

Annual Report of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc
For the year ended 31st January 2016
Sixty-ninth Annual Report

www.wtmc.org.nz

P O Box 5068 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145



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The Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Committee presents its Annual Report on club activities for the year **1 February 2015 to 31 January 2016**.

The Current committee

Amanda Wells (President)
Katy Glenie (Vice President)
Steve Austin (Treasurer)
Rebecca Day (Secretary)
Illona Keenan (Chief Guide)
Kevin Cole (Assistant Chief Guide)
Richard Lardner (Transport Officer)
Jo Fink (Membership Officer)
Andrei Zubkov (Promotions Officer)
Megan Sety (Social Convenor)
Marie Smith (Ruapehu Lodge Convenor)
Emily Shrosbree (Communications Officer)
Tony Gazley (General committee and Newsletter Editor)
Richard House (General committee and Webmaster)
Amelia White (General committee)



Flora and Fauna Winner– Jenny Beaumont



President's comments

It's been another busy year and I want to extend my thanks to the talented and dedicated committee of 2015/16. Our 'business as usual' of running trips takes a lot of effort, and it's easy to minimise this when looking back on what we have achieved. Just keeping things ticking over successfully is a significant call on volunteer time.

But this year's committee wanted to do more than maintain the status quo. Near the start of our year together we therefore held a workshop to identify where we wanted to focus extra effort. Ably facilitated by Spencer Clubb, this workshop produced three prongs for 2015/16.

The first was generated by the recognition that, thanks to the changes made in 2014, we were experiencing an influx of new members. We wanted to make sure these people were well supported into understanding how the club works, how they were expected to behave and how they could contribute. Thank you to Emily Shrosbree who led the development of a series of communications that targeted this goal.

The second prong was managing volunteer effort. Some people are putting a lot of hours into the club and we need to consider how to make all our volunteer roles both sustainable and attractive. Rebecca Day led the development and analysis of a club member survey about volunteer effort – you can read the findings on our website. Thanks to this work, which also served to raise awareness of this issue, we are rejigging some committee roles for 2016/17.

There is always room to volunteer your effort to support the club, so just talk to anyone on committee about how you can help.

Our third prong was redevelopment of the website. We decided to shift the website onto the same platform as the newsletter, which will simplify administration, provide a better mobile viewing experience and also provide greater flexibility in terms of features. Richard House is leading this work, which will also include a fresh look at the website structure and content. It's a relatively large project that will tick over into 2016/17.

Having these three areas to focus on has been really helpful in achieving a sense of momentum and progress for committee. As well as the ever-present business as usual that I highlighted above, we have had to deal with several complicated member issues. This kind of work remains (appropriately) invisible to the rest of the club but takes a lot of energy out of our volunteers. I want to personally thank those people on committee who have contributed to the resolution of these difficult situations.

As we approach our Annual General Meeting on 13 April, we are working to make sure all committee roles will be filled in 2016/17. There are a number of committee members who have confirmed they will stand down at the AGM.

Jo Fink is standing down from Membership after two years in the role. Without any fanfare, Jo has managed all the recent membership changes through the system and done an unfailingly good job. Emily Shrosbree has sadly departed our shores but she leaves behind an excellent legacy of work in the communications role.



Rebecca Day is stepping down as our Secretary extraordinaire. Beccy has done an outstanding job as Secretary as well as picking up a number of extra pieces of work. Steve Austin is trying (again!) to stand down as Treasurer. Thank you so much, Steve, for stepping in to pick up this role and for your extra work as we changed banks this year. Megan Sety is stepping down from Social Convenor, having previously also been Newsletter Editor. Megan has been an organisational driving force and contributed a huge amount to the committee over the past three years. Richard Lardner is stepping down from committee after three years on Transport following two years as Assistant Chief Guide. Richard has consistently and without fuss taken care of transport scheduling and maintenance so that our vans are safe and every trip has transport. I may be biased but the fact that this is one of the roles we are splitting in two is testament to the huge amount of work Richard has done. I am also standing down from the committee.

I want to thank those people who have indicated (or are on the verge of indicating) that they will stand for committee in 2016/17. There are many moving parts to our club, and we really need everyone to give a little bit so that our volunteer machine remains functioning and sustainable. If you aren't currently involved in volunteering, I strongly encourage you to give it try.

Being involved in club operations is a great way to meet people and form strong friendships. It also gives you a chance to try out skills and approaches that might relate to things you want to strengthen in your professional life. And it gives you that warm feeling of giving back. Our survey showed that our volunteers get a lot of fulfilment from their efforts and I encourage you to join them!

Amanda Wells, President



Committee Reports

Our Finances

The WTMC balance sheet remains in good shape with cash reserves of \$250,570 as at 31 January 2016, up 4 percent from the previous year. Club income less expenditure for the year resulted in a loss of \$8,048.

Membership subscriptions were up 25 percent from last year at \$17,183, reflecting growth in membership.

A surplus of \$150 was recorded for transport and other tramping related activities. Income from both North and South Island trips increased from the prior year, reflecting less weather-related trip cancellations. However van maintenance costs were high, possibly reflecting the age and high use of the vans. One year remains for van depreciation after which club transport should start to make surpluses contributing to future capital needs.

The lodge finances show a loss of \$11,664 for the year. This reflects a nine percent decline in patronage, a 14 percent increase in the cost of food, and higher expenditure on essential repairs. Proposals for lodge infrastructure improvements and lodge promotions are on the committee agenda for 2016.

Club operating costs were \$28,951, an increase of 64 percent from last year. This was due to increased expenditure on membership training, including a St John's First Aid Course and instructor costs relating to the Alpine Instructor Course (AIC and snowcraft income are reported in the sundry income section of finance report).

Finally, I would like to extend my warm thanks to Ed Juchnowicz for once again auditing the WTMC accounts.

Steve Austin, Treasurer



People's choice winner – Spencer Clubb



Our Trips

The club runs on volunteers so a big shout out to the more than 100 members that lead trips: without leaders there would be no trips. A special thanks to those that led a trip for the first time in 2015.

