

Traps on the move into the McColl's property.



Photo: K Grabow, 2008

COMMUNITY KIWI PROTECTION PROGRAMME

North Taranaki farmers commit to kiwi protection.

The interest in predator control plans provided by the Taranaki Kiwi Trust (TKT) through the Community Kiwi Protection Programme has been snow-balling. Kris Grabow, our TKT Field Officer has been helping get projects underway on two farms recently in North Taranaki. In March the McColl family's predator control plan at Okau came to fruition with delivery and laying of traps on their property. Alastair and his family are keen to protect the kiwi on their property and beyond. The Jury family from Okoki has also initiated a predator control plan on their property, which will be on the ground very shortly. "I am really enjoying working with such enthusiastic landowners – taking proactive steps to keep kiwi safe" - Kris Grabow.



Field Officer's Report

These past three months have gone by quickly. The long dry summer has turned quickly to wintery conditions – what happened to autumn?

Barry Hartley, a TKT Trustee and I attended a kiwi release ceremony at Mimi school recently. A male kiwi was returned to his territory after recovering from an attack by a farm dog on a property near Rerekino Forest. Due to the swift action by John Jury and his daughter Trina, they rescued not only the kiwi, but its two eggs also.

Further to this kiwi recovery, Mimi school has been undertaking kiwi studies and hosted a TKT kiwi aversion dog training day on Saturday May 24th. More dog aversion training was held in New Plymouth on Sunday 25th May.

In April I was fortunate to attend the Kiwi Hui, which is an annual event for kiwi practitioners nation-wide. This was a great opportunity to build my networks and share information with other groups, and to hear about the latest advances in kiwi work. With 5 different species of kiwi nation-wide, there is great variation in kiwi life styles, and varied management techniques are required. Without a doubt, the common major issue for all, which extends beyond kiwi to all threatened native species, is that of predators – and the requirement for effective, long-term predator control to really make a difference.

The Trust offers stoat control plans and stoat traps on long-term loan to landowners to protect kiwi on their properties. This eliminates initial set-up cost to farmers, but requires their on-going commitment to regularly check and clear the traps, and record catches. The first project in the TKT's Community Kiwi Protection Programme was on the Jensen family farm. The total number of predators caught over the last 12 months was 111 – great work and thanks Chris!

Thanks also to our volunteers for transporting kiwi chicks and eggs to and from Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs Rotorua and assisting at kiwi releases, field work and events.

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KIWI ENCOUNTER!

The Kiwi Encounter, Rotorua, was a magical, awesome experience. Be sure to book to guarantee your visit as it is a very popular place.

Our tour guide, Dion, met us at the desk and escorted us over to the Kiwi Encounter Centre. It was a little disappointing not being able to take photos. He explained to us that it would damage the kiwi's eyes.

Dion was friendly, knowledgeable and definitely entertaining. He had a great personality and patiently answered all sorts of questions.

It was wonderful to see the size of a kiwi egg. We were even able to see the candling technique being done on a plastic egg, to give us some idea of how big the chick would be. This technique is used to see if the egg is viable before being placed in an incubator. They also had another plastic egg resembling the weight. Per body size, the egg was really heavy. As we held it and looked at an x-ray of the egg inside the female, it put things into perspective how big and heavy the egg was.

The eggs are collected from 13 source sites around the North Island when approximately 40 – 60 days old and carefully labelled enabling the chick to be released back in the right place. Rangers and volunteers transport the eggs from the different areas to one of three centres.

We were privileged enough to see a chick that had only just hatched snuggled up in its incubator. A chick can take up to five days to hatch out and it chose the day we visited to enter the world! We have since found out it was called OB short for Ocean Beach.

It was amazing to see how kiwi were already fully formed on meeting the world. Kiwi are born with all their feathers and with their eyes open. They are able to stand within 6 hours and walk within 24 hours. They hatch with an internal yolk sac which they live off for between 3 – 10 days after they have hatched. Chicks spend up to 48 hours in the incubator to dry off and learn to stand.

On day 3 the chicks are transferred to a brooder that looks like a rabbit hutch. They stay there until they recover and return to their hatch weight. On day 8 artificial food is introduced by being placed in the kiwi's bill.

Kiwi Encounter buys and grows meal worms, crickets, locusts and worms to feed the chicks and this is supplemented with fruit, vegetables, porridge, wheat-germ and vitamins and minerals all mulched with ox heart.

