

Welcome to
**Kaharoa Kōkako
Trust's latest
newsletter**

Up-coming workdays: Saturdays – 20th August & 17th September

KKT UPDATE

Since our last Newsletter we have been busy preparing for, and starting our annual pest control operation, updating our Health and Safety Plan, updating and working to improve our website (still in progress), planning for the kōkako census in September, working on a long-term plan for monitoring of Pekapeka-tau-roa (Long-tailed Bat), and removal of all the wilding pines in the Ruato Stream Block. All this, as well as continuing with trapping, maintaining tracks, controlling pest plants, plus ruru monitoring, pre-op rat and possum monitoring.

Several things stand out for KKT this year;

- Our relationship with Tapuika Iwi. This is growing and very positive. Te Puke based Tapuika Iwi are keen to learn about kōkako, Kaharoa Forest, KKT, and the mahi we do, and have done, to protect kōkako and this forest. KKT are helping Tapuika Iwi take on the management of part of the conservation area that was returned to them through their Treaty of Waitangi settlement.

- Our relationship with Bay Conservation Alliance (BCA). They are doing a great job helping community groups like ourselves with information sharing, training opportunities, potential funding opportunities and general support. BCA have been running a 12-week, paid cadetship course, for people of all ages, based in the field, on principles and practises of conservation. KKT have been fortunate to have the BCA cadets visit and help with aspects of our pest operations, and monitoring. They get hands-on field work experience; we get help with the workload.

A big thank you!

To all our neighbouring land owners, our grateful thanks for ongoing access into the Kapukapu Rd Conservation Area and Te Pehu Pa Reserve, and for the pest control that many of you are also carrying out.

Where would we be without all you wonderful volunteers. Thank you. You are making an impact!

Health and Safety

We have recently updated our H&S Plan. It now includes the dead standing pine hazard and the use of Sterigene spray to clean boots with at the Shelter, prior to setting off on workdays. Sterigene is also helping us stop the spread of the unwanted pest plant selaginella (African club moss).

We are increasingly aware of the potential for unwanted pathogens and plant seed or spores to enter this Conservation Area, so we encourage all volunteers and visitors to clean their footwear before arriving at the forest.

Contractors

Our contractors have completed climbing spindle berry and jasmine control; cleared all the wilding pines in the Ruato Stream cutover area (the Tombleson lease block); carried out pre-pest monitoring and Pindone application in the Kapukapu Rd Conservation Area, and put out Pindone in Onaia East. Our thanks to all 3 companies concerned. A great job, well done.

Trapping Update

The trapping team have continued with installation of Sentinel traps for possums. Sentinels are now along Rata Road in the Onaia East. We plan to install more along the Burma Road end of the bait lines to reduce possum reinvasion from the pines in Pinnacles Forest.

The pest animals killed in all of the stoat traps and Sentinels has reduced since winter set in.

Month	Stoats	Possums	Rats	Hedgehogs
April	0	5	5	3
May	0	3	9	0
June	0	0	7	0
July	0	1	3	0

Pre-Operation Pest Assessments

Many of you reading this were involved in carrying out the work, but in mid-July, DOC staff put rat tracking cards out into stations in 12 of our monitoring lines for the night. The next morning, we collected these in and put out wax tags for assessing possum numbers by recording their bites. These tags were collected and assessed a week later.

Our contractor Tim Day has just completed these same actions in the Kapukapu Rd Conservation Area (3 lines) so we can now calculate all the results and compare these with previous years.

All of the assessments are simple, presence or absence counts, calculated as a percentage. The score for rats is called Residual Tracking Index (RTI). For possums it is Bite Mark Index (BMI) or Wax Tag Index (WTI).

Rats

	No of lines	RTI
Aislabie	5	54
OE	3	47
OW	4	60
K Rd	3	49
Total	15	53

These results are reasonably similar between blocks but are a bit lower than previous years. Last year the overall score was 60% and in 2020 it was 65%. The lower score this year may be due to the long, wet spell we had just prior to the assessments or possibly to the annual variance in forest food availability affecting breeding.

