kereru and kahu (native hawk). There seemed to be a family of black swans and their cygnets in each large bay also. We'd counted four boat dumpstations by now, which we hoped were well used.

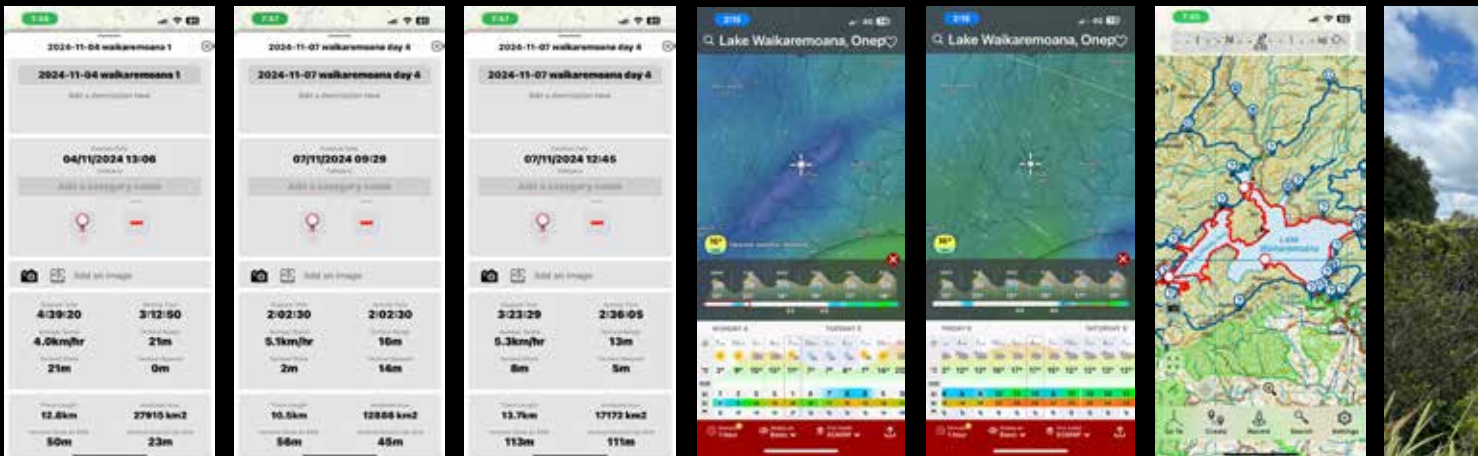


We called in at Waiharuru lodge where only one young couple were staying. A terrific facility in a lovely spot although the boardwalk to the hut was in very poor condition. Just before the lodge we'd paddled to look at the Te Puna peninsula pest fence, which runs from here to Tapuaenui.

We paddled 28kms in total to get to beautiful Korokoro Camp, arriving at 5pm. We'd tried Maranui Camp but were all very pleased we'd carried on another 4kms. Set around a lagoon with a large flat area and pretty bush shelter we were treated to frog, deer and morepork calls all night. It was like having your favourite 'sounds of nature' sleep tape on, only it was real!

We sprang up on our 3rd day, Wednesday, leaving at 8am to complete the Korokoro Falls walk by 10am. 1km of scenic native bush culminating in a very steep approx 10m high waterfall. Patrick, Aaron and I climbed to the top (hello vertigo!) and down below the waking track to the bottom - truly awesome views both angles! It was here we met the first hiker, a young lady happily out on her own.

At 11am we set out on an exploratory paddle around the bay's shoreline, stopping at Waopaoa Hut for lunch. The Hut Warden was in residence, a lovely young lady, who was keeping the area immaculately clean. The hut even smelled good! As we were leaving I saw a large rainbow trout, almost one foot long.



From here we explored two large inlets, paddling up the streams as far as we could go. Saw lots of deer prints in the mud. We also found two native bush exclosures, planted with Kaka beak trees.

On the way home Dennis, Paula and Milli stopped at a beach of almost grecian beauty to enjoy a refreshing swim.

An easy 10.5kms on this day and back to camp by 2pm for some relax time.