Other standout volunteers include:

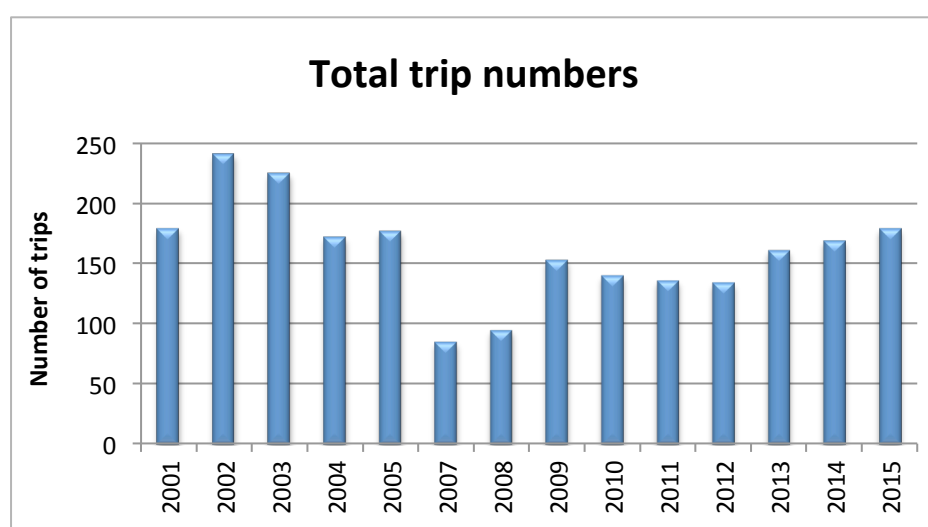
David Jewell for organising the alpine and rock schedule – I am jealous of all those flights (air miles rock!). Richard Lyth and Beth Piggot for running the family schedule. Unfortunately (for us, fortunately for them) Richard and family have moved to the South Island but Beth and others are still doing an amazing amount of family trips. Ann and Phil Kendon, and Mike Pratt for looking after Paua Hut. Peter Silverwood and Marilyn Odnot for being amazing gear custodians and France Boyson for volunteering to pick up this role. Steve Kohler has done another great job of collecting the trip statistics. Barbara Keenan for her consistent good work in the key job of checking trip fare payment. Sarah Fisher has been an outstanding emergency contact coordinator - we wish her well as she moves up north for her career. Last but certainly not least, Kevin (glamorous assistant) Cole for his support of my role as Chief Guide.

This year has seen a step up in training, with club contributing more to our leaders, including a first aid course and an awesome Alpine Instruction Course (thanks Mike Phethean for organising) along with our regular Leadership and Bushcraft courses.

Statistics

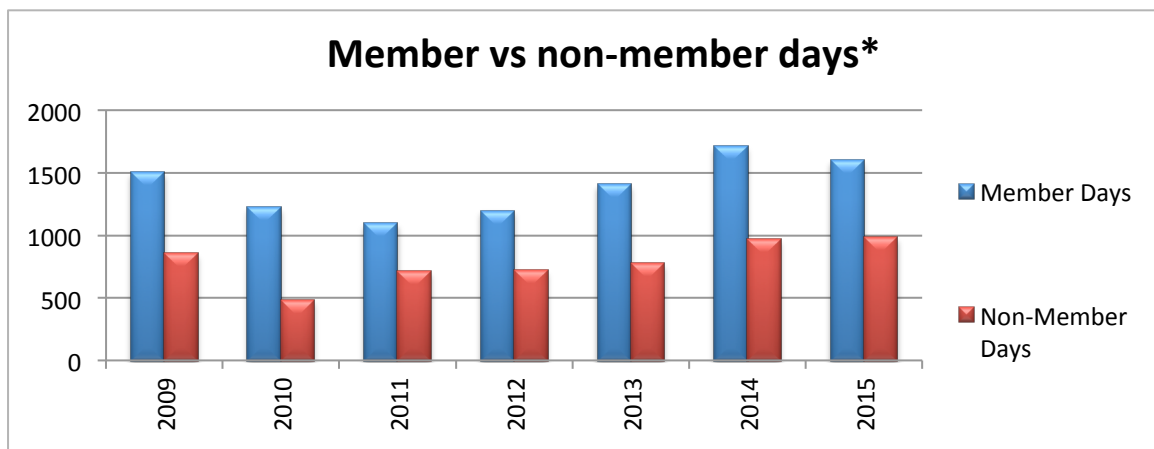
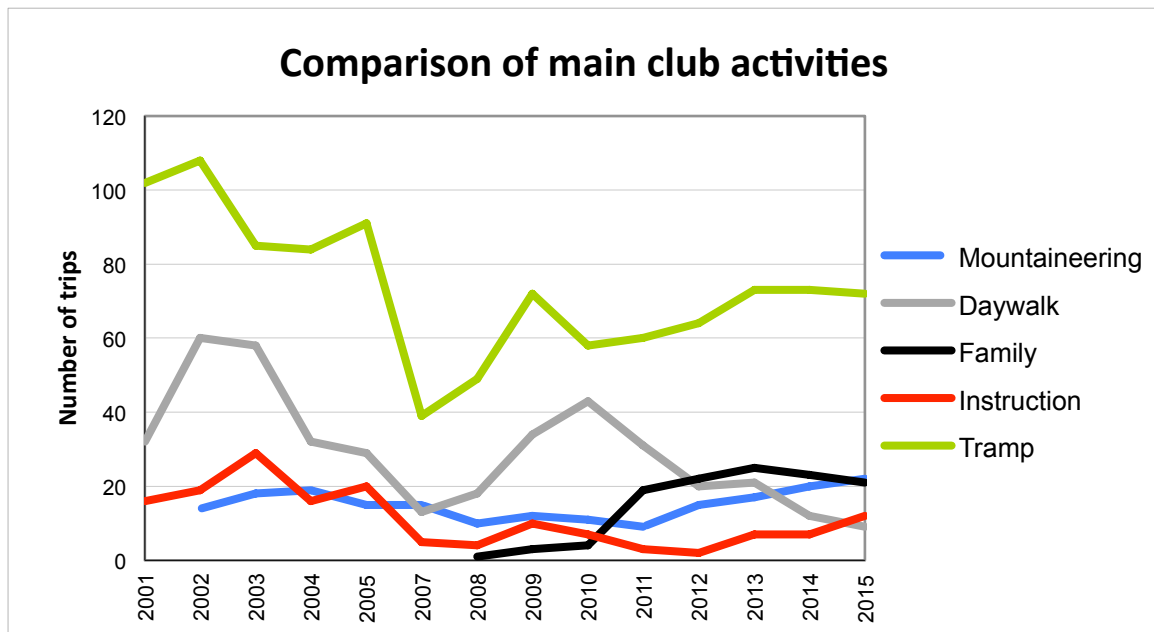
A big thanks to Steve Kohler for recording and calculating these statistics.

