

January 2011

What a great spell of weather we have had over the last few months. A bit dry for farmers but great for us needing to work in the bush.

We have noticed trap the catch has been slower but is catching up now.

We had such a good response to the display when we had it at the Inglewood library, we moved it to the Bank of New Zealand in New Plymouth. It will be up in the Stratford bank sometime this month and hopefully will shift to other high profile sites over the next few months.

We were invited to give a presentation to a national conference late last year. This is now on the web and can be viewed at www.youtube.com/user/signsofchangeconf.

On the right hand side scroll down till you find us. It is the video and is for about 9 minutes.

We have been working with Venture Taranaki lately. With their help we have got an awesome sign now at Purangi for the guided walk.



Display Board for guided walk

We hope to have this up and running within the next few months. Like every conservation project developing ways to raise funds is always a challenge.

Kiwi

Late last year a dead kiwi was found on the Matau saddle. The bird was taken to Massey for an autopsy. This was inconclusive. The kiwi may have been hit by a car or suffered injuries because of a dog. The reasoning for this are as follows:

- The kiwi was in good condition with plenty of fat reserves.
- She was an active breeder
- The kiwi had a massive skull fracture

- Both her flanks had abrasions
- The internal damage suggested she had been squeezed significantly as some organs were pushed out of place.
- There was a lack of broken bones which you would normally see with being hit by a vehicle
- There were no tooth marks found.
- Diagnosis – Severe trauma – suspected dog attack.

They comment they are not certain that it is a dog attack because of the lack of tooth holes found on the carcass, however it is unusual to have a massive trauma by car without any broken bones.

It may or may not have been the result of a dog, but it is a good time to think about dogs and kiwi. Due to her locality where found we suspect she may have been the breeding partner of the male kiwi called "Aitken".



DOC have now implemented the policy that any hunting dogs which are on any DOC managed estate in Taranaki need to have gone through an avian aversion course. This brings the Taranaki region in line with other North Island areas where this policy has been in place for a number of years.

After many years of drafts and more drafts the final taxon recovery plan for the western brown kiwi is about finalised. This is the guiding document for the next 10 years on how the management of the kiwi will happen. The plan identifies our project as one of the two priority sites for the western brown kiwi protection.

We will be doing the bi-annual kiwi call survey again in May this year. This will include both the Purangi side and the Pouiatoa block.



Whio (Blue Duck)

On the National front the Whio Recovery Plan which sets out management for the whio for the next 10 years has been finalised. This can be found on the DOC web site under science publications. The plan divides the different whio sites into security sites of which there are 8, and recovery sites which include those sites known as second priority sites. Egmont National Park project is classified as a recovery or second priority site.

The recovery plan notes that nesting females, eggs, young broods and juvenile whio are particularly vulnerable to predation by stoats. We have noticed that the normal trend of stoats caught in our traps has been skewed due to the heavy rain in September. We expect to see an increase in January and February.

A reminder that every female stoat when leaving the nest is already pregnant. Thank you to those farmers who are now quick to deal with stoats when they see them.

The local DOC office has been advised by the department that a review of the local project has been requested. We do not know what the outcome of this will be. We are aware that DOC is looking at prioritising species, the sites they will concentrate on and how much work will happen at the key sites. We were advised at the regional biodiversity forum in December that for Taranaki region neither the whio nor kiwi feature. This is for DOC only.

During December there was a successful egg lift with 4 eggs being taken to Mt Bruce for hatching.

General

Our planning is going well to re-establish kokako in 2013. A lot of the work involved with kokako takes place at dawn, a challenge when they may be hours tramping from the road end. This issue and safety issues for our contractors identified the need for the project to have a couple of small huts. These are not cheap and we have been looking at options. Those that are familiar with Stratford may have noticed the old office building in the Fitzakerly sawmill site has gone. We have purchased it and currently we are renovating it to be one of the huts for our use. We will be putting it on private land in the Purangi area once it has had its "birthday".

We needed another transportable hut and have been fortunate to receive funding from Taranaki Electricity Trust (TET). A thank you to Standard Timber in Stratford who are supporting this project and providing assistance.

We have updated our volunteer calendar for 2011. The full calendar is on our web site. Here are some of the activities for the next few months:

January

Track work

Track clearing on the new annual guided walk. Help develop view shafts, and keep the track clear.

Weed control

The boxes on the road side need spraying to keep the entrance clear. Very important as stoats will not enter boxes if overgrown. This is for both the blue duck lines and kiwi road side lines.

Firewood

We need a supply of logs at Purangi which need splitting for firewood for the huts.

February

Bird Count Survey.

Four teams will be doing a 5 minute bird count survey. This involves a walk through the track with a listen at set points for bird calls. This will give a base line of bird type and density.

Re-number stoat boxes

The blue duck stoat box lines need to be renumbered. These are on the road side and we have 9 lines to be done.

Firewood

We need a supply of logs at Purangi which need splitting for firewood for the huts.

April

Builders help needed

We will be installing a small hut in the centre of our project. We need fit experienced builders to help us.

Fitness: Medium

Numbers required: 1-2

When: Weather dependent

Firewood

We need a supply of logs at Purangi which need splitting for firewood for the huts.

Our Web site:

www.etet.org.nz

Cheers Karen & Bob Schumacher