

# Ulva Island Update

A newsletter for the friends of Ulva Island

This issue contains updates on how the Robin's and Saddlebacks are faring and what's happening in the Marine Reserve. The Ulva Island Trust presents two new exciting products and the DOC planning team gives us a progress report on the Rakiura National Park Management Plan.

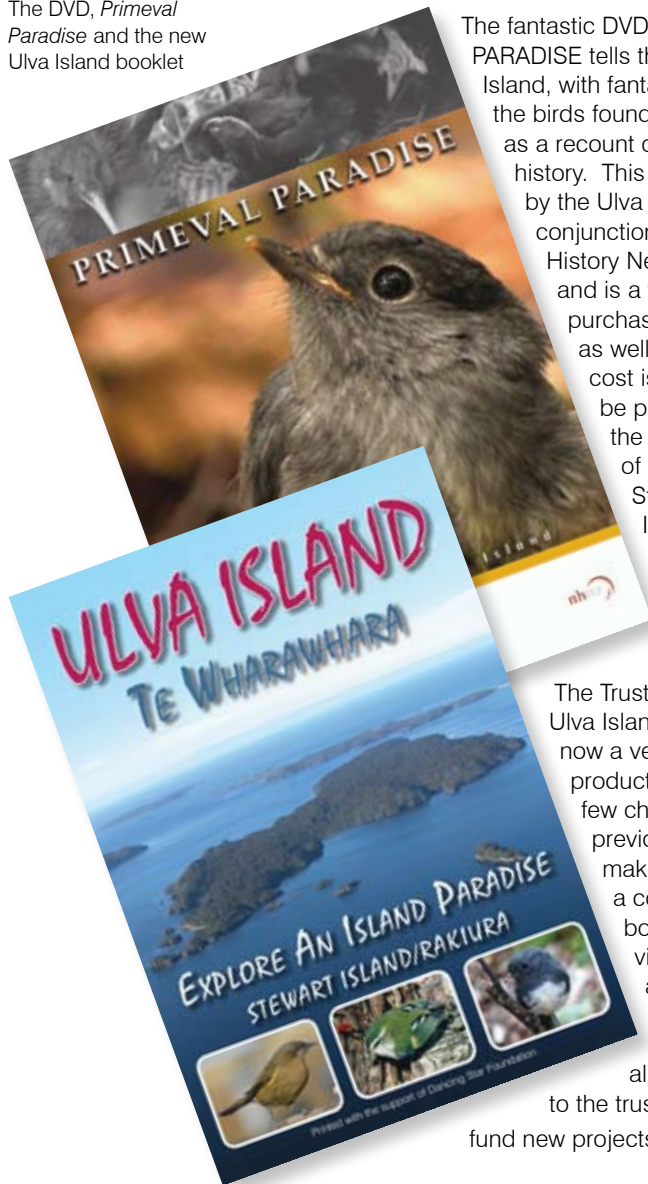
Enjoy!

Robyn Newham

## Ulva Island DVD – a must buy!

### Ulva Island Trust

The DVD, *Primeval Paradise* and the new Ulva Island booklet



The fantastic DVD PRIMEVAL PARADISE tells the story of Ulva Island, with fantastic footage of the birds found on Ulva as well as a recount of the island's history. This DVD is put out by the Ulva Island Trust in conjunction with Natural History New Zealand, and is a very worthwhile purchase for yourself as well as friends. The cost is \$30 and can be purchased from the Department of Conservation Stewart Island, the I-site Visitor Centre Stewart Island, or on line from [www.elwin.co.nz/ulva.html](http://www.elwin.co.nz/ulva.html)

The Trust has updated the Ulva Island booklet and it is now a very smart looking product, with quite a few changes from the previous editions. So make sure you have a copy of this new booklet before visiting the island again. The price is still \$2 and a very good buy with all proceeds going to the trust, which helps to fund new projects in the future.

Once again the Trust is looking to have another magical visit from the one and only Sirocco - the very friendly kakapo who paid us a visit last year. September/October 2008 are the dates in mind, so if you know anyone who missed out last time and would like to visit, tell them to keep some holidays free for spring time 2008.

This is a great time of the year for a visit to Ulva (mind you, anytime is a good time), the birds are certainly at their best and with the wet weather we are experiencing, the ferns are also especially beautiful.

