



100th kiwi release highlights bright future for Whakatane kiwi

2009 has been a year to celebrate for the Whakatane Kiwi Trust and Project. On the 4th of September, the 100th kiwi chick was released into the Whakatane bush reserve. The first chick was released in 2001 and the eight intervening years have seen a great deal of time and commitment by many staff, volunteers and organisations.

The formal celebrations surrounding the release of Kaputerangi, meaning “the reaching place to the heavens”, were attended by local dignitaries as well as the Associate Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson. She congratulated the Whakatane community on our co-operative approach to the protection and restoration of the kiwi, with the Whakatane Kiwi Trust being at the forefront of the successful project and said, “Whakatane really is the kiwi capital of the world – and I want to congratulate the community for the help you have given our iconic bird.”



Pouroto Ngaropo from Ngati Awa blesses the 100th kiwi chick Kaputerangi

The kiwi chick was raised at Kiwi Encounter in Rotorua. Currently, the Whakatane Kiwi Project removes all eggs from nests and transfers them to Kiwi Encounter until the chicks reach a weight above 1kg. At this point, chicks are strong enough to fight off stoats, which are their main predators in the Whakatane area.

The willingness of the community to volunteer their time and energy has started Whakatane kiwi on the road to recovery. With continued support and education, we hope that the sound of kiwi calling will be familiar, even commonplace, to future generations.

On behalf of the kiwi, we would like to thank you for your support and wish you a very happy festive season.

Lorraine Brill - Whakatane Kiwi Trust Chairperson

Super pooch

December 2009

While dogs and kiwi are not usually a good combination, Whakatane Kiwi Project's newest volunteer is the exception.

Whakatane Kiwi Project manager, Bridget Evans, has recruited her six-year-old chocolate Labrador, Tai, to become a trained kiwi dog. Tai had to undergo months of training and is now certified to work in the dog-free kiwi zones.

Tai's job is to track kiwi and indicate where burrows are. She is muzzled at all times and never actually touches the birds. She indicates the burrow by furiously wagging her tail!

Bridget says, “Sometimes the burrows are in the middle of thick tree ferns, steep hillsides and pampas bushes – having Tai enables me to quickly home in on the area the kiwi is located.

“Please don't see Tai as an excuse to take your own family dog into one of our dog-free reserves.”

Whakatane Kiwi Project manager Bridget Evans.



Kiwi dog Tai is easy to recognise because she has her own uniform - a bright orange vest and muzzle.



Stamping out stoats

Pest and predator control is one of the most important roles of the Whakatane Kiwi Project and Trust. Kiwi will thrive if they have a safe environment to live in.

Growing a kiwi in the wild is difficult, making every bird that gets to adulthood precious. About 50% of kiwi eggs fail to hatch and 90% of those that do, die within 6 months. The huge majority of those deaths are caused by predators, mainly stoats and cats.

In November of this year, 57 new stoat traps were set in the Mokorua Scenic Reserve. The traps are the DOC 250 variety and frozen or salted rabbit meat is used as bait.

"It is encouraging to have more dedicated rabbit hunters choosing to support the project by providing skinned

and gutted rabbits but we always need more rabbits for the freezer," says Environment Bay of Plenty pest animal officer, David Paine. Please contact David if you can help with providing bait.

The Mokorua Reserve traps will be tended by Opus Whakatane staff as part of their commitment to the Whakatane Kiwi Project.



Whakatane Kiwi Project staff member Jamie Rhodes setting up the new DOC 250 stoat traps for the Mokorua Scenic Reserve.

Bridget's nightlife

Several weeks ago, Whakatane Kiwi Project manager Bridget Evans and her partner, Craig Palmer, were out at about 10pm and had walked two minutes into the bush at Burma Road when they met another resident on a night out. Unexpectedly, an unidentified kiwi crossed on the track in front of them.

The pair only had a pencil torch between them but Craig did have a net and managed to catch the kiwi. Leaving Craig in the dark with his feathered friend, Bridget raced back to the car to get a transmitter. Bridget was able to fit a transmitter to the bird before it was released and ran off to continue its outing.

Bridget has since re-captured the bird to check for a microchip. The kiwi has been identified as Tokamauku, a female that had her transmitter removed earlier in the year. "It's good to know that at least some of our females are hanging around in the Ohope Scenic Reserve," says Bridget.



As for Craig (pictured above right with partner Bridget), he is redefining his idea of a "date". "I've never done this before and now I'm out getting excited about blue duck and catching kiwi," he says. Maybe not the standard night out, but certainly one to remember.

Early Christmas gift

When Bridget went to collect Pouraiti's eggs for transfer to Kiwi Encounter, she was greeted with more than just the two eggs she expected.



A ten-day-old kiwi chick, happily settled in its bed of feathers under the base of a nikau frond, was a great early Christmas gift.



Teach your old dog new tricks

Many people in the Whakatane area are fortunate enough to live close to native bush. That also means living close to kiwi. This carries a certain responsibility, particularly regarding household pets.

Recently, a kiwi was discovered dead near a local home, killed by a dog. This has highlighted the need for further education to raise awareness about the danger that dogs pose to kiwi.

The scent of a kiwi is strong and irresistible to dogs and it only takes a moment for a dog to stick its nose into a burrow and break the back of a kiwi, or for its jaws to crush the kiwi's soft chest.



Foxie, a student from the kiwi aversion training, pays his \$10.

Dogs are completely banned from kiwi zones (including dogs that are muzzled and on leads) and ignoring the ban can lead to \$300 fines.

