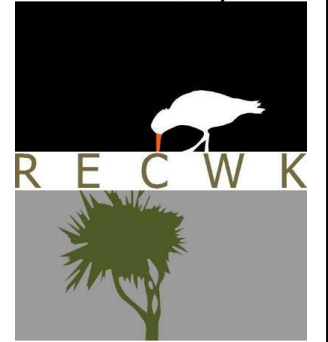


River Estuary Watch

River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti – Karitane

FEBRUARY 2018

River - Estuary Care



Waikouaiti - Karitane

Habitat Restoration Project: Waikouaiti Catchment

We had a good day out planting on the Smith Farm in September!

It was a big effort, with 51 helpers establishing 555 native plants along the Waikouaiti River.

A big thanks to the Smith family for their good stewardship, providing the plants, site preparation and wonderful BBQ. And big thanks to all for your hard work and good spirits.



Stormwater and our waterways

- *Frank van Betuw, Senior Education and Compliance Officer, 3 Waters, Dunedin City Council*

Stormwater is rainfall runoff, which makes its way into drains, wetlands, creeks, rivers or the sea. Looking after our stormwater system helps to protect our waterways.

We all have a part to play. The Otago Regional Council manages the region's water quality and quantity, including the effects of stormwater. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) is responsible for Karitane's roadside stormwater drains and approving drainage as part of building consents. Most household stormwater runs into the roadside drains, nearby streams or to the coast. Landowners are responsible for disposing of their stormwater safely.

The stormwater system can flood when there is more water than the system can cope with, when drains or grates get blocked, or when watercourses are blocked by fences, buildings or unsuitable plantings.

We also need to keep our stormwater as clean as possible. Because stormwater goes into our waterways and streams without being treated, it is important to keep pollutants – such as cleaning chemicals, litter or sediments – out of our drains.

What can you do to help?

There are many ways you can improve drainage and protect stormwater quality:

- Keep your stormwater drains or any flow paths on your land clear of debris or structures.
- Collect rainwater from your roof to use in your garden.
- Create rain gardens to slow and absorb runoff.
- For landscaping, use concrete-grass paving, open-jointed paving or gravel, because water can run through these.
- Clean your car on the grass rather than on your driveway.
- Wash paintbrushes over your lawn. Alternatively, use your laundry so the residue goes into wastewater pipes.
- Use environmentally friendly products sparingly, and avoid using any products when rain is forecast.
- If you notice any problems with roadside drains, please give the DCC a call on 477 4000.

How you manage stormwater on your property can affect your neighbours and others downstream. If you are being affected by stormwater from your neighbour, have a chat with them.

You can find out more about stormwater at www.dunedin.govt.nz/stormwater or www.orc.govt.nz, or call DCC on 477 4000.

Alasdair Kirk - Karitane fisherman

I came out to Karitane in 1980 to crew on 'Sea Slave', then I met the lovely school teacher here and I never left.

There were about 18-20 boats fishing here then - about half were full timers doing crays in the season, and blue cod and set netting for the rest of the year. In earlier days, the old fishermen had an agreed system where they allocated each other different areas (grounds). They made their own pots out of supplejack and hauled them up by hand, so it was impossible to overfish – they only just made a living.

There were only eight or nine licenses then and nobody else could get in unless they bought a boat – with its ground - from an existing fisherman. Any Port Chalmers boats that strayed into Karitane waters were likely to get their pots cut off.

In the late 1960s, it was all opened up and anyone could get a license. A new generation of fishermen moved in. The supplejack pots were replaced by wooden and steel ones and, for four or five years, there were no limits – the old system was gone and it was open slather with every man for himself. When it became clear that there were too many boats, the controlled fisheries came in for a few years, stopping all new crayfish licenses and imposing further size limits.



I crewed for about six months then went out on my own, blue cod potting and set netting on 'Solus', an old boat that my father helped me do up. Then we built 'Solus 2' in John Vicker's big shed that used to be at the 5-ways junction.

Little boats didn't have radar so finding the fish was self-taught - a matter of trial and error. I set nets down at Warrington and checked them every day until the end of January, then went further north to catch Blue Cod.

It was a good lifestyle. I worked every day, including Christmas Day, but was often finished by lunch. One man could make a living – there was no paperwork. Catching fish isn't hard – it's all the bureaucracy that you have to deal with. With that many boats, it was still competitive and there was sometimes friction – we all had our pots cut off at times.

I worked on my own for the first 10 or so years but, as I started to catch more fish, I took on crew, including the kids. They have all worked for me in their holidays – either on the boat or making nets. There have been a few dramas - I had to jump overboard once when the boat started to sink but Gary Kent came to rescue me. I've been lost in the fog and had to sit out the night off Warrington. Several times I've had to dive over to untangle rope from the propeller – we've all have had to do that. You get bloody cold and it's a struggle getting back in if you are on your own.

