

THE RIMU-TALKER

*A newsletter of the Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Incorporated
June 2017*

Kiwi Release

On 29th April, three North Island brown kiwi chicks were returned to the Rimutaka Forest Park joining an estimated 120 kiwi in the area. These chicks are second-generation Rimutaka birds, their parents having been born wild in the park.

The chicks were at the Wairakei Sanctuary predator free Kiwi Creche, north of Taupo until they reached the 1200 grams necessary to protect themselves from stoats.

The support of sponsors and donors is vital to ensure we can continue to increase the population in the park. The female chicks were named Te Wairua o Tane (Spirit of the Forest) and Te Kahu o Kokiri (Cloak of Kokiri)



Our dedicated volunteers were asked for their suggestions for the name of the male chick. The winning entry was from Volunteer Trapper Jörg 'Jay' Otto who proposed Mōrehu (Survivor). The support of volunteer trappers and trap maintenance crew ensures the pest trapping operation is successfully maintained and continues to provide a safe haven for the birds to return to.

We gathered at Wainuiomata Community Marae for a blessing before heading up the hill to the release site on the shortcut track between the Whakanui and Lost Glynis Tracks to witness the very special experience of releasing kiwi into the wild.

Photo credit: Nicola Jackson

Operation Nest Egg (O.N.E)

Cold ONEs - Poppy and Katarina on their return home from Rainbow Springs 22 May. Brings the total of returned chicks to seven with eight to go. The last ONE egg, from Solomon's third clutch, hatched a few days ago.

Photo credit: David Stacey



Special Thanks

A big thank you to Hutt City Animal Control for your very kind donation of a scanner to enable us to scan the transponder IDs in the birds coming back into the park from captive institutions. It will also be useful to scan dogs doing kiwi aversion training.

A big thank you also to Wellington Rural Fire Authority who donated eight new hand held radios. These are very useful when tracking the ONE chicks for their health checks post release. Saves handlers a lot of time as trackers can triangulate the signals and radio a location.

Defibrillator at Catchpool

The 2016 Wainuiomata Rural Fest Committee, assisted by an exceptional donation by Regional Public Health, achieved their fundraising goal to install a defibrillator in the Rimutaka Forest Park area.

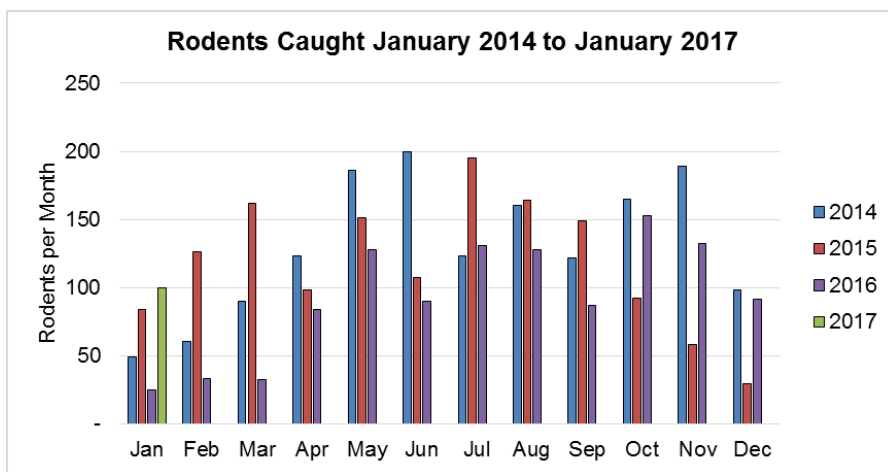
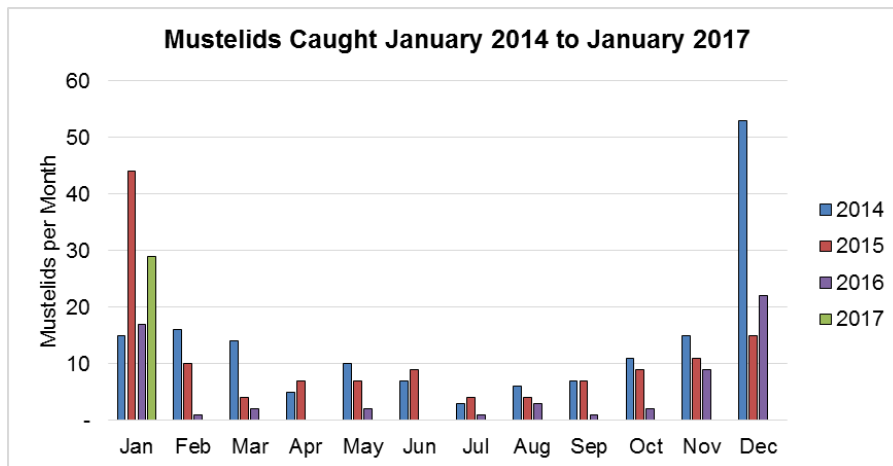
The defibrillator, along with a 111 phone link, is accessible to the public at Wayne Bentley's property at 1090 Coast Road, just south of the park entrance. The Rural Fest Committee is currently organising signage and publicity.