The Whakatane Kiwi Trust undertakes regular kiwi aversion training for dogs. The cost is \$10 per family dog and \$20 per hunting dog and the training only takes around 15 minutes. Call Bridget on (07) 307 0611 to register for the next training day.

Businesses give kiwi helping hands

Dozens of Whakatane businesses have helped the Kiwi Trust this year to raise funds and get practical work done.

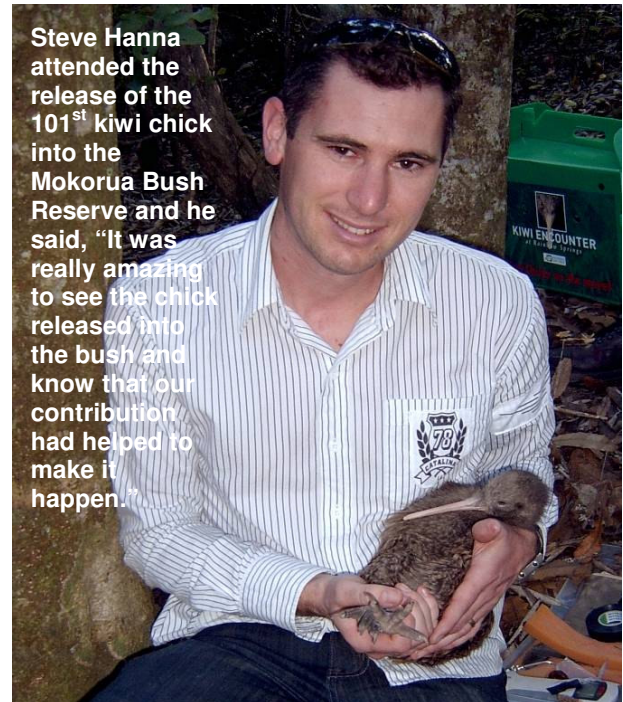
The Trust thanks Radio 1XX for the "Kiwiathon" and all the businesses who made donations. The Beacon and Bay Weekend have also assisted with advertising and articles.

Other businesses have got involved with the practical work of saving the kiwi. Opus Whakatane staff are the newest volunteer recruits assisting the Trust. They are helping out with administration and will soon

tend the stoat trap lines in the Mokorua Reserve. Each fortnight, staff will check the 250 traps to remove dead stoats and re-bait the traps. Opus' business group manager, Mark Townsend, said that staff were really looking forward to being involved practically in a community project.

"We believe that helping community and environmental projects is just part of our corporate responsibility," said Mr Townsend.

Energy Options marketing manager Steve Hanna agrees that giving back to the community is part of good corporate citizenship. Energy Options recently donated \$1000 worth of ceiling insulation, which was auctioned on Radio 1XX, to raise funds for the Whakatane Kiwi Trust.



Steve Hanna attended the release of the 101st kiwi chick into the Mokorua Bush Reserve and he said, "It was really amazing to see the chick released into the bush and know that our contribution had helped to make it happen."

Sarah van der Boom from Cheeky Rooster Communications donates her services to the Trust and believes it's a win-win situation for all. "I get a great buzz out of volunteering. It makes being in business more fulfilling when you can also contribute to the community and environment."

Whakatane kiwi make international news

The Whakatane Kiwi Project is now world famous in Toronto thanks to Vancouver journalist Jennifer Laidlaw who has written about her visit with the Ohope kiwi in The Toronto Star.

<http://www.thestar.com/travel/adventure/article/736671--a-program-that-s-really-for-the-birds>



Never too young to help

If you asked most five-year-old NZ kids what they were into they might tell you Ben Ten, Polly Pockets, Transformers or Dora the Explorer, but Ohope Beach School year one students are mad about kiwi.



The students have been to a kiwi release, studied kiwi, painted pictures of kiwi, made presentations to other classes about kiwi and they even ran a pikelet-athon that raised funds to buy stoat traps for the Ohope Bush Reserves.

"These are high-value ecological sites with a wide range of plants and animals, including the worms and other invertebrates that kiwi feed on. The benefits of pest control also extend to the whole ecosystem," Clive explains.

"When pest animals such as stoats, possums, feral cats and rats are controlled to help protect kiwi, there are real benefits to the forest and the whole ecosystem, including other native birds. Have you noticed that there are more kereru and tui about town? We believe that pest control in the reserves has had spin-offs for these species and a range of other native birds," he says.



"The recovery of the local kiwi population has been spectacular – in fact better than anywhere else in New Zealand! What isn't so well recognised is that the reserves where the Whakatane kiwi live are also quite special."

Promoting biodiversity – new trustee Clive Tozer

The Whakatane Kiwi Trust has two new trustees, Clive Tozer and Marguerite Timbs. The abilities and experience of trustees contribute directly to the success of the project. In this issue of the newsletter, we are introducing Clive Tozer.

Clive has a background in land management and sustainability and appreciates that protection of kiwi is part of a bigger picture that includes the bush reserves the kiwi live in. These DOC and Whakatane District Council administered areas include a relatively large example of pohutukawa-dominant forest and other coastal and semi-coastal native bush.

Upcoming events

Next kiwi aversion training for dogs

When: Saturday 9th January

Where: White Horse Drive

Cost: \$10 per family dog and \$20 per hunting dog

To register contact Bridgtet on (07) 307 0611 or bevans@doc.govt.nz.

Christmas holiday kiwi release

The holiday release will be on the 6th of January 2010 at Ohope School.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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