



**TE MATA PARK** was gifted to the community in perpetuity in 1927 by Bernard, John and Mason Chambers, sons of the original landowner, John Chambers.

Apart from the amazing 360° views from the car park and trig at the top of Te Mata Peak, there is a range of walking tracks within the park which cater for the reasonably fit to the very fit. It pays to wear suitable footwear.

There is good signage at the main carpark to help you get your bearings for all the tracks and the Trust's website <https://www.tematapark.co.nz> has detailed maps.



**PĪWAKAWAKA LOOP:** This well-formed track, which is suitable for most ages and abilities, is 1.3 kms long and takes around 40 minutes to complete. It starts off at the main carpark entrance in Te Mata Peak Road and is named after the lively little fantails which flit about in close proximity to visitors, who disturb insects with their footsteps as they walk along the track.

**BIG REDWOODS TRACK:** An Intermediate Grade track of 2.7 kms, suitable for people who are moderately fit. The track is generally well-formed with some rough sections, some simple switchbacks and inclines. The walk through the giant trees, which were planted in 1927, (some now measuring 40 metres in height), makes a perfect spot for a picnic. Allow around an hour.



**KARAKA WANDER:** Another Intermediate Grade track, this time 4 kms, which is described as 'a wonderful wander through the varied landscapes of the upper part of the park – mature trees, native bush and open grassland to dramatic cliffs and panoramic views.' The track passes through a large grove of Karaka trees, believed to be at least two hundred years old. Allow 1 ¼ hours.



**RONGOKAKO TRAIL:** An advanced and challenging trail covering 5.5 kms, which is suitable for people who enjoy moderate to high levels of fitness. This track goes through the Big Redwoods to the very top of the peak and includes the locals' favourite 'Goat Track', the Peak Summit and travels over the Millennium Planting. At times, the track can be unformed, muddy, uneven and steep. Some areas have high cliffs and extreme drop-offs, so care is needed.

**GIANT CIRCUIT:** A big loop trail similar to the Rongokako Trail, covering 5.4 kms, best walked anti-clockwise. This advanced track should only be attempted by people who are fit. Needless to say, the views along the way and from the top are amazing and well worth the physical effort of getting there.



**TIPUNA FOOTSTEP:** Established in 2020, following the purchase of adjoining land beside Te Mata Peak Road, this meandering limestone track connects the main entrance to the park to the carpark at Tauroa Road. Not too demanding, it is suitable for those who are moderately fit. Enjoy spectacular vistas across the fertile Heretaunga Plains towards the ranges, Mahia Peninsula and, on a clear day, you'll be able to see Mt Ruapehu.

**RONGOĀ GARDENS:** This award-winning area beside the main entrance was opened last October and celebrates rongoā Māori, the traditional healing system of Māori, encompassing herbal remedies, physical therapies and spiritual healing. The Trust grows medicinal and beneficial native plants, maintaining a valuable resource for the whenua of Te Matau a Māui to learn about rongoā Māori. Still under development, stroll through the garden and take time out of your day to be at one with nature.



**Te Mata Park, a priceless national treasure right on our doorstep.**

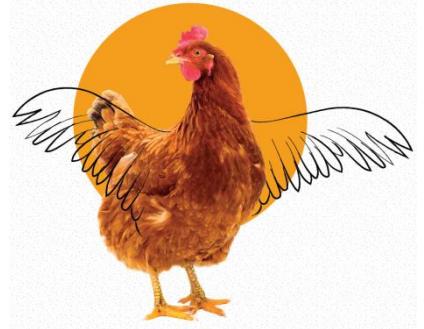


People in New Zealand love animals. We have high standards when it comes to how animals are treated and expect New Zealand's legislation to protect them from harm. SAFE sent me this explanation of what is wrong with the current legal system.

'Sadly, a broken system in New Zealand is failing animals and it's in need of urgent repair. Our once revolutionary Animal Welfare Act 1999 is being undermined by *Codes of Welfare* that allow practices which, according to the Act, should be illegal. The Government agency responsible for promoting animal agriculture is also charged with regulating animal welfare on the very farms it supports. The Ministers responsible for overseeing both animal agriculture and animal welfare have refused to phase out New Zealand's outdated farming practices – practices that are being made illegal around the world. The welfare of animals is secondary to profit because those responsible for protecting them have conflicting interests.'

Animals in NZ need a voice. This is why, as mentioned in the January newsletter, SAFE is calling for an **Independent Commissioner for Animals** to ensure their rights are protected under the law.

