



WILDLIFE TOUR: Recently, I went on safari close to home at Birdwoods, just a 3 km trek from the bustling centre of Havelock North – and what an experience! It was absolutely amazing and an adventure I think everyone who reads the newsletter would enjoy.

I was greeted at the entrance to the gallery, housed in the original 1894 church hall from St



Peter's in Waipawa, by a large but friendly African elephant. After that, I saw three rhinos grazing in the Safari Park close to two browsing giraffes, a trio of hippos sunning themselves, a crocodile with jaws you'd definitely want to avoid, a submerged hippo in the pond (around which day-old ducklings swam fearlessly) and a wide variety of African birds which I would need help to name. The immaculately maintained property is a visitor's paradise.

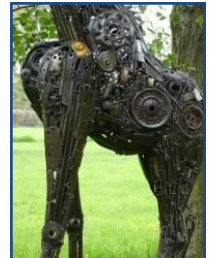


There's something for everyone at Birdwoods and everything on view or for sale reflects the creativity, originality and authenticity of its owners, Bruce and Louise Stobart. The Stobarts emigrated from Zimbabwe to New Zealand in 2004 with their three children after tough times there and they, together with a loyal team of staff and supporters, have grown the business from small beginnings into an award-winning enterprise. According to Trip Advisor, Birdwoods is the second most popular, 'must-see' destination in Hawke's Bay after Te Mata Peak. What a fantastic achievement.

My focus was on the wildlife, so I asked Louise how and where the various animals are created.



"The large metal animal sculptures in our 'Safari Park' are made in Zimbabwe by a group of very talented welders, led by an artist called Martin Chataire, who specialises in large metal animals made from recycled materials," she told me. "Despite the economic hardships Zimbabwe has and continues to endure, the level of creativity, resourcefulness and resilience there is extraordinary."



Since moving to New Zealand, the Stobarts have retained a very close working relationship with numerous artists and craftspeople, ensuring a steady and fair-trade income which is beneficial to everyone involved.

To find out more about this award-winning destination, go to:- www.birdwoods.nz



CHRISTMAS CHEER: Friends gave me a colourful poinsettia in December 2021 and it obviously liked the sunny indoor location and the fact that it was never allowed to dry out. I watered it from the dish below and it bloomed continuously until October 2022 by which time it was looking a bit 'leggy'.

I'm not a green-fingered gardener but decided to cut it back hard, re-pot it and see what happened. I'm glad I did.



After about three weeks, I saw some new shoots appear (I'd cut it above out-growing buds) and three months later, it's looking really healthy.

Hopefully, this may be of interest to other 'budding' gardeners who were given a poinsettia last Christmas. It's much more rewarding to let the plant regenerate than throw it out, as most people do.



DAVID ATTENBOROUGH FOR THE NOBEL PRIZE: No one has done more to raise global awareness of the natural world we live in and the current danger it is in, than Sir David Attenborough.

I came across the Facebook page of this name and the wildlife photos posted on it are completely outstanding.

There are incredible photos of so many amazing animals and birds that I didn't even know existed.

The clarity of the photo of the puffin with its catch is superb as are the colours of the aptly named, very rare



Rainbow Lobster, which hails from a wide geographical range in the Indo-Pacific, from the Red Sea and KwaZulu-Natal in the west, to Japan and Fiji in the east. Isn't Nature amazing?



"Spending time with nature offers us all precious breathing space away from the stresses and strains of modern life; it enables us to experience joy and wonder, to slow down and to appreciate the wildlife that lives side-by-side with us."
- Sir David Attenborough

THE GREAT OUTDOORS: Sir David says that, "Spending time with nature offers us all precious breathing space away from the stresses and strains of modern life; it enables us to experience joy and wonder, to slow down and to appreciate the wildlife that lives side-by-side with us."

Wings and Wildlife has showcased some forty parks,

reserves and destinations, so we are literally spoilt for choice in this area.

