

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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*"Doubt kills more dreams
than failure ever will"*

print house Ltd.



Counting down to Zero

While on placement with Zero Invasive Predators our Coordinator Natalie Collicott learnt about some new tools aiming to fast-track the eradication of predators from the mainland.

Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) are a research and development company tasked with finding innovative solutions to help New Zealand become predator free. To do this, they are enlarging the bag of tricks conservationists have to work with.

They have been trialling and inventing new lures, traps, deterrents, and detection devices at a research facility at Lincoln University. Any tools which show promise are then tested further at a field-site in the Marlborough Sounds. Many of these tools are at a prototype stage, but could soon revolutionise the way we do conservation.

ZIP have invented a monitoring system which alerts managers when a pest incursion takes place. Small electronic nodes on a trap send a text message when they have been triggered, notifying the field team that the trap has been sprung. Another idea being developed is a trail-camera that can detect and identify predators, and also interact with them by playing sound or footage as a lure. Imagine a possum drawn to a camera because he sees and hears footage of another possum.

ZIP are trialling different social and food lures to see which are the most effective at attracting pests. They are also exploring how light and ultrasonic sound could be used to keep pests away from conservation areas.

Our Government wants a predator-free New Zealand by 2050. If this is to become reality, we'll need to prove that large areas can be kept free of predators without using costly, protective fences. ZIP are well on their way to showing this is possible, with a little kiwi ingenuity.



Top left: A typical ZIP 'defence line' where traps and monitoring devices are spaced closely to create a barrier against reinvasion. Above: A cheeky weka eyes the peanut butter used for bait in a tracking tunnel

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**moehau
environment
group**

**coromandel
real kiwi country**

The scent of stoat may make the best bait of all

Could a stinky bundle of fluff improve our chances of catching stoats? We hope so! This month we begin trials of a new scent-based lure in our Coromandel Kiwi Project.

Scientists have discovered that the bedding material from captive stoat enclosures at Lincoln University is a very attractive lure to both male and female stoats year-round. "Stoats are solitary, so if they start to smell another stoat they get quite curious as to who it is. We found that if you put another stoat bedding in a trap or a monitoring device another stoat will come to investigate it quite quickly" says ZIP scientist Dr Elaine Murphy. Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) have been working on manufacturing a chemical synthetic lure but this is proving difficult. So for now, nothing beats the real thing.

The bedding lure has been tested in traps in the Abel Tasman with promising results. Larger field trials are now underway at Lake Rotoiti and in our very own Coromandel Kiwi Project. Our first shipment arrived in August, and we have placed the lure in every second trap so we can compare it to our regular bait. Now all we have to do is waitwith baited breath.

Monitoring kiwi numbers

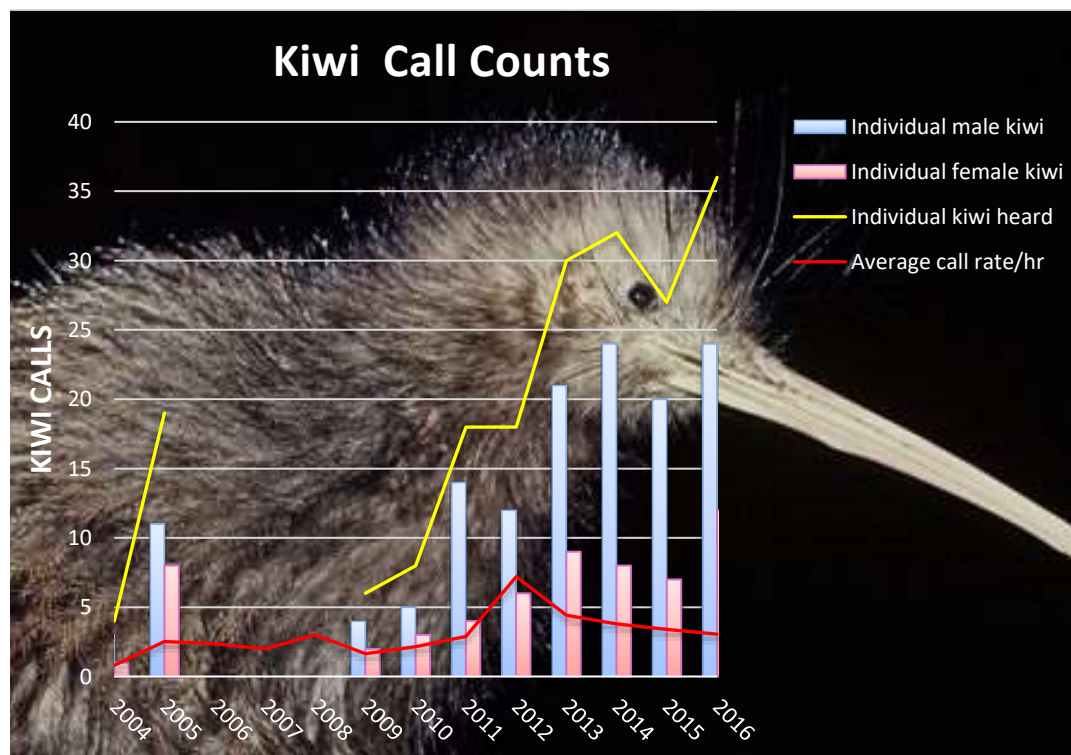
Kiwi calls within our Kiwi sanctuary have remained stable the past few years, with a mean call rate of 3.05 calls/hr recorded this year (similar to what we heard in 2015). Since trapping began in 2005 kiwi numbers have gone up at all listening sites. We're also hearing kiwi more consistently in our Coromandel Kiwi Project, with male and female kiwi heard this year up Flays Rd and near the Kennedy Bay lookout.

