



National Kiwi Hui

Trustees Neale Blaymires, Carole Long and Dave Wills attended this year's hui in Thames. *Ed Check out our web site for a full version of the weekend.*

It was a thought provoking three days, with many representatives from other conservation projects and plenty of new scientific research about kiwi. Introducing the Kiwi Hui was Paul Jansen, who is the head of the DoC's Kiwi Recovery Plan. Paul spoke at the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust's AGM in August last year, and his infectious energy has helped push along the national effort to save the kiwi from extinction.

Kerri Morgan from Massey University, introduced us to an unfriendly microorganism called *Coccidia* – which gives young kiwi the equivalent of our "Delhi Belly". It occurs naturally in our forests, and usually doesn't harm adult kiwi, but can be serious threat for Operation Nest Egg chicks when they are raised in protective enclosures.

Charlotte Minson from Massey University gave us a presentation on kiwi nutrition. The standard recommended diet for captive kiwi was developed in the 1960's, but after Charlotte compared it to food found in the gizzards of wild kiwi, it turns out to be a very unbalanced diet (like fast food?). The proportions of fats, carbohydrates etc. are all out of whack and need to be improved if captive kiwi chicks are to gain weight rapidly and enjoy good health.

Suzanne Bassett divides her year between research work at Otago University and incubating eggs at Kiwi Encounter in Rotorua. Under her guidance the success hatching rate for kiwi eggs



Paul Jansen and keen trappers inspect OKT traps & tunnels

has increased year after year, until today they have a success rate in excess of 93%. Sadly, most of the eggs left in the wild will fail to produce an adult kiwi, due to eggs and chicks being eaten by predators. An estimated cost to hatch and raise a Operation Nest Egg kiwi chick is \$1650. In situations where existing kiwi populations are very low, and stoat trapping must be done over large areas, it takes a long time for the few remaining kiwi to add new chicks to the local population. Raising Operation Nest Egg chicks can be a cost competitive way to give kiwi populations a rapid boost.

Male kiwis are radio tracked to locate their nests, then the eggs are harvested for Operation Nest Egg. The Kiwi Hui gave us a real boost when Dave Wills won a radio tracking competition (to find a hidden transmitter) in a record time of 59 seconds. He won \$1000 worth of telemetry gear which we can use to track our local kiwi.

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"A Giant Totara Falls" Dan Kaiawha-Heke

It was a great loss to the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust when Dan Heke died on Waitangi Day. Dan had not only been a founding member of our trust, he was also our Kaumatua.

I first got to know Dan when we started our nursery at Oropi and Dan used to call in to get plants to plant on his land in Mountain Road. He continued to call in regularly right up until his death. Later I was involved with Dan in the formation of the Te Kokakonui Trust which he was instrumental in setting up. This trust aimed at providing a place where young people, Maori and Pakeha alike, could come to learn about the forest, the trees and plants that were so dear to him. Dan has been described as a giant of the forest, a Kauri, or perhaps in our local context a Giant Totara. Well he certainly was, and his death has created a big gap in forest.

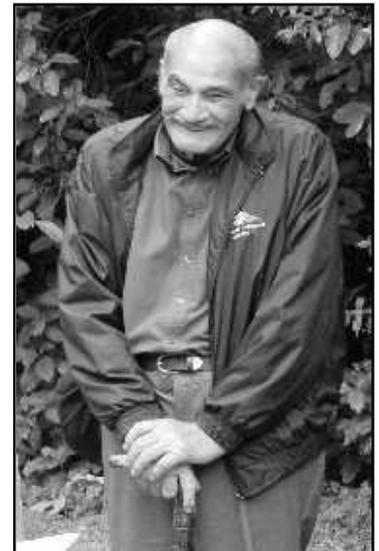


Photo Moana Hodge

The trust will always remember Dan and the love he had for Otanewainuku. I know the work of the trust will continue to achieve one of Dan's important goals – the preservation of our special place – Otanewainuku Forest.

