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Newsletter of the Taranaki Kiwi Trust

Volume 4, Number 2

June 2005

Chairperson's Report

Barry Hartley

A significant milestone in the Trust's progress was recorded when two Brown Kiwi chicks were released into Egmont National Park on 20 April. Our last newsletter recorded the recovery of the eggs and the raising of the chicks to a safe age and size for release. That goal was reached and at last report the birds are doing well, and are still in the release area.

This of course is only a start and many more eggs must be hatched and the chicks released before we can assume that this very localised population can sustain itself; albeit with continuing predator control. Further wild birds have been located and it is proposed that eggs will be sourced from these and raised to chick release age.

In the meantime the Trust's other projects continue. More talks to school groups, liaison with landowners and other groups.

Trust members also attended the official opening (or closing) of the pest proof fence at Bushy Park near Wanganui. We have had several discussions with their trust with a view to sharing resources rather than duplicating them.

The future for Brown Kiwi in Taranaki is looking a little brighter.



Ready to go: Banded and with a transmitter



Naki peeps out of her burrow

Our thanks to TET for supporting the work of Taranaki Kiwi Trust.



"Around the Nation" DOG AVERSION TRAINING

As we know, dogs are a major threat to kiwi, so the Taranaki Kiwi Trust is keenly watching the success of dog aversion training in other areas of New Zealand. Dean Stronge from DOC reports that the Taranaki/Wanganui Conservancy is having good results with the DOC hunter's dogs, which have been trained and re-tested, and many have also done the refresher for their older dogs. "Watching the dogs go through the training they definitely learn to avoid those stimuli. Those dogs getting a refresher (6 months - 1 year on from the original training) definitely knew to avoid the birds. The dogs were reacting to the stimuli, and not from remembering the previous course, as this course was run in a different location with a different set up to the previous one they had been on. It is hoped that the hunting contractor's dogs will be next to be trained".

The DOC website explains "Dogs are fitted with electric collars and exposed to dead ground-dwelling native birds and faeces in a controlled situation. Whilst sniffing these, the dog is 'punished' with a small but surprising electric shock. Most dogs quickly learn to avoid the birds following this experience. The owner is encouraged to reinforce this message when the dog shows interest in other birds, at home or out hunting. Following the training, certificates of attendance are issued". Nearly 1,000 dogs of all breeds, ages (6 months up) and uses have been successfully trained with this method.

The Taranaki Kiwi Trust is planning to facilitate and fund private hunters to take up training for their dogs. DOC Tongariro seem to be leading the initiative with subsidized training for hunters there. Eventually we would like to see this available to, and taken up by, recreational hunters in Taranaki.

BNZ Operation Nest Egg project update



Tara and Naki returned from the kiwi chick-rearing facility at the Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs, Rotorua, and have been released into the bush in the National Park. They were taken deep into the bush, to a suitable burrow which they may decide to make their home. Both chicks are radio-tagged, and DOC staff are monitoring them. (Dean Caskey, Ranger; Jim Clarkson, Programme

Manager; Joe Carson, Ranger - casual; Sue Caldwell, Ranger; and Sid Marsh, Kiwi Contractor)

Progress Reports:

Friday April 29th, 2005

Joe 'beeped' the female on the ground, right next to the release site.

Friday May 6th, 2005

Dean had twice tracked the male transmitter (tx) from the air which showed he was still in the vicinity of the Little Maketawa. The female's transmitter channel has too much static and interference to pick up from the air. Sid, Jim and Sue travelled through to the Little Maketawa to track and do a visual check on the two chicks. We found the female first, about 150 - 200m up from the release site, in a small burrow. A visual check showed she is looking really healthy, the transmitter fits well and she weighed in at 1225g. The male was found in a large burrow slightly further afield - up another 200m from the female. He too is in very good condition, no issues with the transmitter fit, and his weight is about 1125g. Both chicks are very vigorous kickers! We speculated that the female may be following the male's scent as the two chicks are still in close proximity to each other. So, all in all things are progressing really well for the two kiwi, they have dropped a little bit of weight, but that is to be expected, going from a captive living situation into the wild.

Monday 9th May.

Dean heard the two kiwi chick transmitters (tx) from the plane whilst doing a routine blue duck monitoring flight. He was able to pick up both chicks' transmitters this time around, this possibly being due to the aircraft being able to fly at a slightly lower altitude than other recent flights, which have been hampered by cloud cover. From this check it appears that both kiwi are in the vicinity of where we found them last Friday.

19th May:

Dean heard the male's tx in the Little Maketawa area from plane. Could not hear the female's tx once again, due to too much interference.

7th June:

Dean reports, "While looking for a couple of ducks up the Little Maketawa today I also checked the position and pulse rate of the two kiwi. Both pulsing "alive". The female was close to the track 200m from the release site and the male was approximately 220 metres uphill from her. We have been extremely lucky that they have stayed where they are for this period as they would not have to go far to cause a fairly major mission to find and get to them."

