

KIWI ON THE MOVE 2025

**Creating viable and sustainable kiwi populations in
suitable habitat across Aotearoa**



Save
the **kiwi**



Kōhanga Kiwi and our translocation strategy

Kōhanga Kiwi is a world-leading endangered species repopulation strategy driven by Save the Kiwi that aims to supercharge the growth of viable, sustainable kiwi populations in suitable habitat across Aotearoa.

It is the strategy that underpins our mission statement: 'From endangered to everywhere'.

This is a two-phase process. The first requires creating a source population. This involves lifting kiwi eggs from the wild, then incubating them and hatching them in captivity. The resulting chicks are released into predator-free kōhanga sites, usually a fenced sanctuary or island, when they are about four weeks old.

The second phase is where the magic happens, and the whole point of kōhanga kiwi. When these sites reach an estimated half-capacity, the offspring of the original founder population will be either returned to the regions where their ancestors came from, to bolster existing populations, or they will be used to create populations in new spaces and places.

In partnership with iwi and other organisations, Save the Kiwi has established kōhanga kiwi at Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in south Waikato (for Western brown kiwi) and Motutapu/Rangitoto islands in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf (for Coromandel brown kiwi).

Other kōhanga sites in the North Island include Cape Sanctuary near Napier (for Eastern brown kiwi), Rotokare Scenic Reserve (for Western brown kiwi), and Kapiti Island (for kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi).





Kiwi translocations in 2025

Over the 2025 kiwi handling season we oversaw the movement of 324 birds:

From Kapiti Island to:

- Brook Waimārama Sanctuary in Nelson (**41 birds**)

From Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari to:

- Wellington, as part of the Capital Kiwi Project (**54 birds**)
- Taranaki Mounga (**107 birds**)
- Tongariro (**112 birds**)

From Pōnui Island in the Hauraki Gulf to:

- Waiheke Island (**10 birds**)





Kapiti Island to Te Taihu

The kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi was believed to have become extinct, with final sightings on the North Island in the late 1800s and on the South Island in approximately 1980. In the winter of 2025 a remnant population of kiwi pukupuku was found in the Adams Wilderness Area of the West Coast.

In 1912, in an attempt to save the species, five little spotted kiwi were translocated from Jackson Bay on the West Coast of the South Island to predator-free Kapiti Island. Today New Zealand's kiwi pukupuku population is estimated to sit at around 1900, all of which (with the exception of the recently-discovered remnant population) live on predator-free offshore sanctuaries like Kapiti Island and Tiritiri Matangi, or in fenced mainland sanctuaries like Zealandia, Cape Sanctuary and Shakespear Regional Park.

The Kapiti Island population has been determined to have reached capacity in recent years, meaning that kiwi pukupuku can now be translocated to other safe places in their traditional rohe to help establish viable populations there too.





2025 transfer to The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary in Nelson is the largest fenced sanctuary for endangered plants and creatures in the South Island. Its vision is to re-establish a pristine environment, found today on only a few offshore islands, where native birds, reptiles and invertebrates can flourish.

After more than 20 years of hard work, intense fundraising and unwavering community support, The Sanctuary is now protected by a 14.4km pest-proof fence. The organisation is reintroducing lost or endangered species to this 690-hectare protected ecosystem, including tīeke/South Island saddleback, kākārīki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet, large snails called powelliphanta, and tuatara.

In May 2025, after almost a century-long absence from Te Taihū (the northernmost region of Te Waipounamu), we translocated 41 kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi there from Kapiti Island. In accepting these birds, The Sanctuary became the first South Island location to welcome kiwi pukupuku home.

Two separate catching trips, led by Save the Kiwi coordinator Tamsin Ward-Smith in close cooperation with Brook Waimārama ecologist Robert Schadwinkel, and enabled by kiwi handlers with specially-trained and certified kiwi detection dogs, were conducted on Kapiti Island between 31 March and 17 April. The first took place at Waiorua Bay in northern Kapiti and the second happened at Rangatira, mid-Kapiti.

The catching teams comprised kiwi dog handlers, Ngāti Toa rangatahi and representatives, Brook Waimarama Sanctuary staff and volunteers, and Save the Kiwi staff.