Thursday, our 4th day, was goodbye to our lovely campground and off by 9.30am with a plan to camp at Rosies Bay. Having explored up to Whakenepuru Bay the day before we paddled straight across to check out this large bay located just before The Narrows. Another dump station and exclosure - this one having kaka beak trees emerging. Patrick saw two trout as we paddled on to the Narrows. Paddling right alongside the Panekiri cliffs we all marvelled at the quirky beauty of natures artwork - very inspiring. We were delighted to see a cluster of kaka beak trees in flower and further on the kowhai were still blossoming. Bell birds called as we had a food ad swim stop at a small sandy beach between rocky beaches.



Leaving the bluff area we paddled towards the only cellphone tower (worked well for vodaphone, not so good for skinny!) then Sandy Bay Intake for lunch/afternoon tea. With Rosie Bay around the corner we pushed on but found it to be a bit barren and rough. Team vote to continue on home,

Whanganuioparua Inlet, where our cars and a lovely rustic camp with hot showers awaited. We had started on glossy glass like water but were now able to catch a few small surfs coming back in! Back by 4pm, 28kms later, just in time to grab our cabins, all with lake views and untethered horses wandering freely.

A fantastic trip, thanks to Phil for organising and all for making a wonderful experience also a learning and companionable trip. cant wait to do it again!



Phil's notes from same trip:

Our first camp at Tapuaenui was on a crystal clear night, and when during the night, I was outside, the night sky was stunning in its beauty. As always, the stars look so close I feel I could reach up and touch them. Does too, demonstrate how much light pollution there is in our towns and cities, where such sights can't be had.

It was at this camp that I saw an accident that could be avoided. The raparapa on the camp kitchen is about head height, and if one is wearing a hat, as most of us do, it is very easy to walk into an end, and suffer accordingly. I heard the rather loud thud as his head hit the end, and I know, from experience how much this hurts. On a previous trip some years ago now, I was one of two or three paddlers who had the same experience. I think that even something as simple as a piece of rope hanging from the end of the raparapa could define it and allow people to avoid a collision.

It was so easy to slip back into the old routine. I'd wake up, and wait for the korimako to start singing. Sooner or later they would, always seeming faint and a long way away. But, before long, they were doing their thing in that beautiful way they have, and later, to be joined by other birds. Then, when I could define clearly the letters MRS-the makers- on the bottom end of my tent, it was time to get up.

At the two campsites, we heard deer alarm barking at us. I've never seen, down there before, such evidence of high deer numbers, and so close to campsites. None were seen, but sign of them is abundant and in most places we stopped at.

We stopped at a number of animal enclosures, which are fenced-off small areas, that in the absence of introduced browsing animals, show what the forest would be like should there be no such browsing. It does take a number of years for



the vegetation response to be noticeably different to that outside and a few seen hadn't had the time to regenerate, but even still, a couple did have ngutukaka, commonly known as kaka beak, growing in them. And, more were seen as we progressed along below the Panekiri Bluffs. As I was heading home along the stretch of highway immediately above the lake and not that far from Hopuruahine, I saw an animated Aaron pointing out some ngutukaka just showing their beautiful red flowers above the concrete barrier.

On a previous Waikaremoana trip I'd seen a very large one, from memory with about about a 20 cm diameter trunk and at least two metres tall thrusting its upper branches out of the enclosure it was in, which indicated how large this shrub species can grow. It is so unusual to see them, as possums have eliminated kaka beak from most other forests.

All in all, a very good trip, with all contributing to the smooth way in which it was carried out!

And from Dennis a list of fauna seen throughout the trip:

A Long tail cuckoo	Kererū
Bell bird	Possum
Grey warbler	Teal
Kiwi	Tui
Ruru	Frogs
Grey duck	NI Robin
Harrier	Plover
Deer	Chaffinch
Kingfisher	Green finch
Black backed gull	Scaup
Grey heron	Australian coot
Paradise duck	Welcome swallow
Fantail	
Shining cuckoo	
Moly hawk	



Lake Rotoma

09.11.2024

Maureen, John P, Jovan, Lorraine and Lois.

