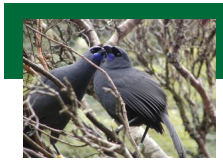

BRING BACK KOKAKO

For more about bringing back Kokako to GBI,
see our website: http://www.gbiet.org/kokako

Little Blue Penguin Rescue

By Evie & Grace MacMahon

One hot day in December we went fishing on the rocks past the second beach. We were scrambling round, clambering up and down when Mum found a little blue penguin wedged in a crevice. Dad got it out with the fishing gloves and put her in a rock pool to see if she could swim - and to cool her down because she'd been lying in the sun. But she couldn't really use her feet or flippers - she just floated out on the waves. Dad swam out and got her back then he carried her back to the beach. He sat her on the beach but she couldn't walk either. So he carried her over the hill and jumped in the car with my sister Grace and our friend Anna. They took her (we called her Patricia) all the way to Karen Walker's place. Grace says she thought Patricia was dead on the way, but she was just exhausted. Karen told them that Patricia was half the size that a penguin should be when fledging ready to go out fishing for itself. When there are two eggs one gets fed more than the other. A lot of time these second chicks stand by the shore, fledged but unable to swim out. If they are white inside their mouths they are malnourished and often dehydrated and she may also have had hypothermia. Sadly even though Karen fed her a fish milkshake and gave her lots of tlc, Patricia died the next day. Little blue penguins are at risk from wandering dogs, being hit by boats and jet skis, and from fishing gear. Let's look out for them!

Easter Art Competition

This year as a change from our annual Rat Tales the Trust has held an art competition for all pre-school, primary and secondary students. Entrants were asked to draw and paint their favourite native bird that lives on Gt Barrier or used to live here. Entries close on March 23 and prizes will be presented at the Easter fair. We hope to have paintings on display at our stall so call in and see our island talent.

Trust Contact Details

PO Box 35, Okiwi, Gt Barrier Island, 0960

Phone: 02 234 GBIET (022 34 42438)

FB: Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust

Twitter: GBIET@GBITrust

FREE/Discounted Cat Neutering

Sponsored by Auckland Council. Contact the local Vet on 463 to book an appointment.

Available for island residents.

Auckland Council

Love. Protect. Restore. **Aroha. Puapua. Whakahaumanu.**

Issue 20 : March 2018
FREE

GBI BUSH TELEGRAPH

Grey-Faced Petrel by Alison Walker

Predator-free islands the world over are a haven for seabirds. Uninhabited islands like Hauturu (Little Barrier) and Cuvier in the Mercury Islands are safe breeding grounds for these birds. The largest colonies of this petrel are to be found on uninhabited islands in the Bay of Plenty.

The grey-faced petrel (titi) commonly known as the northern mutton bird was formerly present on Great Barrier Island and in past years was harvested by Maori. There is a small colony of these birds above the cliffs at Awana which are likely replenished by young birds from Cuvier.

The grey-faced petrel is predominantly dark black/ brown with long narrow wings and a long pointed tail. The base of the bill is grey or white. It is one of the few burrowing petrels to still survive on the New Zealand mainland.

They have a reproductive season of 9-10 months and 55 days incubation. Males spend more time in the burrow than the female. One bird stays with the egg while the other forages at sea.

The greatest threat to the grey-faced petrel on their breeding grounds is, of course, rats and feral cats.

Eradication of rats from many of our uninhabited islands has benefited the grey-faced petrel at many sites. It would seem most likely that eradication of pests on our own Rakitu Island would create a haven for this bird and a wide range of other seabirds.

Restoration of Rakitu by Bill Carlin

It is an important conservation goal to begin the restoration of Rakitu/Arid Island from human-induced destruction. The most useful initial step in restoration is the eradication of all introduced rodent predators. This should be done in the most operationally efficient and the most effective way and should also be done by the most cost efficient means (i.e. aerial) possible. Conservation dollars are scarce and many other areas also require help so we should not waste any resources. Eradication means all rodent predators must be put at risk at the same time. Aerially placed rodent poison- brodifacoum – will do the job. It is in common use along with multiple other poisons on Aotea already.