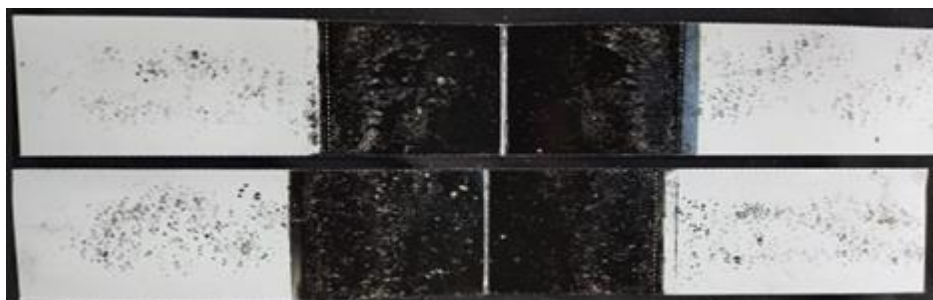
Possums

Here I have compared this year's results with last year's values. The similarities are clear. Possum numbers are consistently low in Aislabie, Onaia East & Onaia West blocks. Numbers are much higher in Kapukapu Rd although they are possibly decreasing. This is only the third year of pest control in the K Rd. area so that may be part of the reason but the fact that this block has a lot of nearby farmland and pine forest is probably a significant factor.

	No of lines	BMI	
		2021	2022
Aislabie	10	15	11
OE	6	15	10
OW	8	8	13
K Rd	3	52	43
Total	27	21	18

All of the blocks have had their first dose of Pindone now so the rat numbers will be falling fast. We have the baffles set in the bait stations so that possums can't get at the bait so they will have to wait their turn for 2023 when we will be targeting them too.

Thank you for all the help. It was really great to see new faces and so many kids.



Biodiversity

Kōkako Census 2022

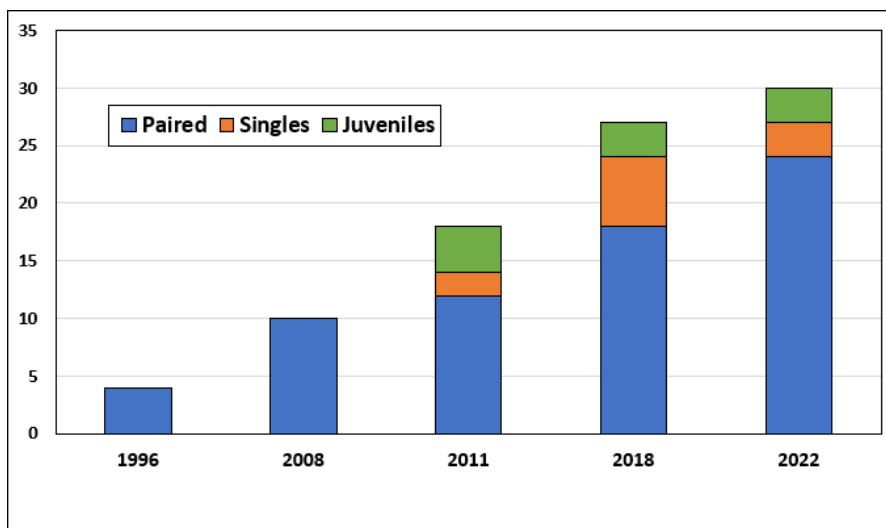
This will be underway in a few weeks! We are all looking forward to finding out how many territorial kōkako are now in the Kaharoa Conservation Management Area (KCMA). The last survey in 2015 found 177 individuals.

Kōkako Translocation

We have just been informed that the planned translocation of 6-8 kōkako from KCA to Kapiti Island, to provide an Island insurance of Kaharoa kōkako genetics, may now not happen this year.