Volunteer Days – Catchpool Restoration Project

During March, April and May we had a busy time down in the Catchpool Valley with infill planting using plants from our nursery plus removal of wilding pines, gorse, blackberry, buddleia and other weed pests. We appreciate the help of hard-working volunteers from:

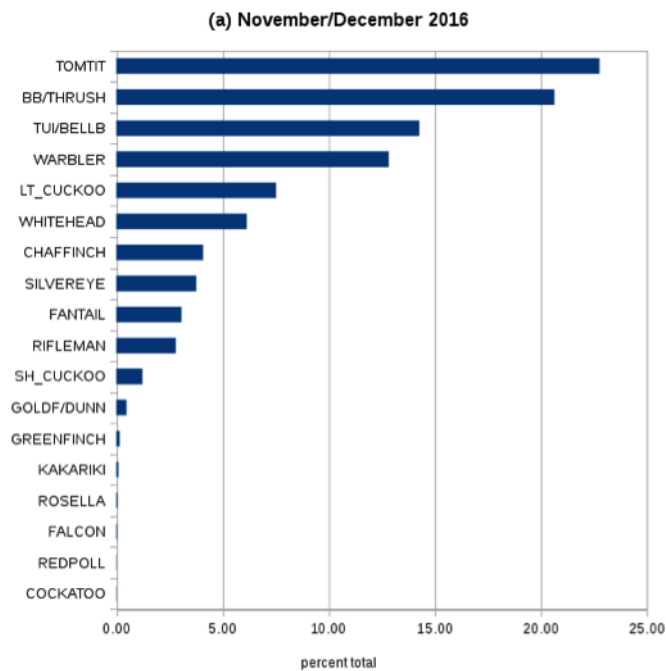
- Contact Energy,
- NZ Treasury,
- Serve for New Zealand Tree Planting event on Anzac day
- ANZ Bank,
- ACC and
- Office of the Clerk, NZ Parliament

