



Small things making a big difference

Whakatāne's "The Fresh Market" has joined forces with the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust (WKT) to support their latest trapping venture. Josh Barry (Manager) and Sean McKane (Owner) from The Fresh Market are donating a tray or more of eggs each week. "It's a small thing, but it means a lot to you guys and we're more than happy to help" said Josh. The Whakatāne Kiwi Trust are delighted with this practical support and volunteers have been (carefully!) carrying the eggs in to the bush to use in a new approach to stoat trapping.

The fresh eggs are being used in a new experimental trapping line dubbed the Free Range line. This is an extra line of ten DOC 200 traps through the middle of Ōhope Scenic Reserve, baited not with traditional salted rabbit or whole eggs used elsewhere in the reserves but with fresh eggs broken into a small bright red cup, replenished every second day.

The team of seven volunteers manning this line are colloquially known as the SWOT team – Stoat Wipe Out Team. They are led by Bob Boreham, the SWOT team leader. Their mission: to try novel trapping techniques in order to catch trap-wary stoats. They plan to move the free ranging trapline to surround any vulnerable kiwi chicks, and will experiment with a range of techniques in the hope of enticing stoats into the traps. Different lures such as fresh wallaby meat, changing trap presentation such as painting the traps yellow, and the use of mirrors or movement are tactics that they may use in the future.



From left to right, Bob Boreham, Josh Barry, Ian Dale, Michele Verry, Gaye Payze.

There has been a disturbingly high rate of Kiwi chick predation by stoats in Ōhope Scenic Reserve in the last two years despite an intensive trapping network, and this has provided the momentum for this more concentrated and experimental approach. Kiwi chicks are incredibly vulnerable to predation by stoats until they grow to "stoat proof size" of 1000gm. Kiwi chicks in Mokorua and Kōhī point reserves have done well, with a number reaching adolescence and stoat proof size unharmed.

The WKT has a number of dedicated volunteers who service the trapping network of 568 traps throughout our three

local reserves (Ōhope Scenic reserve, Kōhī point and Mokorua reserves) where 300 or more North Island Brown kiwi currently live, in amazingly close proximity to our urban backyards. In the wild kiwi chicks have a five percent survival rate, and with intensive management from WKT (partnering with Department of Conservation Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne District Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Kevin and Julia Dodds) the local chicks have between a 20-60 percent survival rate. The help of conservation minded community locals, like The Fresh Market team is invaluable.



'Like' Whakatāne Kiwi Trust on Facebook and keep up to date with the latest news from the project

A project with five partners: Whakatāne Kiwi Trust, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Whakatāne District Council.



Season summary 2017-2018

There were a total of 24 nests with 37 eggs from the 19 monitored male kiwi in the Whakatāne Kiwi Reserves over this breeding season. Of the 37 eggs, 26 hatched and the other 11 were either infertile or the chick died before hatching. Kiwi eggs are quite susceptible to bacteria entering the egg and killing the embryo because their nest burrows can be quite damp and dirty!

Once the kiwi chicks are a few days old, Whakatāne Kiwi Trust volunteers visit the nest and put a small transmitter on the chick, so they can be monitored to ensure the stoat trapping around the Whakatāne

Kiwi Reserves is working effectively. This season 22 chicks were monitored with a transmitter. Unfortunately stoat numbers were high this year and 12 of these chicks were predated before they reached the 'stoat-resistant' weight of 1000gm. Despite this, the stoat-trapping network still makes a huge difference to a kiwi chick's chances of survival, as kiwi chicks who hatch in an unmanaged area have less than 5% chance of survival!

The 19 monitored adult male kiwi around the Whakatāne Kiwi Project area are already starting to incubate their eggs for the 2018-19 kiwi chick season and

the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust volunteers have been trialling new methods of stoat control in Ōhope Scenic Reserve to try and ensure these chicks will have an even better chance of survival next year.

THIS SEASON'S STATS	
Adult kiwi monitored	19
Total kiwi nests	24
Total eggs	37
Total eggs hatched	26
Total chicks monitored	22
Total chicks predated	12

Bugman and the batgirls detect bats on Burma

Bugman Russell Ingram-Seal accompanied by a bevy of Batgirls: Rheanne Sullivan and Laura Morgan, set out in February on a warm humid evening to see if bats were present around Ōhope Scenic Reserve. Armed with a Bat Detector set to 40Hz for long-tailed bats, they went exploring around Burma Road.

