

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2:

Spotlight on toetoe
CoastCare news in brief

PAGE 3:

CoastCare news in brief –
(continued)
Weed watch – Sea Spurge

PAGE 4:

What's in our dunes?
Seaweek – Beach clean-ups

WHAT'S ON

Join us at:

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to find out what's on around
Northland over the coming
months or phone the CoastCare
Co-ordinator on
0800 002 004.

Taipā bounces back from storm damage

The Taipā community has risen to the challenge of repairing and replanting its beachfront in the wake of two ex-tropical cyclones in the early months of 2014.

Taipā's walkways, fences and dune vegetation have been built up over a period of years through the efforts of the Taipā Beach Improvement Society. However, significant damage was caused by storm surges and waves generated by ex-tropical cyclone Lusi in March, and again the following month with ex-cyclone Ita.



Graham Lutze of the Taipā Beach Improvement Society says the dunes had built up quite a bit over the years but were "rolled back" by the waves, with spinifex plants washed inland as far as the road in front of the Reia Taipā Beach Resort.

"The waves left a bank averaging about 1m high and 4m back from where the edge of the dunes had been," Graham says. "But it would have been worse without the spinifex and people have been really impressed with the way the spinifex held back the waves – because they were huge."

Fences and accessways were also broken and

undermined but Graham says the group successfully salvaged a lot of the materials, and even some of the spinifex plants are showing early signs of recovery after having been drenched in salt water. "It's been pretty labour-intensive and we're a pretty old gang now [the Taipā Beach Improvement Society] but it's amazing what we have been getting through. We have had good musters turn up to the working bees and a lot of the people who came to the public day left their names and numbers, so it has been an opportunity to get new people involved. One day we also had community service workers, the junior CoastCare group, Taipā Area School and a team from NorthTec working."

A total of 700 new spinifex plants and 50 pingao, along with fencing supplies, were provided by the Northland Regional Council.

Northland CoastCare co-ordinator Laura Shaft says Taipā, along with other beaches such as Tauranga Bay and Waipu Cove, demonstrated that while dune plantings could not prevent erosion in extreme weather, they could reduce its impact.

She also notes that new green shoots have been observed on salt-damaged spinifex in a number of locations.



A working bee gets underway at Taipā to repair damage in the wake of two ex-tropical cyclones

CoastCare news in brief

Here's a quick look at what CoastCare groups around the Northland region achieved during the summer – for more information, check out our website: www.nrc.govt.nz/CoastCare

Friends of Rarawa

The group is continuing to monitor the growth and survival of plantings, as well as running transects to keep track of the expansion/retreat of the wattle as part of the Dunes Trust's backdune restoration project.



Baylys Beach Society

An official opening of the new walkway between Baylys and Chases Gorge was held during Seaweeek. On their way home, participants collected rubbish from the beach.



Council funding for plants and material

Plants and other materials (such as fencing and pest control tools) can be provided for dune restoration projects through the Northland Regional Council's Environment Fund. Find out more at www.nrc.govt.nz/environmentfund or contact the CoastCare Co-ordinator by email coastcare@nrc.govt.nz or phone 0800 002 004.

SPOTLIGHT ON Toetoe



Toetoe *Austroderia splendens*

Toetoe, a native of New Zealand, is often confused with the exotic plant pampas, which is now more widespread. Here are some handy ways to tell the two plants apart:

- Toetoe flowers in the spring, while pampas flowers in autumn
- The edges of pampas leaves will cut your fingers. Meanwhile, toetoe have a bloom which resembles face powder on their lower stems
- Toetoe leaves have a visible vein between the mid-rib and the edge of the leaf – this is not the case with pampas
- Toetoe leaves are shinier than pampas when the two are compared side-by-side
- Pampas sheds its old leaves and the bases curl around (making a good fire-lighting material), whereas toetoe always hangs onto its old leaves.

Ahipara Community CoastCare Group



A very successful Seaweeek event was held at Ahipara in March. Students from Ahipara School, local pre-schools and homeschoolers all came along to learn about the dotterels and sand dunes and how they can help protect them. They also did their bit to help by cleaning up litter from the reserve and beach.

Work to promote the Punangu (dotterel sanctuary) is going strong, with 10 pou placed around the boundary by the Far North Safer Community Council and Te Runanga O Te Rarawa.

Ahipara Community CoastCare worked hard over the summer to protect the dotterels nesting on the beach and were rewarded by two fledglings.

Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust



The group has been working hard to construct two new walkways down to the beach and improve the walking track through the backdune area of the wildlife refuge. They hope to encourage people to use this path rather than walking through the nesting areas by the estuary.

A successful planting day was held in May at the Living Legends site at Uretiti. The site was chosen for additional plants mainly because of the work Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust have done to keep the plants alive.

They have also been busy maintaining the plantings at Ruakaka dune lake and getting ready for a public planting day held in early June. They will also be planting with students from Bream Bay College again this year.

WEED WATCH Sea Spurge

Sea Spurge *Euphorbia paralias*



The beach weed sea spurge was found near Aotea Harbour in the Waikato in 2012. This invasive weed has been classified as an unwanted organism and could have serious impacts on our coastal environment if it became established here, as it has in Australia where it has caused major environmental

problems at many beaches. So far the discovery at Aotea Harbour remains the only known sighting in New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is leading a joint eradication programme with Waikato Regional Council and the Department of Conservation (DOC).

Wider surveillance of the New Zealand coastline is dependent on local communities keeping an eye out for sea spurge plants. You can help by being aware of what the plant looks like. Sea spurge is most likely to grow on sand dunes or around beach debris. If you find a plant, please do not remove it, but note the location (preferably on a GPS if available) and report as soon as possible to MPI on 0800 80 99 66. Avoid handling the plants because the toxic sap may cause skin and eye irritation.

Further information is available on the MPI website at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/seaspurge including a fact sheet advising how to identify sea spurge. Sea spurge looks similar to a threatened New Zealand native species (*Euphorbia glauca*) and photos of both species can also be found on the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network website: www.nzpcn.org.nz/

"What's in our dunes?"

Little blue penguin | kororā



Penguins were once common in New Zealand, but most are now on offshore islands where there are no dogs, cats and stoats.

As their name suggests, little blue penguins are the world's smallest penguin, standing just over 25 cm high and weighing around one kilogram. They are slate-blue with a bright white belly.

They spend much of their time hunting small fish, crustaceans and squid up to 25 km offshore.

Like all penguins they cannot fly, but their paddle-like flippers make them excellent swimmers, reaching speeds of up to six kilometres per hour underwater.

Penguins commonly nest in dunes, coastal forest, farmland and rocky areas up to 200 m inland. They nest in burrows, caves, rocky crevices, tree roots, and nesting boxes, often under baches and houses close to the sea.

Blue penguins can be found walking across the beach, between their nests and the sea, in the hour after dusk and just before dawn. They are known to cross the road to get to their burrows so are very vulnerable to fast-moving traffic. Cats, dogs, ferrets and stoats are also threats.

You can help little blue penguins by keeping cats inside at night and keeping dogs on a leash. Drive carefully on any coastal road or the beach, especially at dusk or dawn. Consider joining or starting up a group to control pests that may be threats to little blue penguins at your local beach.

Students helping clean their beaches

More than 1200 people around Northland helped clean up our beaches as part of the CoastCare-Enviroschools beach clean-ups for NZAEE Seaweed 2014 in March.



This photo, of students from Oromahoe School cleaning Te Ti Beach, Paihia, was the winning shot in the Seaweed beach clean-up photo competition

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FURTHER INFO

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