



Three great destinations within a five minute drive in Napier are the Centennial Gardens, Bluff Hill Lookout and Sturm's Gully.

The Centennial Gardens in Coote Road were created in 1974 to celebrate one hundred years since the city of Napier was founded. Originally a quarry, although the area looks natural, it's actually man-made, created by inmates from the now closed Napier Prison.

The main feature is a spectacular 40 metre waterfall and when I visited in July, the pool below had been recently re-filled and was very clean. The pretty gardens are within walking distance of the CBD.



Driving further up Coote Road to the Bluff Hill Lookout, visitors are treated to absolutely stunning 360° vistas.

Take in a bird's-eye view of the bustling Napier Port, Westshore and the Ahuriri Estuary with the Kaweka Range as the backdrop, across Hawke's Bay to Mahia Peninsula and then swing round to Cape



Kidnappers. Bluff Hill Lookout is another 'must see' location and was formerly the site of an artillery battery. There is an interesting star compass to see and picnic tables are provided for visitors to enjoy some quality time and soak in the views.

It's been in the news that there is a shortage of wood for the building industry and it's easy to see why; logs are being exported in vast quantities. I saw thousands of them neatly stacked up all along the wharves, looking like piles of matchsticks, waiting to be loaded onto large container ships, mostly destined for China.



From the lookout, if you're fairly fit and don't mind steps - lots of them, you can walk downhill to Sturm's Gully. Napier City Council purchased the gully and its dense stand of mature trees in 1967. Sturm's Gully is named after the earliest European settler in Hawke's Bay, Frederick William Christian Sturm.

Born in Germany (or Austria), around 1811, he arrived at Ahuriri on 2 August 1839 and made his home with Māori living at Mahia. He was a nurseryman, as well as a botanist and a naturalist, supplying plants, trees, fruit and grapevines throughout the Hawke's Bay district.

In 1865, Frederick moved his family to Sturm's Gully in Napier, where he planted his nursery and opened a seed warehouse in Shakespeare Road.

By then, he was importing and exporting seeds, plants, rootstock and native ferns worldwide. In the early 1870's, he moved his nursery business to a 20 acre property at Mangateretere on the Napier/Havelock North road. Many of the old trees still standing at the Bay's historic homesteads were provided by Frederick Sturm.

More information about these reserves @ <https://napier.govt.nz>





PROTECTING OUR FUTURE: The QEII National Trust has a mission to inspire private landowners to protect and enhance open spaces of ecological and cultural significance and has registered some 4,729 covenants since it was formed in 1977.



Almost 70% of New Zealand is in private land ownership, so protecting biodiversity and heritage on this land is critical to reversing the decline of indigenous biodiversity and preserving the country's history. The current chairperson of the Charitable Trust is Hawke's Bay farmer, Bruce Wills, ONZM. [Thanks to Michael Schultz for the photos.](#)



Troy Duncan has been the Regional Representative for the [Queen Elizabeth II National Trust \(QEII\)](#) for thirteen years and is one of 27 local reps throughout the country. I asked him about some of the Trust's work in this area. He told me that the covenants in Hawke's Bay are diverse with the majority being forest remnants but also wetlands, archaeological sites and large landscape scale protection covenants, like the 107.5 hectare Te Mata Park, which has 95 hectares under QEII.



The protection is in perpetuity. A covenant is a legal agreement signed by the initiating landowner that includes conditions that bind all future landowners. Most commonly these are things like, not cutting down the vegetation, grazing stock in forests or restricting building and excavation in landscape and archaeological covenants. The covenanting process is voluntary with subsequent landowners needing to adhere to the conditions. QEII contributes to fencing at initiation and pays for surveys. [Click on the blue hot-link above to go to the QEII website.](#)

Te Mata Park courtesy of Hudson and Associates



RARE PLANTS: In July, ten heart-leaved kohuhu (*Pittosporum obcordatum*, which is a rarity in Hawke's Bay), were planted in Tauroa Reserve. With a Conservation Status of 'Threatened, Nationally Vulnerable', the first signs of green leaves were just visible when I visited. Here is Care Group co-ordinator Michelle Hicks, with volunteer Howard Russell, who planted them. The seeds were collected from a QEII covenant site and grown to trees by the DOC volunteer nursery and Plant HB. They are then spread around 'safe' sites like Tauroa Reserve in an attempt to get more growing in the wild.

