

Kaharoa Kokako Trust

September 2004, Newsletter.

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Welcome to our annual newsletter with a summary of events and highlights for the past twelve months and information about the pest control programme planned for October this year.

Adult Census:

The census completed in the Onaia East and West Blocks in September / October 2003 showed there were 20 pair and 1 single territorial kokako as well as a number of sub-adults throughout the area.

No census was undertaken in the Aislabie Block in 2003, after many years of monitoring, however when nest finding to source chicks was done we were delighted there was evidence of many pair nesting in that area.

No Juvenile Survey was done following the last breeding season.

2003 Pest Control Programme:

Feratox Block Baits with Cholecalciferol was used for last year's operation and the Trust were extremely disappointed with the result.

Post control pest monitoring showed pest numbers were still high - and for whatever reason there was not a good bait take in many areas

Kokako Chicks to Puketi Forest Trust:

Some of you may have seen several months ago a newspaper report that kokako chicks from Kaharoa had gone to Puketi Forest.

To back track, we had a request through the Kokako Recovery Group, a national body, for female chicks to be reared then released into the Puketi Forest in the Northland area. Their kokako numbers are dangerously low with only a few male birds surviving and it is possible birds from the area will disappear altogether.

As a Trust we spent considerable time considering this request. Once we had satisfied ourselves that any chicks gifted would be as well cared for and protected as much as possible, agreement was made with the Puketi Trust that five female chicks could be transferred last season. If successful future transfers could be considered. In hindsight that was a relatively easy step in the chain.

Once this agreement was made nest finding in the Aislabie Block started. Within days of chicks being hatched the nest was approached, chicks uplifted, banded, and a feather removed and sent to determine the sex of the chicks. Once that had been done the nest was again approached and only the females taken. Subsequently we have more male-banded birds in the block now. Only two female chicks were found. They were taken to Hamilton Zoo for rearing. Although these chicks have been gifted to Puketi Forest Trust they have been released onto Mauimua Island, which is an offshore predator free area. The plan is to then transfer kokako back to Puketi Forest once breeding is established, numbers build up and the recipient area is deemed more predator free.

Male kokako from Puketi were to have been captured and released simultaneously with our chicks at the end of March. The translocation went ahead but unfortunately only one male from Puketi was captured to move. He was an older bird which did not travel or respond well when released so was recaptured and returned to the mainland so at this stage there are two Kaharoa female kokako on Mauimua awaiting company! Efforts are continuing to capture other males from Puketi.

Peter & Rachael Davey, along with representatives from Puketi, Hamilton Zoo staff, local Iwi and DOC accompanied the chicks to Mauimua Island for release. Our chicks were in good condition, travelled well and appeared settled on release.

Funding & Thank You:

Again this year the Environment BOP Environment Enhancement Fund has been our major funding source for which the Trust is extremely grateful. Without such solid support it would not have been possible to continue the work as we have done. Our thanks too, to the Department of Conservation for the ongoing liaison and support to the Trust from its staff in Rotorua.

“Hands on” and monetary donations from each and every one of the volunteers who continue to support the Trust so well in many ways is well appreciated, thank you.

The Landrover/Birdmobile presented to the Trust by the Land-Rover Enthusiasts Club (Rotorua Region) has been used during pest control operations, track maintenance, survey work, nest finding and for transportation of visitors into the Block. At a recent Trust meeting promotional opportunities to use the Birdmobile were discussed, if anyone has any suggestions we would like to hear from them too.

This Year’s Pest Control Programme:

This year we have decided to “spell” the Aislabie Block from pest control. It is believed that continuous pesticide may result in pest aversion or resistance to toxins, and ecological sustainability has to be addressed as well.

On 2 October, Onaia East and West Block’s will be targeted using Feratox to eradicate possums, followed with Diphacinone on 16 October into all bait stations. Bait stations will be monitored checking uptake and re-baiting of stations will be done as necessary.

Volunteers will be required only for the Onaia West Block - the Onaia East Block has difficult contour and will be covered by Bruce Bancroft, the contractor who has covered that area over the past two seasons for us. **Due to the toxins being used an age restriction of 15 years will be enforced. (No younger children will be permitted to accompany adults.)**

To meet the conditions of the Pesticides Act, neighbouring landowners will be contacted by DOC, however if you have any queries feel free to contact the DOC Area Manager, Phil Alley (07) 348.3610 or Programme Manager Biodiversity, Bruce Mossman (07) 3498213.

If you are able to assist please phone **John Paterson, 332.2093** (if there is no reply - please wait for the answer phone to engage and record a message)
or Peter Davey ph 348-7359, (w), mob 025.743-198

1st Bait:	Saturday 02 October -	9.00am
2nd Bait:	Saturday 16 October -	9.00am

Or return the attached slip if more convenient:

-----**CUT HERE**-----

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No. _____

Number of helpers available to help with:

1st feed	-	02 October
2nd feed	-	16 October

If you usually travel out with a companion/or wish to be grouped with friend/s while assisting with this work please include their names here too. Thank you.

Please return this “Return slip” to: Kaharoa Kokako Trust
PO Box 78, Ngongotaha.