I got my leg caught up in the winch once on 'Diamond' and was hanging over the side of the boat until I could release the pressure and get free.

I've had some rough rides home in storms and I've been stuck on the bar several times – that's just part of being in Karitane. It was always when I was pushing it, trying to get in when there wasn't enough water. I just had to sit there and wait six hours for the tide to turn.



One year a huge basking shark got twisted up in the nets and drowned. It was floating by the boat and we couldn't untangle it, so we towed it into Karitane. We got a line around the tail, and some kids that were here on their school camp helped to pull it up the beach. I can still picture those kids all in a line, hauling a 6m basking shark out of the water!

In those days you cut out the liver and the fins and sold them, but you couldn't do that now. There were boxes and boxes of liver, which a guy from Kaikoura came and bought.

GPS came in the 1990s and was a big change in fishing because we didn't have to use marks to guide us. We used to line up the headland with the Maori church and you could see that line going right up the coast – it must have been a natural fault and marked the rocky ground.

Some of the old blokes still used that method, even after GPS came in - you could see them with their heads up looking at the landmarks.

I've had seven boats at Karitane over 30 years, two of which have sunk in the estuary, but the boys are doing the fishing now. I'm the backup. Trevor Allison and I were the last ones here and, when they stopped the fuel, I went to Port Chalmers, so there's only one boat fishing from Karitane now. Port is easier - it's a deep-water port with no sand bar.

There are more fish around now. Back then I might have caught 40 ton a year, now it's more like 150. We are a lot more experienced and we go further out but I think it's because there are less boats – and a quota system. Many sold out when the quotas came in, in 1986.

I don't think there was a great problem with pollution back then, apart from the Spartina grass. It grew under water and got sucked up into the boat's vents and clogged up the waterways. At each fishermen's meeting, we had to put in money for a bloke to come and spray it out.

I think it was the Spartina rotting in autumn that caused that Karitane smell. There was thick, smelly black mud – it could also have been from the septic tanks that were still here, or from Cherry Farm sewerage. You don't see Spartina now and the smell has gone.

On the other hand, we used to be able to trawl Waikouaiti Bay, but you can't now because there is so much slime and weed, which must have come from the river. They used to catch Red Cod out there and I can remember trawling for bait 20 years ago, but nobody goes there now.

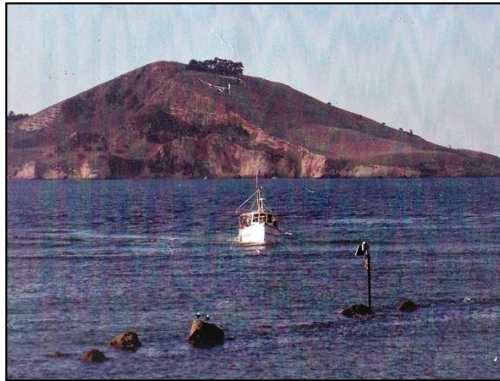
There were more regular floods then, which scoured out the river and cleaned the whole place out. Lots of Manuka trees would get washed down, which was great firewood. Floods didn't affect the fishing much but there was one bad year when they reckon the young crays – puerulus – were killed off due to excess fresh water.

I didn't see sealions then, apart from one that used to hang around the wharf, but he was just a loner. They are increasing now, and they are going to be a problem soon because they eat penguins. They are making a fuss about set nets killing penguins, but they forget that the sealions eat them. I saw Right Whales, and an

Orca came right up beside the boat once and looked at me, but I think there are more whales around now than there were then.

Karitane was a traditional fishing port – there were a few old cribs, but most people worked at fishing and/or Cherry Farm. I remember one boat, 'Elsie', with a cat living on board to keep the seagulls away. It couldn't get ashore – poor old cat – it just had to sit on board and eat any gulls it could get.

It's a different community now – not so close-knit. They were all big drinkers in the old days, but those people are gone – all the hard cases. The characters.



New Year's Eve raft race



Do you want to help out?



Would you like to volunteer?

Rivercare projects work because people volunteer time, advice, and donate funds, plants & materials.

- Would you like to be notified if we are having a planting day in the field or a potting-up day at the shade house?
- Are you keen to help in other ways?

Please contact Patti Vanderburg vburg8113@gmail.com

To become a friend of the River and Estuary Care: Waikouaiti—Karitane	Phone or email Brad – 03 4658334 or brad126@extra.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 convener Dave Yeoman ph 0220991202

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