

Summer 2015-16

COROMANDEL ENVIRONMENT NEWS

# megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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"In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous"  
-Aristotle

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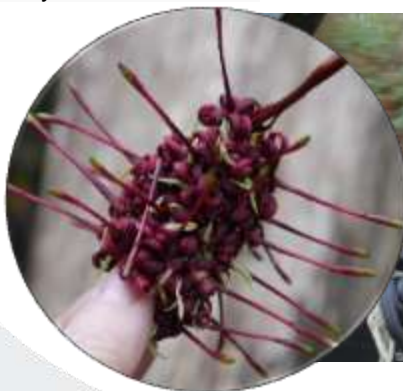


## Looking through the lens of an International nature volunteer

We are thrilled to be partnering with International Nature Volunteers, a NZ company that matches global volunteers with conservation projects like us.

In the past few months we have hosted six volunteers, from Brasil, USA, United Kingdom and Australia. All have stayed in the home of Lettecia and Katharina, staying from between ten days to six weeks. These volunteers help us with a range of field tasks including pest and weed control, track maintenance and monitoring. In exchange, they get to experience hands-on conservation, learn new skills, make a difference and explore this beautiful part of the world.

These photos were taken by UK volunteers Charlotte Crummack and Dan Burgin during their stay. They reveal a volunteers journey of discovery and observation.



Clockwise from left: Charlotte photographing a pateke flock at the Port Charles estuary. A kingfisher keeping watch. Lettecia takes the volunteers on a gator-ride tour of the Rat Attack. Natural symmetry in a rewarewa flower found on the forest floor.



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## Call counts find **more kiwi**

**Our 2015 kiwi census results confirm that kiwi numbers have grown over the last decade since trapping began in our Kiwi Sanctuary.**

Ten years since the establishment of our Kiwi Sanctuary, we were curious to see if our kiwi population had grown. So in winter this year, volunteers came from near and far to complete a mammoth kiwi listening survey.

Kiwi have increased, with 36% more kiwi heard in our Kiwi Sanctuary than in 2005. This result is more meaningful when you compare this to the predicted 26% decline for unprotected populations of brown kiwi. The mean call count rate went from 1.2 to 2.1 calls/hr. 95 individual birds were detected at 19 listening sites.

Unfortunately, it was not all good news. Kiwi disappeared from three listening sites (north of Colville and inland from Tuatēawa) where they were heard in 2005. This is concerning. We suspect uncontrolled dogs may be responsible. However, another three sites where no kiwi were heard in 2005 now have kiwi.

Kiwi seem to be doing better in several 'hotspots' (see map) with densities increasing faster at these locations. This may be for a number of reasons, including more intensive predator control at some of these sites and restricted access by dogs.

A big thanks to all the supportive landowners, our determined trappers and the army of volunteers who braved a chilly winter to obtain these results.

NUMBER OF KIWI DETECTED AT LISTENING STATIONS IN MEG KIWI SANCTUARY IN 2005 (blue dots) AND 2015 (red dots). *Black lines mark boundary of MEG stoat trapping.*



## Duck tales: a remarkable comeback story

**Pateke are making a comeback. This feisty little forest duck is the shade of Whittaker's Dark Ghana. Their remarkable recovery story from extinction should gladden the hearts of us all.**

In the 1980s pateke were on the road to extinction. A small remnant population had survived around the Port Charles estuary and stragglers hung on at Port Jackson. Great Barrier was the last strong enclave left for the New Zealand Brown teal with around 1000 resident birds.

The birds are very vulnerable to predation by cats, dogs and mustelids. When stoat trapping began in earnest in the late nineties in an attempt to stop the decline of Coromandel kiwi, the few remnant pateke also benefited.

Translocations began in 2003, when through a series of serendipitous events the Tangiaro River mouth in Port Charles was chosen as a release site for 70 pateke. The site was selected because of the intense predator control happening in the area by MEG and the Department of Conservation. Many local residents got involved in the translocations. Over the next few years over 270 birds were released here.

The birds liked Port Charles and settled in, breeding and spreading throughout the catchment. By year three their offspring and some older tagged birds had turned up in Waikawau Bay. These 15 pateke became the core of what is now, after ten years, an expanding stable population spreading further and further south.

We do a pateke census each year in February/March. At the last count there were over 200 birds sited in Waikawau Bay alone and over 600 altogether from Waikawau Bay to the northern tip of the peninsula. This is an enormous increase. They are also spreading south with sightings in Tuatēawa and Kennedy Bay for the first time in 75-100 years.

Guided walks at Waikawau Bay can be arranged to view these wonderful little ducks and also some of the other rare birdlife that live in our area. Contact our Coordinator Natalie on 07 8665337 if interested.