At 3 – 4 weeks old the chicks from Taranaki are taken to Bushy Park Reserve, a predator-free creche where they acquire bush skills.

After approximately 4 – 5 months the chicks reach 1kg in weight and they are considered able to defend themselves. Once they have completed 30 days of quarantine they are released either into Egmont National Park or bush at Aotuhia.

It was great to be able to see the staff of Kiwi Encounter working away and interacting with the visitors.

The most special part of the visit was when Dion stopped our group outside some closed doors and said we had to use quiet voices when we entered the next area. He said that we would probably have to stop a minute once inside and let our eyes adjust. He was definitely right!

Once our eyes adjusted – what a sight we got! Three adult kiwi walking around in their enclosures that looked like the real bush. We were blown away that there was no glass between us and if we had been allowed to, we could easily have touched them! Because of the dim light the kiwi were foraging for food and it was amazing to see their beaks work.

Dion explained that adult kiwi were allowed to roam around in the moonlit open plan nocturnal area without the glass so we could experience how they would spend their time in the wild. He asked that we were silent. We could hear the kiwi shuffling around making little noises.

Outside, a path lead us back into an information area. One thing that appealed to our children was a calendar showing when the kiwi were hatched. We all had great delight in looking up our birthdays to see if a kiwi had hatched on that day. The tour was over!

In February 2008 the 1000th chick was hatched at the Centre. Claire Travis, Animal Husbandry Manager slept near the egg for 2 days, before a 389 gram healthy chick was born. It was named W(BP)FW8 until Mary Peri of Manurewa won the naming rights in a competition. She named it Hupai – Milestone. Mary also won the prize of releasing the chick at Bushy Park.

"The kiwi population halves about every 10 years and without human intervention the survival rate of young kiwi in the wild is only 5%. The BNZ Operation Nest Egg Programme has helped to raise the survival rate of kiwi chicks in the wild to 60 – 70%. "The kiwi are very flighty. If a goat, pig, possum or dog sniffs around the burrow the adult kiwi in the nest will usually leave, to the detriment of any eggs or young ones".

There are many sponsorship packages available if people want to help the kiwi. Toni Thompson, Sponsorship and Promotions Co-Ordinator, Rainbow Springs. Email sponsorship@nkt.org.nz for more information. If you are interested in volunteering contact the Centre.

Sharyn Smart, Smart Writing. Sharyn is a 'real life' writer and children's author.

There are many opportunities to help kiwi in Taranaki too, including joining the Friends of Taranaki Kiwi Trust, volunteer work or purchasing a trap box to name a few.

If you see any signs of kiwi or happen to be in the bush and hear them contact the Trust as we have a database monitoring kiwi movement.

Another thing we are promoting is kiwi aversion training for dogs. The training takes 15-20 minutes using an electric collar to discourage dogs from following kiwi scent. Dog owners are also educated on how to help keep their dogs 'bird safe'.

If you happen to find any kiwi hurt please contact Department of Conservation straight away.

YES! I'D LOVE TO HELP! BY... VOLUNTEERING SOME TIME DONATING SOME MONEY

Name/s: _____ Email: _____

Postal Address: _____ Phone Number: () _____

Town: _____ Please call me about volunteer work

Yes! I/we would like to help pay for checking traps in Egmont National Park (one year \$55, two years \$110, or other) \$ _____

Yes! I/we would like to donate a trap-box for predator control to protect kiwi in Taranaki (trap-box/es at \$65 each) \$ _____

Yes! I/we would like to donate money to be used where it's most needed to save kiwi in Taranaki \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ Donations over \$5 are tax-deductible (we will send you a receipt).

All donors become members of '**Friends of Taranaki Kiwi**' and will receive our regular newsletters

Please send to: Taranaki Kiwi Trust, P.O Box 867, New Plymouth 4340

TARANAKI KIWI TRUST SUPPORT FOR MAUNGATAUTARI ECOLOGICAL ISLAND TRUST PROJECT

Maungatautari Ecological
Island

Taranaki Kiwi Trust has agreed to work with Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust in the Waikato in a significant inter-regional initiative that will boost numbers of the western race of the northern brown kiwi.



Photo: Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust Website.