Mark A Dean

Kiwi Listening Survey Training

Come along and learn how to differentiate a kiwi call from other night bush sounds.

Wednesday 27 April. 7pm at the Greerton DoC office. Listening tapes supplied. All welcome.

Volunteer Notice Board

Info sheets

Info sheets are now available for Mustelids and Rats. Pick up your copy in the gear cabinet or they can be downloaded from our web-site. The trap maintenance sheet has been revised to include how to clean traps with a wire brush. A suggestion from Todd Hamilton is to make our tunnels look as if they are being used by animals has also been included. This requires keeping the inside of the tunnel free of cobwebs and plant growth, then clearing a path with your boot from the tunnel entrance back about ½ metre to give the impression that it is an established animal track/run.

I can not stress enough the importance of keeping those trap sets in top condition. That stoat or ferret you catch today may be the one that was going to kill a kiwi or another native bird tomorrow, remember 40% of a stoat's diet is birds. Copies are in the cabinet - do take one!

Line Setting Workdays

17 Apr: Expanding existing trapping area

8 May: Rat monitoring (weather dependant) otherwise a normal work day extending stoat lines.

Meet: 10am at the Otanewainuku shelter. We will work through to approx 3pm. Bring warm gear and good boots, a small pack with lunch and a drink. Cancelled if wet. All welcome!

Contact: Dave Edwards if coming Ph 544 0885

Rat Trap Construction Workshops

Dates: Saturdays: 23 April and 21 May.

Start: 10am till approx 3pm, byo lunch.

Where: Neale's workshop in the Papamoa hills
586 Te Puke Quarry Road, Te Puke

What: Help make rat trap tunnel sets. All helpers get to take home a rat trap & tunnel to use at home. You must ring Neale if you are coming so he can arrange the day's work. Tools, tea and coffee provided. All welcome!

Contact: Neale Blaymires Ph 573 4157 neale@orcon.net.nz

Salted rabbit V's eggs update

We have now been running the trial for 14 months and caught more than 110 stoats and 13 ferrets. Overall the salted rabbit is catching approx. 2.5 times as many mustelids as the eggs, so thanks for the extra effort. It has been worth it! Full report available on our web site: www.kiwitrust.org

Winter Kiwi survey

The trust will be running another Kiwi survey this winter. If you would like something meaningful to do instead of spending those boring winter evenings in front of the fire, come out and embrace mother nature and listen for those elusive kiwi. Training will be given (*Ed: see page 1*). For safety reasons people are teamed up.

More info: contact Dave Wills dwills@doc.govt.nz
Greerton DoC office 578 7677 or home 573 7322

Rat Monitoring

We will be carrying out another rat monitoring early to mid May (weather dependant). It is an interesting exercise and involves setting out ink pads and papers in rat monitoring tunnels to record the pitter-patter of their tiny feet. There is **NO** physical touching of rats. It takes about 4 hours to set up, anyone who would like to be involved please give me a call.

Dave Edwards

WANTED!

Rabbits, skinned and gutted, for our stoat traps.
Call Dave.Edwards 544 0885

Trapping Tally in Otanewainuku

For the latest tally update see our website www.kiwitrust.org

2004/2005	Mustelids	Details
August	XX	1 stoat, 1 ferret, 15 rats.
September	X	1 stoat, 12 rats.
October	XXXX	4 stoats, 25 rats.
November	X	1 stoat, 17 rats.
December	XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX X	14 stoats, 2 ferrets, 2 feral cats, 16 rats, 1 hedgehog, & 1 possum.
January	XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXX	38 stoats, 1 feral cat, 13 rats.
February	XXXXX XXXXX XX	10 stoats, 2 ferrets, 1 feral cat, 13 rats.
March	XXXXX XXXXX X	5 stoats, 6 ferrets, 5 feral cats, 5 rats, 4 possums, 2 hedgehogs.
Total	85	74 stoats, 11 ferrets, 9 feral cats, 116 rats, 3 hedgehog & 5 possums.

