

River Estuary Watch

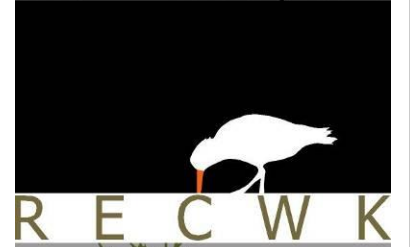
River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti – Karitane

JANUARY 2017

Restoration for sandspit

- *Brendan Flack*

River - Estuary Care



Waikouaiti - Karitane

Ōhinepouwera (the sand spit across the Waikouaiti estuary opposite Kāritane) is undergoing a makeover.



As you can clearly see in the photo to the left, most of the pine trees have been taken down. This has coincided with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka receiving funding for projects that relate to restoration of the river habitats. Great news!

It has been decided to concentrate much of this effort on appropriate plantings and weed eradication on this area.

'Wairua' is the name of this restoration project, and refers to the mixing of the fresh and salt waters in the estuary. 'Wai'- meaning 'water', 'rua' meaning 'two'. It also refers to the connection that we, as humans, have to our rivers.

So, combining our love of waka and other water-craft with planting, and caring for the river, we think that we might have found a good mix of fun and work. Groups of young people (and not-so-young) transport themselves across the river to plant, to weed and to water the plantings.

We learn about the wildlife, the fish and plants in the area and how we fit into it, and we have the opportunity to think about how the health of the environment and the health of the people are linked.

If you know of others that may want to come for a paddle or to plant, there is always a spare seat or two. To learn more, call Brendan Flack on 465 7300 or 027 440 9998.



Update of planting on the Waikouaiti Reserve

- Chris Hull

There has been a lot of interest in the work on the Waikouaiti sand dunes since the trees were felled in 2014/15.

Here is a brief summary of work at the Waikouaiti end of the spit from a planter's point of view:

Replanting began the year after the trees were harvested, with a team of planters employed by Kati Huirapa Runaka and funded by DCC from the sale of the pines.

Ecologist Rhys Millar was contracted to make a plan. He has set up a one hectare trial area 500m south of the effluent disposal area, where a variety of well grown natives have been planted, interspersed with small plots of root-trainer sized plants. It was decided to either add or withhold fertiliser and/or water crystals to assess which combination would have the most benefit. The results favoured no fertiliser and also showed that the smaller plants really struggled in the dry sandy site.



Of the larger grade plants, Harakeke (Phormium tenax) has seen the best growth, along with some good examples of Olearia avicennifolia (Cordyline australis), Mikimiki (Coprosma propinqua) and Kohuhu (Pittosporum tenuifolium).

The plan now is to consolidate, with ongoing new plantings within this area, along with weed and pest control.

Harakeke

Thanks Chris, many residents will be looking forward to hearing further from the DCC about how they expect the work to develop.



Toetoe



Olearia

My holiday job in the 1950s

- Kathy Coombes

We shifted here when I was four because Dad (Rata Kent) was starting up a new branch of Otakou Fisheries. We lived with my grandmother, Hine, in the old family homestead at Merton, but moved into Karitane when our house opposite the shop was built.

The wharf in use then was on the domain by the boat ramp, it was just an old shed and some coppers where Dad boiled up the crayfish. Most of it was packed up and sent off overseas but he cooked some at home too for family and friends and, when the Queen came to NZ in 1953, he cooked crayfish for her.

Later Dad moved to a bigger shed on what is now known as "the old wharf" just below the corner of Coast Rd and Scarp St. He repaired the building and fitted rails to the side of the wharf so that a trolley could be hauled up to the shed. There were about 20 boats working and, in later years, a barge was used to bring the crayfish to the wharf as the river was starting to silt up.

I started working there when I was about 10 after getting into trouble with Mum. It was my job after school to go home and prepare the family's meal but one day I decided to invite all my friends round instead and give them a high tea. I had all of Mum's best cups and saucers out when she came home and caught me. She said "That's it - you can work!"

From then on, I worked at the shed after school and during holidays. Dad paid me 10 shillings a week, which seemed a lot to me at the time. My brothers would have been there too but they were only young and played outside or in the tea room, but they worked there too when they were older.

The youngest was still a baby when I started and he was tucked up in a box and put somewhere to keep warm.

