

# THE RIMUTAKA FOREST PARK TRUST RAG



RIMUTAKA FOREST PARK TRUST INCORPORATED  
 PO Box 38-564, Wellington Mail Centre, Petone

July 2009



How do I do this again?



Oh yeah now I get it!

Kiwi chick RFP7 is provided with solid food for the first time during 2008. Now much bigger, he is learning to fend for himself and is putting on weight ahead of his repatriation to the Rimutaka Forest Park.

## RIMUTAKA TRUST KIWI UPDATE

Hi Everyone,

First, a big sorry for the delay in getting this newsletter out to you all, and then a big thank you to you all for your patience and most of all for your support. Sponsoring traps and being involved in the Trust is a huge part of the success in achieving, an (as much as possible) predator free space for our kiwis to live and breed successfully and for the park

to thrive and expand as a natural habitable forest for all our native species.

With the introduction of 20 more Kiwis into the Park (more details on this exciting news to come), the trapping is even more important now. Trappers are out checking their allocated lines, and trackers are busy each weekend locating the whereabouts of all our birds, ensuring the birds are settling into their new environment comfortably; **it's a very exciting time.**



There are 6 varieties of kiwi: North Island Brown, Little Spotted, Great Spotted, Okarito Brown, Haast Tokoeka, Southern Tokoeka

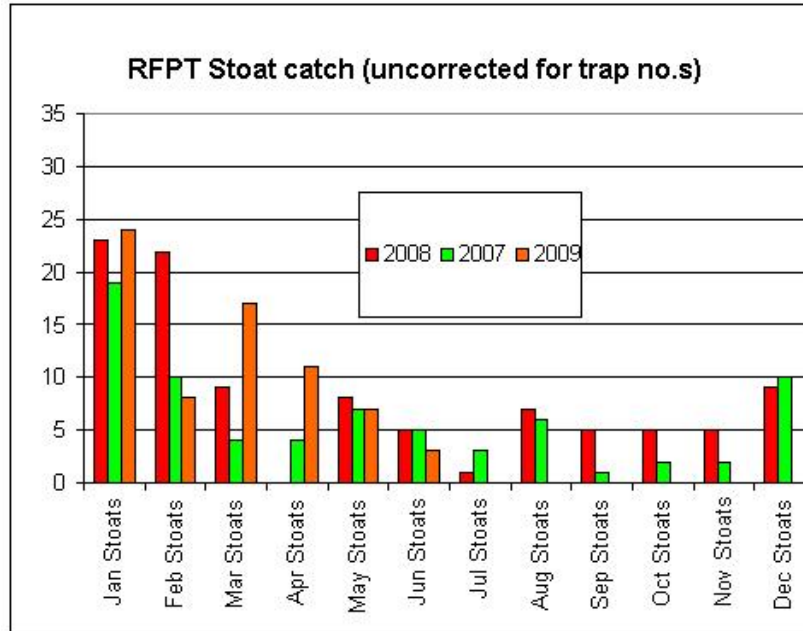
## Trapping News

Each issue of The Rag, we will endeavour to update trap information on a particular trapline. This issue, we feature the Orongorongo Track.

Trap No.	Rats	Stoats	Hedgehogs	Trap No.	Rats	Stoats	Hedgehogs
OT01	5			OT12	10		2
OT02	6	5		OT13	7		1
OT03	5			OT14	8	1	1
OT04	7	2		OT15	6	1	2
OT05	10			OT16	12		
OT06	10			OT17	6		
OT07	7		1	OT18	5		
OT08	9		1	OT19	2		
OT09	11			OT20	4		
OT10	11			OT21	9	1	
OT11	9			OT22	2	1	

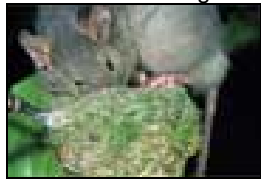
**Update on Stoat Trapping June 2009, Turere Catchment Region** *Number of stoats caught total network: 243*  
*All stoat traps are Doc 180s or Doc 200s baited with fresh chicken eggs.*

*Total monthly stoat catch 2007-June 2009*



The 27 traplines (427 actual traps) are deployed throughout the Rimutaka Forest Park; with 23 traps added in the Whakanui Stream since 2007. They are checked by volunteers on a rotational basis. During the summer months when the predator population increases the traps are checked and eggs replaced on a fortnightly basis. During winter months when predator numbers decline the traps are checked and have eggs replaced on a monthly basis. If you are ever in the bush when you come across a pink arrow on a tree this indicates a trap is placed in the vicinity.

There have been three species of rats unintentionally introduced into New Zealand. The Pacific rat or kiore was introduced by Polynesian settlers. The Norway rat and the ship rat by the Europeans. Rats **eat young birds**, small animals, **eggs**, native fruits and nuts. **Female birds** are particularly vulnerable while nesting and become easy prey for the rats along with their **chicks/eggs**. The loss of these breeding females is indicated by our bird population being predominantly male.