TRAILER TALK: The Hawke's Bay Regional Council's event trailer carrying a selection of stakes, plant covers, spades and BBQ has been a familiar sight around the region this winter, attending numerous community planting days. At the end of the planting sessions, volunteers all gather round the trailer to enjoy a sausage sizzle and a catch up with each other. If you are organising a planting day and would like the trailer and support team, who may be able to come if available, just e-mail:- Stevie.Smidt@hbrc.govt.nz



Shortly after WATCHDOG! lodged a complaint with MPI and the Zoo Aquarium Association of Australasia regarding animal welfare concerns at the aquarium, Napier City Council's CE, Dr Steph Rotarangi, reached out and suggested a meeting. We welcomed this move and will meet up once the two reports are received. Steph said that she and the team are very keen to work with experts in animal welfare in order to make appropriate judgements and improvements, if needed. Hopefully, help is finally on the way for Terry, the lonely turtle and others.

BIKING BUDDIES: Bear, the very cute and handsome toy poodle and his owner Bex Coddington quite made my day when I saw them getting out and about on their bike last month during lockdown. Not to be outdone by Bex, Bear has his own set of biking goggles and loves getting into his doggy backpack to share regular, two-wheeled adventures with his best friend.

The well-travelled pet looks forward to going on his rides and, when he arrives at his destination, wherever that may be, the cool little dude ditches the sunnies and runs about, free to meet up with and check out the local talent.



PICTURE PERFECT

Once again, I have my friend Ros Rowe to thank for providing me with this fabulous photo of a very impressive 12-pointer red stag as well as the lovely one of a red hind and her mini-me fawn.

There are seven type of deer found in New Zealand:- Red, Wapiti (Elk), Sika, Sambar, Rusa, Fallow and White-tailed. Red deer are the most prolific, with mature stags highly sought after by hunters, mainly because of their magnificent antlers.

Like me, Ros prefers shooting deer with her camera, rather than a gun.

The wild populations of deer found here are descendants of those first imported from the UK as early as 1851. The original pair came from Lord Petre's Thorndon Park estate in Essex, while others came from Windsor Great Park, Warnham, Woburn Abbey and other large English and Scottish estates. Red deer are also the most commonly farmed deer, producing lean venison.



Deer numbers have been building over the past couple of decades across the country. DOC reports that they damage native forests by feeding on plants, trees, and seedlings. They start with the native plants they prefer most such as schefflera, broadleaf and hen and chicken fern in forest understoreys. They then move on to plants they like less. This can result in large groups of deer mainly eating falling leaves from canopy trees.

Over time this can hinder or stop forest regeneration. Being a pest species, their numbers need to be managed, but don't worry, these ones are safe!



SEABIRDS ON SHOW: Birds New Zealand member, Ron Jackson, let me know about a great boat trip he and six other members went on recently, setting off from Porerere Beach at 7 a.m. to view seabirds. ([Google Dawn Buster II for charter details](#)).

Boarding the impressive *Dawn Buster II* and heading out to sea while the sun was rising over



the horizon, they encountered a seal eating a fish about a nautical mile off-shore, with gannets and fluttering shearwaters hanging about chasing scraps. Motoring on out to around 10 miles and then switching off the engine and drifting with the current, the crew attracted birds by throwing them berley and freshly caught bait. As well as taking some great shots of the birds, the group enjoyed beautiful views of the coastline from Cape Turnagain in the south to Cape Kidnappers to the north.



