

*To promote and facilitate the protection of sustainable populations of kiwi in Taranaki*



**CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT—OCT 2007**



The new kiwi breeding season is underway after a late start. People close to the action have had both frustrating and exciting experiences, as you can tell from the report from DOC's Jack Mace, below. Activity to protect vulnerable chicks is happening in many places throughout Taranaki. The 7500ha DOC-TKT predator trap network in Egmont National Park will soon be on to the summer trap check schedule of fortnightly checks once stoat breeding and dispersal begins. Throughout NZ there is a huge effort underway to protect kiwi and other native species from predators. I've just been to a workshop of the Sanctuaries of New Zealand network. It was a great opportunity to learn from other groups and to discuss best practice and research findings. Check out <http://www.sanctuariesnz.org/> to see what's happening nationally.

Taranaki Kiwi Trust can provide advice on trapping options and point you to useful, up-to-date information sources. Just drop us a line via email, post or call Kris, the Trust's Field Officer. Best wishes and happy Spring.  
*Jenny Steven, TKT Chair*



**The Taranaki Electricity Trust generously supports the Taranaki Kiwi Trust**



**JACK AND THE EGG LIFT**

It was snowing on the mountain and the hail still lay thick around the office when the time came to leave. Still no cancellation text from Sid—we must be still on! We were going after Kingi's eggs, and the prospects weren't looking good, even apart from the dirty weather. Kingi's transmitter had switched to 'mortality mode' a couple of weeks before, and while Sid was pretty sure it had just been dropped, there was always the possibility that Kingi had passed on. In practical terms, the dropped transmitter meant we couldn't use the transceiver to tell us if Kingi had left the nest—we had to do things the old-fashioned way and wait for him to call. Sid, Bob and I had already spent a long night sitting outside the burrow waiting in vain, and tonight our bags were well-packed with warm gear in anticipation of an all-night wait.

The ominous grey clouds lurking above Stratford slowly gave way as Sid and I headed east deep into the hill country—it was going to be a good night for kiwi work after all! With dusk close on our heels we crested the Kohi Saddle and dropped into the Taumata Valley, through the elephant gates into Aotuhia Station, and parked the car in a grassy clearing. Repack the bags and off, gingerly at first through a patch of ongaonga then up a steep spur, pulling ourselves up with punga and manuka and plenty of sweat, 'til finally the spur flattens out briefly and we settle down under the spreading tawa to wait. The sun sets, the temperature drops and I crawl into my sleeping bag and drift off...

*Whoooooeeee...whoooooeeee...whoooooeeee...whoooooeeee...whoooooeeee*

A male kiwi! And he's close! I go from drowsy sleep to full alert in a fraction of a second. Sid's headlight flashes on, he checks

compass and watch, and quietly, quietly creeps over.

"He's off the nest," Sid whispers. "It's 8:30 now; in half an hour we go in."

Sid had forgotten to adjust his timepiece for daylight savings, but it was still early. The half-hour passed quickly and soon we were underway, egg-box in hand, moving quietly but quickly towards the nest. We were sidling down the steep side of the spur when we heard a rustling ahead—Kingi! Sid dashed ahead, placing himself between the kiwi and the nest, so that Kingi wouldn't be tempted to run home and sit on the eggs. The crashing faded down into a gully as Kingi high-tailed it and we carried on.

The nest was easy to find, an (atypically) uncamouflaged opening half a foot across in the top of a steep bank. Sid shone his torch inside and there within, shining white treasure, lay two perfect eggs. Carefully I reached in and took the first egg. It was cosy inside the burrow, even given the cold night, and the egg was warm as I passed it to Sid to be candled. Sid passed his maglight over the egg, found the aircell (the egg was good) and marked the top of the egg. The egg was then placed into its sock—careful to keep the top of the egg uppermost, to avoid damaging the embryo—and carefully packed into the warm incubator (a chillybin lined with towels and hot water bottle) we had prepared to transport the eggs. The process was repeated for the second egg and, after quickly tidying up the burrow, we were good to go.

Now all we had to do was walk out—easier said than done at night loaded down with heavy packs and gear, down a steep spur slippery from the day's rain. To further complicate matters, the chillybin lid had to

be kept propped open; we hadn't anticipate such an early egg lift, and the hot water bottle used to keep the incubator warm was still too hot for comfort. Slowly we picked our way down, back through the ongaonga and out to the road. Success! Two fine eggs, and an early night to boot! Kris would kick herself for missing this one...

A week later I had the luck to be at Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs, Rotorua, and saw wee 'Snow' freshly hatched and sticky—very cute and a fantastic start to another year of Operation Nest Egg in Taranaki!