The SAFE website advises that less than 1% of animal welfare complaints received by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) lead to a prosecution and that loopholes in the *Codes of Welfare* developed by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) allow mistreatment of animals to continue despite being illegal under the Act. **Yes. Animals need a voice – and a strong one at that.**



**PLASTIC POLLUTION:** Plastic kills wildlife and harms the environment, so a big 'Thumbs Up!' to the Environment Centre Hawke's Bay in Karamu Road, Hastings. As well as accepting E-waste and all the usual 1, 2 and 5 plastics and other recyclables, it is now collecting soft plastics. It's a free service to recycle your plastics which is a great incentive for people to do the right thing.



Manager, Emma Horgan-Heke, told me that they started the scheme last August and in the first four months collected 1.4 tonnes (or 200,000 plastic bags) to be turned into posts. The centre has recently started taking Tetra Pak which is turned into SaveBOARD:- <https://www.saveboard.nz/>  
More useful information about what can be recycled @ <https://www.environmentcentre.org.nz>

**PLASTIC FANTASTIC:** Northland-born farmer and fencer, Jerome Wenzlick, was installing a security fence around an old landfill site when his wooden posts kept breaking on hitting buried plastic. This led him to thinking of a new use for this strong, rot-resistant material instead of it being dumped.

Several years later, **Future Post** was formed, winning the *National Fieldays Innovation Award 2019*. The company is now diverting over 250 tonnes of waste plastic every month from landfill to produce 100% recycled, highly durable post products, popular on farms, equestrian/lifestyle blocks, vineyards and council projects.



Domestic and commercial waste plastics type 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are sourced NZ wide and sent to the Waiuku factory for processing.

The solid plastic posts, which are UV stabilised and Bio-Gro organic certified, are also creatively used for coastal bollards, waterways fencing, wheel stops, boat buffers and garden boxes.

To find out more about this innovative, environmentally friendly product: <https://www.futurepost.co.nz>



**VIKS RESCUE:** Someone who is living her childhood dream - and providing a much-needed community service in Hawke's Bay, is Vicky McKay of Viks Rescue. Vicky has been rescuing cats, kittens and dogs for the past fifteen years and tells me she has rehomed 'thousands' of pets.

Right now, she has around forty kittens up for adoption and needs a hand to get them into their forever homes. The adoption fee of \$145 includes their first vaccination, worming, flea treatment, de-sexing, one month of free pet insurance and a vet check/passport. Vicky says that members of the community are brilliant, helping her out with donations of food, blankets, litter and other supplies as well as organising fundraising events and helping fund vet fees. Other kind people act as foster carers when things get busy. Check out **Viks Rescue** Facebook page or call Vicky on 0274 432 377 if you'd like to adopt a cat or kitten or think you can help in any way.

## PICTURE PERFECT (The Legend of Te Mata Peak)



Many centuries ago the people living in pā (fortified villages) on the Heretaunga Plains were under constant threat of war from the coastal tribes of Waimarama. At a gathering at Pakipaki (5km south of Hastings) to discuss the problem, the solution came when a kuia (wise old woman) sought permission to speak in the marae: “He ai na te wahine, ka horahia te po,” she said. (The ways of a woman can sometimes overcome the effects of darkness).

Hinerakau, the beautiful daughter of a Pakipaki chief, was to be the focal point of a plan. She would get the leader of the Waimarama tribes, a giant named Te Mata, to fall in love with her, turning his thoughts from war to peace. The plan succeeded but she too fell in love.

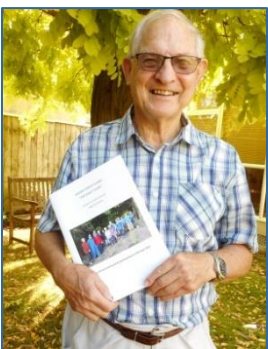
The people of Heretaunga, however, had not forgotten the past and with revenge the motive, demanded that Hinerakau make Te Mata prove his devotion by performing seemingly impossible tasks. The last task was to bite his way through the hills between the coast and the plains so that people could come and go with greater ease. Te Mata died proving his love when he choked on the earth of Te Mata Peak and today his half-accomplished work can be seen in the hills in what is known as The Gap or Pari Karangaranga (echoing cliffs). His prostrate body forms Te Mata Peak.

At sunset one can often see, in the mists which stretch from the crown of Kahurānaki, the beautiful blue cloak with which the grieving Hinerakau covered the body of her husband before leaping to her own death from the precipice on the Waimarama side of the Peak. The gully at the base of the cliff was formed when her body struck the earth.

Looking towards the Peak from Hastings, the huge bite that choked Te Mata can be seen. The outline of his body forms the skyline, with his head to the south and his feet to the north. European settlers also thought the hills resembled a man lying down and called him the ‘Sleeping Giant’.

