



Autumn Newsletter 2020

"Biodiversity is our most valuable but least appreciated resource".
Edward O. Wilson

Kia Ora,

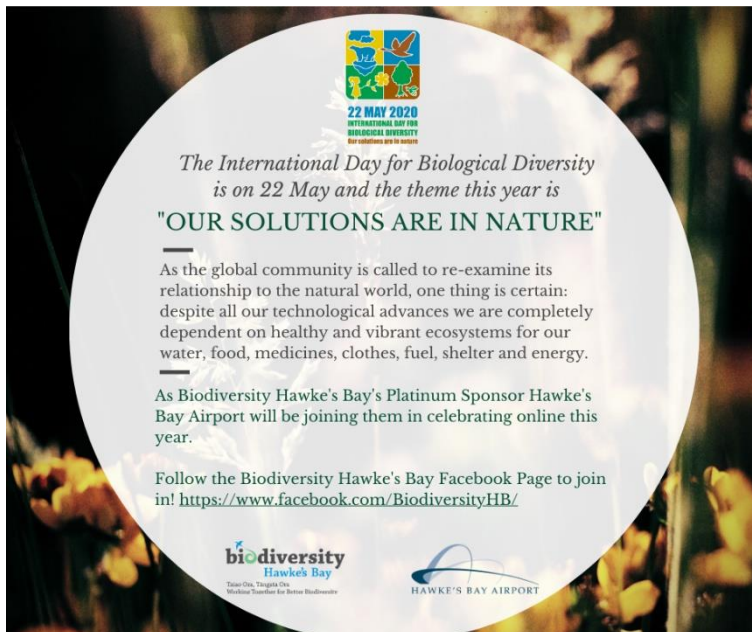
What an interesting time we have experienced through the Autumn months. Des Ratima's reflections over this time will be shared by many of you, highlighting a newfound connection with the environment and a slower pace of life so many of us experienced over the last few months. May is Biodiversity Month and we are excited to celebrate this with you, with a focus on the International Day for Indigenous Biodiversity and the great restoration work taking place in two Kahikatea remnant forests in Central Hawke's Bay.

International Day for Indigenous Biodiversity

May is Biodiversity Month, and today, Friday 22 May is the International Day for Indigenous Biodiversity.

'Our solutions are in nature' is the theme for [#BiodiversityDay](https://www.biodiversity.org/) 2020!

The United Nations proclaimed May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.



As the global community is called to re-examine its relationship to the natural world, one thing is certain: despite all our technological advances we are completely dependent on healthy and vibrant ecosystems for our water, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, shelter and energy, just to name a few. The theme "Our solutions are in nature" emphasises hope, solidarity and the importance of working together at all levels to build a future of life in harmony with nature.

We are proud to have our Platinum Sponsor, the Hawke's Bay Airport join us in our online celebrations this year.

For more information visit:
[The Convention on Biological Diversity](https://www.biodiversity.org/) and our [Biodiversity Hawke's Bay Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/BiodiversityHB/)

Thank you

A big thank you to [Mammoth Media](https://www.mammoth.co.nz/) and [Coast & Co.](https://www.coastandco.co.nz/) for your support in creating and installing the Biodiversity Hawke's Bay billboard, celebrating our relationship with our Platinum Sponsor, Hawke's Bay Airport Ltd.



Saving the kahikatea forest

By Kay Griffiths, The Conservation Company

Tucked on the flats surrounded by rolling hills is a small stand of straight and tall kahikatea. This is all that is left of the swamp forest that once dominated much of the area. An exceptional effort by landowners to save two tiny remnants has begun.

Swamp forests, which once fringed most water bodies and wet valley floors, have just about disappeared from New Zealand. The only truly pristine swamp forests remaining are on the West Coast of the South Island. But luckily, we have some small surviving bits of this forest type left in Hawke's Bay. It is so inspiring to see community, schools, ecologists, regional council and landowners coming together to work on restoring these remnants, which are hundreds of years old. These two pockets of forest are less than 20kms apart in Central Hawke's Bay – one near Elsthorpe and one near Omakere. Both are less than 5 hectares, and both have seen better days.



Kahikatea stretch up over 40 metres to touch the sky. Beneath and around them weeds such as willows, hawthorn and mercer grass compete with the kahikatea and don't allow natural regeneration to take place. Grazing by livestock over the years have eaten out most of the other native shrubs and trees. The naturally wet areas have mostly been drained. With no protection from surrounding trees, prevailing westerly winds batter the tall kahikatea. Slowly but steadily many of the ancient trees have succumbed to these pressures, their giant trunks lie broken on the ground.

Kahikatea forest remnant, Elgin Station

An aspiration to repair this damage has emerged. Both remnants are on stations that have been in farming families for generations. Memories sit with the current landowners of what the forests used to be like. Of bittern booming out at dawn and dusk, teal flying low across the swamp, mud squelching between toes, the ground red with kahikatea seed. There is now a strong desire to restore those sights and sounds. Controlling weeds, excluding livestock and feral deer, ensuring seasonal flooding and providing wind protection are all part of the first steps of doing so.

Both landowners also want their local communities to have the opportunity to be involved in the restoration. Schools and locals are invited to help with seed collecting, growing plants and then planting them. Omakere School is also helping to monitor the progress and changes at one of the sites.



Kahikatea forest remnant, Amblethorn Station

These restoration projects are funded and supported by the landowners of Amblethorn and Elgin Stations, Department of Conservation Community Fund, Biodiversity Hawke's Bay and Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

Covid-19 Reflections from Des...

I have found the Covid 19 has been energising for our environment. The definition of environment is helpful in the context of the Covid 19 impact. Environments became bubbles of interest. How, bubble by bubble, we took control of our personal spaces, and in my space that included more quality whanau time. Meal preparation, meals taken together at the dinner table, moko korero, improving gardens and lawns, eating the products of my garden, tomatoes, figs, feijoas, chard, kale, spring onions and mushrooms.

Daily walks along the banks of our beautiful awa telling stories to my moko of the history and the riparian planting she first got involved in when she was two years old. Now she is six and we visited the area where she had helped Koro and nan with the plants. She recognised harakeke and Kowhai as we went to feed the big black poaka (pig) with our organic cast offs. She saw that the poaka most liked paroa (bread) best. I have enjoyed the beautiful sunrises of late. This entire appreciation of my environment viewed from the safety of my bubble has increased my appreciation of papatuanuku and ranginui.

Des Ratima, ONZM; JP
Biodiversity HB Deputy Chair

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