*Jack Mace, DOC Ranger*



*Snow—first chick 2007-2008 season*  
Photo: National Kiwi Trust at Kiwi Encounter



**Schools**

In Term 3, St Joseph's School in New Plymouth used our resources for a school-wide study of kiwi and had us speak to all classes and spread the message about the plight of kiwi, the ONE programme and how they can help kiwi and other native birds. They ended the term with the whole school watching a short DVD showing a kiwi in the wild at an assembly which everyone enjoyed. This term, St Joseph's in Stratford have a class using our resources. Must be something about those St Joseph's schools! It was St Joseph's, Patea in the first term. Think we should go for the complete set in Taranaki.

Our fame is spreading. We were surprised and delighted to be selected as the recipients of a \$50 donation from 3 girls in Paraparaumu who raised the money through a cake bake as part of a school project. We sent them a book and they donated it to their new school library and sent us a very nice picture of themselves (see below). Thank you Alice, Hollie and Tonisha. What a great thing that young people are helping to save kiwi.

Remember we're really keen to help ALL children and students in Taranaki learn about kiwi, our national icon, and raise awareness of the loss of kiwi, and community action on behalf of kiwi. We have resources to lend and can work with any level. Schools can contact Carolyn at schools@taranakikiwi.org.nz for information or make bookings. *Carolyn*



*Dear Carolyn Brough,  
Thank you very much for the lovely Kiwi book you sent us. We have given it to our school librarian and she has put it into the school library. We have attached a photo of ourselves. We are standing in our school library which is only one year old.*

*Regards*

*Alice Harris, Tonisha Parata and Hollie Smith*

**Community Education**

The Taranaki Kiwi Trust provides talks on kiwi and operations in Taranaki to both school and community groups – we're keen to spread the word! Last month the Pippins Group from Inglewood invited TKT to come and tell them the latest. The group was very interested – especially in the taxidermied animals on display! Kris also visited the Tourist Lodge at Dawson Falls to present information to the New Plymouth Probus Group. The group enjoyed the talk, which was primarily about kiwi on Mt Taranaki and the Operation Nest Egg programme. Kiwi aversion dog training was a hot topic last month and a presentation given to the Ornithological Society provided an update on training. Groups wanting a talk can contact Kris at info@taranakikiwi.org.nz *Kris*

**TKT AGM 29 October 2007, 7.30pm NPDC Community Centre, TopTown Complex**  
**Taranaki Kiwi Trust supporters very welcome**



**TKT FIELD OFFICER'S REPORT**



*Kris Grabow*

The kiwi breeding season is well underway and regular monitoring is carried out on five male kiwi at Aotuhia as part of the Operation Nest Egg project. The first week of October was a significant one with four eggs taken to Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs, Rotorua, for further incubation and hatching. One of these hatched less than a week later – on 9 October. Little 'Snow' marks the first kiwi chick hatched this season! Snow is the chick of Kingi. Well done Kingi and Snow!

We are looking for keen volunteers to become involved with some operations (see page 3). This is really rewarding work and a great chance to learn some new skills and meet like-minded people. Thanks for your responses so far! Opportunities include driving (transporting kiwi eggs and chicks), taking part in kiwi call surveys and predator trap checking and clearing.

A kiwi aversion dog training day was held on 28 July when 22 dogs were put through their paces. This is the third training course hosted by the Taranaki Kiwi Trust in the last 12 months. Over 80 dogs have gone through this training in Taranaki. Please read on to find more details on upcoming training.

With the weather ever-improving towards summer (I hope!) it will be good to see more of you out in the kiwi circles. Keep an eye on the website (www.taranakikiwi.org.nz) for updates and check out some photos taken from recent kiwi releases at Egmont National Park. *Kris Grabow, TKT Field Officer*

**TSB Community Trust**



The TSB Community Trust generously supports the Taranaki Kiwi Trust

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

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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Gift Certificate YES  Donations over \$5 are tax-deductible

All donors and gift certificate recipients become members of Friends of Taranaki Kiwi and will receive regular newsletters

Please send to: Taranaki Kiwi Trust, PO Box 867, New Plymouth 4340



### Wondering what to give for Christmas?

How about a TKT Gift Certificate? Make a donation (minimum \$20), tick the Gift Certificate box on the form and we will send you the receipt plus a TKT Christmas Kiwi Gift Certificate. Recipients can register their contact details via phone or email to receive regular newsletters and an invitation to a chick release.

Please use a separate form for each certificate—photocopy the form or print it from the website

### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Summer is just around the corner and the kiwi breeding season has kicked off! The Taranaki Kiwi Trust is keen to hear from people who would like to assist us with various volunteer roles and get involved in active kiwi conservation.

**Drivers**—as part of the ONE project, eggs are rescued and transported to Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs, Rotorua. Once hatched kiwi chicks are taken to Bushy Park, Wanganui and returned to Taranaki for release into the wild when they are big enough. We require drivers to chauffeur these little tackers around—and that's where you come in! It's a great opportunity to get an insider's view of Kiwi Encounter and other kiwi operations. Vehicle provided for the journey.

