

# THE REMU-TALKER

## Mihi to Pāpā Sep

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe Pāpā Sep.  
Haere atu rā e te Matua, whāi muri  
atu i te tini me te mano kua rūpeke  
atu ki tua o Kahurangi.

Ko koe tētahi waka huia o ngā  
mōhiotanga o ngā tūpuna. Ko koe  
tētahi pou e āwhina ana i ngā kiwi  
kua hoki atu ki te Wao nui a Tāne.  
Kāore mātou e wareware i a koe.

No reira e te pāpā, ngā mihi aroha  
ki a koe me tō whānau. He nui te  
mihi ki tō wahine a Mate, he wahine  
pūmau. Ko ia tō toka tai.

Mā tō tātou Ariki koe e tiaki i a koe

Moe mai. Moe mai.

Many and deep are our  
acknowledgements to you Pāpā  
Sep. Go to the bosom of the  
almighty, follow the many who have  
passed beyond the veil.

You are a great storehouse for the  
knowledge of your ancestors. You  
are a great supporter in assisting  
kiwi to return to the forest of Tāne.  
We will not forget you.

Therefore Pāpā Sep, we send our  
love to your family and especially to  
your wife Mate, ever steadfast in  
her support. She has ever been  
your rock.

May the Lord protect you

Sleep. Sleep.

*Arohanui from  
the Remutaka Kiwi Team*

## In Memoriam - Pāpā Sep

21st July 2021 was the day we lost a special friend of the kiwi -  
Hepetema Taitua - fondly known as Pāpā Sep. Pāpā Sep blessed  
so many of our kiwi that I'm positive he is now walking the whenua  
with them in spirit.



Pāpā Sep blessing the new Waharoa at the entrance to the Orongorongo Track,  
December 2020

Whaea Mate and Pāpā Sep will always be an integral part of the  
aroha that we all share for these incredible birds and we could not  
have done this without the generous, giving and spirit of Pāpā  
Sep. Our hearts and aroha go out to Whaea Mate and their  
Whanau. He will be remembered, he will be missed.



Whaea Mate, Linda and Pāpā Sep at the dedication of the  
bird information panels, December 2016

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## From the President's Desk

Tena kotu katoa,

Those of you who attended the 33<sup>rd</sup> AGM will probably agree that it was a surreal experience. Because of Covid, the room had a limited capacity, so chairs were spaced, and masks were required. Still, it was a good chance to see old friends, including Angus and Elly from the Department of Conservation. There were some good questions following the President & Treasurer reports, including the inferred one of what is a realistic cash reserve for a Trust of our kind?

There was one change to the Committee, with Janet Lawson stepping down & Ian Armitage coming back to volunteer for another year. Fanny Leduc, who had been seconded during the year, was confirmed by election this time.

We were treated to an inspiring talk from Paul Ward, founder of Capital Kiwi. It was reassuring to hear that Paul refers to our success with re-introducing Kiwi as one of the inspirations for his group. Again, we had good questions and discussions arising from that session.

The matter of securing sustainable, long-term funding is a significant challenge for us. We are now faced with an annual cost of gassing and baiting the A24 traps of about \$20k – something we haven't had to worry about over the past two years. This exceeds the amount we receive from regular large sponsors. Although the Hutt City Council have generously increased their sponsorship amount, we are still short on an annual basis.

As I mentioned in my talk, the Committee will be finalising our rolling 5-year operating plan shortly. This will include generating a budget for each project so that we know in advance the financial implications of what we do & wish to do in the future. We are acutely conscious of the hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours that have gone into our Trust's work, and the last thing we want to do is impose corporate "stuff" on volunteer activities. However, this is where the real-world kicks in and we must show potential funders that we know what we're doing and how much it will cost.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you'll see the Christmas sponsorship offer which will hopefully provide friends and families with the opportunity to make tax-deductible contributions to our work.

On a personal note, I do hope that all, or at least most, of you will have had your "two shots" and are working in fully vaccinated teams. With a large percentage of our members being in the older age cohorts, it is up to us all to ensure that we can keep ourselves & each other safe from Covid infection.

Nga mihi

Geoff

Geoff Cameron, President, Remutaka Conservation Trust

## Kiwi? Cooee? Kiwi!

We are always keen to hear from anyone who hears, sees a kiwi, their tracks or poo in or around the Remutakas. Or maybe in your own back yard?

Recently, a male kiwi made himself heard to a group at Boar Inn.