**rats! to Rats**

**Continuing support is greatly appreciated:** If you know of any friends, relatives or work mates who are interested in conservation please encourage them to support our cause. A great present for children, get them involved early on in life.....its their future.





**Stoat kill trap**

Many of New Zealand's native bird species have been hunted to near or total extinction by predatory mammals such as the stoat, introduced in the 1880s to curb the spread of rabbits. Other problem predators are rats, cats, ferrets, weasels, hedgehogs, possums and wild pigs. Controlling pests in key areas has allowed some endangered species to make a dramatic comeback. This wooden box or tunnel contains a spring trap, rather like a large rat trap. The dead stoat lying on the open lid was lured into the bottom entrance by bait, and killed instantly.

### Kiwi News

#### **Potiki | Tahunahuna | Manaia | Pounamu | Waikiwianui | Lorenzo | Chook**

Three years on and these birds are well and truly at home in the Rimutaka bush; although two of the older birds (*Koniwi* and *Milo*) subsequently died of natural causes, we have had an incredible seven new chicks been successfully hatched from eggs laid and incubated by four of our kiwi pairs. Currently as at the 12 July 2009 Tahunahuna and Waikiwianui are registering 48 bpm on their transmitters which indicates they are both sitting on eggs again.

#### **Then came: Colin**



Anne Manchester shown here with the kiwi she named "Colin"; after the late Eastbourne sculptor, Colin Webster-Watson.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Colin (formerly RFP3) at 17 months old was released into the Rimutaka Forest Park, not far from the burrow where he was laid as an egg.

"Colin's release is very significant to us," said volunteer Robin Toy. "If he survives, and he should as he is healthy and well over a kilo in weight, he will be the first kiwi in living memory from a Rimutaka-laid egg to grow up and hopefully breed one day too. Once juvenile kiwi are over 1200 grams, they can defend themselves against stoats, which are our main concern".

### Our Chicks



*RFP5 hatched 16 September 2008 – Bushy Park 30.01.09 (seriously cute chick and what big feet!)  
Now named Elvis his parents are Lorenzo and Pounamu Released back into the park 27 May 2009.*

Of the eggs that have been produced by our Kiwis, 10 eggs have hatched. As mother-nature prevails unfortunately of the 10 hatched three died from various diseases/problems, but the good news is that seven are in their various stages of development and progressing towards release back into the park. Currently our chicks are either located at Bushy Park or Mt Bruce, being looked after and monitored, awaiting a good healthy weight, to follow their fellow chicks Colin and Elvis into the Park.



*Manaia's egg is seen here in her burrow before removal for further incubation and hatching at Mt Bruce*

Today Bushy Park Forest Reserve's 98-hectares includes a very successful kiwi crèche, and a predator-free patch for New Zealand's native birds. The "bush" is a lowland remnant of rata-podocarp taka-puketea rainforest near Kai Iwi on the Wanganui to New Plymouth highway. Northern rata is found throughout the forest, including one listed notable tree, "Ratanui", the largest known rata tree in New Zealand. Its girth is more than 11.5 metres and it is estimated to be between 800 and 1000 years old.

## Chick Summary- As at 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Bushy park predator free kiwi crèche is home to 6 of our last seasons' chicks. Fluctuation in weight is not uncommon in the young chicks. RFP10 was released into the crèche on the 13<sup>th</sup> May so went from meals on wheels to having to find his own supper hence the weight loss. All chicks were hatched at Pukaha/Mt Bruce except the last one which hatched at Rainbow Springs in Rotorua.

RFP6 (male) – Current weight 780g with a monthly weight gain of 80g.  
RFP 7 (female) – Current weight 940g with a monthly weight gain of 100g.  
RFP 8 (female) – Current weight 1040g with a monthly weight gain of 60g.  
RFP 9 (female) – Current weight is 1060g, she has dropped back down from putting on 20g at the 2 week check back to release weight,  
RFP 10 (male) – Current weight is 830g, his first monthly check he has lost 60g.  
RFPRS1. (tba) – Current weight is 480g with a monthly weight gain of 20g.

## Frequently asked questions:

**Q: Why do you take the eggs out and incubate and hatch in captivity when there is a trapping network in place to protect the chicks??**

**A:** Two reasons; 1<sup>st</sup>: Initially when we started this project we did not realise the extent to which we would need people 'certified' to handle adults and chicks. Getting handling experience for adults proved hard enough but chicks are proving even more of a challenge. When kiwi chicks first hatch out they are very vulnerable to mis-handling so it is important for us to get experience in this and signed off before we can leave the chicks in the burrows.