The fish, mainly groper and blue cod, went straight into containers and were sent off to town, but most of what was brought in was crayfish and it was our job to process them. There was no quota and they were only caught from July to December.



Mum and Uncle Des at the wharf

My holiday job in the 1950s continued

The small ones went through a roller to squeeze the meat out to be frozen into blocks. The larger ones were tailed and the tails graded and packed in cellophane before going into boxes to be frozen. At the end of the day we could have processed up to 6000 tails.

The heads weren't sold. Some got eaten, some were buried in a big hole in one of the paddocks and others went down a chute on the Otago peninsula.

My cousin Judy and I used to put our names on the inside lid of our boxes and were always eager to see if we would get a reply. We got a few from Australia, which we couldn't understand as we thought the crays were sent to Asia.

Then I was really surprised to get a letter from a guy in America. He worked in a restaurant near Lake Eyrie and asked me how we worked. I wrote back, telling him about our industry and he published my letter in his local paper so his customers would know where their crays (or 'lobsters' as he called them) were from. He sent me the cutting, which I still have.

The Otakou Fishery at Karitane was well known and the crays were said to be the sweetest and juiciest in NZ, so we had regular visitors. On one of the Lions tours, 4 of them came out to see the crayfish being processed and they gave me their autographs on a fisheries docket. Another visitor was the author A H Reed, who walked the length of the country, stopping off at Karitane on his way north. He signed my autograph book.

Karitane was a close-knit community and the estuary was a focus of activity. We kids swam in the river and dragged for whitebait by the wharf - we used to say "A good cray fishing year is a good white-baiting year".

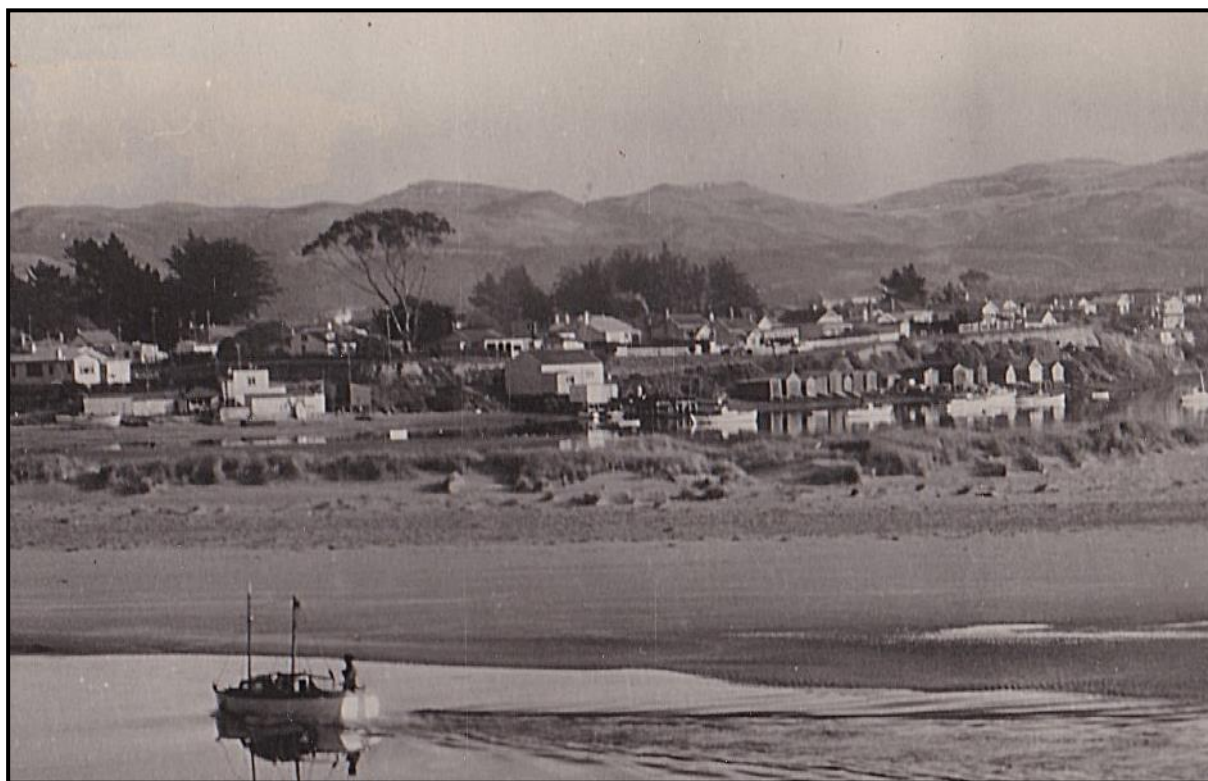
We didn't need to go fishing – Mum cooked us fish of some sort for breakfast, dinner and tea. Although our family livelihood was from the sea, we never went to the beach and we were banned from going round the point.