Location would be great and if you can, a GPS location. This will all add to the information mix on the kiwi locations and help us keep kiwi safe.

email: [kiwi@remutaka.nz](mailto:kiwi@remutaka.nz) or text: 0275712451

## The Gift of a Name

The first birds to be reintroduced into the Remutakas in 2006, were named by local schools.

- \* *Manaia* – Pukeatua School
- \* *Tahunahuna* – Arakura School
- \* *Woopsy* – Fernlea School
- \* *Wairuakiwi* – Wainuiomata School
- \* *Lorenzo* – St Claudine's
- \* *Chook* – Konini School
- \* *Wiski* – Wainuiomata Intermediate

One of the first birds born in the Remutaka Forest Park was named by JB Hughes Contractors. John and Karen named their bird "Jaybee". Jaybee, pictured below, was born to Tahunahuna and Manaia in 2009 and released back into the park in January 2010.



## Keeping Kiwi Wild

*Contributed By: Melody McLaughlin*

Keeping kiwi wild is one of the key objectives of the RCT kiwi programme. As well as nurturing and protecting our native icon, it also means all of us have the opportunity to see and hear kiwi in the wild.

In 2021 this vision is very much a reality with birds being seen and heard across the park and around the fringes of the Remutakas.

Our journey started back in 2006 with the release of the first kiwi to be present in the Remutakas for 100 years. All of the volunteers involved in this amazing achievement have worked tirelessly to ensure the survival of these incredible birds. Over forty of these volunteers have reached the 10 years plus milestone. This work will continue, just in a different way.

The predator control has always been and will continue to be a critical part of the work that we do. 113 of the 172 volunteers are focused solely on 10,000 Ha of predator control enabling kiwi to disperse and set up territories, as they mature and find mates.

We will still be monitoring the population but rather than individual indicator birds we have scaled up to monitor the population using the acoustic recorders and cameras. We will supplement this monitoring every 5 years through a capture/release monitor using specialised trained kiwi detection dogs and their handlers. This will provide us with additional information on the younger birds and their survival.

Recently we had a visual reminder that the kiwi in the park use the walking tracks. After the snowfall in July, volunteer Karen Baker took this photo of kiwi footprints in the snow.

We have actively tracked 152 individual kiwi made up of chicks, juveniles and adult and walked thousands of kilometres in the Remutakas.

Strong support from Miria and John at Camp Wainui has meant we have easy access to several pairs who have made the camp their home as well as the pest control to support their breeding success.

The Wainuiomata community including local businesses, the Marae, and schools have all be a part of this amazing journey and I hope will continue to support the mahi being done by everyone. As well as local support, the project has volunteers coming from as far as Te Horo, Wairarapa and Wellington City. This is truly an example of New Zealanders volunteering in action.



## Bird of the Year...is a Bat!

The Bat(man) beat out Robin (and the rest of the birds) to win Forest and Bird's "Bird of the Year 2021".

New Zealand has only two native land mammals and they're both bats - long-tailed and short-tailed. Just like our native birds, bats are under threat by pests such as possums, rats, stoats and cats.

Pekapeka-tou-roa / Long-tailed bats though distributed throughout New Zealand are critically endangered. As described in their [campaign profile](#) they "fly at dusk along forest edges using echolocation calls to hunt moths, mosquitoes, and other insects. They are as small as your thumb, the wingspan of your hand, and weigh the same as a \$2 coin."



Photo: Colin O'Donnell, DOC



Photo: Colin O'Donnell, DOC

Pekapeka-tou-poto / Lesser short-tailed bats are primarily in the North Island including a colony of 300 found in the 1999 in the Waiohine Valley, Tararua Forest Park. Pups bred in captivity from this population have been established on Kapiti Island. They are larger than the long-tailed bats and have relatively large, pointed ears and prominent nostrils. Uniquely, they are adapted to foraging for food on the forest floor as well as in the air.

## So does Remutaka Forest Park have Bats?

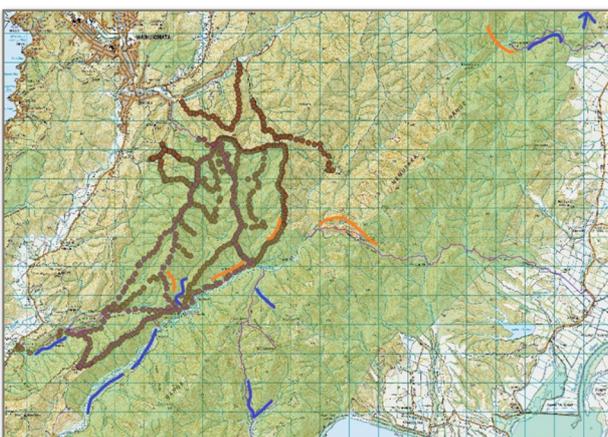
*Contributed by: Fanny Leduc*

Back in March the Trust asked if someone could coordinate a survey to find out if bats are present in the park. I put my hand up. The winter was spent researching the topic and designing the survey.