We had 10 more trips in 2015 versus 2014 – go WTMC! This included 72 tramping trips. Day walks decreased by three. I'd like some help with this area during trip planning, as I am not a day walk kind of girl. Steve's statistics also show that our total person days decreased by 99 person days compared to 2014, but 2015 was still the second highest total (2,590) since 2005 – not bad I say!

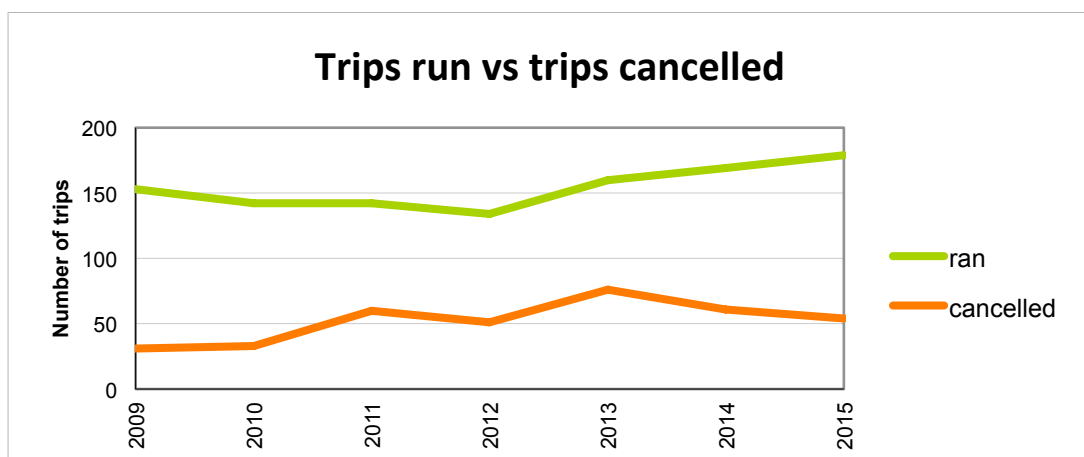


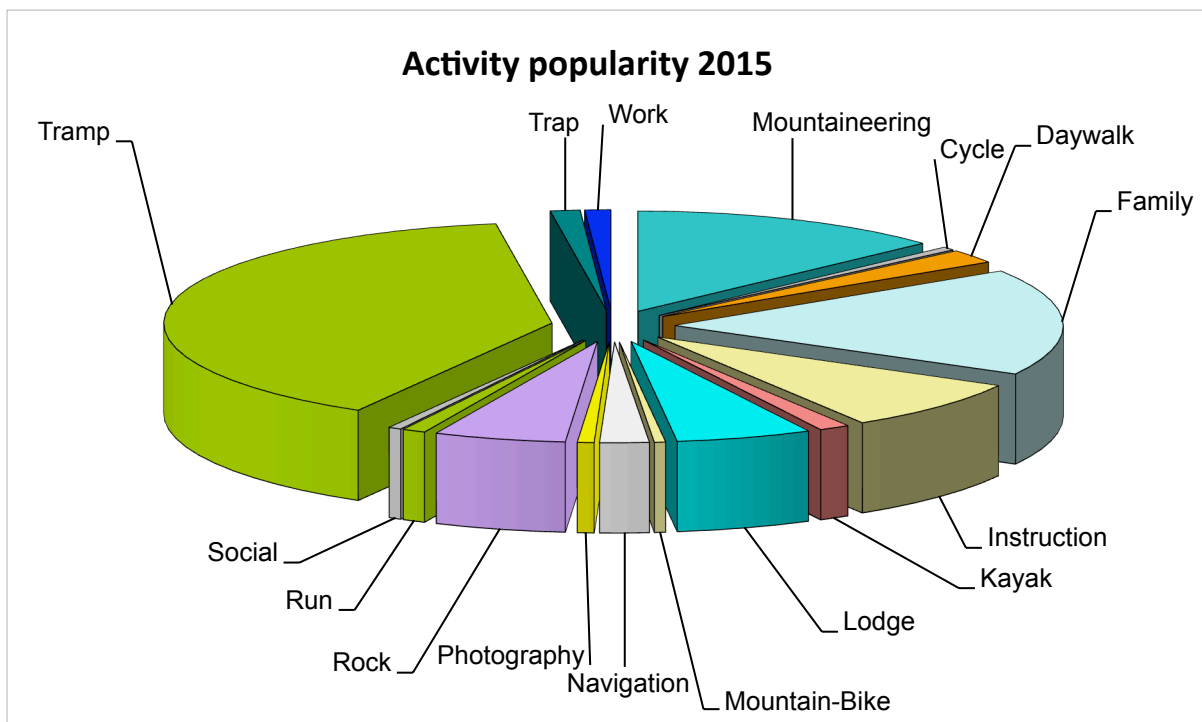


The main activities chart shows the steady numbers of mountaineering trips, which includes growth in rock climbing trips. Instruction courses have increased versus last year. There has also been a steady number of family trips.



*Days are calculated as members / non-members multiplied by number of days





**Popularity is calculated as people multiplied by number of days for each activity.*

Conservation – WTMC Ruahine trapping line to protect whio

WTMC is working to see more whio chicks on the Upper Makaroro River, like this photo from the Apias (the neighbouring catchment), taken by Lisa Whittle.