Volunteer Profile - Ian Borrie and Gordon Forward

Known as "The Last of the Summer Wine" to the staff at Naturally Native Nursery, where the Trust stores equipment and bait, Ian is 78 years old and Gordon is in his late 60's. Ian is a retired Post Office radio technician. Gordon worked in maintenance at the Kawerau Pulp and Paper Mill. Both now live in Welcome Bay. *Interview by Sharon Seager.*

How did you get involved in the Trust?

Gordon: Around Christmas 2002 I was introduced to the Trust, and Ian through Eric Geddes at U3A. Eric has since had to give up due to ill health, and Ian and I seem to be the only ones left in the cluster Eric recruited.

Ian: My wife and I shifted here in 1990 after retiring and I got interested in tramping as a means of keeping fit. Seeing a notice in the Bay News I attended the first meeting at Oropi School and started trapping in November 2002.

Why did you volunteer to work for the Trust?

Gordon: My reason for participating is nothing nobler than to find out what it was all about. After two and a half years, I am none the wiser. **Ian:** I have always enjoyed the bush environment and wanted to do some volunteer work.



Photo Gordon Forward

What do you do?

Ian: Gordon and I teamed up and were allocated Lines 20 and 22, with 40 traps in all. We park the car safely and walk 1 ½ km to the start of Line 20. This line is nearly all downhill, some of it quite steep and ends up in a slippery creek. The path follows the creek for about ½ km then meets Line 22. Line 22 is much steeper, with lots of ups and downs, so to get prepared for the climb we stop for a rest, have a drink and a snack and talk about how we are going to save the world. I also help modifying the tunnels in my own garage, and when I can, help making new tunnels. We check and rebait the traps every two weeks in summer and every four weeks in winter. Each trip takes about 5 hours.

Any adventure stories?

Gordon: We lay out among the deer droppings last June, listening for the night time mating call of lovesick kiwi. We were armed with a ghetto blaster playing the shrieks of both male and female birds. It was difficult to say whether we got a response amongst the aircraft flying overhead and the neighbourhood dogs yodelling. **Ian:** One day we were following the creek and I nearly stood on a newborn lamb asleep under a fern bush. If we left it, it would surely die. I said to Gordon that we had better take it to the grass country and see if we could find the mother. I climbed the steep 10m bank with the lamb under one arm, grabbing trees for support with the other. We found the mother in a bad state, with a half born dead lamb, too weak to do anything about it. Gordon held the ewes head while I worked at the other end. After 10 minutes the dead lamb came with a rush and I learnt never to kneel behind a ewe when it is lambing. The mother and lost lamb survived the ordeal. Gordon asked me later how often I had assisted a birth like that answer "NEVER!" We scrambled back down the bank and resumed stoat patrol when we heard another lost lamb crying in the undergrowth, but that's another story... *(Editor Unfortunately we don't have photos of 78 year old Ian scrambling up a vertical bank with lamb under arm, but we do have photos of their kiwi listening escapade)*

What keeps you going?

Gordon: Whether we have made any difference is difficult to assess, but I have had an enjoyable time and met many people sympathetic to our cause. **Ian:** Sometimes, if we don't catch any predators for a month or so we get a bit fed up, but catch a stoat, ferret or rats, it makes our day and we stride on a lot happier. I feel there is a great increase in bird life since we have been doing this work.

Corporate or Business Sponsorship

Is your business or someone you know looking for a worthy local environmental project to sponsor??

We have a range of sponsorship options from as little as \$250 per annum.

Bronze: 10 hectares for 1 year \$250

Silver: 20 hectares for 1 year \$500

Gold: 40 hectares for 1 year \$1000

Platinum: 100 hectares for 1 year \$2500

For more info contact

Mark Dean 07 5433021
mark@naturalenvironments.co.nz

Sponsor a hectare

You can sponsor a hectare for just \$25 a year. Either fill in the form on the back of our brochure, or email us info@kiwitrust.org and we'll send you a brochure.



