

Friends Update

Recent generosity towards our project – thanks to..

- ☺ All the volunteers who helped with the kids day and night tour.
- ☺ Drew Taylor, who has generously donated a ten-foot dinghy complete with outboard motor, sails, lifejackets etc to the Trust. The HMS Rotokare has already been in service transporting invertebrate traps to the far end of the lake, saving hours of trudging. It will be invaluable for transporting gear and volunteers to various parts of the reserve for kiwi checks, tunnel runs etc, taking the load off our hard-working volunteers. Thank you Drew - we welcome you and Mary to the Rotokare family, and are organising a fun day when we can try out the sails and give you an eel's-eye view of our lovely spot.

Rotokare's 2011 Wish List

Maybe you have a spare for the education centre?

- ✓ Vacuum cleaner
- ✓ Small table and chairs
- ✓ Fridge/freezer
- ✓ Microwave
- We also have a small list of books & resources we would love for the education programme – please contact us if you are interested.

** Kiwi Crèche Update **

Rotokare is now currently home to six very cute kiwi chicks. Harteh, Miner, and Nutter, the three kiwi chicks that were released in late November are doing well and have already grown to a nice weight of around 1kg.

On the 8th of January, Taranaki Kiwi Trust arrived with two new chicks, "Ogo" and "Bruce Lee". These two came from Aotuhia (east Taranaki) via Rotorua as part of the Operation Nest Egg Programme (or ONE). ONE helps kiwi by taking eggs from the wild, and incubating and hatching them in captivity (in this case, at Kiwi Encounter, Rotorua). This programme vastly improves the chances of chick survival.

More recently, "Howie" arrived directly from the wild, at a tender age of about 7 days.

All birds are doing extremely well, and once they reach their target 'stoat proof' weight of 1200g will be ready for release in to the wild.



Simon holding Howie, our newest arrival.

From the Chair



Welcome to 2011, although it is already well on its way.

As the recently elected chairman of our Trust I would like to introduce myself to those who may not know me so well. I have been a trustee of Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust from the very beginning. As I have worked in the banking and insurance industries, I seemed to gravitate to the treasurer role in the trust. I remain the treasurer as well as now holding the chairman position since taking over from Joe Menzies last year. Other than changing a couple of job titles, the trustees are continuing with all projects as before – no point in changing a good recipe. Joe is still very much involved, now taking on the portfolio of fundraising to ensure our long term future is secure.

My main interest has always been protecting what we already had at Rotokare and making it better. Since the trust was formed in 2004, my highlights have been securing the money to build the fence, the fence completion celebration, the building project and most recently the release of the kiwi chicks. Most of these have only been possible due to the tremendous community buy-in to the project and the generosity given by the volunteers and the wider business community. Long may such highlights continue! Thanks, Mike.

Rotokare Resident - North Island Brown Kiwi

North Island Brown Kiwi or *Apteryx australis*, is one of the 5 species of kiwi in New Zealand. Although brown kiwi are the most common kiwi, they are not as widespread as they once were. Their major threats include predation by introduced mammals and loss of habitat. In fact, 95% of kiwi chicks die before breeding if pests like stoats aren't controlled.

Kiwi are very un-birdlike: the only bird known to have its nostrils at the end of its bill, flightless and nocturnal (often heard snuffling at night feeding on invertebrates by probing their long bills into the soil – using smell and vibration to locate food). Kiwi also have the largest egg-to body weight ratios of any bird – the egg averages 15% of the female's body weight.

Kiwi are very territorial and usually mate for life, many living up to 50 years old. They can have 2-3 clutches per year with up to 2 eggs in each clutch. It's the male who does most of the egg incubation. Chicks are independent of their parents very soon after hatching- with a fully feathered body and innate feeding skills.



X-ray of a North Island Brown Kiwi with egg, 15 hours prior to laying at Otorohanga Kiwi House. Image from: ourspace.tepapa.com/media/8736

Volunteer of the Month – Simon Terry

Simon is 15 years old; and lives in Stratford with his parents David and Suzie and his older sister Kate. He has been a volunteer at Rotokare for about 14 months. His interest was first sparked after he visited the lake and participated in one of the education programmes units with his year 9 science class. He has then tagged along to as many school trips to the lake as the teachers will allow him to go on. Reports back from the teachers involved have said he was great to have along and was very helpful and knowledgeable about the lake.