2nd: Terrain – we are not sure how we will keep track of chicks given their transmitters are smaller so do not have the same distance and it is important to be able to track the chick and change its transmitter on a monthly basis as their legs grow. It is not an option to lose a chick and not be able to do this.

**Q: When will you leave chicks in?**

**A:** We are looking at leaving one or two chicks in this season to 'test' our monitoring plan. Of the three breeding pairs last season we got 8 fertile eggs of which all bar one produced healthy chicks. So all the other fertile eggs will be removed as they were last season until we are confident we have the resources and the knowledge to keep tabs on them. The logistics of monitoring the 30 birds currently in the park is proving challenging.



Emu egg (left) seen alongside a Kiwi egg. An interesting comparison, considering the relative size of the fully-grown birds!

Kiwi can live to be 40 years old

## 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10 / 11 / 12...20 April 09 release of 20 NI Brown Kiwi into RFP

On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009 a group of very dedicated and well trained members of the RPFT spent two weeks on Little Barrier Island preparing 20 NI brown kiwi for translocation to the Rimutaka Forest Park. The volunteers had the difficult task tracking and catching the birds through very rough terrain, once caught transmitters were placed on them and bloods taken for disease screening, they were then released back to their habitat until the test results came back and the time of transportation arrived.



Brilliant management, fantastic planning and amazing people ensured the success of the venture. So with all kiwis recaptured and placed in the newly designed kiwi transporters the kiwi started their journey:

- Helicopter and boat to the mainland
- Van to the airport
- Aircraft to Wellington
- Van to Wainuiomata Marae
- Check by Zoo Vet
- Blessed on the Marae
- Transported to release site (carried in bags by volunteers on foot)



*How many tired kiwis were there that night!*

Visit: [www.rimutaka.org.nz/projects/kiwi2294.wav](http://www.rimutaka.org.nz/projects/kiwi2294.wav) to listen

Within an hour or so of their release, their [distinctive calls](#) could be heard across the valleys!

## Catchpool Restoration Project

The Trust was successful in obtaining funding for restoration work in the park over the next two years. A total of \$40,000 (\$20,000 a year) to purchase plants to restore some areas in the Catchpool where the pines have been removed. The small pockets of existing native bush will be given a helping hand with additional planting to create a more diverse range of flora thus creating a seed bank for further natural dispersal. This also gives us the opportunity to perhaps re introduce plant species into the park which have become extinct in that area. This will also provide a great opportunity for community/corporate groups to take ownership for a 'plot' and maintain them on a regular basis.



## Dawn Chorus Project

The Trust is committed to providing active predator control to ensure the successful nesting and subsequent increase in the variety of birds in the park. Some birds which have returned or increased in numbers over recent years include, bellbirds (Korimako), tui (parson bird), paradise ducks, long tail and shining cuckoos (pipiharauroa), grey warblers (riroriro), rifleman, kingfishers, pukeko, fantails (piwakawaka), Australasian harriers, silvereye (tauhou), tomtits (piropiro), kakariki, pipits (pihoihoi), bush falcon (karearea), whiteheads (popokatea), wood pigeon (kereru), welcome swallows, and morepork (ruru),



This year we expanded the pest control by installing more warrior kill traps, stoat and rat traps. Able support by volunteers from the Animal Health Board who also released (weeded!) planting that had already taken place along the river edge and behind the newly revamped education centre.

Always looking for volunteers to clear traps in the Catchpool, these trap lines are easy walks from 30 minutes to two hours depending on your fitness level and the time you have available.

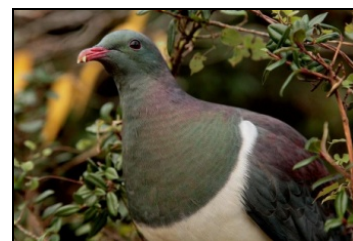
Contact: Simon [swear@clear.net.nz](mailto:swear@clear.net.nz)  
Melody [melody@rimutakatrust.org.nz](mailto:melody@rimutakatrust.org.nz)



*Pests targeted by the Dawn Chorus intrepid team of trappers*



*Some of the birds protected by the Dawn Chorus intrepid team of trappers*



### Dawn chorus

In forest where native birds are plentiful, their chorus can be heard at dawn and dusk in the breeding season. Some species sing earlier or later than others – tui often sing until after dark. Along the bush edges, introduced blackbirds and thrushes can also be heard.

# Articles from the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust website

[www.rimutaka.org.nz](http://www.rimutaka.org.nz)

Please, when you have time, go online and view the website it provides lots of interesting facts and news about what is happening so close to where we all live. Of particular importance the Trust acknowledges the passing away of William McCabe, a hugely important individual, one of the Trusts founding members and the person behind the sponsor a trap initiative.