Kōkako Walk-through Survey 2022

This was carried out over 2 fine weeks in May, to find out where kōkako are dispersing to, i.e., where they going if they leave the KCMA, how many kōkako are living or using forested areas outside the KCMA, and if they are breeding successfully. What we found were 30 kōkako outside the KCMA, this included 12 pairs, 3 single kōkako and 3 juvenile kōkako. Some birds were strongly territorial outside the KCMA, and some utilising forest areas both inside and outside the KCMA. Juveniles are not territorial, but those encountered were all outside the KCMA, so included in this survey. Note that in the graph below, there is a steady increase in the number of pairs visiting or living outside the KCMA.



Walk-through survey results over time

Pirinoa (Green Mistletoe) *Illeostylus micranthus* Translocation Project

Pirinoa, is a parasitic plant that historically would have been present in the KCA, but has disappeared, probably due to possum browse. Pirinoa is known to be growing on private property in the Kaharoa district, and with permission from landowners and DOC, and with volunteer help, we were able to collect seed in May and transfer ('stick') about 600 seeds onto host plants in Onaia West. Last year the weather and birds got to the source seed before we could, but this year we put netting over host plants, and were able to collect plenty of ripe fruit for seed.

This project will continue for a number of years, as the success rate for germination and growing is low.



Ripe mistletoe fruit, successfully saved from kereru, tui, blackbirds, rats and possums eating it, and ready for harvesting.

Kohurangi (Kirk's Tree Daisy) *Brachyglottis kirkii*



Recently a group of 10 or more Kohurangi plants were found in the west of the management area, growing over the edge of a ridge-end. This find is a first in the KCA. All of the plants found were terrestrial, though normally they are epiphytic. The ridge-end where found is so steep it probably protects them from goat browse. All the plants were healthy and over 1m high. We hope to collect seed to propagate more plants, to establish elsewhere in the KCA.

Para (Kingfern) *Ptisana salicina*

We have started the time-consuming task of carrying out a census of the Para plants in the KCA. This involves counting each plant and recording its size. Para tends to be growing in horrible gullies so this can only loosely be described as 'fun'.

Plants vary in size from a few centimetres to over 3m tall and wide, as in this photo. Thanks to the Tier 1 DOC staff and other volunteers for getting this project started.



Upcoming work days

Date		Pest Operation 2022
20/08/2022	Saturday	Volunteers workday - Pindone top up put into stations (0.5kg).
21/08/2022	Sunday	overflow workday - Pindone top up put into stations (0.5kg).
17/09/2022	Saturday	Volunteers workday - Pindone residues removed from bait stations
18/09/2022	Sunday	Overflow workday - Pindone residues removed from bait stations.
29/10/2022	Saturday	OW/OE/Ais post-op monitoring cards for RTI out into tunnels
30/10/2022	Sunday	OW/OE/Ais post-op monitoring RTI collect cards
25/11/2022	Friday	DOC put pre-op monitoring cards for RTI out into tunnels
26/11/2022	Saturday	Volunteers workday - Pre-op RTI card collected.
3/12/2022	Saturday	Volunteers workday - Pindone put into bait stations (0.5kg).

Please put these dates in your diary, we are keen to see as many folk as possible.

Help Wanted

The Trust is still looking for a keen volunteer to take on some of the IT tasks.

Anyone with an accounting background out there? help with our Treasurers role would be appreciated

There are plenty of other areas you may be interested in. If you would like to help out in any way, get in touch via kaharoakokako@gmail.com

If you are a business & might consider sponsoring any of our work or projects, we have plenty.

Last shout outs

A big thank you to Stewart Wallace who donated a lot of fence battens to upgrade our fence around a *Pittosporum cornifolium*.enclosure, and they do match our décor! We will nail them up as soon as we get a chance.

The last Bay Conservation Alliance class of cadets carried out the Pindone application in Onaia West. This was a huge help as it meant our regular volunteers could focus on Aislabie block.

To the team from Tapuika who did the Pindone application in Te Pehu Reserve. It was great to see you all there and it was an enjoyable day while getting the mahi done.

Thank you to everyone who has helped KKT and the Kaharoa forest in any way past or present, big or small.