His sporting interests include Hockey, Cycling (including training rides from home in Stratford out to the Sunday working bees!) and kayaking. Simon loves volunteering at Rotokare; this is mostly due to the people who are out there with him. He enjoys the company and the feeling of being part of a team who are achieving something of importance. He also enjoys the educational side of things that he is learning while he's out there.



Simon hopes to get into the DoC ranger training programme once school is finished, and we think he will be an awesome ranger, and an asset to the DoC team.

New, Unique and Innovative Rotokare Environmental Education Programme



- ✓ Hands on learning experiences, about, for and in the environment.
- ✓ Strong links to the National Curriculum, with high quality classroom resource packs available.
- ✓ Broad and flexible units for early childhood through to senior secondary students.



Book now!

Phone: 06 764 8500

Email: educator@rotokare.org.nz

www.rotokare.org.nz

BIOSECURITY ALERT



STOP

(At the gates)



CHECK

(Your car, boat and bags)

KEEP EM OUT!

(pests and predators like mice, rats, and your pets)



Lizard discovery

Over the last fortnight two different lizard species have been found at Rotokare.

First an ornate skink (*Cyclodina ornata*) was found in one of the invertebrate monitoring traps, and then last week a Forest Gecko (*Hoplodactylus granulatus*) was found by Don and Ray basking in the sun on the mesh during a fence check. Both of these are the first official records for either species here, so very exciting finds. In addition, ornate skinks are regarded as a threatened species!



As lizards are typically quite slow to respond to pest control efforts (being slow breeders and rather inconspicuous) we expect to only find more and more over time. We think this gecko discovery gives extra incentive to become a much appreciated fence check volunteer! Please let us know if you are interested.

Buildings Update

After a bit of a break over Christmas, the volunteer effort working on the buildings is going well. The emphasis is on the office block now so that Kara, Melissa and Simon can start working from there as soon as possible. The plumbing is nearly finished, painting is being done during evening working bees and flooring is to be laid once the paint is finished.

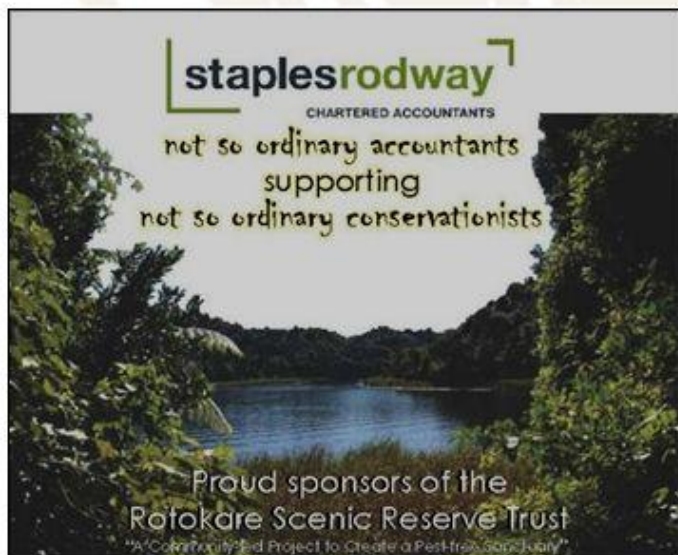
The workshop is mostly lined and shelving put up. Another day spent in there will finish that off. The operations centre room will be lined over the next month so that can have a good tidy up. All materials, tools etc can then be put where they belong. Simon has done a terrific job of landscaping the garden area behind the house and putting up a wind-break screen between the house and workshop.

Overall, the buildings are looking really good. Hopefully a second coat of exterior paint can be put onto them all and the paint trim finished while the weather is favourable. Anyone keen to help out will be most welcome, especially on Tuesday and Thursday evenings or on Sunday mornings but if you have any other free time to offer, please call us.