How about visiting:- Keirunga Gardens, Dolbel Reserve, The Karamū Stream, Park Island, Karituwhenua Stream Walkway, Te Mata Park, Sugar Loaf Reserve, Ōtātara Pā, Westshore Wildlife Reserve, Ball's Clearing, Little Bush Scenic Reserve, William Hartree Memorial Scenic Reserve, Mohi Bush, Napier Botanical Gardens, Puketapu Park, Waimarama Domain, Haumoana Domain, Clifton Domain, Te Awanga Domain, Marine Parade, Napier's Centennial Gardens, Bluff Hill Lookout, Sturm's Gully, Flaxmere Park, Cornwall Park, The Village Green, Duart House, Maggie's Way, Halliwell's Walk, Lance Leikis Reserve, Art Deco Napier, Eskdale Park, MKK Ngaruroro River Walk, Windsor Park, Waipātiki Beach, The Pukeora Forest of Memories, Eastwoodhill Arboretum, Westshore Beach Ramble, Frimley Park or Hamilton Gardens.



ROYAL SPOONBILLS: As a follow-up from last month's visit to the Waikahu Wetlands at Waitangi Regional Park, I asked Bernie Kelly, Birds New Zealand's Hawke's Bay's Rep about the spoonbills and he said that they were thriving. Part of the success story, is that their roost and the wetlands are relatively isolated, which has given the birds the opportunity



to become established with minimal disturbance.



BIRDWATCHING: While having a stroll round the gorgeous gardens at Duart House, I saw a pair of attractive California quail, also out strolling.

The black chin and cheeks edged in white and the blue/grey colouring on the chest identifies the male while the more muted brown plumage belongs to the female. Both had distinctive scalloping, which merges into strong, pale streaks on the flanks. <https://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz>



PICTURE PERFECT



This dramatic photo of a Northern giant petrel was taken by keen photographer Lynne Roberts who was on a trip with Albatross Encounters in Kaikoura. For effect, I cropped it to fit across the page.

Sometimes referred to as 'Sea Vultures', Northern giant petrels scavenge corpses of birds and mammals, on beaches and at sea and take fishing waste and some kelp. They prey on penguin and albatross chicks, and also kill and eat other seabirds up to the size of an adult albatross. They sometimes take fish and squid by surface-seizing, surface-diving and pursuit plunging down to 2 m.

The DOC rating for this native petrel is 'At Risk/Recovering'. It is thought that there are around 2,600 breeding pairs in New Zealand with a worldwide population likely between 11,000 and 14,000 pairs.

Fun Fact: The traditional seafarers' name for this species, 'stinkpot', is apt. Adult birds and chicks have an intense, foul smell like putrefying flesh! For more info:- <https://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz>



DUART DELIGHTS: The three and a half acres of well-kept grounds at Duart House are lovely at any time of the year but, last November, the roses and perennials were looking better than at any time I can remember.

The spectacular display of colour is due to the dedicated team-work of a small band of



volunteers who take pride in tending the many and varied flower beds, keep the weeds at bay and support Giz from Recreational Services, ensuring that the gardens always look their best.



CRUEL COLONY CAGES: Did you know that battery cages were made illegal in New Zealand at the end of December? The problem is, that colony cages are still legal and they're little better. The poor hens still suffer.

With up to 80 hens in each cage, colony cages are severely overcrowded. Each hen only has space about the size of an A4 piece of paper in which to live out her life. That's unimaginable. With so little room, hens can't stretch their wings, move around freely, express normal hen behaviours or comfortably rest. These birds deserve a life worth living, yet the Government allows the egg industry to deny hens some of their most basic behavioural needs.

SAFE is calling on the Government to put an end to all caged-hen farming in New Zealand, warning that without such action, the country will be left behind on global animal welfare standards.