Long-tailed bats are very small; dark brown to black in colour and use echolocation to identify food and other objects. The high frequency sounds emitted by bats for echolocation cannot be heard by humans. Bat detectors convert bat pulses into sounds humans can hear i.e. a bat call.

They feed on flying insects e.g. moths, beetles, mayflies, midges and mosquitoes. They have very large territories and can fly considerable distances in a night. So the trio thought it might be a slightly batty idea to hope to hear bat calls.

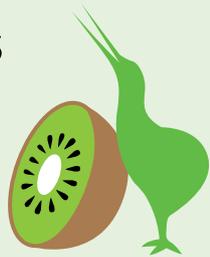
Suddenly there was a series of clicks from the bat detector as a bat flew into range. "Batastic" exclaimed the batgirls as they waited with bated breath for hopefully a battery of more bat calls. No more occurred, which was a bit bathetic. (Yes it is a real word!)

But we definitely heard and captured on Batgirl Rheanne's mobile a series of clicks i.e. a 'bat pass'. So there are Bats on Burma Road...



EastPack
Growers at heart

Furry kiwis support feathered variety!



Whakatāne Kiwi Trust is delighted to announce Eastpack as a new sponsor of the Trust for the next two years and hopefully beyond.

EastPack is New Zealand's largest Kiwifruit post harvest operation. It is a 100% grower owned co-operative with the Head Office in Te Puke and pack houses in Te Puke and Katikati as well as Edgecumbe and Ōpōtiki. It is a large employer in the eastern Bay of Plenty; and the eastern Bay of Plenty has the best kiwifruit growing conditions in New Zealand.

Whakatāne Kiwi Trust Chairman John Pullar said "There is a great synergy between Kiwi the bird and kiwi the fruit and Whakatāne Kiwi Trust is grateful that EastPack is assisting us in our mission to protect our native birds and continue to educate young people on the biodiversity of the New Zealand bush"

The busy packing season at EastPack is March-June and when this winds down in July the Trust plans to take the Kiwi truck to visit EastPack in Te Puke – photo in our next newsletter.

2018 Kiwi Night Walks

Whakatāne Kiwi Trust's guided Kiwi Night Walks have been very popular and April, May and June were fully booked. Community awareness of the walks appears to be higher than ever.

So far, 195 people have explored the Ōhope Scenic reserve at night. They have heard many clear territorial kiwi calls. One group were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Scrum the Kiwi and several groups listened to a duet of calls between a male kiwi and female kiwi.

They have all heard the various calls of morepork as well as seeing our nocturnal invertebrates. Many have been amazed at the size of the large cave wētā and sheet web spiders. An extremely large tiger or leopard slug (*Limax maximus*) was sighted – see picture.

This season the Kiwi Night Walk team led by Russell have been focussing on increasing our pool of keen volunteers and building experience and knowledge

in doing the walks. We acknowledge the enthusiasm of the volunteers giving up their Friday nights to help and support the walks. It is very much appreciated.

Thank you Allan, Anneke, Bob, Bridget, Clive, David, Di, Graham, John B, Kari, Katri, Laura, Mike, Paddy, Peter, Ray, Rheanne and Sonia. Thank you Hannah for all the help in dealing with the administration and booking of people on the walks.

If you are keen to get involved with the kiwi night walks next year, please make yourself known to us by emailing admin@whakatanekiwi.org.nz

Whakatāne Kiwi Trust would like to express their appreciation and thank everybody who came on a night walk for their time and support of the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust. A huge amount of time and effort is put in by night walk team leader Russell Ingram-Seal, whose infectious enthusiasm make these walks an experience not to be forgotten by anyone who takes part!



Russell has been leading the night walks for the past 11 years and during this time they have become one of the must-do events in the community. This season the night walks sold out in record time, showing how popular these walks have become under Russell's leadership.

Volunteer profile: A Cloggie and a Pom...