Kiwi were caught at night by calling them in, by teams using certified kiwi detection dogs, or fortuitously in a burrow with a bird already fitted with a transmitter (kiwi pukupuku often roost together).

Kiwi pukupuku on Kapiti Island generally have extremely deep burrows. The dogs will typically indicate the burrow entrance, at which point handlers may have to dig a small inspection hatch and undertake some extraction work. So it can take quite a while to get a bird out of a burrow.

In the end, 24 manu were caught at Waiorua Bay and 25 at Rangatira. Of these, 11 males and nine females were selected from Waiorua, along with nine males and 11 females from Rangatira – a perfect gender balance!

The birds were fitted with radio-transmitters, health checked and had cloacal swabs taken before being released in the same place they were caught. The cloacal swabs were then sent to the IDEXX lab in Hamilton for disease screening; specifically for salmonella, yersinia and campylobacter.



Once this screening was completed, and with all the birds receiving a clean bill of health, the muster (whakakao kiwi) and transfer took place between Monday 5 May and Sunday 11 May.

Whakakao kiwi took place on Tuesday 6 May and Saturday 10 May. This time the large mustering team, again led by Tamsin and Robert, used telemetry gear to locate the kiwi that had been transmitted previously.

Once extracted from their burrows the birds were placed gently into a travel carry bag or a coreflute box. They were then passed to trained staff who carried them back to base for processing. Here they were given health checks and weighed to ensure they were large enough to translocate.

The whakakao kiwi involved early starts and long days, and the team was processing birds into the early evening. They were able to strike a good balance between holding birds in transfer boxes for the minimum amount of time and making sure they were able to collect the required birds during daylight hours.

The first took place at Waiorua Bay, with the second at Rangatira.

Rangatahi from Kapiti Island mana whenua Ngāti Toa (Porirua and Whakatū) were involved not only with the catching and whakakao kiwi, but also with the transfer planning and logistics – and on this translocation that was no mean feat because, while sometimes we float kiwi to their new homes and sometimes we fly them, on this occasion we did both.





On the day following each whakakao kiwi the birds were blessed with karakia led by Ngāti Toa, transferred to the mainland by ferry and driven to Kapiti Coast Airport.

Here they were loaded onto light aircraft, arranged by Brook Waimārama Sanctuary volunteer and retired commercial pilot Erwin Oberhumer who has his own plane, and flown to Nelson in the company of the iwi's kiwhakahaere te tiaki taiao, Luke Barnsley, and other Ngāti Toa representatives.

With these multiple modes of transport, efficient as they were, it was critical for the wellbeing of the manu that we were able to achieve smooth connections with no delays.

On arrival at The Sanctuary the birds, their handlers and the supporting manuhiri were welcomed warmly with moving mihi whakatau, after which the birds were released into their new home.

The release took place in the early evening and, with the sun having set, the transport boxes were gently opened so that the kiwi could make their own way out to begin exploring their new territory. With the attendant audience respectfully quiet, everyone on hand was treated to a wonderful experience as these manu took their first steps, and probed the forest floor for the first time, at Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.

One late arrival, bird number 41, was released at The Sanctuary on 10 June. It had been sent to the Wildbase centre for sick or injured native animals in Palmerston North with a suspected eye injury.

This turned out to be an elderly bird with cataracts. Wildbase staff were able to video the kiwi manoeuvring itself around various obstacles without incident so it was given the 'all clear' for release. Since its partner had already been released at the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary the decision was made to release it there too.

This was an extremely successful translocation. It was the first time that this many kiwi pukupuku had been transferred over such a short duration. Having now worked for a few weeks and lived alongside Ngāti Toa on the island, including the crew from Kapiti Island Nature Tours, Department of Conservation rangers and the island's Ngāti Toa ranger, we feel well placed to undertake future translocations. The Porirua DOC team provided superb support.

We're delighted that this project complements the vision of the original founders of The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. Over 20 years staff and volunteers there have dedicated thousands of hours to create an environment in Nelson in which kiwi can thrive once again.

Save the Kiwi is proud to support this kaupapa. Not only through our translocation mahi but also by lending our expertise where it's helpful, and by providing funding to the Sanctuary via our annual contestable funding grants. Kia kaha!



Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari

Maungatautari in the Waikato has been a kōhanga site for kiwi since 2005, when Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro gifted four kiwi to mana whenua Ngāti Koroki Kahukura. In 2017, Save the Kiwi joined Ngāti Koroki Kahukura and Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in this kaupapa.

About 400 chicks have been released onto Maungatautari since 2005. More than 300 of these were released by Save the Kiwi, almost 200 of which were hatched at the Gallagher Kiwi Burrow, our purpose-built hatching and incubation facility which opened in Taupō in 2019.

Today, thanks in part to the exceptional habitat found on Maungatautari and the work that Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari staff and volunteers do to keep predators away,



the original 400-bird population has ballooned to more than 3,000. This means that the kiwi population dispersed across the 3,400 hectares of Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari is now large enough to sustain itself, and every year hundreds of kiwi can be transferred to other safe places in the Western region.



The annual Maungatautari whakakao kiwi

Not for nothing has the Maungatautari whakakao kiwi project become known internally at Save the Kiwi as The Beast. Many of those who organise and participate in this event each year put their personal lives on hold for weeks, or even months, during which time their universe shrinks to 'the mountain' and what needs to be done to ensure a safe, successful whakakao kiwi that can see hundreds of birds leave Maungatautari for their new homes elsewhere.

Kiwi are found by specially-trained and certified kiwi detection dogs and their qualified handlers. The dogs are adept at locating the manu with minimal noise and disturbance. Each dog team is supported by two trained volunteer kiwi handlers – once the team has located and caught a bird one of these volunteers will take it to a place where it will be placed in a box before being processed. In the meantime, the dog team and the other volunteer handler will move on to look for the next bird. This process has been designed to maximise the search time available to the dog team.

Each kiwi caught is assessed, given a full health check, and microchipped. It is then translocated almost immediately or, if large enough, fitted with a transmitter on its leg and re-released into a smaller part of the sanctuary, the 65-hectare southern enclosure.

On transfer days kiwi handlers take aials and receivers into the southern enclosure to locate the birds via the transmitters. After a quick health once-over, each bird is prepared for its translocation.





Teams of volunteers from gifting and receiving sites are involved in this transfer mahi. Working alongside the kiwi handling teams, these volunteers gain practical experience working with kiwi - including learning how to handle the birds, participating in health checks, and attaching transmitters under supervision. Most of these trainees will go on to be involved in future kiwi transfers and releases, or even build careers in this space.

Kiwi transfers of the scale we undertake at Maungatautari provide an unmissable opportunity for hands-on training for kiwi handlers around the North Island. Throughout the duration of each whakakao kiwi, many conservationists and volunteers receive training and certification, or renewed certification, for important kiwi-handling tasks. Some kiwi detection dogs and their handlers also get a chance to hone their skillsets.

Others attend the event simply to volunteer their time and for the experience of working with so many kiwi simultaneously. Some get up close and personal with as many birds in a single day as they'd usually see in an entire season. And, in some cases, more than they have seen in their lives.

The first 111 progeny manu were removed from the Maungatautari kōhanga kiwi and released into their new homes around the North Island in April and May 2023. Including the 273 birds translocated from Maungatautari in 2025 (as outlined below) this kōhanga kiwi site has now contributed 606 kiwi to the worthwhile cause of moving our national icon 'from endangered to everywhere'.





2025 Maungatautari kiwi transfer season

This year's Maungatautari whakakao kiwi was our longest yet, a 10-week epic stretching from 7 February all the way through to Easter.

Six months of planning culminated in a highly effective operation involving about a dozen Save the Kiwi staff, many Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari staff, eight kiwi detection dogs and their handlers from around the country, and more than 60 volunteers donating their time and skills - from one day all the way up to, in one case, a staggering 105 hours.

These volunteers came from many different organisations and walks of life - Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari staff, people from other kiwi projects, Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, other iwi and local communities.

This was the third Maungatautari whakakao kiwi, and it showed. The team benefited greatly from the experience gained over the previous two seasons, with refinements in technique, organisation and bird handling delivering positive results.