This is yet another example of New Zealand's Animal Welfare Act 1999 failing animals and birds. The Act requires that the physical health and behavioural needs of animals be met but, clearly, colony cages do not allow for this. Prolonged confinement, overcrowded conditions and the inability to display normal behaviours contravenes the Act. To do something positive, you can sign **SAFE'S** petition to ban colony cages at:- <http://freehens.nz/>



DOG ATTACK: While visiting Cornwall Park, I saw this lovely mother duck with her brood swimming close to the lake edge. I also saw selfish people exercising their dogs, off-leash, nearby. I thought at the time that she and all the other ducks were at risk of being attacked. Two weeks later I saw a FB Post with a photo, reporting an injured duck and it was the same bird.

Although they didn't find the mauled duck, thanks to HDC's Animal Control officers for looking for her and for arranging extra patrols in the area.



This is how hens should live



OARSOME EFFORT: Recently, the Hawke's Bay Rowing Club organised two community clean-up days, focusing on removing rubbish downstream from the boatshed.

Secretary, Andrew Norris, told me that on 5 November volunteers removed rubbish from the Clive side of the river.

"Then on Sunday 20 November, there were about twenty of

us cleaning up the Napier side, where we removed about thirty bags of rubbish, mostly plastic," he said. "We also removed tyres, TV's and other strange items that should not be in the river."



The District Council supported the club's efforts by providing a trailer to remove the rubbish which was dumped for free, help which is appreciated.

"There's a lot of rubbish on the riverbanks," says Andrew, "Particularly at the hide-tide mark under the trees and out of sight. We were all shocked at the amount of rubbish we found and there is still a lot to be removed."

"We're committed to cleaning the river to the best of our ability and welcome other volunteers to come and join us when we're running these clean-ups."

It's great to see club members helping to look after the environment they enjoy using. The club plans another clean-up day this month, so if you'd like to get involved, check out the HBRC's FB page.

GOOSE BUMPS: We all need a 'Good News' story which gladdens the heart.

A Facebook post reported that a man found a goose that was shaking with cold stuck to a pole in Montana. As he got closer he realised that, wrapped up in her wings, was a tiny puppy she was shielding from the freezing temperatures.

We have so much to learn from animals. The story had a happy ending. Both the goose and the puppy recovered, were adopted out together and are doing well.



SHINE FALLS: Russell Engelke reminded me that a visit to Shine Falls (the highest waterfall in Hawke's Bay at 58 metres) makes for an enjoyable outing – and a great excuse for a picnic. Just make sure you wear sensible footwear for the ¾ hour walk from the carpark to the falls.

The track passes through open farmland and then through

a low-land forest, including kanuka, kawa kawa, kowhai and titoki before arriving at the spectacular waterfall. Russell described the falls as, "One of the best Hawke's Bay experiences to undertake" and recommended bringing swimwear for a refreshing dip.



SECOND CHANCE HENS: I'd already reported on the law changes for housing hens when I heard that two local poultry farms were closing because of them. This will save a lot of caged hens suffering horrendously in the future.

Apparently, one poultry farm culled their flock of caged hens (how sad for the poor hens) but Keighley's Poultry Farm at Haumoana advertised its hens for sale @ \$6 each and I heard that over 2,000 birds were rescued.



Caring people spread the word, mainly through Facebook and the response was fantastic. Locals stepped up and literally flocked to Keighley's to pick up birds which will now be able to enjoy a free range life and pay their new owners back with lovely fresh eggs.

One modest hero saved 300 hens from death row and found homes for them in their local area, while others fostered them temporarily until they went to their new out-of-town homes.

I caught up with local artist, Katharine White, at the Havelock North Handmade Market and she told me that she had rehomed twelve. She said, "Given the circumstances, I'm grateful that people were offered an opportunity to re-home these precious chickens." More on this next month...

If you're aware of a conservation champion or something relevant going on in Hawke's Bay, please let me know and I'll be happy to follow it up:- jessicamaxwell2017@gmail.com



*"To know that even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