In June: The monitoring team will be removing the transmitters from the two chicks in June (weather depending of course!), as it will have been two months since their release. We will give them a quick 'once over' and weigh them also at that time.

Photos on the web and here were taken by Carol Greensmith (DOC Wanganui Conservancy), Jim Clarkson (DOC Stratford), Barry Hartley, Murray Sulzberger and Elise Smith. **Photos © copyright Taranaki Kiwi Trust / DOC**

Website and Email addresses:

Please visit the Taranaki Kiwi Trust website to see the photos in colour www.taranakikiwi.org.nz on the page with News and Newsletters.

Our email address is info@taranakikiwi.org.nz



Kylie Day from Rainbow Springs



BNZ staff from Stratford Springs



Tipene Hoskins, Patuairua, welcomes the kiwi to the National Park.



Hannah Carter and Tara



Jessica Sparkes and Naki

Whangamomona Kiwi conservation programme

The Kiwi Trust is concerned about the future of kiwi in the eastern hill country – the last large wild population of the western race. We hope to assist landowners with combating the kiwi predators – through planning trapping programmes, and sourcing funding. Our concern stems from research done by Dr Potter from Massey, here he describes the work done by a Masters student Don Ravine, who has looked at kiwi behaviour, productivity and habitat at Aotuhia, comparing kiwi lifestyles in bush remnants with those in the forest. See the Massey website

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~mpotter/kiwistory.htm>

“He’s studied five breeding pairs of kiwi in this area from 1995 to the start of 1999. He found that the birds breed every year, but not one chick has survived”, Dr Potter says. Again, the culprits are stoats. “There’s not a thing we can do about it, except reduce stoat predation” Dr Potter says. “And the person who can figure out how to completely get rid of stoats will deserve their million dollars.” Wild kiwis live 12 to 14 years. Without new generations of chicks coming through, the breeding generation at Aotuhia will be gone by about 2007.

Reports from the eastern hill country:

Monday 4th April 2005. Good news

Sid Marsh is back in from Aotuhia. He managed to get another male in the Whangamomona Conservation Area so that’s 6 males out there now. As it was a handsome beast Sid named him “Caskey”.

The 6 radio tagged male kiwi in the Whangamomona Conservation Area – at the Aotuhia end, have been named:

Bill-dozer (after local bulldozer driver called Bill)

Caskey (after the handsome Dean Caskey)

TAKT (after the Taranaki Kiwi Trust)

Kingi (after a Maori general)

Kimball (Kimball Bent was the famous Imperial Army deserter, and friend of Titokowaru)

Hendry (ex-DOC area manager)

Five are between the Kohi Saddle (where Matemateonga track starts off Upper Mangaehu Rd) and Aotuhia Station, all within a few hundred metres of the road. This is handy for monitoring, but it is still relatively steep and thick country. Just round the corner from “Ben’s Block” ex-research site (also in Whangamomona CA).

At Purangi Sid has managed to re-capture Aitken, who had dropped his transmitter. Whew! He is the father of both the chicks which were released into Egmont National Park. The female of the pair in Purangi Scenic Reserve has been caught (3.5kg!) in an attempt to try and catch her mate on the off-chance. The female was named “Schumacher”. Sid has been in there half a dozen times, and unfortunately had not got anywhere near the male.

Maru and Titoko, on the Schumacher’s property are still in the picture; they have had their transmitter changed too. Sid is going back into there to try and capture one more kiwi as part of the Operation Nest Egg project.

A local trust is being set up in the Purangi area to carry out pest control over a large area. Sid Marsh is contracting to carry out some nights of kiwi surveys in the area.

All of this is good news for the kiwi, with great support and community effort.

Information on traps may be found on the Taranaki Kiwi Trust website, or on the Predator Traps website.

<http://www.predatortraps.com/about.htm>



Sid Marsh checks a transmitter on a kiwi chick



Cees Bevers, Joy McLean and Maggie Bayfield greet Tara. Both kiwi chicks came from the Bayfield’s property at Purangi.



Kiwi release team crossing stream in ENP

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The Newsletter of the Taranaki Kiwi Trust



Would you like more information ?

- ◆ For assistance to protect kiwi on private land?
- ◆ Planning pest trapping in kiwi territory?
- ◆ Finding out facts for school projects?

Would you like to contribute?

The Trust appreciates financial assistance to get traps checked in Egmont National Park. On average, it costs about \$3 each time a trap-box is checked by trappers. Traps are checked 18 times a year; every 2 weeks from October to April, and every four weeks for the rest of the year. You can help check traps with a tax-deductible donation of \$55, or by donating a new trap-box for predator control protecting Taranaki kiwi, at \$65 each.

Please send your donation with your contact details so we can keep you informed about the projects.

Would you like to be involved?

The Trust would like to hear from you. We will have projects this year which range from deploying traps and locating kiwi, to folding newsletters, entering data or assisting with our education programme.

Please contact us, and give us your details if you wish to be on the mailing list, or visit our website.

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