By the 1960s, several new fisheries had started up – Skeggs, Globe and National Mortgage – and the money was better so people started working for them, leaving less men fishing from Karitane for Otakou Fisheries.

After I left school, I moved away and, when I came back in 1980 to the local shop, I noticed the difference – there was a new hall and a new wharf, the fish factory work had stopped and there were less boats. The white-bait were still around but much less flounder or eels - there used to be heaps of eels.

Now I enjoy sitting on the river bank in the sunshine with my white-bait net out – it's very peaceful. My main connection with the river now is that I'm on the Taiapure Committee and I'm happy with what we have done so far.

Then and Now – 1950s-2017



Karitane wharf and boatsheds



2016 raft race



Value added volunteers

- *Patti Vanderburg*

Our community-based conservation projects are grounded by generous volunteers. The talents and hard work of planters, cooks and hosts, bird counters, plant growers, shade house builders, organisers, school kids, university students, and community members all result in our wonderful long term habitat restoration, education, and monitoring work.

We know that this work is not easily measured. We can quantify the areas of habitat restored, the patterns of bird movements and migration, and the level of awareness in our community about river and estuary issues. Harder to measure are some real positive boosts in environmental capital and social capital we experience by concentrating our efforts on worthwhile community based conservation projects.

We also have been tallying volunteer contributions in our yearly Volunteer Hours report. In 2016 we documented 1,766 volunteer hours! The equivalent contribution (at \$19.25 living wage/hour) would be \$33,995.50. Full credit to our volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering your talents and time please get in touch: vburg@es.co.nz

Visiting swan

Local resident Joel recently saw a large white swan amongst the black swans on the estuary. This was confirmed by our ornithologist and artist Derek Onley to be a Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*), which is a rare European introduction to NZ. It is larger than the Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) and has a distinctive orange bill (and is white rather than black). A Mute Swan – probably the same one – was seen on the lagoon a few days previously but, prior to that, there have been very few sightings in this area. They are mainly seen around Canterbury and Hawke's Bay.

Despite the name, the Mute Swan is not mute but does not have the distinctive loud call of the Black Swan. Derek thought that our visitor was just a transient traveller from its home territory and would probably continue wandering for a while. Swan species do not interbreed.

Thanks to Sam Clarkson for the photo.



To become a friend of the River and Estuary Care: Waikouaiti—Karitane	Phone or email Brad – 03 4658334 or brad126@xtra.co.nz
Should you wish to kindly make a donation	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter our name: Waikouaiti-Karitane Rivercare Group Inc) (this will appear on your statement) ▪ Enter our bank account number 060942 0190792 00 ▪ Enter your name and reason for payment e.g. donation to friend of Waikouaiti-Karitane Rivercare Group (Inc) (this will appear on our statement) <p>or post donation to 1333 Coast Rd Karitane</p>

River-Estuary Care Waikouaiti - Karitane

Active since 1999 – Incorporated in 2001

Coastal Otago Conservation Award for 2005

Objectives

- To restore balance to Papatuanuku (Mother Earth).
- To have a well-informed community about our river and estuary.
- To have our community participating in sustainable resource practices.
- To have a healthy, productive river and estuary ecosystem (fishing, biodiversity, general health).
- To promote an understanding of the inter-relatedness of our river and estuary ecosystem with adjacent ecosystems.

Anyone interested in supporting the above objectives may join!

Would you like to help with a project this year? Then contact

- Newsletter – Hilary Yeoman ph 465 7687.
- Revegetation project – contact Andy Barratt ph 021 890 048.
- Education, information and advocacy project – contact Patti Vanderburg ph 465 8113.
- Birdwatching – contact current convener Allan Kilner, phone 465 8411.

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