Maungatautari Trust has applied for a translocation permit to transfer kiwi chicks (from eggs of Taranaki origin) to become part of a genetically-diverse founder population in their extensive fenced (45.5km!) mainland island sanctuary. Maungatautari Trust is proposing to use the BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust Operation Nest Egg system to rear Taranaki kiwi chicks from eggs taken from wild pairs at Aotuhia. They will release 50% back to the source site each year, and add 20 chicks to Maungatautari over a 3-5 year period, if all goes to plan. In time, and even as soon as 3–5 years, some kiwi will return from Maungatautari to Taranaki as Maungatautari Trust manages the establishment of their founder population. In the longer term, once the sanctuary reaches carrying capacity, a steady and ongoing flow of kiwi will be available to boost Taranaki's populations.

The translocation proposal has not been approved yet so it's still possible the ONE project won't go ahead. Aotuhia forests are within the rohe of Ngati Maru. This iwi has indicated their support for the project and we certainly wouldn't proceed without that. If the translocation proposal is approved, Taranaki Kiwi Trust and Maungatautari Trust will run two ONE projects in unison, both based out of Aotuhia. If it doesn't, preparatory work (kiwi catching by Lance Dew and Sid Marsh, and site assessment) conducted already will not be wasted. It will mean TKT has a large replenished pool of monitored kiwi males, of fresh genetic stock, for our continuing work on Mt Egmont/Taranaki. We are working with Chris Smuts-Kennedy and Pim de Monchy from Maungatautari. Pim has previously led kiwi work in the Moehau Kiwi Sanctuary on the Coromandel, and Chris is very experienced in species conservation, so we have a lot of confidence Taranaki kiwi will be well cared for and the interests of the kiwi will be upheld.

So why do we at TKT support this proposal?

- It will enable a new kiwi protection tool, the semi-captive kiwi farming/controlled dispersal system to be developed at Maungatautari;
- It is essential to get a broad founder population established quickly at Maungatautari so a few early pairs don't dominate the gene pool;
- The long-term benefits are likely to be huge once that large sanctuary begins to "pump out" genetically diverse (and genetically appropriate) kiwi stocks to replenish protected and unprotected populations in the western North Island. (It's a bit like a term deposit with compounding interest then an endless period of superannuation payouts);
- Short-term benefits are also considerable, with additional birds being put back into the source population each year, in addition to the ones we can produce in our own BNZ ONE project.
- It will also have extra spin-off benefits – links between Maungatautari and Taranaki people and our projects will mean ideas on conservation (of kiwi and other species) are more easily shared, and our own region's fenced projects, like that at Rotokare, can benefit from Maungatautari's earlier experiences.
- The proposal fits with the desired outcomes of various national and regional agreements and plans relating to kiwi.
- Maungatautari Trust's involvement in kiwi in Taranaki will be beneficial to the kiwi population in Egmont National Park. In the short term we will have a fresh genetic source stock and in the longer term, we may also have Maungatautari bred birds returning to our maunga/mountain should the local population will be depleted.

Jenny Steven, TKT Chair

Kiwi Egg Courier!

Evelyn Mills is a keen volunteer who has helped the TKT organise kiwi releases and drive eggs to (and kiwi chicks from) Rotorua. She has kindly provided us with this account of her recent 'egg courier' experience!

I was thrilled when Kris rang me to ask if I could accompany eggs to Rotorua. I'd been privileged to go there a few months earlier with Carolyn Brough to collect 2 chicks to bring back for release on the mountain, so I knew a little of what it was about.

I got my drivers licence sighted and photocopied at DoC in NP in case I needed to drive a DoC car - not a problem! Then, I waited for the call to say Kris and Sid were going to collect the eggs and that the uplift had been successful. Winn and Ray, who are involved with the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust in Eltham, came along with me.

It was a lovely fine day and we set out at 9.15 with Ray opting to sit in the back with the two eggs, keeping an eye on the temperature, which he said was quite nerve wracking as they were such precious cargo! We delivered the eggs safely to Kiwi Encounter and were allowed to see them candled and washed. The airsack was marked on the shells and the eggs were weighed before being put into the incubators. We had lunch in Rotorua before heading home, arriving safely in Urenui at 6.30pm. I thought I'd be tired, but it was just the opposite - must have been the excitement of the day!

Looking forward to the next trip!

Evelyn Mills



Evelyn Mills (above) & Winn Kerr (right) holding Waiti at the release site in February 2008. Photos: Evelyn Mills, 2008.