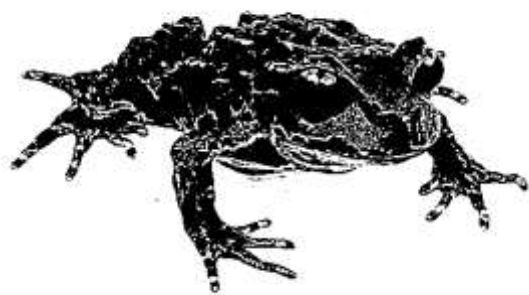
Kiwi appear to be doing better in some areas than others. We suspect this may be due to roaming dogs, which can decimate localised kiwi populations when left to roam in the bush.

Big thanks to our 2016 kiwi listeners who dedicated many evenings to sitting quietly in the dark: Kathi Parr, Katharina Hecht, Lisa Kearney, Tommy Herbert, Nathan McCauley, Sarah Ford, Simon Stigner and Richard Webster. We are looking for volunteers to help analyse electronic sound recordings. If you are computer literate, and want to help tally kiwi calls, please phone 8665337 to find out more. Training provided.



Raine grabs a paper tea filter to measure out the first bit of male stoat bedding. Each trap will get 5g of this smelly material, placed alongside the usual food lure (egg or rabbit). The bedding is harvested from the enclosures of captive stoats kept for research at Lincoln University in Christchurch, so is as rare as hens teeth.








Freaky frog facts

Described as a 'living fossil' the Archey's frog is one of only four native frogs that survive today. This rare frog can be found at high altitudes on the Coromandel.

Did you know?

-  Archey's are our smallest native frog, at just 38mm long
-  Rather than tadpoles, the Archey's frog produce tailed froglets. The male frog may carry his young offspring around on his back for several weeks!
-  Our native frogs do not croak or make loud mating calls like other frogs. Archey's squeak or chirp when annoyed, distressed or engaging in sexual activity.

News in brief

Winter Lectures will return

Professor Ben Bell gave a captivating talk on local frog populations at our final Winter lecture for 2016. The series and quirky venue of Moon Hair Salon has been so popular, that we are already dreaming up topics for next year. Donations from attendees will be used to purchase a live-capture cat trap, available for loan to locals wanting to target feral cats.

Kiwi platform complete

Our new kiwi listening platform offers one of the best spots to hear kiwi in the Northern Coromandel. Just off the Port Charles Rd, the site is elevated above three valleys, and has one of the highest densities of kiwi calls in the area. A MEG volunteer recently counted 33 kiwi calls there over 2 hours. Even if you stop during the day, our audio post will teach you what to listen out for. How cool is that!

Sausages a crowd favourite

Our volunteers had fun at the Illume Winter Festival in July and managed to raise over \$500 selling local sausages and mussel kebabs. Thanks to everyone who came out and partook in the festivities.



A tribute to Kathi Parr

It is with heavy hearts that we farewell Kathi Parr, a founding member of MEG. Kathi has been a key member of our group for over 17 years. During this time she has served on the Committee, with stints as Secretary and Project Leader for the Waikawau Bay wetland. Kathi was a driving force in protecting the Waikawau Bay wetland from predators and weeds. Under her stewardship the wetlands has flourished, and become a haven for rare birds and reptiles.

Those who have worked alongside Kathi respect her as a dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled field ecologist. Her most recent research explored the behaviour and impact of mice in a wetland. A previous 2 year research study looked at the impact of saltwater paspalum on the health of the Waikawau Bay estuary. Over the years she has dedicated thousands of hours to pest control and monitoring. Thank you Kathi, for your long-standing contribution to conservation.

All smiles: Wayne, Kathi, Terry and Lisa finish planting some natives in the Waikawau Bay wetland



Come to our AGM

**Sat 1st October,
Colville Hall**

Starts 10am with a light lunch
provided afterwards.

The meeting will include the
election of Officers, and updates
from our Chair and Coordinator.
Everyone is welcome.
We hope to see you there!

Practical Trapping Workshop

**Sat 19th November,
Colville School**

Want to learn how to catch pests?
Keen to make an income from
selling possum fur? MEG and the
Colville Social Services Collective
are hosting a trapping workshop for
people interested in learning
how to catch pests.

Come along to this free Workshop
to learn all the tricks of trapping.

For more info or to register email
natalie@meg.org.nz



Follow us on Facebook

'Like' Moehau Environment Group
and help spread the word

Shop Online

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.**

Ceramic Replica Kiwi Egg

Made by a New Zealand
ceramist, these kiwi eggs look
and feel like the real thing.
A beautiful object for the
mantle piece.



Just \$35 each

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/

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,
c/o Lettecia Williams, 1409 Port Charles Rd
RD4, Coromandel 3584

You can also pay online here

www.meg.org.nz/support-us/membership/

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

Membership subs are due 1 October.

Have you paid? If so, many thanks.

We really appreciate your support.

For further information please contact:

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Ph (07) 866 5337

E: natalie@meg.org.nz

Big thanks to our sponsors



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Conservation
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