We will be using AR4 acoustic recorders set on "bat mode" to detect ultrasonic frequencies at night during summer. Between December and March sets of 5 recorders will be out in various areas of the park for 4 weeks at a time. After a wee break to change batteries and memory cards, they will go out again. Volunteer recruitment is currently under way to help with deployment and retrieval of the recorders, with a few still to confirm the date when they are able to do this.

Analysis of the recordings will be done with the help of computer programmes to see if bat calls were picked up by the recorders. We will keep you, the committee and DOC in the loop with the results, whether we find bats or not.

Have you seen bats in the park before? If so, I would like to hear from you! Please get in touch with the Trust [info@remutaka.nz](mailto:info@remutaka.nz) and let us know if you remember where, when and what time of day/night you saw them.



Map of proposed bat survey areas:

- \* Blue lines: areas for long-tailed bats.
- \* Orange lines: areas for short-tailed bats.
- \* Brown dots: current RCT DOC 200 trapping network.
- \* Green shading: RFP area
- \* The blue arrow represents the Cross Creek area which is not situated in the map area

NB: Our extensive A24 trap network extends beyond these boundaries into the Wainuiomata Water Catchment, along the Orongorongo River and over to the main Remutaka Range ridge lines above the river

## Traffic Lights Ahead

*Contributed by: Alan Peck*

Well, once again we have had to endure a lockdown which prevented us from undertaking our normal activity in the forest. Fortunately it was not for long and our brief absence would not have had a huge impact on our wildlife, especially our kiwi population. We were “back in business” in time for early Spring.

We have now been operating at Level 2 since early September, which has meant that we have resumed our regular trapping and monitoring, but with some restrictions. Many of our volunteers will have noticed that the restrictions have been a little more stringent compared with Level 2 last year. This has been because we are dealing with a much more virulent strain of the virus and stronger precautions have been needed to keep us all safe.

The Trust has ensured our rules and processes meet the requirements set by the administrators of the land in which we operate: the Department of Conservation, and the Greater Wellington Regional Council. At the time of writing there has been no hint of any relaxation, and it is possible that we will be at Level 2 for a little while yet. It is, however, reassuring to note that the lockdown system may have had its day.

We look forward with interest to the introduction of the new traffic light system. It would appear that our activity should still be possible under all Red/Orange/Green scenarios, but we need to wait to see how DoC and the GRWC interpret the new rules. One thing that is certain about this new system is that life will be much more “normal” for those who have been vaccinated.

## Prickly Task for DoE Service

Hutt International Boys' School (HIBS) students, along with their teacher Paul Falloon, survey the enormity of their Duke of Edinburgh Award service task.

Their challenge, set by Peter Cooper, was to remove all yellow flowers (mostly gorse) from key Catchpool Restoration Project areas around the top carpark. They have been cutting the gorse and applying herbicide gel to the stumps to avoid regrowth.

These fantastic young men turn up every other weekend to tackle gorse and other woody weeds as part of our CRP volunteer superstars. Paul is also part of our volunteer trapper team.



## Spotted in the Park



A rare sighting of a Forest Ringlet butterfly (*Dodonidia helmsii*) captured beautifully by Gillian Candler. These brightly-coloured endemic butterflies were once common here, and in the neighbouring East Harbour Regional Park to our west, but they are now quite rare and apparently in decline for as yet unexplained reasons.

Please keep an eye out for these beautiful 'solar sailors' when you're out and about in the Park. Use the iNaturalistNZ app if you have your smartphone and/or camera handy for rapid confirmation of your observations.

## Volunteer Days

We've had some hardy school, service and corporate volunteer groups through over the winter months.

Ministry for the Environment and Wellington Electricity were lucky to have fine sunny weather on their weed busting and planting days.

Two double-decker bus loads of school children and a Girl Guides/ Rangers group also came to plant native trees but hit some wild wet and windy weather. With their double-decker London bus unable to traverse the flooded ford, we walked both the school groups along the Nga Taonga Trail to their restoration planting zone near the Catchpool eco-hotspot on the other side of the stream, carrying the trees and spades with us. Fortunately the weather failed to dampen spirits.