In February 2015, DOC and various volunteers put out a new DOC200 trap line in the Eastern Ruahines, from Aranga junction to Totara Spur, called the Parks Peak trap line. After hearing about the work Lisa and Geoff Whittle have been

doing on their neighbouring trap line (thanks to an excellent club night talk), WTMC was keen to get involved in protecting the whio. We agreed to take on the new Parks Peak line, and became part of the Ruahine Whio Protectors collective. The collective is made up of six groups or individuals that look after more than 30 pairs of whio and maintain 1835 traps (see map below).

The club currently looks after 119 traps. At the time of writing, we have checked the trap line nine times, catching 100 predators. This includes 64 evil stoats, which are the main threat to whio. The most successful trap is trap 89 with a tally of four stoats! Trap 77 has caught three. These traps are close to the river so add protection to the three whio who we regularly see on the Makaroro River near the hut. Our commitment is to check the traps every month.

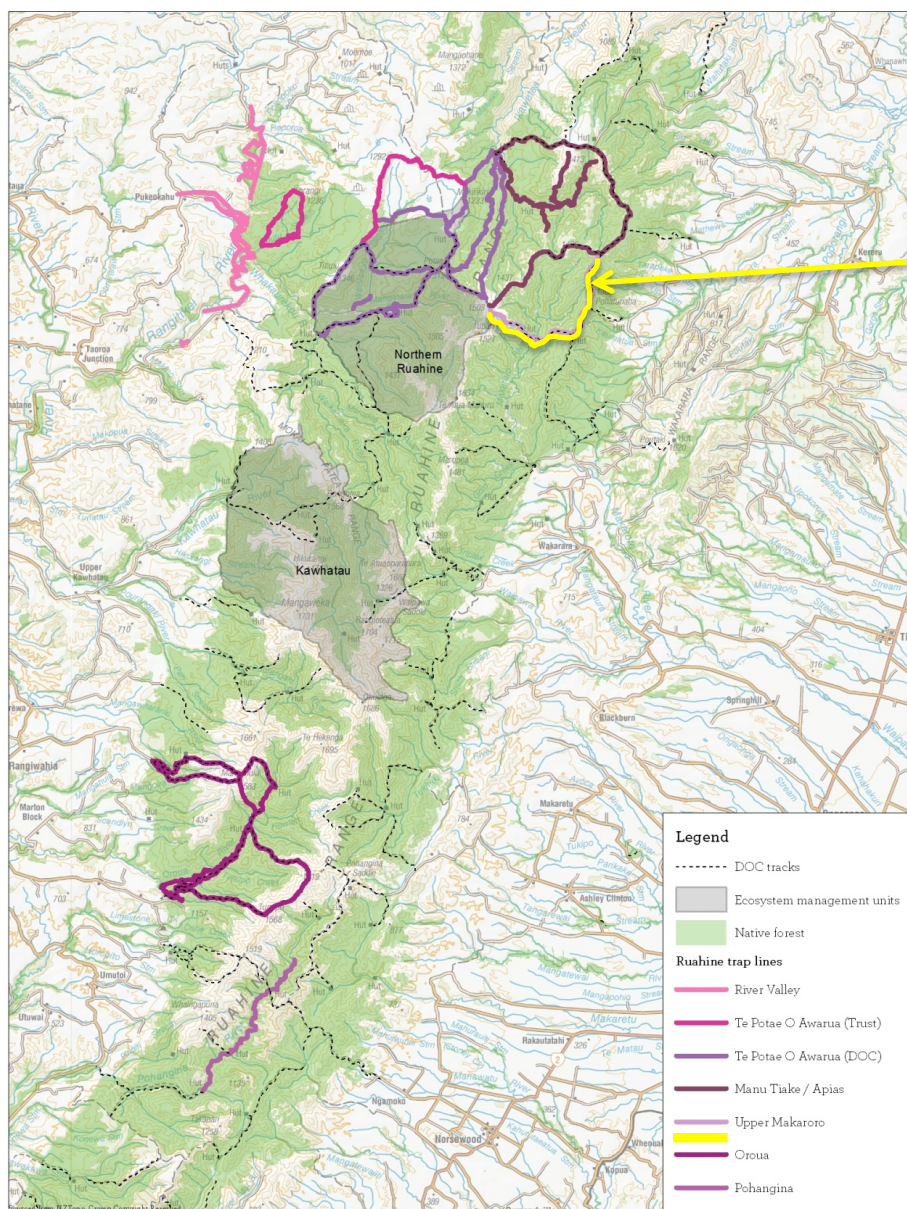


There have been a number of trapping trips on the schedule and we will keep regularly putting trips on. These scheduled trips are an opportunity for people new to trapping to learn the ropes. Our line lends itself really well to different graded trips, so anyone can take part. We are keen for people to learn the skills so they can teach others. Our off-schedule trips tend to be medium fit so that we can do the whole line in a weekend with a small number of people. Our hope for 2016 is to run trips to visit other trapping lines in the Ruahines and maintain the gains that we have made to date.

Get in touch chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz if you are keen to go along or learn more. Below is a map of all the trapping lines in the Ruahines – WTMC’s line is labelled Upper Makaroro.

Illona Keenan, Chief Guide

Ruahine whio trapping network



WTMC Upper Makaroro Trapping Line

Ruahine whio trapping network





Our Assets

Ruapehu Lodge

Our lodge up on Mt Ruapehu is approximately 40 years old. In that time it has served the club extremely well. It is fantastic base for skiers; and an excellent place to introduce people to climbing and gaining the skills required to explore above the bushline.

