

## Hawksbury Lagoon update April 2019

We held our Annual General meeting a couple of weeks ago and it was great to see some new faces present and to have the opportunity to hear Greg's presentation about the eight Maori reserves in the East Otago area of which part of the Hawksbury Lagoon is one (the fishing easement). Those present found it very interesting.

In my annual report, I took the opportunity to look back at the past ten years to outline what all our volunteers have accomplished (full report is on the website). The most noticeable are the plantings in different areas of the lagoon. We planted approximately 18,000 plants during this time, although a number have not survived, due mainly to lack of maintenance, harsh growing conditions and rabbits. Fortunately, we no longer have to apply for funds to purchase plants as the Marae nursery now supplies us with all we need at no cost. The other obvious improvements are the causeways, we have resurfaced them with limechip on two occasions over the past ten years, with volunteer assistance. Every now and again DOC swoops in to cut the sides back (hard) and saves us days of work. The other less apparent work relates to managing water levels, this has engendered much discussion and debate, however changes may become apparent over the next few months, fingers crossed.

The wildlife supported by the lagoon, comes and goes as it always has, with bird numbers of various species fluctuating widely. This past month has seen a lone Kotuku (White Heron) gracing us with her/his presence and being much photographed. Recent shoals of fish have been sighted in Post Office Creek, due mainly to the outlet remaining open for a much longer period, the shoals noticeably attracting shags to the lagoon.

At the AGM those present supported the idea of setting up a "Friends of the HL" group. A number of people over the years have said they'd like to support the work at the lagoon but don't want to go on the committee. I would be very keen to hear from anyone interested to become a "Friend". Encouraging "friends" to take part in activities at the lagoon, such as planting, maintenance or monthly bird monitoring and an invite to our Christmas supper. You can volunteer whatever time you had available and we would provide you with some initial training if needed, especially in learning how to identify specific duck species for bird monitoring. Alternatively, you could select a specific area of the lagoon which you want to maintain and/or come on our planting days, the next one is on **Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup>**. We are also busy selling our popular tea towels designed by Derek Onley (\$15) and lovely packs of photo cards with envelopes (5 for \$10). Just email me if you're interested to find out more or go to our website.

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