

The Trust

Information Sheet



Otanewainuku Conservation Area is 1,200 hectares of unique virgin New Zealand bush located 25 km south of Tauranga. Thanks to local landowners this forest has never been logged. The Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust is a community based conservation Trust formed in 2002 by Te Puke Forest and Bird and other members of the local community concerned at the decline of North Island brown kiwi in the Otanewainuku forest. The Trust operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Dept of Conservation (DOC) who administers the area. Local Iwi support and assist our vision.

Trust structure

The Trust has a three-tiered volunteer structure, with a Board of Trustees, Operations Committee, and Fundraising Committee and over 80 other volunteers. The Trustees meet every two months, holding the Trust's vision and developing strategies. The Operations Committee meet monthly and oversee the day to day running of the Trust; they also research and prepare recommendations on subjects such as "integrated pest control" for the Trustees.

Volunteers are the life blood of the trust, with many thousands of km travelled and approximately 5000 volunteer hours given each year. Work includes clearing trap lines, making traps, checking and baiting traps, co-ordinating volunteers, monitoring kiwi using radio tracking equipment, administration, newsletters and sausage sizzles.

Kiwi numbers

Surveys at Otanewainuku indicate that kiwi numbers plummeted from around 50 birds in 1984 to as low as 1 or 2 in 2006. While Otanewainuku provides near perfect kiwi habitat, they are under pressure from stoats and ferrets (mustelids), feral cats and dogs. Nationally the kiwi population is halving every 10 years with 70% of chicks hatched killed by stoats and ferrets.

Initial Focus - Kiwi

The initial focus of the Trust was to protect our remnant kiwi population and make Otanewainuku forest a safe environment for future kiwi releases. As the Trust has grown it has been able to develop an integrated pest management programme, which has benefits for all flora and fauna at Otanewainuku.

Mustelid trapping began in 2002. In spring 2006 possums and rats numbers were hit in a toxin operation. Pest control was so successful we were given permission by DOC to reintroduce kiwi. 2007-2012 we released 15 kiwi: four adults (Willowbank, Rainbow Springs) and 11 juveniles (Whirinaki ONE programme). Four kiwi are missing (*Matariki*, *Old Blue*, *Merton* and *Aztec*), two are breeding (*Maui* and *Whetu*) and have produced our first chick *Pistachio*. Nine have died (a variety of reasons including being hit by a car, drowning, mustelid and dog kills, and leg caught in vines). We have the use of crèche facilities in Warrenhiop and are growing up our current group of kiwi juveniles to a heavier release weight.

Kokako re-introduced

Kokako were removed from Otanewainuku to Little Barrier Island in the 1980s because the population was under threat from predators. In 2010 we released ten kokako: a pair from Kaharoa and eight sourced from Rotoehu forests. Although some are now outside the Otanewainuku area, many have successfully bred and fledged chicks. Pest control is intense around their nesting sites to give them the best chance of breeding.

You can help

The Trust has won numerous awards for its conservation work and continues to exist only through the work of our volunteers and financial supporters. You can help by becoming a member, sponsoring a hectare, or making a donation. Visit www.kiwitrust.org to help keep Otanewainuku a special place for generations to come.