Karakia

The event began at 6.45am on Monday 10 February with a karakia at Kiirihe, our kiwi processing centre set up in a spare classroom at nearby Pukeatua School. It was a profoundly moving experience shared by many of the team. Native birds from Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari flew over as the karakia took place, reminding us of our purpose and, we felt, providing an optimistic omen for a successful season.

Three dog teams were working at any given time. In all, 392 birds were caught over the duration. Of these, 273 were found to be translocatable. The balance were either founder birds (released originally onto Maungatautari to create today's population) or below target weight. Founder birds were identified by microchip at the point of capture and released immediately in the same spot. Birds below target weight were identified at weigh-stations and subsequently released back onto the mountain.

Target weight was a bigger factor this year than in previous whakakao kiwi. Conditions at the time were not ideal for kiwi - the region was labouring under drought conditions and while the birds were generally in reasonable condition, they were a little leaner than they would otherwise be.

As with last year, Pukeatua School - the small country school that sits at the base of Maungatautari - played a central role in the whakakao kiwi. The classroom that served as our Kiirihe kiwi processing HQ quickly became everyone's 'home away from home'; the place where meetings were held, planning was carried out, and visitors were shown around. Every translocatable bird we caught was brought here for health checks and microchipping.

Kiirihe is a te reo word meaning 'flightless bird' or 'forest dweller'. The name was gifted by Ngāti Koroki Kahukura and it's our privilege to use it for this very important mahi.



One of the refinements we were able to put in place, arising from the experience of previous years, was to send fewer birds to the southern enclosure for holding and, instead, translocate a greater proportion directly from the main mountain. This greatly reduced the need for double-handling.

Instead, we held the birds overnight in their transfer boxes, well furnished with fern fronds and leaf litter. This all combined to ensure that the manu arrived at their destinations unstressed and in particularly good condition.

Learning

Education was a key feature of the whakakao kiwi and took many forms over the duration.

Some of the teachers from Pukutea School underwent professional development by spending a morning with the health check team in the Southern Enclosure, while others followed some of the kiwi-locating teams into the bush – supplejack, streams and all.

Staff members Gaia and Will, along with Tia the trained kiwi detection dog, attended a school assembly to talk to the kids about all things kiwi – but, of course, Tia became the star of the show. Groups of students came to Kiirehe where they learned more about kiwi and got to see one close-up when it received its health check. And an early childhood centre that feeds into the school visited Kiirehe for a very special kiwi experience.

LEARNZ, an organisation that produces a free programme of virtual field trips encompassing New Zealand, Antarctica and beyond, to help students access the inaccessible, was there for

two days. They filmed the whakakao kiwi for a virtual lesson that will appear on their website.

And, of course, the Maungatautari event once again provided a wonderful opportunity for extensive training in kiwi handling. Fifteen beginner trainees received training, with 12 reaching a point where they have achieved an accredited kiwi handler's certificate. Most beginner trainees were local to the project, but we had representatives from future release sites and some from other North Island kiwi projects.





Some trainees had taken part in previous years so it was rewarding to see learned skills being put into practice, and confidence grow. Additional training - or upskilling - was given to some of these handlers. This included training new handling techniques, modified box extract and release techniques, the upright hold, insertion of transponders, holding for transponder insertion, transmitter attachment and oral dosing.

The event also contributed to the science of kiwi health. Last year some kiwi were found to have a skin inflammation condition that was suspected to be caused by mites. This year we had students from Massey University on site to undertake skin scrapings on some of the birds to investigate this further.

Volunteers

Volunteers and trainees play a massive role each year in contributing to the success of the whakakao kiwi.

This time some were even able to help our captured kiwi take flight. Seven of the birds we located during the event needed attention at the Wildbase centre for sick or injured native animals in Palmerston North. Volunteers Rick and Moira Haddrell, who are establishing a future kiwi release site, were able to shave hours off the journey by flying the birds in their aircraft. And when this wasn't available, student pilots from Waikato Aviation stepped in.

Reducing road travel time was also a priority for the crew. We took the decision this year to transport by road those kiwi destined for Wellington, using the Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari minivan. Instead of driving them all the way to Wellington we met Capital Kiwi staff at Mangaweka, south of

Taihape, where we transferred the birds into their care. This created huge time savings over the four trips and meant that the volunteers involved could be deployed on other activities.

Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari's drone, developed by an environmental monitoring company, proved yet again to be another immense time-saver. It was able to sweep the southern enclosure for the location of transmitted birds, providing an accurate starting point for searches.

Ngāti Koroki Kahukura delivered farewell karakia for each translocation from the mountain. Whakakao kiwi teams, health check teams, volunteers helping in the southern enclosure, tour groups and even random tourists all experienced some of these special moments.

As ever, the Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari team of staff and volunteers played an indispensable role in the activity. Their help with moving people around the maunga was hugely beneficial. From logistics and volunteer training, through to arranging access to the mountain from neighbouring farms, the team helped smooth the way at every turn.



This year the team also ran commercial tours for up to 10 people so guests, including our valued corporate sponsors, could watch the health screening work being undertaken in the southern enclosure and see the birds for themselves. The funds raised by these, help offset some of the costs of the translocations.

Social

Socialising and cultural contributions and input are always important features of the whakakao kiwi; Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari and Ngāti Koroki Kahukura delivered on these beautifully. The relationships built, and connections or reconnections established during these translocation projects, are significant.

All involved with the 2025 Maungatautari event were delighted by the result - 51 birds more than last year and 162 more than 2023. This kōhanga kiwi site has now contributed 606 kiwi to the worthwhile cause of creating viable, self-sustaining kiwi populations elsewhere, exactly as per the kōhanga kiwi game-plan.





Pōnui Island to Waiheke Island

In 1964 the New Zealand Wildlife service released 14 kiwi onto Pōnui Island, adjacent to Waiheke Island in the Hauraki Gulf, following a request from landowner Peter Chamberlin. Today Pōnui is home to an estimated 1,500 North Island brown kiwi.

The fact that the kiwi population on Pōnui is thriving to this extent has given the landowners, who have a deep sense of kaitiakitanga, confidence to have some of these manu find a new home on Waiheke. It's a wonderful kiwi conservation / species restoration success story. And a perfect example of how long-term species restoration works and how successful it can be.

So, 61 years after kiwi were introduced onto Pōnui, on Friday 16 May 2025, ten of their progeny were transferred to Te



Matuku Peninsula at the eastern end of Waiheke Island.

These 10 birds became not only the first kiwi to be reintroduced to Waiheke, they were also the first kiwi to be reintroduced to any part of urban Auckland. Proving that it is indeed possible - with a lot of care, dedication, effort and commitment - to bring our national icon from endangered to everywhere.

The drive to introduce kiwi onto Waiheke has been long in the making, and the 2025 translocation from Pōnui was the culmination of one family's dream - a dream that, over time, became the ambition of a community...



Bringing a dream to life

Save the Kiwi trustee Jennie Fenwick, along with her late husband Sir Rob Fenwick, has owned land on Waiheke Island's Te Matuku Peninsula for more than 30 years. The Fenwicks have long been great environmental advocates and the family has carried out extensive predator control on their land with the intention of creating a habitat where native wildlife can thrive.

In particular, it was always a dream of Sir Rob's to introduce kiwi to Waiheke and Te Matuku Peninsula was identified as a potential kiwi release site.

Following Sir Rob's death in 2020, Jennie continued this vision. While a portion of the Fenwicks' land was sold, all landowners committed to maintaining the conservation and intensive predator control that had been undertaken over the previous three decades.

This predator control, both on Te Matuku Peninsula and across the wider island, has been instrumental in turning the Fenwicks' vision into reality. In addition to that carried out on Te Matuku Peninsula by the family, local charitable trust Te Korowai o Waiheke has been working since 2019 to eradicate stoats from the entire island. Its ambition is to turn Waiheke into the world's first predator-free urban island. Only a small number of these predators now remains on the island thanks to Te Korowai o Waiheke's extensive work.

The work that the Fenwick family has carried out on Te Matuku Peninsula, Te Korowai o Waiheke's war on stoats, and other eradication work happening on the island have combined to create a solid predator control baseline and a habitat where kiwi can thrive.

With this in place, Save the Kiwi felt able to start the process of engaging with elements of the Chamberlin family on Pōnui Island, the Department of Conservation, Ngāti Paoa, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki and the wider Waiheke community, to bring the dream to life.