Five of us gathered to explore Lake Rotoma after a winter and more of heavy rains and flooding. The weather was pleasant, mostly overcast, glimpses of sunshine and gentle breezes. Launching near the cafe boatramp we cut across the Manawahe Rd bay going anticlockwise to the far side and thereafter closely followed the coastline. Maureen pointed out the sandbar about a meter beneath our hulls as the usual place for morning tea in paddles past which had demarcated a now non existent lagoon. The ducks, swans and Canadian geese didn't seem to mind. A beach was found nearby and morning tea was had in an open space amidst the drowned and now dead manuka bushes.

Following the edge of the lake closely, Jovan retrieved a fishing scoop and quietly observed a nesting bird. A jetski briefly interrupted the natural peace then left the lake just to us. A beach was then spotted in the distance and with the sunlight looked like an appealing spot for lunch. Alack, on closer inspection and with no other option and some tricky disembarking and scrambling through dead trees we each squeezed in a spot to sit. Lunch is always good.

The trick our eyes played from a distance was to mistake the dead manuka bushes lining the lake edge as sand. The quip "shoulda gone to Specsavers" was inevitable.

Paddling on we passed baches with makeshift jetties as the permanent structures and beach were still submerged in many places. Forecast to rain in the afternoon we managed about 3 drops each in our last half hour of paddling as we set off to enjoy seeing the pink and yellow waterlily beds in flower.

At coffee in the cafe afterward the guess on distance was possibly 15kms maybe more. Nobody had their gizmos working! testament to a very relaxed and enjoyable paddle. Thankyou Maureen for organising.

Paddling the Te Ara Moana Kayak Trail 22.11.2024 - 24.11.2024

Andrew and Helen, Phil and Jilliene, Maureen, Laraine.



ADVENTURERS OF THE PARTY FROM THE NORTH.

Here we all are; looking relaxed after listening to Helen's grim story of a whole class in Western Australia who were swallowed alive by the sudden collapse of a cliff.

Those that had signed up for Ruth's trip had split into two parties, we six had opted to do a longer paddle and complete the kayak trail in spite of being held up by windy weather.

We came together at Omana Beach, with Rangitoto across the water and the last of the windy weather exerting its final energies.

On our route we would gaze across the Tamaki Strait, first at Waiheke Island, then passing Ponui Island, before rounding the corner into the Firth Of Thames.





This Auckland council map shows the start and finish points with camping options at each end and four extra sites along the way.

The campsites shown are small, have a toilet, shelter and water and are aimed at sea kayakers. Dark green posts with a yellow ring mark their positions.

To me, the most appealing of these was Tawhitokino Campground, an elevated spot beside a stream.

Our route was 57 Km in length, a little longer than the official length. Not so surprising as we hugged the coast the whole way and poked our noses into everything that looked interesting.

Our trip took us past beach communities, with both humble baches and double glazed monuments to the owners' economic might. Rocky outcrops were manned by fisherpersons and their long lines which I only managed to collide with once.



The mouth of the Clevedon River provided us with our mangrove experiences. However, I am pleased to be able to report that the dominant experience of the trip was passing unpopulated and wild sections of coast, often amongst clear water with rock formations and sandy beaches that enhanced the paddle. Given that this is on Auckland's back doorstep, it

made for a very pleasant surprise. All the campsites were situated in regional parks, meaning that there are all sorts of walking tracks and places to explore on the surrounding land. It is a credit to those people with the forethought and/or generosity to endow the region with parks such as these.

Though Ruth was not with us in person, we did not feel abandoned as she would send us comforting messages before bed, - 'If you hear explosions in the night, do not feel alarmed' Well, we all made it through the night and presumably the nearby film crew got the shots they were after. The following day, after great rejoicing, having encountered Ruth and her group from the south we again camped in a collection of tents both great and small, beach front and elevated, sunsoaked and shaded.

The final day was the short paddle to Waharau, the southern terminus of the kayak trail, whereupon Ruth gathered up the drivers of our party and returned them to their vehicles at Omana Beach.



So, great thanks is due to Ruth for organising a surprisingly nice paddle and refusing to be cowered by the threat of inclement weather.

It is worth bearing in mind however, that with strong easterly winds blasting onto this shoreline, you would be much better off sitting in bed at home with a good book.