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Hugh Robertson (pictured below) is the kiwi science expert at the Department of Conservation. He had some sobering statistics on survival rates for adult kiwi. In South Island's Haast and Okarito reserves, kiwi live in excess of 60 years, in Waikeremoana they live 40 years and in Northland the average is less than 13 years. Why is kiwi survival so poor in the North Island? The main culprit is predation by dogs, and to a lesser extent ferrets and cats.

Until recently it was thought that only the occasional rogue dog posed a significant threat to kiwi, but various kiwi projects are reporting a steady number of kiwi deaths from dogs. They also see regular deaths of adult kiwi from ferrets. We had assumed that our adult kiwi in Otanewainuku forest were relatively safe, but in light of this new research we may have to increase the protection we provide from marauding dogs and ferrets.

The good news is that Adele Smaile from the Coromandel has pioneered a successful kiwi aversion training scheme for dogs, which only takes a couple hours and costs very little. If a group of dogs is assembled for a training session, the cost is only around \$25 per dog.



Scientist Hugh Robertson from DoC

Photo Neale Blaymires

There was plenty of interest shown in the stoat & rat trapping systems which the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust has developed, and the "Salted rabbit v. Eggs" information sheets we took along were quickly snapped up. These meetings are a great way to share information, create new alliances and get re-energized. It's not all doom & gloom, and I've returned from the Kiwi Hui confident that we have the ability to save our local kiwi.

Neale Blaymires

Thank-you very much!

We'd like to thank the following groups for their recent support. Check out our website for other businesses who support us.

Port of Tauranga:
Bronze sponsor \$250

Sponsor a hectare

Pat and Val Sale, Alistair Lawler, Jenny and Graeme Treloar, Rita Carter, Keith A Wilson, Mrs Joyce Bates, Jon & Sharon Foxon, the Oldham Family and I & M Shaw.



**Dogs kill kiwi
Leave them at home**

Predator Control Skills Workshop

The NZ Landcare Trust and DoC have organised a series of environmental workshops on such diverse topics as native seed collection, GPS use and pest control. Contact Robyn Skelton robyn.skelton@landcare.org.nz for more information. February's Predator Control Workshop held at Otanewainuku focussed on stoats. Our trapping experts for the day were Todd Hamilton (Whangarei) and Wayne Todd (Coromandel).

Todd Hamilton impressed on us the importance of good hygiene when handling pests. They can carry just about every disease going (including *Leptosprosis* and TB), so always wear gloves. On his advice we now use extra large vinyl disposable gloves (easily taken on & off between traps), instead of the original sweaty latex gloves. Todd considers prickly hedgehogs the perfect disease inoculation device, so he demonstrated how to spit open a Fenn trap to extract a hedgehog without getting our fingers perforated.

Wayne Todd calls stoats "energy bombs" because they are so active and always hunting. A fascinating fact: a stoat's heart rate is 500 beats per minute. Wayne has autopsied hundreds of stoats, and found their gut content contains 40% to 50% birds – with the remainder being rats, frogs, geckos, and beetles. Most stoats only live one or two years (usually dying from disease or starvation) – but they can live up to 8 years in good conditions.



Photo Robyn Skelton

Neale Blaymires

Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust Useful Contacts

Chairman	Mark Dean	07 543 3021	mark@naturalenvironments.co.nz
Volunteers	Dave Edwards	07 544 0885	djedwards@xtra.co.nz
Trapping	Neale Blaymires	07 573 4157	neale@orcon.net.nz
Secretary	Carole Long	07 542 0224	carolelong@xtra.co.nz
Finances	John Mullany	07 579 1917	j.mullany@clear.net.nz

Please send photos, comments and other newsletter or web site contributions to:

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