**March, 2009:** - Rimutaka Forest Park Trust founding member and Chairman, William James McCabe (Bill McCabe) died on the 14th of March. He is already hugely missed by members and volunteers of the Trust. For more than 20 years, Bill worked tirelessly on bringing about the aims and objectives of the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust. He was involved at every level of engagement with the Trust's activities, from executive leadership of the Committee, to pitching in with fellow volunteers distributing and checking pest control traps and putting up signs and providing visitor facilities throughout the Park.

A large crowd turned out at the memorial service for Bill held at the Wainuiomata Fire Station on Wednesday for a moving farewell and pleasant musical celebration of Bill's life, and accomplishments. It was held at the fire station

because of Bill's association with the Wainuiomata Volunteer Bush Fire Force since 1970, when he was the driving force behind its creation.

On a national scale, he contributed hugely to the Forest & Rural Fire Association of NZ, and was a former County Town Committee Member and councillor representing the people of Wainuiomata before it was amalgamated into Hutt City Council. Bill McCabe was also a foundation member of the Wainuiomata Choir and was behind the "Tomorrow's Trees" initiative in the valley. He is survived by his wife, Margaret and son, Robert and daughter, Fiona.



*James, 'Tash and their brilliant kiwi dogs, Percy and Breeze. They caught, banded, health-checked and applied transmitters to more than 20 adult kiwi during their brief time on Little Barrier Island. What a team!*



*Interior view of the Information Kiosk built by the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust for visitors to the Catchpool Valley area of the park. The kiosk is located near the entrance to the car park and is close to the camping ground*

## Kiwi Aversion Training



This is an activity the Trust runs twice a year, to ensure any dogs that are in the park are trained to avoid kiwi.

The scent of kiwi is very strong and the bird scuffling around in the dark can sound very much like a pig. Adult kiwi will fight and this also encourages dogs to fight back, which is a natural response. Our pets and working dogs are just doing what they do naturally so it is helpful to train them to avoid all things kiwi in the first place.

It takes 15 minutes to put a dog through the training, certification enables hunters to hunt in other parts of the country. Small or big dogs are both a threat to our national icon, the average life expectancy of adult kiwi in Northland is 12 years instead of 40 due to predation by dogs.

If you prefer not to get your dog aversion trained please keep your dog on a lead in the park it takes only a very quick chump to kill a bird. Thank you.

Contact Melody if your interested in getting your dog kiwi proofed.

[melody@rimutakatrust.org.nz](mailto:melody@rimutakatrust.org.nz)

Text: 0274524982

Phone: 04 5646213



## Our Heroes



Thank you to Janice and Neville from the Wainui Pet & Farm Supplies (WP&FS) who have been behind the Kiwi Project from day one. They set up a collection can for customers to dispense with their odd pieces of coin which has led to 7 traps being sponsored to support the North Island Brown Kiwi in the Rimutaka Forest Park. Janice and Neville sponsor 2 traps themselves. The remaining 5 are from the counter collection, proving a little bit can go a long way.

The Wainui Pet & Farm Supplies provide premium pet foods & pet essentials. They are also stockists of small farm supplies. They recently provided, in cooperation with the local vet, a \$10 de-sexing campaign for cats, which was oversubscribed and a resounding success. It was just another example of the valuable initiatives taken recently by WP&FS to support the local community!

**Shop 37,  
Wainuiomata Shopping Centre  
The Strand Wainuiomata  
Lower Hutt  
04-564 8055**

**Terrific support The Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust is extremely grateful for the contributions, services and support it has received from the following sources:**

- Air New Zealand
- All those hunters and pet owners who have put their dogs through kiwi aversion training
- Auckland Zoo
- BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust
- Caltex Service Station, Wainuiomata
- Clive's Chemist Wainuiomata
- Colin Webster-Watson Trust
- Department of Conservation
- Friends of Little Barrier Island
- Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Hutt City Council
- Hutt Mana Trust
- Hutt Valley Emergency Management Office
- J.B. Hughes
- John Norris, Export Meat Warehouse, Wainuiomata
- Lifeway College Campus
- LinFox Transport
- Massey University Wildlife Health Centre
- Masterpet
- Microsoft
- Ngati Manuhiri Trust
- Our "Sponsor a Trap" donors
- Our stoic volunteers
- Pub Charity
- Pukaha Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre
- Ron Greenwood Environmental Trust
- Ross & Sally Jackson
- Sirtrack Wildlife Tracking Solutions
- Stephenson&Turner
- Tait Mobile, Wellington
- The Professionals
- Wainui Pet & Farm Supplies
- Wainuiomata Development Committee
- Wainuiomata Marae
- Wainuiomata Volunteer Bushfire Force
- Wellington Community Trust
- Wellington Zoo