### SAVE KIWI MONTH

October was an eventful Save Kiwi month. We held a Movie night at Moon Hair salon, a raffle at BNZ, did kiwi-talks at local schools and auctioned some amazing prizes on Trademe. Plus we installed a giant kiwi sculpture at Port Charles. Phew! Huge thanks to Diane Arundel from Harcourts, and the owners of Coromandel Four Square, Sea Perch, Kaka Cottage, Castaway Cottage, the Pepper Tree and Mana Retreat for donating items to be auctioned. You helped us raise over \$1000 for kiwi protection.

### FIRST TRAIL CAM FOOTAGE

Our AJ Production trail cameras captured our first glimpses of Ronnie, a male Coromandel kiwi who lives near Port Charles. He was incubating eggs, but sadly these have turned out to be infertile. Ronnie has abandoned this nest, but hopefully it is early enough in the breeding season that he will lay another clutch. To watch the video clip of Ronnie, visit our facebook page.

### FAREWELL TO WAYNE

Long-standing Committee member Wayne Todd is stepping down this year. Wayne has made a huge contribution to MEG since it was founded, and will remain involved. He is looking forward to having more time for his sculpture and art. We will miss Wayne's inputs. We'd like to welcome Carol Sutherland to the committee.

**meg**events

### Summer programme

Join us for an unforgettable encounter with nature this January. Look out for our Summer Programme booklet or download one from [www.meg.org.nz](http://www.meg.org.nz)

### Kiwi Avoidance training

5 Jan at Waikawau Bay. Get your dog trained to avoid kiwi for free  
Call 07 867 9080 to book



### Giant kiwi spotted in Port Charles

#### A new sculpture in Port Charles will welcome visitors to Real Kiwi Country.

Our giant kiwi sculpture was installed during Labour Weekend, with volunteers and locals lending a hand. Kiwi are such a draw-card for visitors to the Coromandel. MEG commissioned the art piece as a fun way of raising the visibility of kiwi in the district.

The design is based on a 3D postcard made by Model-Tech NZ. The corten steel kiwi is 2.5m high and 3m long. Wayne Todd project managed the construction and installation. He admitted the project gave him a few sleepless nights working out how to piece the puzzle together.

The sculpture sits beside the Port Charles Rd (after the second bridge and before the turn-off to Carey Rd). It will be accompanied by some interpretive signage. If you are in Port Charles, pop down for a nosy.



Clockwise from above: Local farmer Colin Caldwell uses his tractor to help Wayne, Letticia and Diane position the kiwi body. MEG volunteers helping install the bottom half of the kiwi. Despite the wet weather, the opening of the kiwi sculpture on Labour Weekend drew a crowd.



## New MEG Base at Knox Coastal cottage



A new partnership with DOC has helped to secure Knox Cottage as a base for volunteers with workshop facilities. The base is ideally situated in Waikawau Bay near our wetland, possum and kiwi projects. It is also available as holiday accommodation on Book a Bach to help cover the cost of the lease. It sleeps six, from \$150/night. If you'd like to book this bach visit [www.bookabach.co.nz](http://www.bookabach.co.nz)

## More funds will help fuel conservation

New funding from the Department of Conservation's Community Conservation Partnership fund will allow us to grow the number of volunteers involved in conservation on the Coromandel. The three-year grant will also help us extend the area under kiwi protection; allow our Coordinator to continue environmental education and volunteer programmes; and support landowners wanting to protect biodiversity. Thanks DOC!



**Follow us on Facebook**  
'Like' Moehau Environment Group and help spread the word

## Shop Online

Stumped for original Christmas gift ideas? Our online shop has a range of items for sale including traps, gift cards, key rings, and T-shirts.

**100% of the profit of these items will fund local conservation projects.**

### Kiwiana Gift Cards \$12.00

These make great souvenirs or gifts. Choose from a kiwi, fantail, tui, weta or tuatara.



The cards fit in a standard envelope, so are simple to post. They come with easy to follow instructions on how to construct your 3D artwork. The finished models are small souvenirs that can sit on your desk, table or book shelf.

Or for those who have it all, why not consider a 'trap sponsorship' - just \$65/yr.

To make a purchase visit [www.meg.org.nz/support-us/shop/](http://www.meg.org.nz/support-us/shop/)

## Support our Work

### Become a member of Moehau Environment Group.

You will directly help to protect the unique species and ecosystems on the Coromandel.

**It's easy! Simply fill in the form below...**

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	
I'd also like to volunteer	Please circle: YES NO

### Annual Membership fees:

Single: \$10, Family: \$20, Corporate: \$250

### I would like to donate a further:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Please include payment by cheque.

Cheques payable to: Moehau Environment Group, Port Charles, RD4, Coromandel.

### You can also pay online here

[www.meg.org.nz/support-us/membership/](http://www.meg.org.nz/support-us/membership/)

*Pleased note for accounting reasons we no longer offer direct debit as a payment option unless requested.*

### Members subs are now due 1 October.

Have you paid? If so, many thanks.  
We really appreciate your support.

### For further information please contact:

Natalie Collicott (our Coordinator)

Ph (07) 866 5337

E: [natalie@meg.org.nz](mailto:natalie@meg.org.nz)

## Big thanks to our sponsors



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