Report - Andrew
Photos - Jilliene

Te Ara Moana – Plan B

Gusty winds and generally rubbish weather meant that Ruth needed to modify her best laid plans for the Ara Moana. The Original Plan A was to depart from Omana on Thursday 21/11 for a 4 day cruise down the west side of the Firth of Thames to Waharau Regional Park. Plan A version 2 was hatched due to the forecast 40 km wind gusts and thunder storms. Version 2 was to depart Friday instead and compress the trip down to 3 days.

The forecast on Thursday night was still a bit dodgy. Whilst some of the group decided to stick to **Plan A version 2** and depart Friday, the Thames contingent - Ruth Henderson, Adrian and Rose Davis and John Patton plus myself - Janet Wilkinson from Auckland, opted for yet another plan. **Plan B** was to delay yet another day, departing Waharau on Saturday for an overnight at Tapapakanga, returning on to Waharau Sunday.

Of course these plan variations had no effect on my plans for the large bar of Whittaker's chocolate, which I had bought especially for the trip. I broke into that on schedule on Thursday and predictably it was all gone by Saturday when we actually started... oh well never mind.

On Saturday morning at Waharau the **Plan B** team were packed and on the water before 11am, after negotiating the ankle breaking boulder strewn beach. The Hunua Ranges sheltered us from the westerlies as we paddled up the coast, past clusters of beach front houses and pebbly beaches lined with Pohutukawa, some just starting to flower. A few fishermen and sparse family groups came into view in spots that were easily accessible from the road. I spotted a mystery grey shape, occasionally diving

and resurfacing just in front of us. Too dark for a dolphin, too fast for a diver, after tantalizing us with the occasional display of a fin or flipper, he/she finally showed her face to confirm we were in the presence of a little seal, who kept us company most of the way.



We beached for a snack, then continued on to the delightful Tapapakanga beachfront campsite in time for a late lunch. We just had time to pitch our tents when the other part of the group (the Plan A, version 2 team) arrived from the opposite direction.

Everyone spent a relaxing afternoon, snoozing, swimming and exploring the farm paths,

including a visit to the historic Ashby homestead. After the convivial pre dinner snacks and conversation it was



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson



PHOTO ©: Ruth E. Henderson

time for dinner and an early night.
Another day in paradise!

Sunday morning it was time to head back to Waharau as a united group. Once again we were reasonably sheltered from the wind and the visibility had improved, giving us clearer views of the Coromandel/ Thames coast across the firth. I was half expecting to meet our friend the seal wearing the sunglasses I lost the day before but alas - no sightings today.

We arrived back at Waharau without incident. Another fun trip, thanks everyone for your excellent company and thanks again Ruth for your 'agile' planning skills.

Lake Waikaremoana

2.12.24 - 6.12.24

Phil A - leader, John G, John P, Allen S, Andrew and Helen, Lois N.

With its extensive unsealed sections, Highway 38 was possum strewn, pothole rich and slow going. This difficult route shields Lake Waikaremoana from the blast of the outside world. On the drive down, more wandering horses than vehicles were encountered, three impressive marae entrances and a new tearoom complex stood out.

The plan was to be on the water before 2 pm. The mob of rather fine young horses did their best to assist, but their contribution was questionable, and in fact apples may well have been the true motivation for their help.



If you look through very thick glass, it is not clear, but green. This was the colour of deeper sections of the lake when the sun was out. Mudstone lined the lake edge, weathering to become a giant mosaic. We progressed anticlockwise around a calm and deserted lake, hopping across Mokau inlet but otherwise hugging the lake edge.



Encountering a curtain of water, decisions had to be made. To travel behind, in front, or (for the overheated) through. It was a delightful feature to encounter and at the right time of day can be adorned in its own personal rainbow. Far above us and unseen, the road snakes around the clifftop offering spectacular views.

The Hopuruahine Landing came into view. This is the northern terminus of the walking track, leaving hikers with the task of getting back to their setting off point. A dark blue water taxi was active from time to time, which had an undeniable appeal when the alternative is an 18 km road walk.