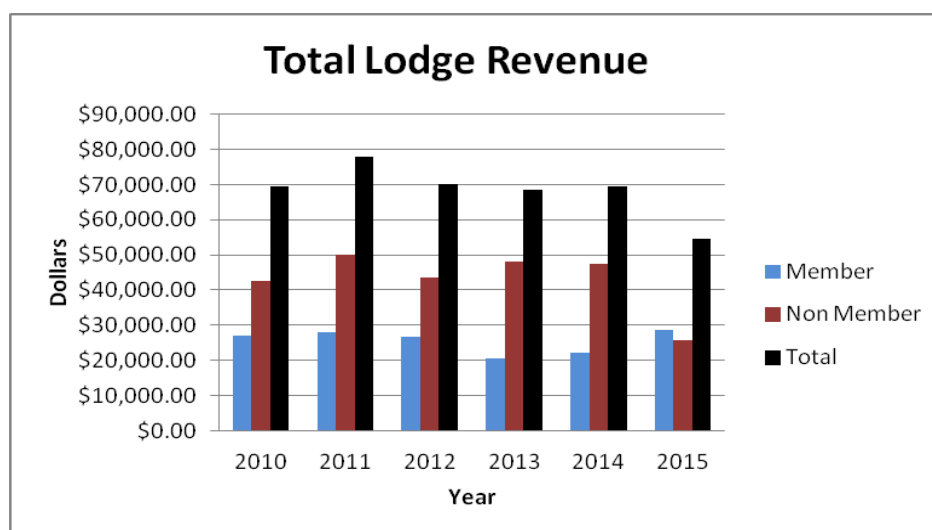
When we get good snow, the lodge is well used and, thanks to the open lodge season from Boxing Day to early January, the numbers of people using the lodge in the summer are also increasing.

For the last few years the lodge sub-committee has made sure essential maintenance has been carried out on the building, but we haven't done any major works for a while. We need to consider updating some of the aging lodge infrastructure. Also, we are aware that we compete with other lodges, accommodation at National Park and Ohakune for the winter leisure dollar and we need to make sure the lodge is both comfortable and attractive to users.

Lodge Usage Summer/Winter 2013, 2014 and 2015

	Possible bed nights	Actual bed nights 2013	% Utilisation	Actual bed nights 2014	% Utilisation	Actual bed nights 2015	% Utilisation
Summer	7008	281	4%	503	7%	425	6%
Winter	4608	1542	34%	1630	35%	1517	33%

Despite maintaining a healthy level of bed nights, the lodge revenue is down quite substantially on previous years. As shown in the graph below, most of the lodge revenue in the past was from non-members. WTMC changed the membership rules in 2015, making it easier to become a club member. The result to the club was an increase in membership in 2015, but a decrease in revenue as people naturally took advantage of the lower member rates.





As always many thanks go out to the members of the lodge sub-committee who put in many hours behind the scenes to keep the lodge in good condition and do all that's required to ensure the people who use the lodge have a great experience. Special thanks also to the club members who are lodge leaders – we can't run lodge trips without you!

Marie Smith, Ruapehu Lodge Convenor

Paua Hut

Paua Hut, with its road-end less than an hour's drive from Wellington, continues to be an extremely popular club asset. Paua Hut is free of charge for members but requires booking.

Bookings for Paua Hut have been steady all year. The usual slowdown in the winter months did not happen in 2015. Almost every weekend was booked apart from three weekends in May and a handful from July to September. Usually weekends are booked up around a month in advance but the hut is currently booked every weekend till end of April. December and January saw a number of midweek bookings.

This year a new firebox was installed and general maintenance undertaken. We've also put up notices in the hut to remind people not to lock themselves out of the hut during their stay and this has stopped any reported cases this year.

We are looking at developing an online calendar so that people can easily check if the hut is booked, to help manage the number of enquiries.

Ann and Phil Kendon

Club Vans

The club owns two Ford Transit 12-seater minivans. Altogether the vans were used for 50 trips in 2015, as opposed to 60 the previous year. The combined mileage driven by both vans within the last 12 months was approximately 29,000 km; an increase of around 1000 km on the previous year. Passenger use was also slightly higher in 2015; a total of 470 passengers over the year, as opposed to 446 in 2014. Van use is at an acceptable level for retaining two vans. Over the past year we have had a number of weekends when both club vans have been in use and we have needed to hire extra vehicles; altogether we hired 14 rental vehicles over 11 different weekends in 2015.

There are approximately 65 vetted current club members who have volunteered to drive the vans. This is great, though we are always keen to encourage as many volunteers as possible to become familiar with driving the vans. The club scheduled a van familiarisation session in August 2015, however this was cancelled due to lack of interest and familiarisation is being run on an ad hoc one-on-one basis. We have carried out



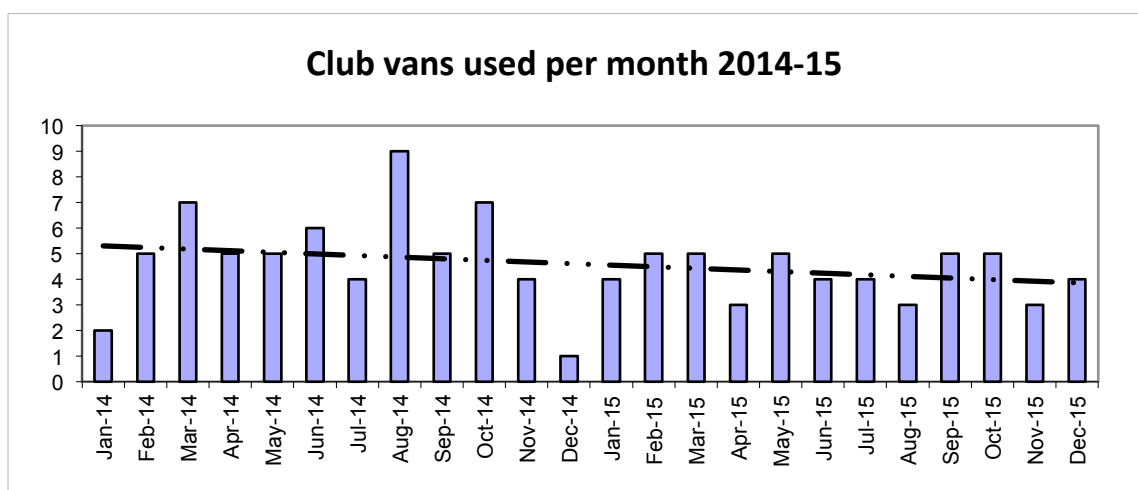
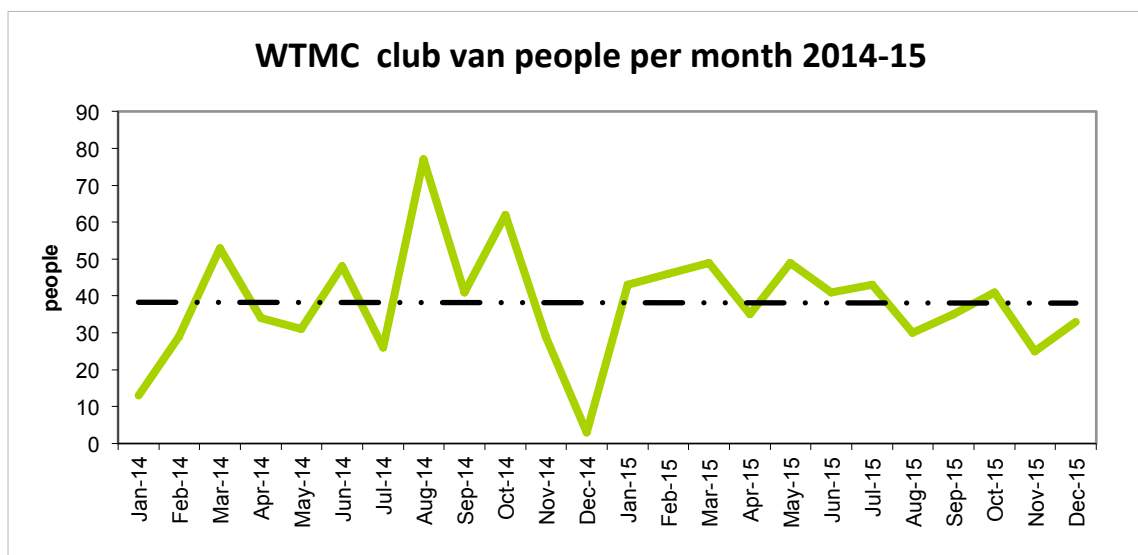
communication to trip leaders and drivers in 2015 to remind them of their responsibilities to drive safely and follow the road code.

