



Mokomoko Newsletter

Number 6
1 April 2009

Hello everyone

The Central Otago Ecological Trust is off to a good start this year – please read on!

Funding for predator fence approved

COET has been granted \$50,000 from the Central Lakes Trust, and \$25,000 from the Otago Community Trust, to build a 0.23-ha predator-proof fence on the [REDACTED]

This, combined with the funding already raised (mainly from WWF and Transpower), will allow us to re-introduce Otago skinks into the wild in the coming spring. MWH NZ Ltd have also donated \$3850 to the Trust this year. We thank these funders for their generosity.

Consents for the fence are granted and work has begun. The 180-m fence line has been prepared (see photos) and the fence will be erected in May. Pests inside the fence will be eradicated in winter, and 12 captive-bred skinks will be introduced in spring. If this translocation is successful, we will introduce wild skinks at a later date. The outcome of this pilot trial will determine if and when we expand the size of the Sanctuary and introduce other rare fauna.



View of predator fence line [REDACTED] featuring two large outcrops of complex rock surrounded by native, fruit-bearing shrubs.



Steep, rocky section of predator fence line.

Funding for herbivore fence approved

An important part of re-introducing native fauna is ensuring the vegetation is in good condition to provide habitat and food for fauna. The community are helping us remove weeds and replant native species at the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], right next door to our predator fence. The problem we face, however, is browsing of our plantings by rabbits, hares and sheep. We therefore applied to the government's new Community Conservation Fund to construct a rabbit-proof fence over 10.4 ha, remove weeds and plant native species. We were granted \$35,600. Our aim is to eventually upgrade this fence to a predator-proof fence which

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will constitute our expanded Mokomoko Sanctuary for reintroduction of other native fauna. We thank the Department of Conservation for approving this funding.

Skink births

Our captive skink population in Alexandra is doing well. Two babies were born in February and are thriving. We now have 12 Otago skinks in captivity in Alexandra.



A one-day old Otago skink.

Escape Rentals

Escape Rentals is a company that hires campervans in New Zealand. They have an environmental philosophy and some of their vans are lavishly painted featuring threatened species. Lesley Judd from DOC suggested we approach the company to see whether they would paint one of their vans as an 'Otago skink' van and they agreed, and will include COET's logo. This will help raise awareness about lizard conservation in New Zealand.

Re-vegetation day

We will be holding a vegetation restoration day at [REDACTED] on Sunday April 19. We will meet at 10 am at the locked gate behind Conroy's Dam.

Please bring weeding tools, gloves, protective glasses etc and a lunch. Garry Nixon will send a reminder soon. We'd be very pleased to see you there.

Thanks again for all your support.

Trustees of the Central Otago Ecological Trust.

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