Our night was to be spent at Tapuaenui Campsite situated at the base of the large peninsula that juts into the lake. It is also the start of a pest proof fence that crosses the peninsular at its narrowest point. However, such fortifications need eco-warriors to maintain them, and sad to say, that does not seem to be the case. A short walk from camp and the air is charged with a fragrance divine. It emanates from the many tiny flowers of a spindly cabbage tree like plant. Phil tells me it is called 'Neinei', but I say "Yesyes" I want some for my garden!



The new day started with a kiwi's screech followed by a full-on dawn chorus. This was a fine, sheltered campsite with plenty of room for spreading out.

Around the peninsula we paddle, through the section named 'The Narrows', calm now, but it was more thrilling than we cared for when we were sucked through five years ago. Lunch, and some had a swim at Waiharuru Hut, the first of three huts we visited, which together with their grounds, were immaculately presented.



Investigating most of what the lake had to offer had left us somewhat drained, so we skipped the Marauti inlet and headed straight for Korokoro Campsite, our home for the next two nights. This is a wonderful spot, underfoot is not grass but a miniscule flowering herb.

We were sheltered but had peeks of the lake and tired bodies were lulled off to sleep by the melancholy music of the frogs.

Wednesday dawns, our neighbours, the young men on their 'Duke of Edinburgh' adventure were out of their bivouacs in which they enjoyed various levels of discomfort. We were off to explore the end of the lake where the walking track descends the Panekiri Bluffs and meets the water. Here there are lots of bays and sheltered waterways to poke into.



Next, across the waters we went to Marauiti Hut for lunch then around the corner to view the campground and river that feeds the inlet before heading back to our camp. Once there, the most energetic explored Korokoro Falls. Meanwhile, the least energetic first slept then awakened to appreciate the bursting forth of nature - Cabbage trees in outrageous bloom, dragonflies participating in their mid air romances, pairs of paradise ducks with their nine fluffy children.

Thursday was our get home day, and Phil, contemplating a very windy forecast and carrying the burden of leadership, decided upon a change of plan. We were to return the way we have come to avoid being where the wind could hurt us most. The sun never rises any earlier than it does on this date, and *Kapow*, we found ourselves on the water at 6.30 am. Our course is direct and there is a sense of urgency as we approach 'The Narrows', potentially the most unpleasant spot on the lake.

Finally we arrive - but what trickery is this? Our whole party is engulfed in dead calm! Oh well, we are bound to get it wrong now and then. We continue on and call into Mokau Landing for lunch. Tucked just back a bit is the rather quaint 'Wairoa Angling Club' hut, with its men's and women's wings.

Off we set again, with a gentle breeze behind us, on the last leg, back to our cars parked just a few kilometers away around the corner.

Actually, the breeze was indeed quite helpful, in fact very very helpful.

The waves too, were going our way, and were also getting bigger and more helpful.

We were starting to have even more fun gripping our paddles as the wind would playfully try to pluck them from our hand.

By now we were really enjoying the challenge of staying upright as we bounced and bobbed along.

This last section seemed so much shorter and more dramatic than I imagined it would be.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven paddlers, whew!