Text copied from the Te Mata Park website:- <https://www.tematapark.co.nz>

To view a spectacular 3D aerial mapping video of Te Mata Peak which The Surveying Company in Hastings produced recently, click on:- <https://www.surveying.net.nz/news/mapping-a-mountain/>



**COMMUNITY CHAMPION:** Liz Carter, who received Forest and Bird’s highest accolade, the *Old Blue Award* in 2020, let me know that 2018 *Old Blue Award* winner, Neil Eagles, had written the history of the Napier Forest and Bird Branch, from when it was formed in 1956, up until now in a book titled *The Early Years*.

Liz describes it as a very interesting, well-written book and said that the research that Neil had done on it was amazing. Neil told me that he’d been a member of Forest and Bird for over forty years and was chairman for almost ten saying, “Luckily I knew many of the old identities mentioned in the book which helped!”

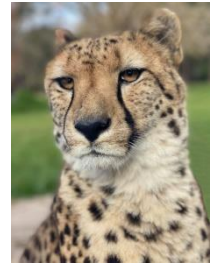
The group is selling copies of the book for \$20 so, if you’d like one, contact Liz on 844 9358 or e-mail her @ [garthandliz@gmail.com](mailto:garthandliz@gmail.com)



**ANIMAL AID:** It isn’t only people who are suffering in the world due to war, famine, or natural disasters. The Vancouver Sun recently reported that animal welfare organisation SPCA International and partners Kabul Small Animal Rescue (KSAR), War Paws, Marley’s Mutt’s, RainCoast Dog Rescue Society, and Thank DOG I Am Out Rescue Society arranged for around 300 pet dogs and cats stranded in Afghanistan to be evacuated to Canada. It took nearly six months to extract the traumatised but lucky animals which arrived at Vancouver International Airport on a charter flight last month to start their new lives. Photo: Arlen Rebekop.

**HAMILTON ZOO**, the largest zoo in the country, covers twenty five hectares (sixty two acres) and is home to over 600 animals and nearly 100 species.

Originally, the park was founded in 1969 as the privately-owned Hilldale Game Farm. The business was facing closure in 1976 when the Hamilton City Council (HCC) stepped in and brought the site, buildings and stock. In 1984, the zoo again faced closure but, due to public pressure, HCC resolved to keep it open and the day-to-day running of the zoo was transferred to the Department of Recreation and Welfare.



Conservation is a major focus for the zoo and it keeps important relationships with several native conservation groups. These include the Department of Conservation, Kea Conservation Trust, Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, the neighbouring Waiwhakareke Heritage Park and Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust. International organisations supported by Hamilton Zoo include the *Red Panda Network*, *21st Century Tiger*, *Save The Rhino*, *Traffic* and the *Jane Goodall Institute*.



There's a lot to see, so you should allow around two to three hours for your visit. The zoo boasts the largest walk-through aviary in New Zealand dedicated to native birds and plants and there is a café on site.

It is also home to Mencari (right) the second oldest Sumatran tiger in captivity in the world. She celebrated her 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday in January and is a great ambassador for her species – of which there are only around 400 left in the world.



The zoo's four male cheetahs, Denzel, Radi, Bomani and Manni are also firm favourites with visitors.

**Fun Facts:** A group of cheetahs is called a 'coalition'; they are the fastest land mammal on the planet and can go from 0 - 100 kph in just 3 seconds and they don't roar... they meow and purr.

More information on:- <https://hamiltonzoo.co.nz> or follow news and updates on its Facebook page.

**ESTUARY EXPERT:** The Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society held its summer picnic at Pandora Pond, Napier on 29 January when thirty members and supporters gathered to listen to this year's speaker, local wildlife conservation legend, Hans Rook, who received a NZOM in the 2022 New Year's Honours for his services to conservation.

Hans spoke passionately about his work, much of it since retirement, of restoring and protecting habitat for Australasian Bittern (Matuku) in the Upper Estuary. This bittern, a secretive, shy wetland bird, is critically-endangered, and Hans reported that, encouragingly, numbers in this area are gradually increasing.

He illustrated the process with maps showing the stages of development from 2011 to 2018. This included fencing and planting, building bunds, setting trap-lines, capturing winter floodwaters, and gradually extending the area. Predator control is a vital, on-going aspect of the work.



Hans then described some of the issues threatening the upper part of the Ahuriri Estuary; the exploding invasion of the tube worm that builds coral-like structures and impedes water flow and his concerns about council ideas floated for the Ahuriri Regional Park that may dry out the Upper Estuary, send salt water into current fresh water areas and major issues this would create with the tube worm development. Society President, Angie Denby, said, "We are thankful for Hans alerting us to these issues and can use his valuable information in our on-going advocacy work through submissions and contributions to council planning processes."

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](mailto:jessicamaxwell2017@gmail.com)

**Q. How do you know if you can trust someone?**

**A. If it barks or purrs, it's 100% good and reliable.**

