



## Media release

11 June 2015

### Guided night walks take the chill off.

Ever wanted the opportunity to hear a kiwi calling in the wild, or if you're lucky see one? Every Friday evening during May and June, the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust have been running guided Night Walks in the Ōhope Scenic Reserve for a donated small fee. These walks aim to introduce participants to the reserve and the work being undertaken by the Whakatāne Kiwi Project.

The walks are being guided by long-time volunteer for the Trust, Russell Ingram-Seal, with the help of other experienced volunteers. As well as kiwi, Russell is interested in bugs so it's likely you may be introduced to a spider, wetā or more when out on a walk. Russell says "It's always enjoyable taking people up in the reserve at night as you never know what you will hear or see".

Whakatāne enjoys the unique privilege of having a wild kiwi population close to town and for this reason the Kiwi Trust has trade marked the 'Kiwi Capital of the World' title.

A recent attendee on a walk in May, Mereana Waaka-Murch stated "Thank you for the unique opportunity and experience to participate in the Kiwi night walk last night. The kiwi call we heard was great and the bush has its own special beauty at night, stars just spectacular."

Metua Herman who also attended a walk said: "I have more respect for the bush than ever and all things that live in there, especially our treasured kiwi".

There are currently around 300 kiwi living in the reserves around Whakatāne. Kiwi call at night to mark their territory and to stay in touch with their mate and the best time of the year to hear them is now! During the months of April though to July their distinctive calls can be heard more frequently as they near breeding season. The males piercing call can travel several kilometres on a clear and still night. The best time to listen for kiwi is up to two hours after dark and just before dawn.

The Trust's pest control programme benefits the entire ecosystem and many species are now thriving. You will not only have the opportunity to see native birds like the kiwi and ruru (morepork) but also skinks, geckos and wetā.

To participate in the night walks a good level of physical fitness is required as the walks venture off the public tracks. Please visit the Kiwi Night Walks page on the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust website for further information and booking details, or alternatively phone Erica on 312 4536. There are three more walks remaining in June so book now before you miss out!

To learn more about the Whakatāne Kiwi Project contact the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust. [www.whakatanekiwi.org.nz](http://www.whakatanekiwi.org.nz) or email: [admin@whakatanekiwi.org.nz](mailto:admin@whakatanekiwi.org.nz)

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## **Contacts**

Bridget Palmer, Department of Conservation Partnership ranger.

[bpalmer@doc.govt.nz](mailto:bpalmer@doc.govt.nz)

Ph: 021 1664558

Lynda Walter, Whakatāne Kiwi Trust.

[kylie.bop@clear.net.nz](mailto:kylie.bop@clear.net.nz)

Ph: (07) 304 6127

## **Background information**

Whakatāne Kiwi Project website: [www.whakatanekiwi.org.nz](http://www.whakatanekiwi.org.nz)

## **Photos attached:**

Photo1 – Russell Ingram-Seal (front) with a group of recent ‘Kiwi Night Walk’ attendees.



Photo 2 – Native Cave Wetā caught on camera on a Whakatāne Kiwi Trust Kiwi Night Walk.