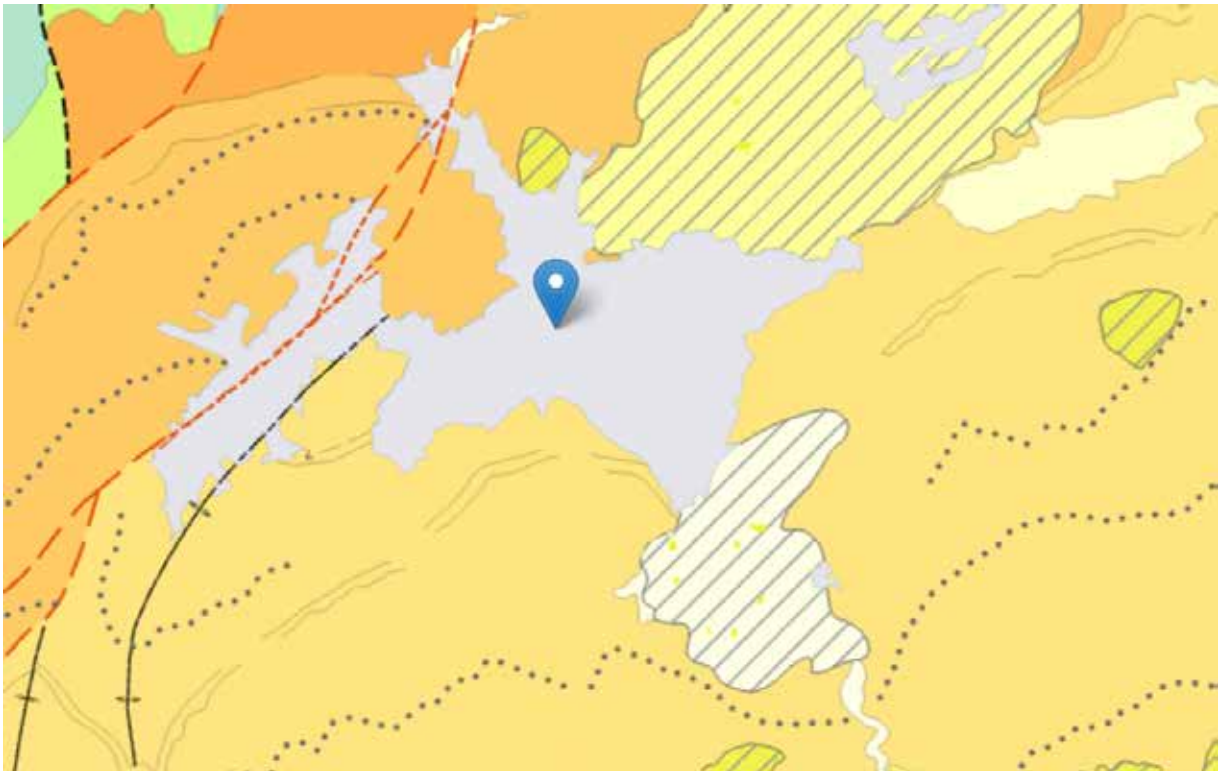
Thanks Phil, for good leadership and decision making.

Photos - John P and Helen
Report -Andrew

Geology of Lake Waikaremoana

Lake Waikaremoana is a drowned river valley that was formed 2,200 years ago by massive landslides that blocked the Waikaretaheke River. Possibly triggered by an earthquake, the landslide debris is about 2.2 km³ in volume. Outflow was then restricted to underground flow which was in turn largely blocked following construction of the three power stations in the 1940s.

Kayaking round the lake we noted the often-tilted sandstone and mudstone beds. The eroded beds revealing hard and soft layers. At the time these marine sediments were being deposited the New Zealand landmass was restricted to the South Island. By late Miocene North Auckland and possibly also the Waikato and Bay of Plenty may also have become land.



Geological Map of lake Waikaremoana (Source: GNS Science)

Key:

Light yellow (striped) at the south-east outlet is Holocene (11,700 to present years ago) landslide deposits.

Dark yellow (striped) at the north-east, where the Holiday Park campsite is located, is Late Pleistocene (126,000 to 11,700 years ago) to Holocene landslide deposits.

Mustard yellow, exposed around most of the lake, is Late Miocene (11-5 million years ago) sandstone and mudstone

Orange, the rock exposed on the western side, is Mid Miocene (16-11 million years ago) sandstone.



Mudstone and Sandstone Strata.



Amongst the magnificent sandstone bedding planes.

Andrew about to be drenched.

John Gumbley

Coromandel – Tucks Bay

17-19.12.2024

This paddle, organised and led by Ruth Henderson, started on Tuesday 17 and finished on Thursday 19 December 2024. Along with Ruth were Jim Mathews, Robert Brassey, Phil Alley, Milli Lovell and Barrie Rainsford.

The weather forecast for Wednesday was wind speeds picking up during the day, from a southerly low of 12 knots, to a high more from the west of 25 knots. And on the water, probably was accurate. Much milder on Thursday with estimates of 9 to 12 knots from the southwest, and a calm sea as we completed our day's paddle.

