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FireSmart Volunteers enjoying a sunny break from weeding work at Anchorage Bay.

Project Janszoon has seen a few changes since our Summer Newsletter. We've said farewell to Programme Director Bruce Vander Lee, who held the dual role of Director of Operations and Programme Director since April 2017. Bruce achieved much in his tenure in the role, including multiple kākā, pāteke and whio releases, the completion of the Wilding Conifer Control programme and subsequent handover to DOC. He oversaw the trapping of hundreds of predators, the growth of science monitoring and data collection and gave many visiting school students the benefit of his knowledge about conservation in the park.

We welcome [Geoff Button](#) into the role of Project Director. Geoff is a local Riwaka resident who has a long-standing connection with the Abel Tasman National Park. Much of his career in conservation has been spent in the top of the South/Te Taihu, starting out as a walking guide in the park in the early '90s. He went on to work for DOC as a ranger undertaking ecological restoration and pest management, before moving into adult education, teaching eco-tourism and conservation.

Science Advisor [Ruth Bollongino](#) has assumed the role of Director of Operations alongside her science role.

Looking ahead

The year ahead is a critical one for Project Janszoon. It is the last year of funding from the Hutton Wilson Trust - which has so generously provided over \$20 million to restore the Abel Tasman National Park biodiversity and ecosystems. We have largely

met the targets set well ahead of the original schedule, and are now working through discussions around what's next.

We have an agreement in place with The Department of Conservation (DOC) under the Tomorrow Accord, which stipulates that the gains made by Project Janszoon to restore the ecological prospects of the Park will be maintained by the Department. This will take effect from June 2026. We are discussing with DOC the best way to carry forward the momentum of Project Janszoon and ensure that the future of the Abel Tasman and its habitats, ecosystems and rare species are treasured and protected.

Kākā spreading across the park



Juvenile kākā born in the 2024-25 breeding season making most of supplementary feed - Video Craig Whiddon

Our kākā monitoring around Bark Bay during the 2024-25 breeding season kept a close eye on a very productive nest that produce three fledged chicks - a great success for a very hard working kākā mum.

Our acoustic monitoring of forest birds is tracking the spread of kākā out into the park from Bark Bay, as the growing population seeks out new habitat and food sources. This year we detected kākā at double the number of sites compared to last year, and call rates also doubled - so there are more kākā in more places in the park.

Kākā can now be seen and heard along the coastal track from Bark Bay to Akerston

Bay, as well as at numerous sites inland. We get regular sightings recorded through the [Abel Tasman App](#) as people delight in seeing these unique bush parrots.

Cheeky robins turn on a good show for citizen scientists



Bush robins are officially back on the Abel Tasman Coast Track

Video ©Ruth Bollongino/Fern Photos

Project Janszoon's summertime citizen science campaign to understand the spread of native bush robins along the Abel Tasman Coastal Track received lots of attention. Over 70 sightings throughout the park were recorded by park visitors and locals. Of these, almost a third were birds seen on or near the coastal track – an area they have been absent from for many years due to invasive predators.

Clusters of robins were spotted around Appletree Bay, Anchorage, Awaroa, Bark Bay, Tonga Quarry, and Whariwharangi. In many cases the sightings were backed up with photographic evidence.

This study has helped us ground truth our acoustic monitoring and backs up what we were seeing - a return of robins to coastal habitat where the pressure of predators such as rats had previously been too great for them to thrive. This evidence will help inform decisions around future predator control operations to maintain these important biodiversity gains.



FireSmart volunteers lowdown



FireSmart Volunteers hard at work at Anchorage this Summer

Project Janszoon's FireSmart programme is about removing flammable introduced weeds such as gorse from the foreshore of the Abel Tasman National Park to reduce the fire risk to the ecosystem.

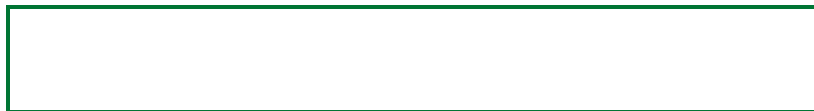
As well as removing noxious weeds, the team replaces them with native dune plants such as pīngao and spinifex, both of which are more fire resistant but also are natural dune system plants, helping to stabilise sand drifts, withstand coastal inundation and protect the park's coastal margins from flooding and erosion.

And if you are planting natives on your property over the winter, do consider the flammability of native species. There's a great resource [here](#) from Scion Research that will advise you on what plants help reduce fire risk.

**These Carnivorous Snails Slurp
Earthworms Like Spaghetti**
We are super excited to see our work



to protect native land snails in the Abel Tasman National Park being shared with a wider audience through The Nature Conservancy Cool Green Science newsletter.



Meet Four Amazing Endemic Parrots from New Zealand

New Zealand is home to a small handful of endemic parrots, two of which have been re-introduced to the Abel Tasman National Park by Project Janszoon.



The Project Janszoon 23-24 Annual Report is out now. The report celebrates the progress made towards our Tomorrow Accord targets in the last financial year, and shares stories and photos of the people and places that make the Abel Tasman National Park such a special place.





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