Kris Grabow talks to the enthusiastic children at Mimi School



Photo: K Grabow, 2008

LOCAL KIWI KIDS KEEN TO SAVE KIWI!

Interest in kiwi protection has extended well into the community of North Taranaki. Kris Grabow has been working with both Ahititi and Mimi schools, helping them with studies about kiwi. As part of their studies, pupils at Ahititi School carried out a predator tracking tunnel project on the school grounds. This involved the children setting up tunnels (in strategic places) and monitoring what predators passed through them. The animals pass over an ink pad to reach the bait, and leave their paw prints on paper as they leave. This enables us to identify the animals that visit each tunnel - great fun!

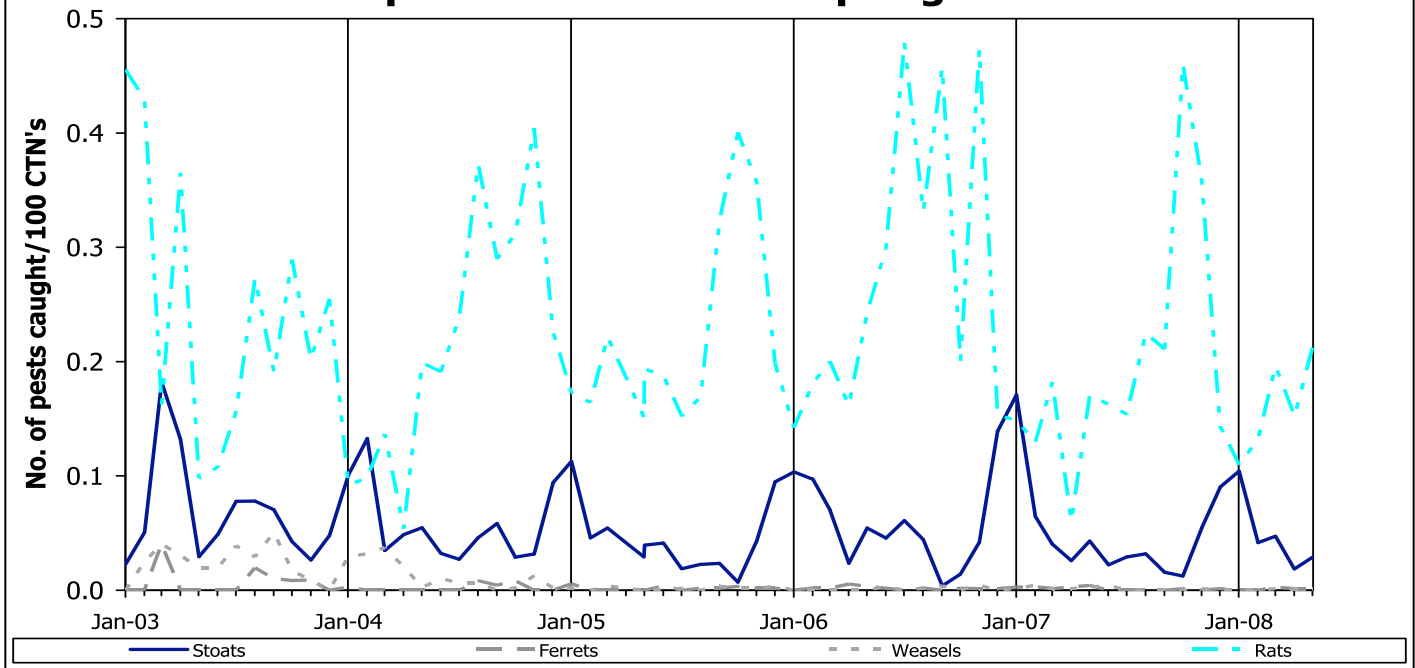
It is never too young to start educating our kids about the importance of saving our national icon. Puketapu Kindergarten in Bell Block invited TKT to come along and talk with them about kiwi recently. The children had been learning about forest birds, including kiwi. During the visit, they especially enjoyed seeing the taxidermied kiwi and photos. The following day the kindergarten group was taking a trip to see the presentation of Kiwi Moon, based on the childrens book written by Gavin Bishop.

The Taranaki Kiwi Trust invite all Taranaki schools who are interested in undertaking kiwi studies to get in touch with us.

We provide talks, study resources and can work with schools on wider community projects.

Contact Kris Grabow at info@taranakikiwi.org.nz or on 0274 601 047.