We camped at Tucks Bay, which is an extension of the Long Bay camping ground, and around in the next, northern, bay. Ruth made the observation that there is a difference in character between the clientele of both camps. There are those of us who enjoy the minimum of facilities so stay at Tucks Bay, while those who stop at Long Bay require more, and this is reflected in children. The kids at Tucks Bay are outside doing stuff, while those at Long Bay are inside on their devices.



We eased ourselves into a very relaxed 9am start on Wednesday morning, after a good briefing from Ruth on her plan for the day's paddle. Which was to head along the Ruffin Peninsula, cross the Little Passage and follow the shoreline of Whanganui Island in an anticlockwise direction. As we were paddling along the peninsula and observing the houses that are perched on the cliff edge, in order to gain what must be magnificent views, there seemed to be a couple of issues for the house owners. One house had a recent slip directly below it, and for most of the others, inevitable erosion of the cliff edge must make insurance costly, if indeed, they can be insured. And, like so often in the Coromandel area, houses are often nestled in amongst native vegetation, mostly kanuka, no doubt giving the owners some sense of pleasure. But, if they knew the hazard that burning kanuka can pose, that could well change. A canopy fire in this species can spread with speed, and ferocity, much much faster than three fit young forestry workers can run.



As we progressed along the lovely coastline of Whanganui, the wind did seem to be picking up, and proved so when the writer, who was a wee bit ahead of everyone else went around one corner and into strong wind. Being of the belief that he who hesitates is lost, charged at it, and when safely in calmer water, was able to turn to see how everyone else was coping. And found he was very much on his own. A much quicker return around the corner saw the others preparing for a stop on a nice stretch of beach. After a break, Ruth made the decision that for safety reasons, we should return to camp. As we were paddling back a boat approached us. The skipper stopped, and asked where we were heading, after finding out, advised us against this. He had just come from Tucks Bay, and said the wind was very strong there. As there weren't reasonable alternatives available, we didn't take his advice, but it was reassuring that he cared enough for our welfare to try and assist us.

The rest of the day was spent on reading, talking and walking, one of which is through a lovely grove of regenerating kauri. There is at least one mature kauri in there, probably a couple of metres in diameter, and well worth visiting.

Our Thursday's paddle, shortish, and fitting for the last day, by following closely along the shoreline northwards. We called into a number of neat small creeks along the way, a very pleasant paddle up some of them that gave an indication of what they would have looked like a long time ago. That the trip was finished was well and truly reinforced by being informed that there had been an accident on the Thames/Coromandel Road, which prompted some discussion about alternative routes to get home.

Thanks to Ruth for organising and leading this trip.

Story - by Phil Alley

Photos - By Ruth E. Henderson

President's Thoughts: Here are some items that have crossed my mind.

-----I have recently returned from visiting Lake Waikaremoana after a five year absence. During that time the media has reported on some of the actions of Te Urewera's management that have been disappointing or even alarming to some people. I stayed in the commercial campground, visited three of the five huts on the 'around the lake walk' and found them all amazingly clean with well looked after grounds. Two of the lakeside camping spots used by trampers and kayakers were very pleasant, however they would have benefited from some maintenance. Lake Waikaremoana's Puketukutuku Peninsula had been a haven for endangered species and benefited from the protection of a fence and trapping program. Things are not looking good here, and if you happen to be a young kiwi chick of less than 800 grams, no one would blame you for being worried. An excellent article on this topic is listed below.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/300535889/pest-control-efforts-in-te-urewera-have-changed--some-conservationists-worry-about-the-fate-of-native-species>

-----The subject of safety equipment is a bore or a topic of excitement, depending upon your outlook on life. A recent unannounced challenge between four teams of BASK's finest, endeavoured to ascertain if paddlers had the equipment, and how quickly they could bring it into action.



Well, here are the mighty, all conquering 'B Team'. Not only were they fastest off the mark, but the shrill sound of their combined whistle blowing would bring fits of jealousy to any kokako.

-----Jean Kirkham and a group of like minded paddling friends got BASK up and running some 27 years ago. She was the only *Life Member* of our club. Unfortunately she died last August - see the article for more details.

- Andrew.