

## Sandspit SOS Inc Newsletter Winter 2015



[www.sandspit.org](http://www.sandspit.org)

### Ancient taonga discovered in Sandspit garden

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 John and Jenny Collins were surprised to discover a piece of history lying beside the course of a stream in a newly dug pond bed in their garden. Brett the digger driver, who discovered the three artefacts, immediately recognized that he had something special and notified Jenny and the landscaper, Linda Falconer. Linda contacted Ngati Manuhiri and Heritage New Zealand to notify them of the find.



As photo shows, the artefacts appear to include a short paddle and two digging sticks.



Fiona McKenzie, a representative from Ngati Manuhiri, the local iwi, visited the site and said a karakia before taking artefacts so that their provenance can be studied. Jenny, a historian herself, is looking forward to finding out the story behind these important taonga and sharing it with others interested in Sandspit's history.

## Rat control

According to various Google articles, one breeding pair of rats can produce 880 offspring in one year as the progeny typically breed in their first year – so the problem becomes exponential. Controlling rats allows an increase of insect forage for birds, increases the tree seeds able to reforest our bush, protects birds eggs, baby birds and adults on the nest. Bait stations need to be replenished even in winter as rats will continue to breed.



*Reprinted by permission of DOC, Warkworth*

## Banded Rails

Protect our rare and endangered Banded Rails. They will be breeding soon. Their flightless chicks are vulnerable to cats, dogs, rats and stoats. Slow down on our roads.



*Photo taken lower Brick Bay Drive*

## Brick Bay Drive wetlands reserve restoration – 2015 planting

Approximately 450 plants from the SSOSI nursery were planted in the reserve wetland edges. A big thank you to all helpers and the Moirs and

Brian Morrison for their donation of time and mulch on the day.

## Spoonbills are back for winter and early spring

These graceful, tall white wading birds are back in our estuary. Their high tide roost is on the jetty and in the pohutukawa trees at the entry to the Matakana River. This year is the highest count to date: 17 individuals. Please keep your distance when visiting them at their roost as they are easily frightened.



## Dolphins in the Estuary

For two hours in the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> July a pod of dolphins were feeding off Sandspit Wharf.



## Sandspit Harbour Study News

The latest meeting was addressed by Rachel Griffiths from Waicare (fresh water). The study group was focused only on estuarine water cleanliness, ignoring that most pollution entering the estuary comes mainly from upstream sediment - from farmland, forestry, subdivisional activities, stream bank erosion. We hope to persuade a change in focus towards this major environmental challenge.