Rotokare Summer Activities

During the summer school holidays, we held two successful events. The first was a children's day, Melissa took the children who ranged in age from 4-12 firstly on a bug hunt, where they found weta, soil bugs and a really huge flatworm. They were then taken on our famous guided walk around the lake which was thoroughly enjoyed by both children and parents. The day was finished off with the children making a bird feeder to take home, and a sausage sizzle.

The second of the events was the long awaited night tour. This was a huge success with 26 people and \$300 in donations raised. Guests were treated to glow-worms, morepork calls, huge tree and cave weta, eels, and the opportunity to see how we keep track of our new kiwi chicks, by 'beeping' them with telemetry equipment. This was followed by some great conversation and a yummy supper. Both events will be repeated in the near future, so watch this space!



How would you like an advert for your business in our next Newsletter?

Contact us NOW for sponsorship options

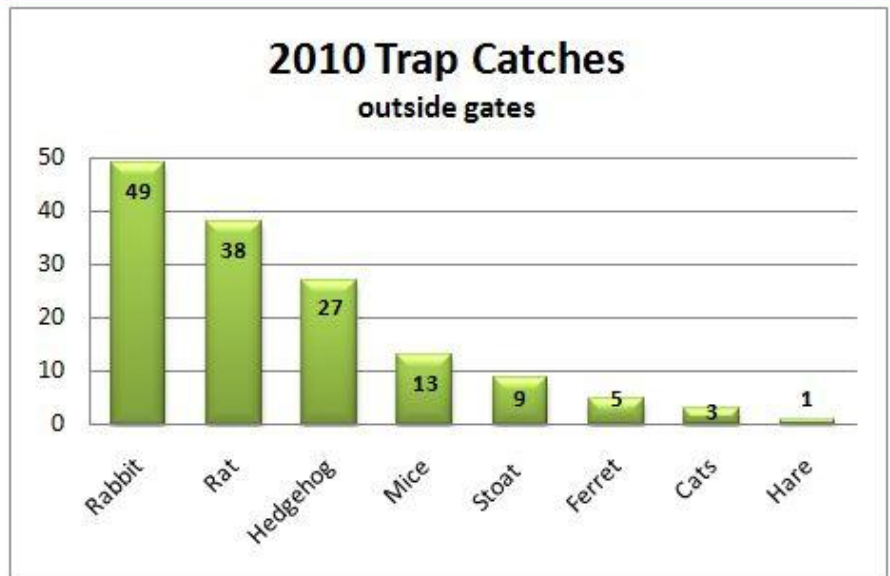
In addition, the next newsletter will include a special acknowledgement of our funders.

Trapping Results

Don't worry; we aren't talking about inside the Sanctuary, but rather the 30 traps outside the gates (a 'high risk' area). The results to the right show the nasties roaming just outside.

The trap catch for January 2011 has totalled:

- 8 rabbits
- 4 stoats
- 3 hedgehogs,
- 2 ferrets
- 2 rats
- 1 mouse.



Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ) – adds an international flavour to Rotokare

Over the past year CVNZ has been visiting Rotokare as part of their volunteer work programme in Taranaki, which is funded by the Fonterra catchment care programme. CVNZ is a 'not for profit' trust, and a conservation orientated volunteer programme, which operates nationwide, and offers unique experiences and opportunities to people from all over the world.

CVNZ first came to Rotokare early in 2010 to perform plant release around the revegetation planting done in mid 2009, and since then have participated in a range of different activities including clearing monitoring lines, tidying around the walking track, baiting and collecting tracking cards, earth ramping around the inside of the fence, some general weed control, and even helping with our ongoing building project.

Last month we hosted a group of young Australian students. The highlights for them were taking part in a fence check and helping to deploy weta monitoring boxes (made with help by Eltham Technology Centre students). Melissa gave them a brief

presentation about weta (many knew nothing about weta), we then went out carrying 100 weta boxes, wire, staples, hammers and wire cutters. The team was split into pairs, with each pair installing boxes at 50m intervals up some of the monitoring lines. Some handled the task and the difficult terrain better than others, and although they all agreed this was probably the most challenging task they'd had to perform during their 2 weeks in New Zealand (with some happy to find another task after lunch) they all thoroughly enjoyed it.