During the morning, a number of seabirds were identified and these included Northern Royal Albatross (photo left) Northern Giant Petrel, Gannet, White-capped Mollymawk/Shy Mollymawk (photo above), Black Browed Mollymawk and Cape Petrel. Then the engine was restarted and the group returned to shore around lunchtime. What an amazing experience.

Secretary, Lynne Anderson, said that they would love to have some new members. To find out more, e-mail:- birds.hawkesbay@birdsNZ.org.nz

VANDALISM in Tainui Reserve, Tauroa Reserve and Keirunga Gardens has infuriated responsible reserve users. Groups of unsupervised boys with mountainbikes were seen cutting branches and damaging hillsides making their own unauthorised bike tracks. Graffiti is evident along with vandalised signage and recently established plants pulled out. During Level 4 and Level 3 lockdown, many mountainbikers who clearly thought that lockdown rules didn't apply to them, continued to race down the Grade 3 MTB track which was ineffectively 'closed' by the council. Public reserves should be safe, tranquil spaces for people to relax in and enjoy Nature.



Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is growing a wilderness in the heart of Wellington. Protected by the world's first predator-exclusion fence, the 225-hectare sanctuary is a safe-haven for endangered birds like takahē, kiwi, kākā, tīeke/saddleback, tītīpounamu/rifleman, kākāriki, dozens of reptiles, frogs and invertebrates as well as hundreds of native plants and trees.

With no mammalian predators there has been a rapid increase in species that were on the edge of extinction.

Species are even beginning to spill over outside the sanctuary.

Being situated in a valley only 10 minutes from the CBD, suburbs all over the city are seeing increased birdlife. Kākā screech overhead, tūi chortle in park trees and even tītīpounamu, NZ's smallest bird, have recently been spotted outside the fence. **Takahē** by Lynn Freeman



But the battle for wildlife survival is far from over. Regular maintenance of the fence continues, restoring the sanctuary's ecosystem is a priority and as birds continue to spread their wings outside the sanctuary, they need good habitats and safe places to go to. Zealandia is 30 years into a 500-year vision of restoring the forest and freshwater ecosystems of the valley to pre-human times, all while connecting people to nature.

When you visit the sanctuary to walk along its 32kms of trails, take a tour and learn from a knowledgeable guide - or become a member, you are helping bring this vision to life. **Tīeke/Saddleback** by T.M. Davidson

Zealandia is open to visitors in Alert Level 2. There is a café on site and free electric shuttle from the city centre. For details of the **Zealandia By Day Tour** and **Zealandia By Night Tour**, go to:- www.visitzealandia.com

CONSERVATION BOOST: A positive spin-off from COVID has been the creation of the Government's **Jobs for Nature** programme, a \$1.3 billion shot in the arm for conservation, enabling 11,000 people to be employed nationwide for a variety of projects. Well-respected disability provider, Hōhepa Hawke's Bay, whose Trees 4 Hawke's Bay nursery is based at Clive, has received \$1 million to expand and protect the wetland habitat that services Te Whanganui-A-Orotu (Ahuriri Estuary) and establish riparian protection zones along the Taipo Stream and the associated waterways. Click on <https://baybuzz.co.nz/hohepas-helping-hands/> to read an article about the great planting and restoration work being carried out by its service-users and service teams.



Another local grant recipient to benefit from the July funding round is the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, which has also received \$1 million. This will enable it to protect high biodiversity value remnant bush sites, through deer fencing and pest plant and animal control throughout Hawke's Bay. This funding is great news for our region.



Meanwhile, the One Billion Trees Fund also provided the HBRC with close to a million dollars to boost its existing native planting programmes, while the Te Mata Peak Trust Board received \$600,000 to establish 12 ha of new plants and trees and The Cape Sanctuary received \$160,000 to expand its nursery at Ocean Beach.



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



"Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet."

Colette

