



**Community Newsletter from the Committee of the Mahurangi East Residents
& Ratepayers Association (MERRA)**

December 2025

www.scottslanding.org

Merry Christmas and Happy holidays

Congratulations Bill Townson



On 26 November Bill and Mona Townson finally got to see the timber motor launch Bill had been building, for five and a half years, on the water. It was launched on the Mahurangi River behind the Cement Works in great excitement in front of family and friends and Hilary Barry with the Seven Sharp TV crew. He designed and handcrafted the launch in the huge tin shed in front of his house in Scotts Landing. Mona Townson named the launch Songbird and she christened it with a champagne bottle. It's the 12th boat Bill has built but his first launch. They plan to use it for coastal trips up and down the North Island.

Walkway Volunteers Needed



MERRA is still looking for more volunteers to help with maintenance of our Scotts Landing walking tracks over the next few months. Thanks to Nick, Stuart and Chris for turning up to clear one of the Schoolhouse Bay walkways. Our focus is on weed removal and fixing up washouts on the surface of tracks in the Schoolhouse Bay and Burton Wells area. If you are able to help out, please contact Chris Bradley on chris.bradley@carsonfox.co.nz or merra.events@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you!

Kaka loving Scotts Landing



You may have noticed and maybe heard an increased presence of Kaka - the New Zealand native forest parrot around Scotts Landing lately. They have been seen up to 10 at a time and close by, feeding on flowers or ripping bark from dead trees to find insects. We are not sure if they are breeding here yet but they appear to be part of our 'community' now.

New Dog Rules over Summer



Micheal our local ranger has informed us of the new rules for dogs over the summer period. All dogs must be on a lead at all times on Scotts Landing beach or parkland. There are no daytime restrictions for dogs on these areas though.

New Marine Protection Zones



The new Marine Protection Act came into force on October 25. The marine area around Kawau has now been divided into HPA's - High Protection Areas (purple) and SPA's - Seafloor Protection Areas (green). In HPA's no recreational fishing is allowed. In SPA's low impact fishing is allowed, such as line-fishing, spear-fishing and diving.

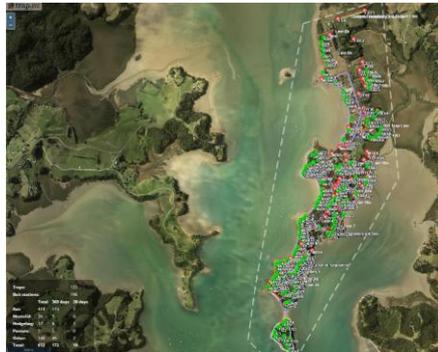
To get more information and bigger maps: <https://shorturl.at/ks4oj>

Fire crew get a call out!



The Scotts Landing Fire Crew got a call out on Monday 15 December. A pile of mulch and weed matting caught fire and started burning manuka trees above it, sending flames and smoke into the air. The volunteer fire crew that meets regularly to practice fire fighting was called and rushed to attend the fire. Three hoses were joined together to reach the fire and almost one full water tank was used to get the fire under control. It's a timely reminder in these hot, windy and dry times to not pile up mulch too much (10cm and above) as it is a combustable material. The Warkworth fire brigade also sent a fire truck to check on the fire.

Rat bait line volunteers needed



Above is an image from the Trap NZ app that we use to record our pest catches and when we rebait our bait stations. The green dots are bait stations that are checked and refilled every 3 months. The red dots are rat traps that are set with fresh rabbit. On the left hand corner you can read the results for the last year and 30 days. I have enlarged it below.

If you are interested in helping out occasionally to put rat bait out in the bait stations please contact Craig at : 021923220 or craigmaskell@gmail.com

Traps:	123		
Bait stations:	196		
	Total	365 days	30 days
Rat:	414	115	7
Mustelid:	36	5	0
Hedgehog:	17	6	1
Possum:	5	1	0
Other:	140	45	2
Total:	612	172	10

Rat Trap tips

Here are the top three tips

1. Seasonal Baits and Lures

Peanut butter (chunky works best), Nutella or mayonnaise added to oats are good choices in summer. Swap with a different bait every trap check, smarter predators quickly learn to avoid the same smell. Raw mutton/beef fat is also good and less attractive for wasps.

2. Spring Clean Your Traps

Just as you might spring clean your house, take time to clean your traps. Old, rotten, or fly-blown baits repel predators. Clear away larvae, maggots, or bugs, and make sure your trap sits flat with no long grass or sharp edges blocking the way. The goal? Make it feel like an easy, irresistible meal.

3. Check Traps Frequently

Summer brings higher predator activity and warmer temperatures, which means bait spoils faster. Aim to check traps weekly. Regular checks not only keep baits fresh, but also boost catch rates. Place traps along walls, hedges and fence lines. Always use gloves to handle the trap and bait. Place a little bait outside the trap to attract the predator into the trap. [Predator Free NZ Trust](#)

Keep a look out for Myrtle Rust



Myrtle Rust

<https://myrtlerust.org.nz/about-myrtle-rust/what-to-do-if-you-find-myrtle-rust>

Myrtle rust is a serious plant pathogen that impacts New Zealand native species such as pōhutukawa, mānuka, and kānuka. It also impacts exotic plant species such as feijoa, monkey apple, guava and eucalyptus. Myrtle rust is an unwanted organism that has spread in New Zealand, however, you can help slow the spread to protect our taonga species and help us to track its movement.

Look out for symptoms of myrtle rust, including:

- bright yellow powdery eruptions appearing on the underside of the leaf (young infection)
- bright yellow powdery eruptions on both sides of the leaf (mature infection)
- grey, 'fuzzy' spore growth on undersides of leaves
- some leaves may become buckled or twisted and die off.

How to report myrtle rust

Reporting sightings of myrtle rust is vital in helping scientists and agencies track the spread of the disease and its impact on New Zealand.

If you think you see the symptoms of myrtle rust:

- take a clear in-focus photograph of the whole plant, the affected leaf, and a close-up of the spores
- submit the photograph to [Myrtle Rust Reporter - iNaturalist website](#)

Make sure you label your finds as myrtle rust, noting what host plant it has been found on. Capturing this information through iNaturalist means it will be available in future to analyse the rate of spread and observed impacts.

If you see myrtle rust on public land you can report your myrtle rust sighting to:

- your local council
- the Department of Conservation (DOC) if sighted on public conservation land.
- MERRA committee member

For further information on how to identify and advice on how to remove infected trees or shrubs refer to the website above.

Thank you to one of our local residents who removed a whole monkey apple (lilly pilly) hedge after the previous newsletter about Myrtle Rust. Monkey apple is known to be a super spreader of the disease.

MERRA Picnic



Save the date for the annual MERRA Picnic at Scotts House next year. It's mid afternoon to early evening Sunday March 1st. Please come along and encourage any new residents to come and meet others in the community.