Reaction proved overwhelmingly positive across the board. Many community meetings were held to ensure that residents were supportive, understood what it would mean, and had a chance to air their concerns and hear the responses.

In addition to the community meetings, responsible dog ownership and kiwi avoidance training workshops were held on the island in advance of the release, and were well-attended.

The 10 founder birds we brought to Waiheke in May 2025 are the first of several dozen more founder birds from Pōnui set to make their way over to Waiheke in coming years.



2025 translocation to Te Matuku Peninsula

Save the Kiwi handlers and certified kiwi detection dogs worked Pōnui Island late on Thursday 15 May and early on Friday 16 May to catch the 10 adult founder birds, believed at the time of publication to be six females and four males, that would form the nucleus of Waiheke's founder North Island brown kiwi population.

These manu were brought over in their transfer boxes by barge from Pōnui and landed on Waiheke's Blackpool Beach in Te Huruhi Bay. Fittingly, the barge was helmed by David Chamberlin, son of Peter Chamberlin – the man responsible for establishing the Pōnui Island kiwi population in the 1960s.

The first kiwi to be reintroduced on Waiheke, and anywhere in urban Auckland, had arrived.

A mix of Save the Kiwi staff, volunteers, community representatives and onlookers carried the transfer boxes along Blackpool beach – two people to a box. A large crowd had gathered on the beach to watch the historic arrival and lined the route up to the entrance to Piritahi marae, which overlooks the beach and the bay.

The weather gods were smiling on us; birds and manuhiri were bathed in autumnal sunshine as we were called onto the marae by Ngāti Paoa. The slow walk from the waharoa to the ātea, with the call of the kaikaranga ringing out across the grounds, felt especially heavy with emotion. A taonga was being restored, returned, to Te Motu-ārai-roa.





Following karakia and speeches, including a poignant tribute by Jennie Fenwick to the contribution to this kaupapa of her late husband, Sir Rob, Save the Kiwi board member Ruud Kleinpaste called for hush. In the expectant silence two birds were removed carefully from their boxes by Save the Kiwi handlers, who walked them around – each trailed by an excited gaggle of children.

By now the shadows were growing long and it was time to take the birds to their new home on Te Matuku Peninsula, a remote piece of native bush at Waiheke's eastern end and one of the most isolated corners of the island.

There, following karakia, waiata and mihi whakatau from Ngāti Paoa, the birds were released into two separate areas, in hand-painted whare decorated by Waiheke school-children and other members of the community. As darkness fell, we left them to explore the whare, the bush and their new spaces ... and get on with their day.





To the motu and back: 2026 and beyond

Motutapu Island is co-owned by Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki and the Department of Conservation (DOC) and designated a Recreation Reserve. The 1,510-hectare island is a kōhanga for the Hauraki subspecies of North Island brown kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*), commonly referred to as the Coromandel brown kiwi.

Rangitoto Island is a volcanic dome located in the Hauraki Gulf covering an area of 2,311 hectares. Rangitoto is jointly owned by DOC and Tūpuna Taonga o Tāmaki Makaurau Trust and is managed by DOC. It is designated a Scenic Reserve.

Rangitoto is linked to Motutapu via a manmade causeway and large intertidal mudflat. There is an area approximately one kilometre in length where the two islands are close to one another at Gardiner's Gap and Islington Bay.

Due to the physical connection of these islands and evidence kiwi are inhabiting Rangitoto as well as Motutapu, all kiwi kōhanga related work acknowledges these islands as one land mass, Motutapu-Rangitoto.

The Coromandel brown kiwi kōhanga on Motutapu-Rangitoto was established to create a secure, self-sustaining source population for translocations to the Hauraki-Coromandel region and other safe spaces.





Between 2012 and 2024, 145 kiwi were released onto Motutapu, fostering a robust breeding population in a predator-free environment.