## Robin and saddleback population increases

### Ian Jamieson

As another season of monitoring is well underway on Ulva Island, the results from last season's efforts have been collated and are looking good!

There are now 152 adult robins on Ulva which is an exciting increase of 45% from the previous year. In addition, there were 89 juvenile robins banded. A total of 64 pairs nested, producing 84 fledglings. Ulva Island is now home to 190 adult saddlebacks which is an increase of 12% from the previous year with an additional 47 juvenile saddlebacks banded. 41 Saddleback pairs nested producing a total of 47 fledglings.

Both bird species continue to nest primarily in coastal vegetation around the periphery of Ulva Island, but a few pairs have started to establish territories further inland toward the mature podocarp forest. So things appear to be looking up for the robin and saddleback as their populations continue to grow. Let's hope for the same monitoring results again for this season!



## All things marine

### Morven Carruthers

Monitoring has been conducted in and around Paterson Inlet for over 15 years and has provided valuable data on fish species such as blue cod, trumpeter, blue moki, paua, kina and rock lobster. The distribution of bladder kelp, which provides food and shelter to many of these fish, has also been monitored.

DOC aims to continue this monitoring, because it provides a means of keeping an eye on the health of the marine ecosystem around Ulva Island/ Te Wharawhara. Regular monitoring will provide data that can be used to assess the condition of the marine reserve and the effect of marine reserve protection on the amazing



Above – Marine reserve monitoring. *Kim Westerskov*  
Right – Stewart Island robin. *DOC*

creatures that it is home to. It is anticipated that the total protection afforded by marine reserve status will have positive effects in terms of the number and size of many species living in the reserve and surrounding area.

We are currently in the planning stages of the next monitoring survey, which will take place in 2008. In this survey we will use the same methods as in previous surveys, so that valid comparisons can be made. Divers will swim along underwater transects of set length and width, counting and recording the species that they observe. When the data from this is analysed we can build a picture of life in and around the marine reserve and, ultimately, how it is changing over time.

Although it is early days in terms of marine reserve protection, in 2006 high numbers of juvenile rock lobsters and large (over 33cm) blue cod were observed in the marine reserve compared to in previous surveys. Perhaps this is the start of a trend... the monitoring survey next year should help us find out!

## Progress report on the Rakiura National Park Management Plan

### Community Relations - Planning Team

The review of the Stewart Island / Rakiura Conservation Management Strategy and preparation of the Rakiura National Park Management Plan continues to progress, with the public workshops discussing Ulva Island, Mason Bay, Port Pegasus and hunting / hunter huts having been held.

These workshops were all well attended by members of the island community, and the Rakiura Planning Team would like to thank those who attended for their valuable contribution.

The Department of Conservation has compiled a document summarising the discussions had at these workshops. This document is available online at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/page.aspx?id=43703>. Checking out this document should provide an good overview of direction received from the public workshops.

Or for an update at any stage on progress of the Stewart Island / Rakiura planning process and how you can be involved, please contact either Peter Wilson or Anke de Jong at DOC in Invercargill, or Sharon Pasco at the DOC office on Stewart Island/ Rakiura.

## What are those research students up to?

### Sheena Townsend

The breeding season on Ulva got off to a busy start when the first robin egg of the season was laid on September 15th. As we write, the fledgling from that egg is out on his own, while mom and dad frantically care for their second brood, hatched earlier this month.



With the robin and saddleback monitoring well under way, the island is quickly accumulating new avian faces sporting this year's cohort band combination of two white bands over a metal band. New human faces have also joined the team. Sheena Townsend is a new PhD student from Nova Scotia, Canada. She will follow the Ulva population of South Island robins for the next three years and is interested in the effects of inbreeding depression. Two new volunteers, Sheila Holmes (Alberta, Canada) and Fiona Gordon (Dunedin), have been spending long days following the island's 90 pairs of robins and over 70 pairs of saddlebacks.

Familiar faces include Sandra Soeder-Hunua (HMB). She returns this year as field technician, bringing with her several seasons experience as an Ulva volunteer. PhD student, Bryan Rhodes (Dinwiddie, Virginia) has also returned to finish his field work on the thermal properties of saddleback cavities.

It is an exciting year on Ulva. Saddleback and robin adults both number over 200 and birds are beginning to use some of the more neglected areas of the island. In some crowded spots, lots of interesting territorial shifts are occurring, adding a little drama of another kind to the already dramatic scenery of the island!