Thanks to Gareth Morton and Pete Gent for continuing to clean the vans every month—not a glamorous job but an important one! The van storage location at the Interislander ferry terminal works well for the club and is particularly handy for South Island trips. Thanks to Gareth Morton for arranging ferry bookings with Interislander for South Island trips over the past year.

Neither van suffered any major damage in the past year, although several sizeable bills were received for general wear and tear, as to be expected of vans this age. At the risk of stating the obvious, if you are driving a van and notice that one of the warning lights is flashing or on, please take note and report this to the transport officer asap so it can be checked out.

Finally thanks to Steve Kohler for collecting trip statistics and preparing the following graphs of van use.

Richard Lardner, Transport Officer



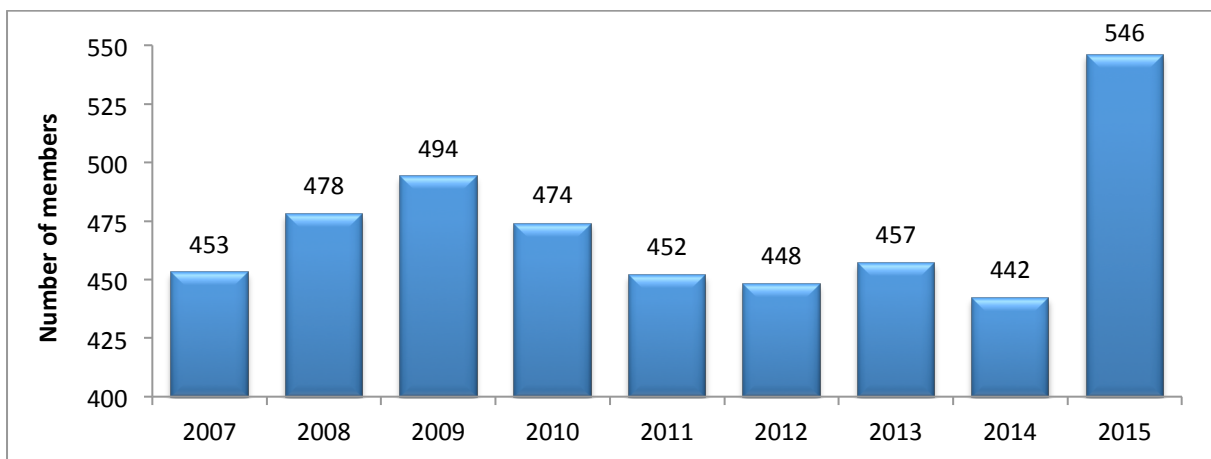


Our People

Membership

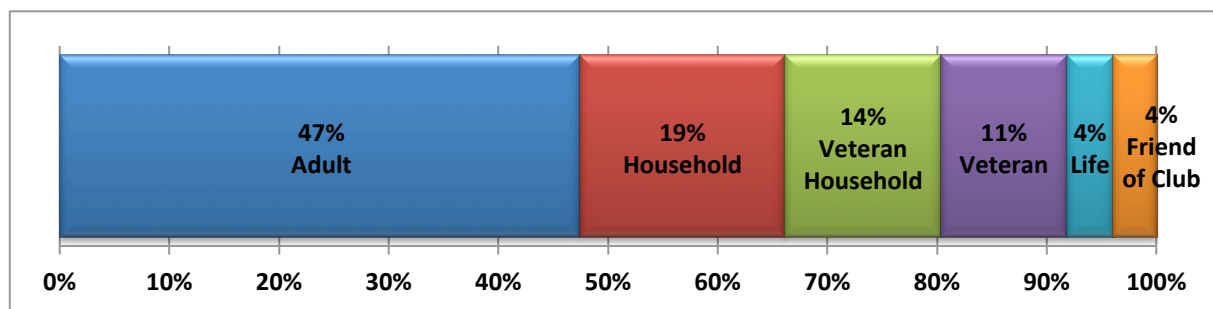
At the end of 2015, we had a total of 546 members, spread across 331 households. Our current membership is substantially higher than in recent years.