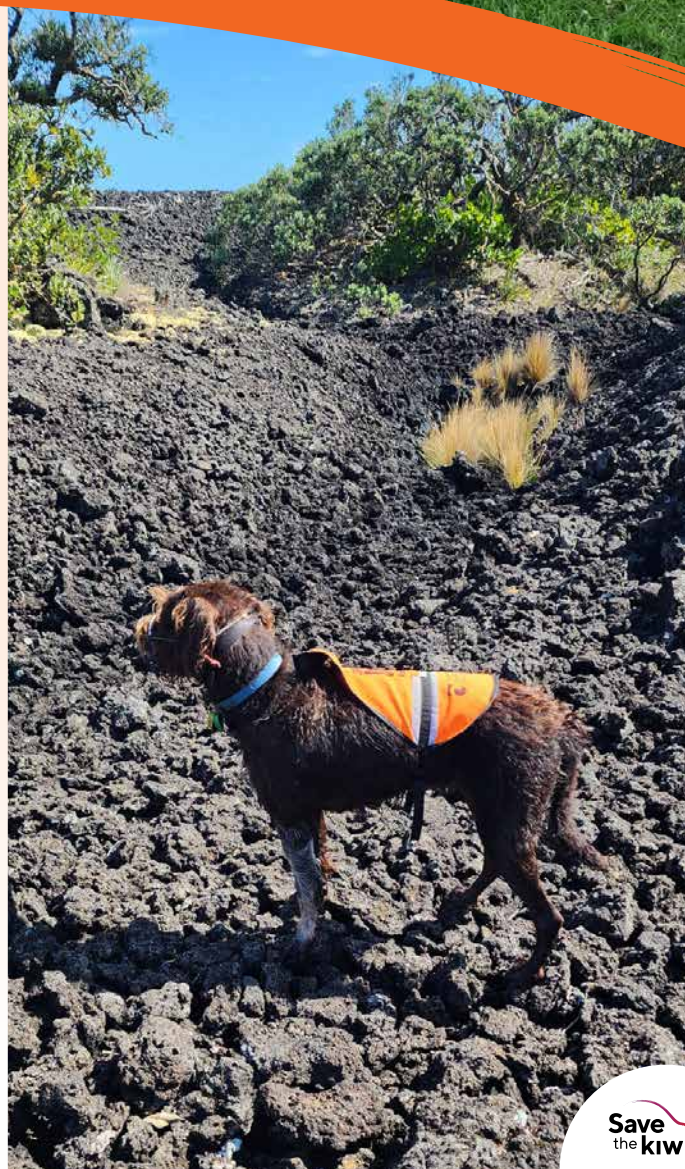
Save the Kiwi has now completed population survey work on Motutapu-Rangitoto. This comprised two seasons of dog surveys and a call survey.

The surveys indicate a population of between 268 and 320 adult Coromandel brown kiwi.

This year we conducted health screening of individual birds in preparation for the first whakakao kiwi, scheduled for 2026. This mahi provided evidence of sustained recruitment and healthy condition scaling across surveyed birds. These findings indicate the kōhanga approach has successfully established a thriving kiwi population, meeting key benchmarks for growth and sustainability. Given this progress, Motutapu-Rangitoto is now positioned to support whakakao kiwi from 2026 onwards.

The fringes of Rangitoto are an inhospitable and unforgiving environment for kiwi. As the population of Coromandel brown kiwi grows on Rangitoto, younger birds will be pushed out towards these fringes. Therefore, our aim is to catch breeding adults on Rangitoto as a component of every whakakao kiwi, to limit the number of juvenile birds there.

We intend to conduct the 2026 whakakao kiwi between 15 and 24 March, to coincide with the new moon. This will be run as a 'dress rehearsal' for more extensive events in 2027 and beyond. The 2026 whakakao kiwi will focus on process,





giving us an opportunity to refine logistics, staffing and the training and resources needed to conduct whakakao kiwi at scale at this location.

From 2027 onwards we aim to translocate up to 100 kōhanga kiwi a year, initially to recipient sites at Te Mātā, Kūaotunu, Moehau, Whenuakite and Kapowai – thereby honouring the agreements made when founding kiwi from these locations helped establish the kōhanga kiwi on Motutapu-Rangitoto.



Ngā mihi!

We acknowledge and applaud the outstanding mahi of the Save the Kiwi team members involved, and all the dog teams, kiwi handlers, and support crews.

Thanks also to all of the groups and individuals who have supported this kaupapa in 2025.
Your efforts are truly appreciated.

Mauri ora.