**Kiwi call surveys**—these are carried out to estimate the presence and distribution of kiwi in an area. Surveys are carried out early evening for a 2 hour period in Egmont National Park and other bush blocks in Taranaki. Come along and tune your ears in to some of the wildlife by night!

**Mustelid trap checking**—Are you a keen trumper? We require people who are able to check, clear and re-set traps in Egmont National Park. This can be carried out en route to your tramping destination. Contractors carry out periodic checks of the traps, but any additional checks on these traps are an advantage. Additional trapping projects supported by TKT are getting into swing in other areas of Taranaki, so there is potential to explore new ground in future also.

Full training will be provided – so come along and join in! For more information and to register your interest, please contact Kris Grabow, Field Officer, ph 027 460 1047 or email [info@taranakikiwi.org.nz](mailto:info@taranakikiwi.org.nz)

### DOG AVERSION TRAINING



TKT is keen for dog owners to register interest in putting their dogs through a kiwi aversion dog training course in November. Dog training teaches dogs to avoid the kiwi scent, therefore not chase or attack kiwi in the wild. The training costs \$20 per dog and takes approximately 20 minutes. Further kiwi information is available on the day and we encourage people to come along, have a chat and meet other fellow dog owners. More detail on training is available by visiting the TKT website.

Refresher training is also offered 12 months after initial training to remind and retest dogs. So roll up... Contact Kris Grabow, Field Officer, on 027 460 1047 or email [info@taranakikiwi.org.nz](mailto:info@taranakikiwi.org.nz)

Has your dog been trained yet?



NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
[newplymouthnz.com](http://newplymouthnz.com)

The NPDC generously supports the Taranaki Kiwi Trust





## BNZ OPERATION NEST EGG UPDATE



Currently TKT are monitoring five adult male kiwi in the Aotuhia area. Eggs from these kiwi are lifted and become part of the Operation Nest Egg project. In previous seasons four males at Purangi were also monitored but their eggs will now be left in situ. Predator control, coordinated by another Trust, provides protection for the Purangi chicks.

Kiwi egg lifts were carried out on three kiwi at Aotuhia in the last month. BillDozer had abandoned his burrow and we found two very cold eggs, no longer a going concern. Two eggs were uplifted from Kingi's burrow—these were healthy and aged 60+ days old. Sid Marsh, the Trust's contracted wildlife officer, unexpectedly came across two eggs in Takt's burrow two days later and took them to Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs, both healthy and aged about 55 days.

And the latest news... the first Taranaki ONE chick (Snow) has hatched at Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs on 9 October. This is one of Kingi's eggs that was transported to Rotorua less than a week before! Well done Kingi.



*Mark Wineera, Tee Wineera with Mamaku, Uncle Sandy Parata  
Photo: Kris Grabow*

Kotukutuku, a chick from last season, is still to be released. He hatched in March this year and is growing slowly, obviously not in a hurry to leave Rotorua! He will be returned to Taranaki when over 1kg. He last weighed in at 892g on 4 October.

We also have one chick at Bushy Park crèche from last season. Waiti is under the care of Daniel Hurley, Bushy Park's Conservation Officer. Daniel reports that Waiti is doing really well. The chick put on 150g in the last month. By 19 September Waiti weighed 650g. Next week's check might show another 150g increase—good spring growth rates.

Daniel reports that Waiti is a stropky, noisy, but cute little chick. It grunts and whines before and during the monthly checks, but isn't a kicker. Daniel will send off a feather sample for dna testing next week so we can find out whether Waiti is male or female. In three months or so Waiti will be ready for release into the wild in Taranaki.

*Kris and Jenny*

*Ruth Garland releasing Mamaku  
Photo: Kris Grabow*



## COMMUNITY KIWI PROGRAMME—PREDATOR TRAPPING

TKT has good interest from private land owners wanting to protect kiwi and other wildlife in their bush blocks. We have a pool of mustelid traps available on long term loan. TKT assist in getting a trapping plan together and traps on the ground. We are in the throes of getting an additional plan on the ground at Matau, and are presently monitoring

two properties for kiwi, one on Upper Mangorei Road, the other in northern Taranaki.

This initially involves exploring the land for sign of kiwi and evening kiwi call surveys to establish whether kiwi are on the property before identifying the best routes for laying trap lines and getting trapping underway.

Trap costs are often the hurdle to carrying out predator control—this is where TKT can help. Check out our website for more information and get in touch with us if you believe there are kiwi in your area and want to actively protect them by getting a trapping plan in place. We welcome both individual and community driven projects.

**Donations are always welcome!**

Sponsor an existing trap in ENP (annual donation \$55)—or make a donation for a new trap box (\$65 each)