Total annual membership 2007 – 2015



Nearly half our members (47 percent) are Adult Members. A fifth (19 percent) are Household Members (could include one or two adults plus several children), 14 percent are Veteran Households and 11 percent are Veterans. Four percent of our members are Life members and four percent are Friends of the Club.

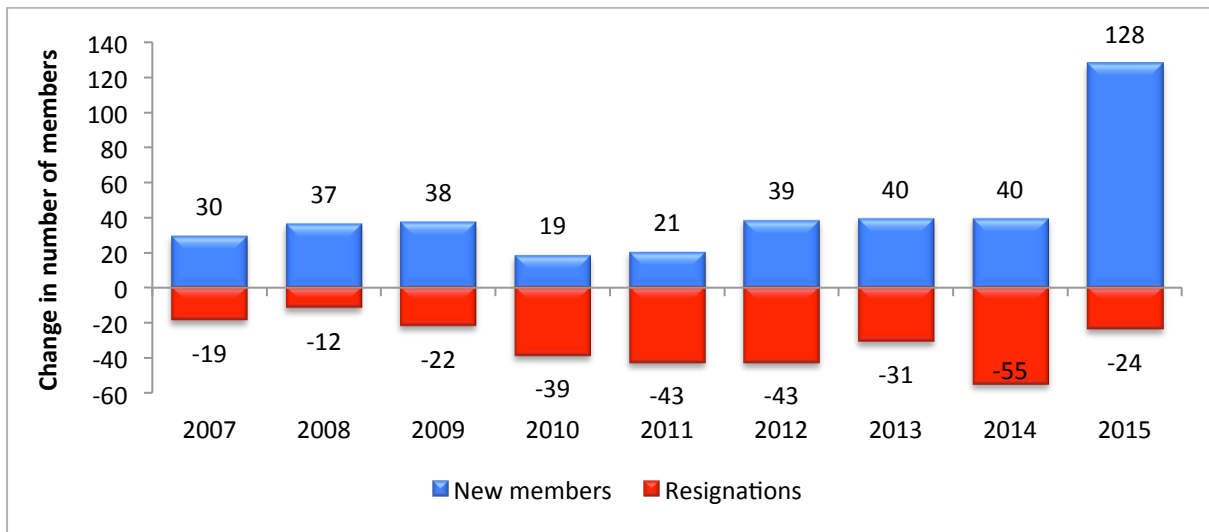
Distribution of membership types, 2015



We welcomed 128 new members in 2015. This included 58 individual Adults, and 70 others as part of Households (including 36 children). 24 members resigned or were removed from the membership.



New members and resignations 2007 – 2015



The increase in the number of members can be attributed to several changes, which came into effect in 2015:

- membership categories were simplified into individual and household units
- the \$15 joining fee was removed
- the requirement for going on two trips and being nominated by current members was removed.

Members are encouraged to keep the club's database up to date with any changes to their contact details, including your email address. Please send your updated details to membership@wtmc.org.nz or notify the membership officer by post - PO Box 5068, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145.

Jo Fink, Membership Officer

Communications

This is the first year that the Communications Officer role has been filled. The Communications Officer is responsible for co-ordinating the various channels of communication open to the club.

This year the focus has been on communicating with new members. Since the changes in membership criteria, we now often have new members joining us with no prior experience of how the club works. To ensure they understand what we expect of them as members of the WTMC community, this year we established some membership induction communications. New members now receive three emails over three weeks that provide advice on how to be a good punter, our rules and policies, and how they can help out with the running of the club.

Here is summary of other communication channels we have used this year:

- The club Facebook page continues to be well-followed (693 likes). Other organisations often pick up content we post and share it.
- We've replaced the monthly newsletter with a continuously updated blog, so trip reports and other updates are available in a more timely fashion.
- The forum on the WTMC website continues to be well-used.

Emily Shrosbree, Communications Officer



Above the bushline winner – Katja Reidel

Promotions

This year promotions focused on increasing interest in club nights, bringing in interesting speakers and utilising online and social media as a way to reach our membership. While it's hard to measure, there



certainly seems to be an increasing number of members attending club nights, many new, young and keen to experience the NZ bush, and in general a buzz around the room of excitement.

We moved away from using the Meetup “Wellington Tramping Group” for advertising or running trips, as we found that members were often confused that there were actually two separate groups. This decision has had no negative effect on our social nights or trips, and in fact we seem to be seeing more people coming through our doors with a greater sense of community and investment in volunteering and participating in the club. To replace the use of Meetup we’ve focused on Facebook and Eventfinder. Both have proved useful. In addition, these tools are allowing us to reach younger audiences and reduce the burden on our members for promotion, and the cost to our club for advertising.

These changes are consistent with the changes in the newsletter, which have focused on increasing engagement with members and non-members alike, including more frequent but briefer emails. In addition, we’ve focused on delivering more content focused on trip reports and ‘need to know’ WTMC news.

The times are changing and WTMC is working to move with them, both to enhance our member’s experience of the club and expand our reach to the upcoming generation.

We’ve seen real benefits from these changes this past year trickling down to the places it matters - more people on trips, more new people stepping up to lead trips, high demand for and attendance of our instruction courses and more people stepping up to help out with the club.

Club nights

Club night attendance has shown some variance throughout the year, with more people attending during the warmer months. Busier nights coincide with our more popular talks like the Photo Competition and Mountain Weather. We are averaging 35 people a night, 27 of which are members, six non-members, and two first-timers. Total attendance for 2015 was 1480 people, which is slightly lower than the 1500+ who attended in 2014. This change in numbers might reflect our change in asking people to no longer sign-in at the door, but simply tick a box.

We’ve had a range of presentations this year focusing on club members primarily speaking on trips within New Zealand. This included a special presentation by the families group and their children, as well as a range of external speakers who have proved very popular, speaking on topics from tramping nutrition to NZ-based documentaries and more. As attendance at club nights seems particularly high prior to the talk and then suddenly seems to dissipate when the talk starts, we have been experimenting with ‘social only’ nights. It’s too early to tell, but this looks like a good opportunity to allow members more time to talk and to reduce the burden on the social convener. We also held another ‘member’s night at Bivouac’ which including a 20% discount. While this was popular, attendance was low and I would recommend not repeating the night but instead inviting Bivouac to visit the WTMC social night at the hall.

