

WHAKATANE KIWI PROJECT

Keep Whakatane kiwi safe from dogs

On dark still nights, kiwi calls are heard from small enclaves of native bush within the Whakatane District. Some of these birds are in the protected "Kiwi Zones" of Ohope Scenic Reserve, Mokorua Scenic Reserve and Kohi Point Scenic Reserve. Some are on private land with both indigenous and exotic tree cover. Both need protection from dogs.

The Whakatane Kiwi Project has returned over 40 young kiwi to the area in the last six years and every effort is being made to keep these birds safe as they mature and start breeding.

Dogs are excluded from all designated Kiwi Zones, regardless of whether they are on a lead or not as they are the main threat to adult birds. Trapping and poisoning of possums, rats, stoats, ferrets, weasels and cats is also carried out, as these predators all threaten young kiwi.

Over the last two years six dead kiwi have been handed in to the Department of Conservation, Whakatane Field Centre, all killed by dogs. One of those was from within Ohope Scenic Reserve. In 2004, in Urewera National Park, the study population of kiwi was reduced from 17 to 3, in less than 18 months. Dogs were responsible for killing at least 80% of these kiwi.

Records from Northland show that the average breeding life of a kiwi can be reduced from 50 to 13 years due to predation by dogs.

All evidence points to the fact that dogs can decimate a kiwi population in days, effectively nullifying years of kiwi recovery work. This is not the dogs fault. Kiwi smell strongly and are appealing to the ever vigilant canine nose. They can be easy to catch and while a dog will rarely eat a kiwi, they can inflict fatal wounds by shaking or crushing the bird. The excitement of the kill is a positive reinforcement for the dog, which can then become a repeat offender and responsible for the local extinction of kiwi.

To ensure this does not happen in Whakatane, a concerted effort by all parties is needed to avoid contact between dogs and kiwi.



Help keep our Whakatane kiwi population safe:

Keep all dogs out of designated Kiwi Zones.

Report dogs seen in Kiwi Zones to the Whakatane District Council on 07 306 0500 or 307 0729 after hours.

Take heed of all "No Dog" signs.

Keep your dog under control at all times but especially at night.

Have your dog avian aversion trained. Ring Tiki Hutching on 027 473 5807 for more information.

Owners of dogs found in a designated Kiwi Zone will be fined \$300 per dog.

