

Taranaki Kohanga Kiwi at Rotokare

Issue 5

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Stakeholders Update

We thank all supporters and sponsors for their involvement in the "Taranaki Kohanga Kiwi at Rotokare", a joint project between Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust and Taranaki Kiwi Trust.

30th FOUNDER ARRIVES AT ROTOKARE

We have achieved the stage-1 goal of bringing 30 kiwi to Rotokare as the founders of the Taranaki Kohanga Kiwi population.

On December 19th 2014, a kiwi chick called "Crabtree" arrived at Rotokare. He originated from Chris Jensen's property at Matau. The occasion was quite a celebration, attended by many of the landowners, sponsors and volunteers involved in the project, including three generations of the Jensen family. The little male chick (named after a Crabtree brand of tree hauler parked up near the egg lift site) was popped into a makeshift burrow, then everyone headed back for a barbecue and a celebratory toast.

Earlier in December, chicks from Mt Hiwi Sanctuary near Waverley, Campbell's property near Huiroa and Tiaki Te Mauri O Parininihi's project at Parininihi (Whitecliffs) had been released, the result of egg lifts in October.

We always aimed to exceed the target of 30 kiwi by one or two, as an "insurance measure", in case some founder kiwi chicks die or fail to breed. An extra male kiwi was caught near Mt Messenger. Several attempts were made to catch a male kiwi near Mt Damper, but we ended up catching a female. We will find the male with her soon and egg lifts can be done at both these sites next breeding season.



PHOTO: Eli and Cassidy Hancock excitedly peer into a kiwi box

How you can help

We have many voluntary roles you could fill, for the TKKR project and for our two trusts. You don't have to have field skills or a lot of time. Maybe you have PR, corporate or data management skills that could be applied to this project. Donations are also always welcome.

KIWI EXPERIENCES

There are two kiwi in Rotokare that need updated transmitters fitted, so if you are interested in coming along on a daytime mission to a kiwi burrow and getting up-close to a kiwi as we do this contact Chauncy at Rotokare. We ask for a minimum contribution of \$500 to the TKKR project.

If you want to do voluntary kiwi work elsewhere in the Taranaki region, you can contact Sue at Taranaki Kiwi Trust.



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STAGE TWO PLANNING

With field work easing off for a while, the next step is to plan when, how and where to begin exporting kiwi from the kohanga. Initially, we need to know when Rotokare is “full”. Population assessment will begin this winter. Carrying capacity is estimated to be 100 birds. The theoretical maximum number present now is 78 (4 chicks per adult pair) but in reality it will be somewhere in between the 30 brought in and this figure.

Listening surveys are first up: 14 sites should enable us to hear kiwi calling from every nook and cranny of the reserve! Recorders will also be placed at these sites for 10 nights.

Capture-Mark-Recapture is a technique for estimating populations. The proportion of unmarked birds caught on the recapture session is an indication of how many new birds there are in the population. It will be especially useful to us at this stage because nearly all the chicks brought in will still be too young to call.

WHERE WILL OUR EXPORT KIWI GO?

Sorting out criteria for kiwi to be released in an area is a technical business. The TKKR project will employ an ecological contractor to work through this process and prepare a Translocation Plan. Then it is a matter of assessing well protected sites all over Taranaki. Some might have kiwi populations that need a boost. Other sites might have good kiwi habitat but few or no remaining kiwi. Community involvement will play a big part, e.g. through commitment to predator control, by volunteering and by fundraising.

The Western Brown Kiwi Taxon Meeting was held in Stratford in April to discuss progress on the recovery plan for this race of kiwi. We received lots of interesting feedback on the subject of kiwi exports.

20 KIWI/YEAR OR MORE? This could be the yield once this population gets going. The need to find homes for significant numbers of kiwi every year is an exciting challenge and a situation that has never existed before!

ROKOKARE KIWI STORIES

Don Ravine (tutor for 5min Bird Count course and a former kiwi catcher) spent an hour at the picnic table on the lawn. He heard 10 kiwi calls before 7.30pm and had a kiwi walk right up to him!

While spraying all the way around the fence platform, **Jenny Kerrisk** noticed maybe a dozen kiwi poo and several probe holes under the fence skirt.

Chauncy Ardell found a kiwi burrow next to a tracking-tunnel line, feathers and all, but no kiwi in residence at the time. It is crucial that dogs are kept out of Rotokare now that kiwi numbers are building up. We also ask that drivers go slowly on the road, especially after dark.



Above: Conrad O'Carroll of Tiaki te Mauri O Parininihi Trust doing an egg lift from Parininihi recently **Below:** From left: Kevin Stokes, Conrad O'Carroll, Simon Collins, Jenny Kerrisk



Thank you to our funding sponsors