In addition, this year marked a significant change in the running of the social nights, as we decided to start the nights 30 minutes earlier. This was done primarily because large numbers (between 10-20 people) have



been arriving at least 30 minutes before the doors were open. The change was met with positive comments and welcome feedback from members and had the added benefit that families find it easier to attend and bring children.

Facebook page

The WTMC Facebook page has been going from strength to strength and has almost doubled the number of “Likes” from last year (currently at 762). Regular posts continue to generate 100s of views. Thanks to Meena Kadri and Amelia White for keeping the Facebook page ticking over, posting new posts and responding to questions as they come in.

For our February 2016 New Members Night we tried a couple of new things in terms of promoting the event using Facebook. We set up an “Event” page on Facebook, where people could indicate their interest and ask questions. This type of approach has been used for advertising gigs, bar promotions, community events etc. It’s a good way to advertise an event and get regular Facebook users engaged, as the event page will send periodic notifications/reminders. This could be used in the future for our special club nights, like Photo Competition and Mountain Weather, or for special guest speakers.

New members night and advertising

For the first time, Facebook was our primary source of advertising for the New Members night on 10 February 2016. We “boosted” the Facebook event post through Facebook advertising, targeting 18-65 year olds with an interest in sports and the outdoors. The total spend to boost the post was \$27.75, resulting in an additional 5195 views, 252 click-throughs and 66 people indicating they were interested in or attending the event.

Overall, over 14,000 people saw a link to the event on Facebook, 581 clicked through, and 212 indicated that they were interested or attending the event. Facebook advertising is an interesting new area to explore, and in my opinion provides a cost effective advertising platform for future events.

A post on Eventfinda also proved useful, as their partnership with Dominion Post meant the event was promoted in a small blurb on the Capital Diary page of the Tuesday 9th of February edition Dominion Post. Some attendees also mentioned that they saw the event on Eventfinda.

We estimate over 100 people attended new members night, and volunteers said that it looked like it was busier than previous years. Just over 90 new member’s forms were picked up, indicating a high attendance and interest in the club.

End of Year Function

We had our annual “Thank You to the Volunteers” end of year function in early December 2015 at the Malthouse. Invitations were sent out to everyone who had helped out the club in some way in



2015. Overall 25-30 people attended, with many more dropping by for a quick “Hi”. The Malthouse staff were incredibly helpful in arranging the space and food orders ahead of the night. The night was a great success.

Andrei Zubkov, Promotions Officer & Megan Sety, Social Convenor

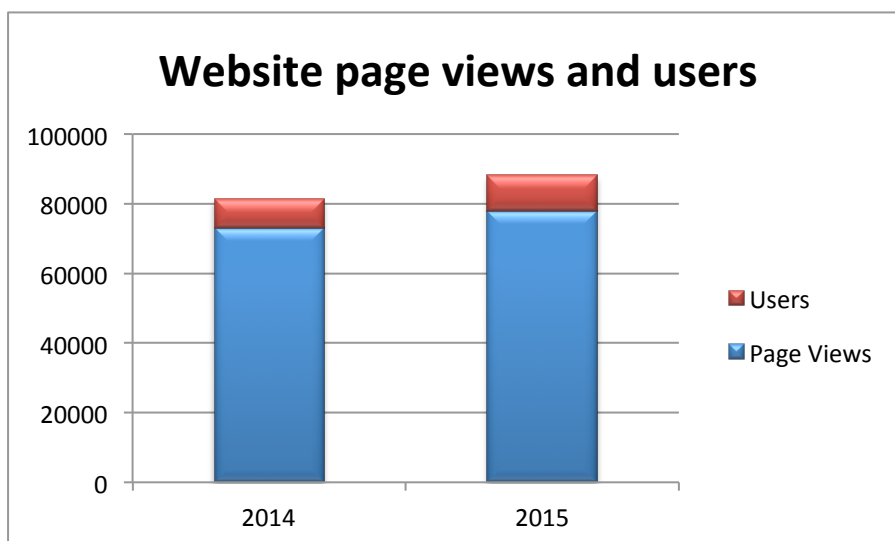


Outdoor Landscapes Winner – Katja Reidel

Website

Website traffic has continued to increase with page views rising to 78,000 in 2015 from 73,000 in 2014. Users increased from 8,350 to 10,080 for the same periods, with New Zealand at 80 percent, the United States at five percent, Australia at two percent and the United Kingdom at one percent.

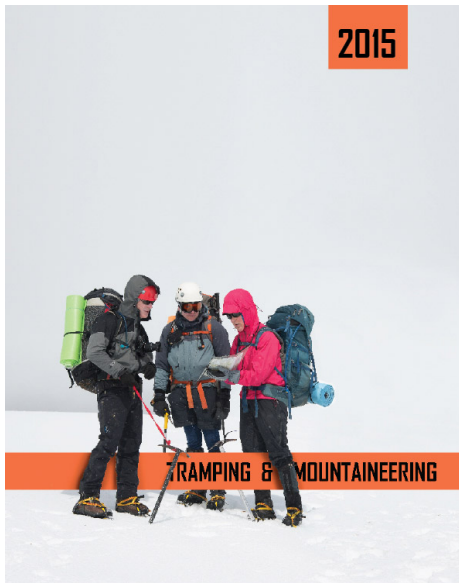
Small improvements to the most popular pages (trip-schedule and upcoming-club-night-entertainment) have resulted in a 30 percent increase in the number of visits.





Because people are increasingly access the Internet from mobile devices (phones and tablets), we will be making the website information more easily readable on these devices. At the same time we will integrate the main website and newsletter into a common site, thereby reducing the complexity of maintaining both separately on different platforms. We will also be making the pages people most often look for easier to access with fewer clicks.

Richard House, Webmaster



Ian Harrison did an outstanding job of producing the journal for the second time in 2015.

The journal features stories of club trips and adventures further afield, in a visually appealing format.

The hardest part of compiling the journal is making sure that stories and pictures come in on deadline – it's never too early to start about what you could contribute this year.

Thanks Ian for all the skill and persistence you have brought to this task!