



New Zealand Conservation Trust

May 2011

Kiwi Report

Well, the season started with a bang and a shake, and it certainly finished with a resounding reminder of the unpredictable power of Mother Nature.

Despite the lasting repercussions of such a devastating time for Christchurch, its people and New Zealand as a whole, the Kiwi season 2010/11 managed to continue operations smoothly thanks to the dedication of the Kiwi team and its amazing group of volunteers.

A special mention must be made of the efficient back-up generator system which not only kept the incubating eggs warm but provided a comforting link to the outside world.



Kiwi Stats

This season saw a total of 106 eggs and wild chicks come through the facility:

27 Haast Tokoeka
47 Rowi,
25 GSK,
7 North Is Brown

With end of season upon us, the Breeding Centre is certainly a lot quieter with only 3 eggs in incubation from Willow bank's own new North Island Brown record breaking breeding pair Ti Kouka and Shaunie, who so far this season have produced 7 eggs!

A complete surprise to Nelson Lakes and us was the late arrival of a Great Spotted Kiwi egg, which hatched at the end of March and is currently making a lot of noises in the brooder room.

The last of our Haast and Rowi chicks will be leaving in May, leaving us with a few Great Spotted Kiwis which will crèche with us until spring. Our focus will now turn yet again to maintenance and the up-keep of the facilities to ensure the best possible performance of the centre during the next season.

We would love to thank everyone for their continued support as we look forward to the 2011/12 season.

Ka Kite
The Kiwi Team
Frauke, Shaun
and Angela



And a huge thank you to our volunteers

Joy Davies, Mary-Ellen Wilson, Mike Payne, Paul Stabbutt, Kay Wilson, Jennie Lloyd, Karen Lamb and Annie Bonifant

And we can't let this go out without acknowledgement of Corry Ann Langford....

To define a leader and quantify their skill is one surely only to be measured by the respect, admiration and dedication that they receive? The way in which they can guide and nurture willingness to achieve great things, is surely the epitome of great leader?

In 2007 Corry Ann Langford was brought into Willowbank as the head of the Kiwi Breeding Centre, a role which is highly demanding of time and occasionally sanity. It is a role which tests life skills on a daily basis; it is this which Corry Ann conquered and inspired others to do.

A typical work day with Corry Ann always started with a huge smile, followed by a well organized day designed to meet the high demands of life in the Kiwi breeding centre. I speak, I believe, for all the staff here at Willowbank when I say that she will be sadly missed but by the same measure we wish her well as she continues her studies moving onwards to teaching in the secondary sphere of education. It has been a pleasure Corry Ann, you have inspired and led.

Kia ora,
E Haere rā
Shaun Horan



Tut news

A rotund female tuatara from the Willowbank native species section was x-rayed in October 2009 and found to be gravid with 14 eggs. After many enclosure searches and false alarms she was x-rayed again in May 2010 when her keeper got tired of waiting for her eggs to be laid!

There were no eggs seen in the x ray. Her enclosure was dug up and 13 eggs were found. Unfortunately one was destroyed by a grass grub. The eggs were moved to an incubator and in early 2011 the eggs started hatching. 7 hatchlings successfully made it out of their eggs and are doing well in a terrarium.

Ultra violet lighting and dietary supplements are ensuring they develop properly until they can be moved outside into natural light at around 6 months of age.



Chairman's Report

The current breeding season is drawing to a close with only three eggs still in incubation. Over 106 eggs/chicks have been processed through the breeding centre this season which is a similar number to the previous year. There was a 50% increase in the Great Spotted kiwi egg/chick numbers brought to the centre which currently stands at 25. This number can easily be increased dramatically subject only to funding over future seasons. General funding is progressively becoming more challenging as various Trusts amalgamate and refine and narrow their donation and grant scope.

The renovations carried out at the Willowbank breeding centre have proven to provide a much improved disease barrier and be more efficient operationally for staff.

New crèche pens have been completed in the predator free area and as a result some kiwi chicks will remain there until they achieve release weight.

The bush clearing programme at Craigieburn has been completed and plans advanced for the minor renovation of some of the buildings.

The Craigieburn trapping programme continues to achieve good results with well over 400 mustelids and other predators caught. Each mustelid can kill and eat an egg a day which means that potentially over 120,000 birds have been saved by this programme.

Richard Moore
Chairman



Thanks to our supporters over the last 4 months

D. Payne – kiwi
Halton Group Oy – kiwi
H. Young – kiwi
St Joseph School – kiwi
Thorrington School – kiwi
E. Howard
J. Venning – Ruru
Southern Trust
Ron Greenwood Trust
Canterbury Community Trust
COGS



And thank you to the following supporters who continue helping us every season:

Willowbank Wildlife Reserve
Yates Ltd – supply of Peat Moss for kiwi brooder boxes
Verkerks Ltd – supply of mince for kiwi
Arthurs Court Motor Lodge – GSK programme
Riccanton Bush Trust – providing a crèche facility for GSK chicks.
Canterbury Environmental Trust – management of trapping lines at Craigieburn
Pauline Howard from Hornby Vets for her dedication in looking after kiwi in need of veterinary help
DoC
Paparoa Wildlife Trust

Without your help we can't do what we do - thank you!

Hamilton and Guy - Takahe residents

On 24/09/10 Willowbank received a pair of takahe from the Burwood bush hand rearing unit near Te Anau. Their names are Hamilton and Guy. Hamilton is the male and the reserve could not have asked for a better display bird. Hamilton loves people and is always found at the front of his 2500 square metre enclosure interacting with the public. Guy, the female was very shy after her introduction to her new life at Willowbank, but has become much more confident and can be seen preening in her pond or feeding near Hamilton at the viewing area every day now.

Hamilton and Guy are a retired breeding pair. Both of them are around 20 years of age making them old for a takahe. They are well represented genetically and the Department of Conservation no longer wants any offspring from them. This is one of the reasons they have been moved to Willowbank to be advocates for their species and help promote takahe conservation locally.

Many people thought that the takahe were just big pukekos before they arrived at Willowbank, however staff and regular visitors were impressed by their size (Hamilton weighs over 3 kg) and their striking colouration. It is difficult to judge how impressive these birds really are from photographs or video. Seeing them face to face, with only a thin piece of mesh between you is a unique experience and Willowbank is very lucky to have such a bold pair of birds that will let the public approach them so closely.

The takahe's enclosure is the predator free area on the southern side of Willowbank. Previously this was used for weka. A large fenced off section of this area is also used for housing the South Island kiwi chicks prior to their release to the wild. The takahe are loving the huge space available to them and being strictly vegetarian, the huge supply of native and introduced grasses is a real smorgasbord!

Close ties remain with the Burwood breeding centre. Updates on the takahe's weight and condition are sent to the staff there on a regular basis to ensure they know their birds are being looked after. The native species team has a big job just picking up the 6-7 metres of poo each takahe does every day, but so far both birds are doing really well.

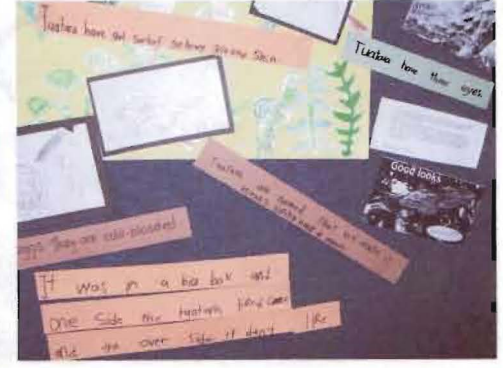


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