ENP Kiwi & Blue Duck predator trapping catches per 100 corrected trap-nights



Trapping in the Egmont National Park continues.... Trap checking is on a monthly basis at this time of the year. Thanks to all who have sponsored traps and donated money to keep the trapping programme going. The programme is keeping on top of stoats, but clearly it is an ongoing battle! Since 2002, 1657 Stoats & 7077 Rats have been trapped in the Egmont National Park.

BNZ Save the Kiwi Operation Nest Egg Project

The 2007/2008 kiwi breeding season has now finished with a total of eight chicks being hatched successfully. This number is lower than we expected, but is due to a reduced number of adults being monitored, and the extra dry summer has no doubt had an impact on productivity.

These eight chicks are now at Bushy Park, the predator-free creche site, where they will stay till they reach 1kg release weight. In February I spent a day at Bushy Park, Wanganui working with the ranger there to carry out monthly checks on three Taranaki chicks. This involves tracking and catching the kiwi for a weigh-in and changing their transmitter leg-band (to allow for leg growth). Weight gains of chicks were slower this summer, with some requiring a boost of supplementary food. This is an indicator of the tough times that many other species may have experienced in the wild also. We look forward to the return of

numerous kiwi to Taranaki over the coming months. They will be released within Egmont National Park as part of the Kiwi Conservation Programme and some will return to their source site in order to boost in-situ kiwi populations.

Monitoring of the kiwi population on Mt Taranaki is carried out by an annual kiwi call survey. This was completed in May after a short delay due to adverse weather. This survey is run by DoC, with assistance from the Taranaki Kiwi Trust and volunteers. The survey is carried out at four stations on the mountain, for six nights. The results will provide us with a call rate frequency that can be compared from one year to the next.

Over years to follow we expect the call rate to increase, indicating the increase in kiwi numbers. Kiwi do not call until adulthood, so although 33 sub-adults have been released into Egmont National Park since the start of the Operation Nest Egg Project, it is still early days and the majority of the new kiwi may not be calling as yet.

Kris Grabow, TKT

To all our sponsors, thanks for the support!



TSB Community Trust



FIRST CHICK RELEASE AT

AOTUHIA

Sid Marsh has been working for the Trust in the Aotuhia area for over three years now, locating nests and uplifting eggs



Photo: B Hartley, 2008

for our Egmont National Park Kiwi Conservation Programme.

The Trust and our partners DoC have decided that we will start returning a percentage of these kiwi to their natal area. The first of these releases was on May 17 with a group including local residents and Makahu School children. This was a good fun day, and is part of our programme to raise awareness in rural communities of the work of the Trust.

SAVING KIWI - LITERALLY!

John Jury and his daughter were out the back of their farm near the Rerekino Forest when John found his dog had caught a male kiwi and inflicted what appeared to be serious injuries. When he saw feathers on the ground leading back to a burrow in the scrub he found two eggs.

Realising the prospects were not good for either the bird or the eggs the Jury's wrapped the bird and eggs in warm clothing and brought them out over a winding, rough quad track to their 4WD ute and, from there, over a further winding steep road to civilization.

The Department of Conservation got the kiwi to a vet then to Massey University where the Wildlife Centre treated it until it could be sent to the Turakina Bird Rescue Centre. The kiwi recovered and was brought back to Taranaki. It was introduced to Mimi School pupils before being flown in (across a flooded river) to be released in his original burrow. The eggs went to Kiwi Encounter, where against all odds, the first hatched just a month later and the second hatched just recently. The young kiwi will be coming back to Uruti and will be named by Mimi School children prior to release. The chicks will be released in the same area as their parents.



Photo: B Hartley, 2008

SITUATIONS VACANT

VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

We are seeking a volunteer for up to 5 hours per fortnight to carry out administrative tasks for the Trust. Tasks will include clearing mail from a central mail box, taking minutes at evening meetings and assisting with the organisation of a variety of events. The position would suit someone with good writing skills and their own computer, with a creative streak, and who is keen to be part of the Kiwi Team! If this sounds like you, please contact Kris at info@taranakikiwi.org.nz with brief details.

NOTICES

Our apologies for such a late newsletter this quarter! We hope you enjoy the new look.

Any comments to the editor or story ideas can be sent to news@taranakikiwi.org.nz



P. O Box 867

NEW PLYMOUTH 4340