Anneke and Graham Philips had been aware of the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust for some time but in 2016 they decided to get active and become volunteers.

"We can hear Kiwi from our home and were interested to find out more. One day at the Ōhope market, we saw the kiwi trailer and started chatting to Bridget. We signed up there and then."

Since they joined the Trust they have learned a lot about the environment and made new friends. For them meeting fellow volunteers, getting to know them and learn from them is a real highlight. The hours the volunteers put in and their commitment is very inspirational.

"The natural environment is just stunning here and the kiwi make it super special. We want to help ensure that this is maintained and shared in a respectful way."

Volunteering on the night walks and with the Kaitiaki Kadet programme for youth are two activities that Anneke and Graham are directly involved in. Anneke also helps out with the Kiwi Tracker programme when she can, giving school students an experience in kiwi territory where they can learn a lot about our national bird and the threats they face. Anneke and Graham are also helping out with the kiwi adoption programme, which helps fund the kiwi management work undertaken by Whakatāne Kiwi Trust volunteers.

For Anneke a memorable moment was when they were invited to spend Easter weekend on Moutohorā Island conducting a kiwi listening survey and taking part in weed control.

"For me it was a profound experience of seeing what biodiversity really means. The birds, the trees and plants are thriving without the introduced pests. Taking 50kg of Lily seedpods off the island was



Graham and Anneke and 'home on Moutohorā'

just a small dent in the battle against unwanted species."

Both Anneke and Graham agree that the passion, camaraderie and patient sharing of knowledge all added up to an adventure that will stay with them for a long time.

Not a bad effort for a girl from the Netherlands and an English lad!

Wasp control in the Whakatāne Kiwi Project area



Vespula wasps are now targeted under the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust pest control programme, as they pose a risk to volunteers and the general public walking in the reserves around Whakatāne. They also predate native invertebrates and compete with native birdlife for food.

Fewer German and common wasp have been about this year, attributed to the wet 2017 spring affecting the survival of early nests and ability of wasps to forage for food. The two species of Vespula wasp look very similar but up close there are differences in markings. These social wasps have queens and make their nests in sheltered locations in the ground or in the sides of banks. They aggressively defend their nests stinging anyone who comes close often multiple times. Because of this they are a significant hazard to our kiwi pingers and stoat trappers and others working or enjoying our bush reserves in summer.

The Whakatāne Kiwi Trust has established a bait station network throughout the Whakatāne-Ōhope reserves to control these Vespula species of wasp using Vespex – a protein based toxin that has been specifically developed to control Vespula species of wasps, while not posing a risk to honey bees or other invertebrates. Vespex needs to be applied when wasps are feeding on protein and pre testing is required to test when these wasps change their diet from carbohydrates to protein. Whakatāne Kiwi Trust volunteers undertook weekly pretesting this summer but failed to find wasps feeding on non-toxic protein baits in sufficient numbers to trigger our control operation. Consequently, the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust has simply opted to destroy all known wasp nests this year. In autumn, queens are produced. Nests will usually die off during autumn with mated queens seeking places to hibernate for the winter. Occasionally some common wasp nests may overwinter allowing them to become stronger nests next season.

Photos showing body markings on wasps



Source: www.terrain.net.nz

Unfortunately Vespex is not designed to control paper wasps (Polistes species). There are two common paper wasp species around – the reddish brown Australian paper wasp and the Asian paper wasp, which has a narrower black body than the German or common wasp with thin yellow stripes. The Asian wasp is the most commonly seen paper wasp, easy to identify when flying as it dangles its legs. It's commonly seen hanging en mass around wooden fences, and other wooden garden structures. These paper wasps have no queens and are comprised of male and female workers. They make their honeycomb shaped nests by chewing up wood, mixing with their saliva to make a papery paste that is spread out with their mandibles to make the comb. They attach these nests to the underside of wooden fences, eaves, and walls or attached to branches of shrubs. Paper wasps predate caterpillar species. This is useful when they are targeting the white butterfly caterpillar that's munching the cabbages in your garden, but not good when they are targeting monarch butterfly caterpillars or our native butterfly and moth caterpillars. The best means of control is to find the nests, wait until evening when paper wasps are clustered together on the comb and spray wasps with fly spray.

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