Look no further than Little Barrier/ Hauturu to see the success and conservation results of aerial brodifacoum application.

Lets get on with it!

Givealittle: www.givealittle.co.nz/member/gbitrust **Website:** www.gbiet.org

Okiwi Kākāriki Project by Emma Waterhouse

Anyone who lives or spends time in Okiwi will likely know the call of the kākāriki or red-crowned parakeet- that distinctive 'ki-ki-ki-ki' chatter as birds fly overhead, often in pairs. Long-time residents relate stories of flocks as large as 12 or 13 and remember the birds always having been around in the valley.

Although we know a lot about kākāriki populations elsewhere, it seems that relatively little is known about the Okiwi population. How many birds are there? Where do they nest? Is this a remnant population that has always been here, or did birds from nearby islands (such as Hauturu/Little Barrier) fly across to Aotea in the past? Why has this population 'hung on' in the valley despite the presence of ship rats and cats?

We know that kākāriki are particularly vulnerable to predation by introduced mammals – adults forage on the ground and fledglings spend the first few days on the ground after leaving the nest. The nest holes (in mature puriri trees) are also the perfect size for rats. Thankfully on Aotea we don't have to worry about stoats and Norway rats but the tree-loving ship rat and cats pose a significant threat.

Over the last three months, the Trust has been supporting research by a masters student from Massey University to locate potential and active kākāriki nests in known and likely habitat in Okiwi, largely along the stream. The aim is to identify where the birds are breeding now and increase trapping efforts around those areas. We've liaised closely with Okiwi School, whose rat control efforts over many years may have played a pivotal role in the survival of the Okiwi population. We are also interested in finding out how many birds are here – do you see the same birds many times, or are they different individuals? With no recent kākāriki population count in Okiwi, we are also working closely with the Okiwi Community Pest Project, who will conduct bird counts in the valley in the coming months.

Kākāriki nest in an old puriri tree along the Okiwi stream (Photo: S Simmonds).

The nest searching this summer found both active and unoccupied nests as well and many poten/al nest sites. Quite a lot of bird activity was also observed, such as perching around potential nest trees, calling and flying through the valley.

The research also involved talking to Okiwi residents, the School and others about kākāriki in the valley. What's clear is that this popula/on of kākāriki are an important part of the environment on Aotea, both culturally and scientifically, and certainly worth protecting.

Membership

Annual Subscription: $25

Senior: $20, Family $35, Student $15

Life Subscription: $250, Senior $200

Direct credit to: 12-3110-0058231-00

Please advise your contact details by email/letter so we can email or post you the Environment News.

Kākāriki Facts

- New Zealand has five species of kākāriki (meaning 'small green parrot').
- *The red-crowned species were once common throughout New Zealand but is now largely restricted to offshore pest-free islands.*
- Nesting occurs from October through to January, although kākāriki will nest through winter if food is abundant.
- *Female incubates up to nine eggs for around 20 days until hatching.*
- Usually solitary or found in pairs, although in autumn and winter they may form small flocks.
- *Flight appears to be erratic when crossing open spaces, but kākāriki are capable of crossing open ocean over distances over 100 km.*

Trap Grant by Alison

Late last year Pest Free NZ 2050 gave the Environmental Trust $6,500 to spend on traps and trap boxes for community projects. Traps were handed out at New Year community days. 40 trap boxes were given to Claris Sports Club and the Golf Club for a wetland protection project.

Trap boxes went to a Kakariki project in the Okiwi Valley where a number of nesting sites have been discovered. Local Principal Colin Griffiths has spotted fledglings in the Okiwi Park this summer.

A number of private properties carrying out pest management have been happy to receive the long-life wooden trap boxes.

We will be at the Claris Easter Fair where we are happy to discuss how to rid your property of rodents and attract more birds. If you have a project come and see how we can assist you.

Kids Show the Way!

Here is a large rat caught by Manuka as part of the Mulberry Grove School project.