Trapping Graphs



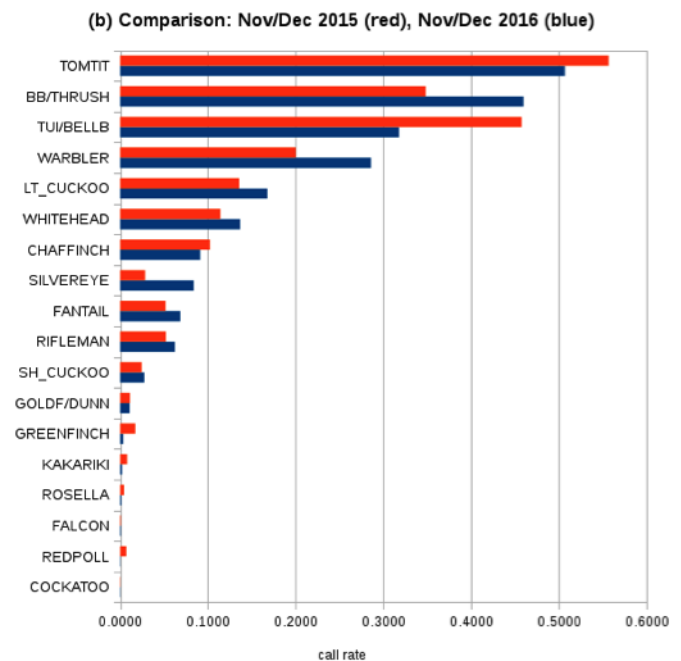
Forest Birdcall Data

In Nov/Dec 2016, we re-surveyed bird species calls via acoustic recorders at 75 sites around the Turere and Catchpool valleys to estimate the relative abundance of diurnal bird species in the Rimutaka Forest Park.



(a) shows the results for 2016 as the percent each bird species calls relative to the total calls recorded (for all species).

The most common calls in the park are from tomtits, blackbirds/thrushes, and tui/bellbirds.



(b) shows a comparison with the previous year's survey data. This time the plot is in terms of calling rate, which for each bird species shows the likelihood that it will call in a 10-second sound sample. For example, in 2016 there was a 50% chance that any sound sample would contain a tomtit call.

We would like to thank the Trust volunteers who helped to deploy and picking up the acoustic recorders during the 2016 survey.

As well as the diurnal survey, we have collected (and are currently analysing) night-time data to estimate the distribution of kiwi in the park in 2011-2013, 2015, and 2017 (ongoing). Ian Armitage also maintains a 5 minute bird count that has been running since 2009 (see <http://www.rimutakatrust.org.nz/5mbc/5mbc.htm>). Victoria University are running a study in the park studying the effects of the 1080 drop (contact: Roald Bomans, VUW).

Myrtle Rust and Seed Collection

Brent Tandy from DOC and Peter Cooper have been checking the park for Myrtle Rust (none found) and collecting seed from plants that could be affected if it does spread to the Rimutaka Forest Park.

QEII Trust Ranger, Trevor Thompson has provided us with more precious native mistletoe. It is exciting to have both red and yellow mistletoe seed available to plant. The *Peraxilla tetrapetala* (Red mistletoe) will be the first attempt we've made to re-establish this species since its extinction from the park for more than 40 years due to possum browse. It is notoriously difficult to propagate, so wish us luck!

Village Accommodation Kiwi Morning

We recently held a morning tea at Village Accommodation showcasing the Trust and our work to their staff. We have a 3 year agreement with Village sponsoring kiwi and other activities for the Trust. Managing Director Adam Cunningham presented staff members with our Kiwi logo T shirt in recognition of our partnership.

Birdcall Players at Catchpool

Hand crank powered birdcall players have been added to the interpretive panels at the Catchpool. Visitors are able to turn the crank and press a button to select the song/call of the birds featured on the panel.

Prototypes of the player have been installed on panels as a trial of the idea and the picture shows Rosemary Thompson trying one of them out. These players were developed by Alan Thompson (RFPT member).

Give them a try when you are next at the Catchpool, any feedback or other advice re these prototype players is welcomed.



“Wild Kiwi” Children’s T-Shirts



With assistance from Village Accommodation, we are able to offer these great children's T-shirts (size 2-14) available for purchase. Perfect for the Wee Wild Kiwi's in your life.

Please contact info@rimutakatrust.org.nz to order.

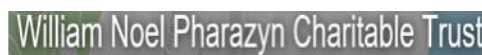
Thank you to all those like-minded people and organisations who have sponsored a trap, Kiwi or tree through the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust's sponsorship programme



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Te Runanganui o Te Atiawa



Flyrite – Rimutaka Heli Services