## Goodnature in the Park

Many of you will recognise spots around the Whakanui Track in this cool promo by our friends at Goodnature. When a new Goodnaturist joins the team, co-founder Robbie Van Dam takes them 'bush' north-east of Wellington, to where their story first began. Then it's back to the workshop where they make their own **A24 trap**. Watch it [here](#).

## Tweets for Tweets

A much appreciated shout out (tweet out?) from Tim Park, Manager of Ōtari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve during an epic Wairarapa to Wainuiomata mission over the Papatahi Crossing.



Tim Park  
@parkecology

Walked the less trodden route from Wairarapa to Wainuiomata over the weekend. 40 odd kms and at least a couple up and down. Bit rough in places but satisfied today. Achieved another [#dogsonmushrooms](#) moment



12:43 PM · Oct 25, 2021 from Orongorongo River · Twitter for iPhone



Tim Park  
@parkecology

If anyone wants to compare similar forests with pest control and without, I recommend the walk. The eastern side has been hammered to the point of collapse - gutted by goats, deer, pigs and possums from the inside out. The west is well managed and cranking with life - incl kiwi



Tim Park  
@parkecology

Three cheers to [@RemutakaC](#) for leading the charge on the pest control effort. We saw kākārīki, kārearea, popokatea, titipounamu, miromiro and heard ruru, long tailed cuckoo and others in the management area 🐓🌟 Only tūī, shining cuckoo and grey warbler in the eastern range

4:30 PM · Oct 25, 2021 from Wellington City, New Zealand · Twitter for iPhone

# Kiwi Avoidance Training

*Contributed by: Ross Gilmour*

I assisted with the administration work for another successful Kiwi Avoidance Training weekend hosted by the Remutaka Conservation Trust and conducted by Willie Marsh. Over three days, 125 dogs went through the fully booked course.

As a Trust volunteer, I was hearing great feedback from owners whose dogs had completed the training so I was delighted to get the opportunity to accompany first-time participant Ella and her owner Jane as they went through the training.

Willie set up a course with lots of kiwi props and the sound of kiwi calls in a forested area of the Catchpool Valley. Ella was fitted with a shock collar that also had a vibrate mode. Willie explained that his preference was to only use the shock mode if he felt it was essential. At the start of the course there was a kiwi prop lying on the ground that had a strong kiwi smell on it. Jane was asked to let Ella off the lead and as Ella got close to the kiwi Willie briefly used the vibrate mode and Ella got a real fright (that was the only time the collar was used).

The next kiwi on the course was on a moving rail and as Ella approached the kiwi charged at her and that gave Ella another significant fright. A short while after this Willie took off the collar - explaining that what he wanted was the dog making an aversive association with the smell, sight and sound of kiwi, not fear of the collar. This definitely worked as on the last part of the course Jane, and I were asked to walk with Ella past two rows of three kiwi props that had been placed across a vehicle wide track. Ella who was walking with us stopped and would not follow, even when called. As Willie explained it was like there was now "glass wall" across the track. Jane was then asked to return to Ella and lead her back via the route that did not involve going anywhere near the kiwi.

I was impressed with how simple, humane and effective the training was. The effectiveness could be seen by the fact that dogs returning for a re-test either twelve months or two years later, still found the smell, sight and sound of kiwi very aversive.



Ella in training



Ross, Jane and Willie with Ella

## A Very Kiwi Christmas Gift

### \$50 will:

- \* Help fund the constant requirement for bait for our traps. Without frequent fresh baiting, our 2,000+ traps would be ineffective.
- \* Help fund the purchase of the native trees and plants we need to continue our habitat restoration work.

### \$100 will:

- \* Help buy equipment we need to monitor the health of our native wildlife
- \* Help purchase safety equipment needed to keep our volunteers safe

### \$200 will:

- \* Provide and set up a trap to keep stoats and rats away from our precious kiwi and other native birds.
- \* Provide predator control for an entire year over the area needed to sustain a kiwi pair.



### How to donate

Please email [sponsors@remutaka.nz](mailto:sponsors@remutaka.nz) with your donation amount and contact details. You will receive a receipt and we are a registered charity (CC37211) for tax deductible claims.

Deposits can be made directly to Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust 02 0544 0002549 00 (make sure that you also include your surname so that we can associate the payment with your donation)

**Thank you to the following key sponsors as well as all of you who sponsor kiwi, transmitters, traps and trees for your continued annual support**



William Noel Pharazyn Charitable Trust



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



*Nau mai, haere mai*  
*Kia mau ki to Maoritanga*  
Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui

