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## MESSAGE FROM CHRIS HAWKES TRUST CHAIR

I recently had the delightful experience of being close to a kowhai tree in Nelson and being absolutely astounded by the number of tui in the tree, calling out, squabbling and darting in and out as tui do. The tree had far too many tui to count. This noticeable increase in the tui has been mentioned to me by numerous people, many of them have commented that they have seen tui around their homes in the city itself.

I presume the influx of tui is part and parcel of the developing halo effect of native species successfully breeding and raising their young within the protection of the Sanctuary, then moving out over the pest fence. While a key objective is to reintroduce and successfully raise endangered species, an equally important mission is to protect and increase native species not on the endangered list but nevertheless in decline or not widely established within or outside the Sanctuary.

At a recent volunteer presentation, I mentioned this increase in tui being observed - I was advised that tui and bellbirds have nearly doubled in number with bellbirds swapping places with silvereyes to become the most abundant species in the Sanctuary. Along with bellbirds and tui, tomtits and robins have shown the greatest changes since the introduction of pest eradication. While tomtits and robins have appeared in counts throughout the years, they were previously far more abundant at higher elevations than they were at lower altitudes before pest eradication - probably due to predation pressure from rats at lower elevations. The observed numbers of tomtit and robins have taken off following pest eradication - most noticeably with robins.

Thanks to the bird monitoring team it is quite clear resident native species are flourishing over a wider habitat within and outside the sanctuary. All very gratifying, and a testament to this important work done by volunteers and staff alike at the Sanctuary.

So as the holiday season approaches, and as this is the final edition of eNews for 2023 it is appropriate to thank not just the bird monitoring team, but to thank all 300+ volunteers who contribute in one or more of the 11 volunteer teams within the Sanctuary, as well as our staff and my fellow trustees. Thank you for your hard work and commitment - your efforts are making a real difference both within the Sanctuary and outside the fence.

I'd invite you all to visit the Sanctuary during the holiday season, please take along your out-of-town visitors, friends and family; discover our walking track network, sit quietly, look and listen, you never know what species you may observe. Safe travels, and we look forward to sharing more exciting Sanctuary news with you in 2024.

**Meri kirihimete! Chris Hawkes, Trust Chair**

## LOTS ACCOMPLISHED, BUT TOUGH TIMES AHEAD!

The Sanctuary operation has been extremely busy for the last 18 months and a tremendous amount has been achieved, most notably, the translocation of kākāriki karaka to the Sanctuary and their confirmed increase in numbers, the translocation of powelliphanta, the completed upgrade to the Visitor Centre and the mouse-exclosure fence.

We produced strong results across the Sanctuary's environmental, social, cultural and financial aspects for the 2022-23 year. We forecast the 2023-24 year would have a different set of challenges from previous years; six months into the financial year it is becoming increasingly apparent that 2023/24 is going to be significantly more (financially) challenging than recent years have been. One example is that we have had very little success with larger grant applications this year - grants are drying up! However we continue to generate good support for smaller Sanctuary projects.

In the current year we have a focus upon species introductions, it is pleasing to note that preparations for the next set of species introductions are advancing well.

We are working with sending iwi, receiving iwi, and the Department of Conservation on plans to bring back iconic species to the Nelson region. Some of these species have not been seen or heard from in 100 years. We are not in a position to guarantee when we will see translocations as yet, but we are confident we will secure kiwi, tuatara and kaka to the Sanctuary in due course.

To support species introductions, involves making significant commitments and takes a lot of time, effort and money to prepare the Sanctuary, and to support ongoing work such as monitoring after translocations are made. For example, our new inner fence development is part of our attempt to make a small part of the Sanctuary mouse-free, and for this habitat to help strengthen our case for the reintroduction of tuatara.

This is an appeal to help support our species introductions plans. If you can support the Sanctuary in any way, we would appreciate your assistance now. There is a range of options available, and we are more than happy to discuss any aspects of support with you. Cash 'untagged' donations, not linked to a specific or project are especially welcome and needed.

For more information please contact either Ru Collin or Nick Tilly at [info@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:info@brooksanctuary.org.nz) or take action now and make a donation via the website - [click here](#).

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are always seeking new volunteers - right now a number of our volunteer teams are a bit light on numbers.

Join the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary volunteer community and be part of conservation in action! We currently have a variety of volunteer roles available including track cutting and maintenance, wildlife monitoring, fence line monitoring, weed control, events and fundraising, visitor centre hosts, tour guiding and more!

Please get in touch with Sabrina, click [here](#) to email Sabrina. Or, submit a volunteering enquiry through our website, click [here](#) to learn more about the volunteer teams and their work in the Sanctuary.

## FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT DONATED TO SANCTUARY



Our thanks to OneFortyOne for the recent donation of firefighting equipment. Picture above Ru Collin our Sanctuary Chief Executive accepting donated shovels and water filled knapsacks presented by Dennis Parsons.

The Sanctuary was successful in receiving a OneFortyOne community grant for fire protection equipment. OneFortyOne kindly donated three knapsack fire pumps and three heavy duty shovels, which will help the Sanctuary manage its fire response.

We've also extended an invitation OneFortyOne to visit the Sanctuary.



## LOOKING FOR SOME GREAT GIFT IDEAS?

If you're looking for great gifts, look no further, the Sanctuary has some great offerings!

## SANCTUARY MERCHANDISE

The Sanctuary has a range of quality merchandise available for sale, ranging from t-shirts, to bucket hats, drink bottles, tote bags, locally made art, Steffi's colouring-in books, a variety of donated books, Grant Stirling photographic prints, Pam Pope's cushion covers and who could forget Jane's Jams?!

This range is available for purchase via the Sanctuary website (excluding the artworks, cushion covers and jams), and the full range is available for purchase at the Visitor Centre.

Click on the image below to view the merchandise range on the Sanctuary website.



## POWELLIPHANTA TOTE BAGS NOW AVAILABLE

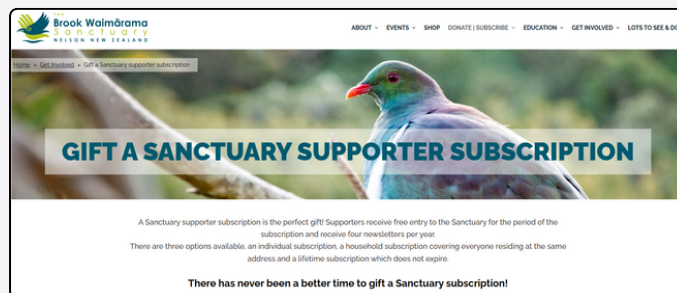
The Sanctuary recently launched our latest limited edition run of new tote-bags at the October Open Day.

These new tote bags feature the artwork of local artist Thijs Van Der Beek of the **Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina** snail. This merchandise is part of the Sanctuary's Artist Collaboration Series which began in 2022, with items being rolled out to celebrate the Sanctuary's conservation milestones, as well as to use visual arts to communicate messages about ecosystem restoration. With the powelliphanta tote bag we hope to raise awareness of this unique invertebrate, whilst celebrating the release of 44 snails into the Sanctuary last year. The tote bags are heavyweight Pre-Consumer Recycled Cotton and are available for sale (at \$25 each) at the Sanctuary Visitor Centre, the town office and on the Sanctuary website (while stocks last) - [click here](#) to purchase.

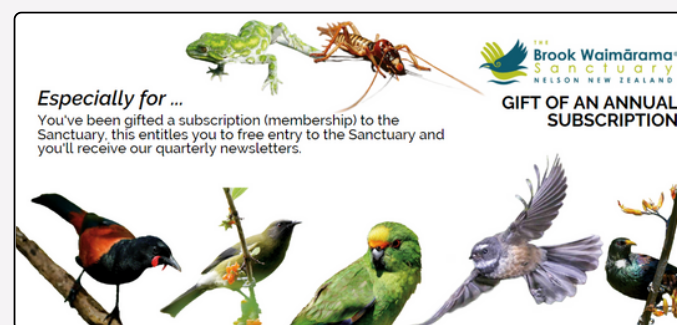
## GIVE THE GIFT OF A SANCTUARY SUBSCRIPTION

We've made it easier for people to purchase/gift a sanctuary supporter subscription to another person or family with the addition of a new page on the website specifically for this purpose. Sanctuary subscriptions are a great gift idea for friends, family, employees and work colleagues.

Click on the image below to purchase/gift a subscription.



We can also create a personalised voucher for you to slip into a birthday or Christmas card. Contact us to discuss these - [info@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:info@brooksanctuary.org.nz)





## WHAT'S THAT BIRD SONG? BIRD CALL PLAYERS

In the September edition of eNews we ran an article on the bird call players being developed for the Sanctuary. By the time this December edition goes out, the bird song players should be installed, up and running! They will be located close to the entrance of the Sanctuary (to the left of the 1905 dam bridge).

For many years, the bird song buttons in the Visitor Centre were very popular with children, and a great tool to demonstrate to visitors the different calls they might hear in the Sanctuary. Due to the enhancement and rewiring of the Visitor Centre, this system no longer worked, and we had to come up with a new system to enable visitors to first experience our native bird calls.

The Remutaka Conservation Trust (RCT) were recipients of a grant from the US Embassy in 2018 which was used to install informative panels depicting the bird life to be found in the Remutaka Forest Park (RFP) which is located in the hills behind the Hutt Valley. The panels were installed on the main tracks that provide access to the Orongaronga River. Soon after the panels were in place it was decided that it would be a huge benefit if our visitors could also hear the song of the birds that were featured as the chance of hearing one was much greater than actually seeing it. What was needed was some sort of device that could play the sound of a featured bird on demand.

RCT member Alan Thompson designed and built the bird call players. Alan describes them as a bit of classic "number 8 wire" engineering to meet a rather unique need. PVC plumbing pipe for a case, some wooden brackets and a handful of components from the local electronics shop put together in his basement workshop. The players in the RFP have been cranking out bird song for 5 years now and have proven to be reliable in a relatively harsh outdoor environment, not to mention the attention of enthusiastic children!



**Our sincere thanks to Alan Thompson and the team at the Remutaka Conservation Trust for their assistance in producing our own bird call players.**

Inspired by the audio players used in the Remutaka Forest Park, we approached the Remutaka Conservation Trust seeking advice. After some discussion, they offered to build five devices for the Brook Sanctuary.

Inside each player is a micro-SD card that can be easily removed, meaning we can change bird calls and alter their volume in house. We have personalised the calls, firstly welcoming visitors to the Sanctuary and then providing instruction on how to play the different calls.

The bird calls initially featured will be the tūī, korimako/bellbird, kererū/NZ pigeon, pīwakawaka/fantail, riroriro/grey warbler, ngirungiru/South Island tomtit, kākārīki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet, kakaruai/South Island robin, ruru/morepork and the kārearea/NZ falcon.

Featured below, the bird call players and signage installed at the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary (installation not quite completed).





## VISITING THE SANCTUARY WITH CHILDREN?

If you're visiting the Sanctuary with children over the holiday season, or indeed at any time of year, make sure you get a copy of our Nature Passport conceived and designed by our very own Education Supporter, Shani Bennett.

The Nature Passport is an A5 size booklet filled with fun information and activities for kids, designed to foster their interest in conservation and the natural world.

Thanks to funding from the Harcourts Foundation we have been able to print a large volume of these booklets, so don't hesitate to ask for copies for the kids when you visit.

Generously supported by:

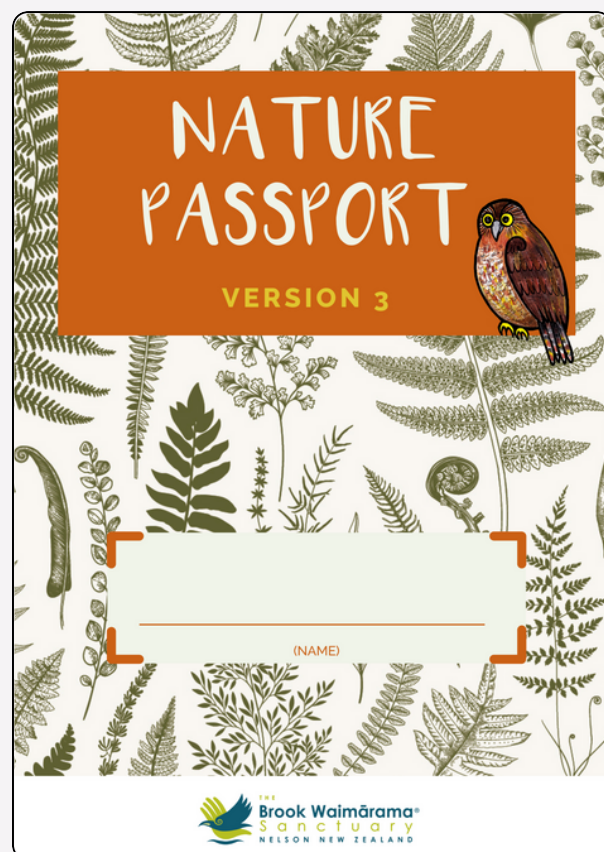


## BEECH GLADE SESSION FEATURING JOCEE TUCK

On Saturday 16 December, we hosted our first 'Beech Glade Session' outdoor concert of the season. Thank you to the incredible Jocee Tuck for a captivating performance! Due to the weather this event was held on the front deck of the Visitor Centre.

The Beech Glade Sessions are a series of acoustic concerts happening at the Sanctuary throughout the summer months where local artists are invited to perform in an intimate forest setting. These events aim to strengthen the bond between people and nature through the performing arts.

**Our next Session is taking place on 28 January. More details coming soon! Mark your calendars and keep your eyes peeled.**



## BROOK BUSINESS CLUB PROFILES



RMA Ecology Limited is excited to be supporting The Brook Sanctuary.

We're a small ecological consultancy based in Nelson, New Zealand with projects nationwide. We provide end-to-end advice and services on ecology matters for clients involved in development projects, with particular expertise in matters that are complex, in dispute, or where innovative solutions may be needed.

Our team work collaboratively and input into projects as needed easily bringing a wide range of experience to bear on any project, with a minimum of fuss and cost. Our clients get top level input and expertise at all levels of their project. We have a passion for finding solutions for each unique project and its issues.

We focus on technical aspects of projects that seek resource or operating consents where ecological values occur. Our project experience includes representation for Applicants, statutory regulators and submitters in the consenting process, although we also provide ecology advice in non-RMA (Resource Management Act) contexts as well.

Our strengths are in EclA technical assessments and document co-ordination, due diligence opportunities and constraints, mitigation development, offset programme design (including quantitative analysis where needed), and providing expert opinion at Hearings, mediations and Environment Court.

[www.rmaecology.co.nz](http://www.rmaecology.co.nz)

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## SANCTUARY CALENDARS

We still plan to produce a Sanctuary 2024 calendar, unfortunately, we haven't managed to produce these in time for Christmas, but we intend to have these out before the end of January. To pre-order, email [info@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:info@brooksanctuary.org.nz)

Last year's calendar focussed on kākāriki karaka, the 2024 calendar will feature a variety of pictures, birds, plants, fungi and scenery from the Sanctuary.

## NEW SPONSOR PROFILE



# Digitella

We are very pleased to announce a new bronze sponsor to the Sanctuary whanau. Digitella specialise in creating bespoke digital solutions for businesses looking to level up their online activity, and we take immense pride in educating our clients along their journey to digital success. Whether it's Google ads, paid social media, email marketing, search engine optimisation, or web analytics that you're interested in, our team of platform specialists are great at identifying the best channel mix and strategy for your business goals. When working with us, you can consider us an extension of your team – ready to assist and effortlessly merge with your company to enhance business intelligence and drive meaningful results. Daniel Raats at Digitella will manage our Google account. The first project involves an advertising campaign to promote the Sanctuary's Open day set for late October.





## VOLUNTEER END OF YEAR BBQ

On Friday 15 December we hosted our annual volunteer BBQ at the Sanctuary, we had a terrific turnout with 100+ people turning out for the event.

The volunteer BBQ is an opportunity to thank the Sanctuary volunteers for their ongoing efforts throughout the year. In the last financial year, volunteers dedicated around 28,000 hours to the Sanctuary. We would also like to thank The Free House, The Vegetarian Butcher, Proper Crisps, Chia Sisters & Pestel's for their sponsorship support for the BBQ event.



## SANCTUARY PRESENCE - NELSON MARKET IN DEC.

You might have spotted Sanctuary volunteers at the Nelson Saturday Market in the lead-up to Christmas. The Sanctuary pop-up stall has been a great opportunity to promote the Sanctuary to out-of-town visitors and locals alike, as a way encourage the public to visit us or support us by becoming annual supporters or purchasing Sanctuary merchandise items. A massive 'thank you' to the volunteer team who have been helping out over the past few weekend.

The Sanctuary will also be running a pop-up stall at the Lion's Summer Fair at the Tahunanui Sports Ground 1 January, so be sure to wander down and say hello!





## SPECIES FEATURE

It's important to celebrate what we already have within the Sanctuary. Some species, such as toutouwai (South Island Robin) and titipounamu (rifleman) are more unique than most of us realise. We aim to profile a species in each issue of Fan-tales (and eNews) with the input of our ecologist Robert, helped by volunteers and other staff.

## PIRITA | MISTLETOE

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary has, or plans to reintroduce birds, reptiles, amphibians and even snails. The introduction of deer, goats and possums and a loss of native browsers like giant moa, has changed the composition and dynamics of plants in the forest eco-system.

One such plant, that is increasingly rare or absent in much of Aotearoa's forests has thick juicy leaves that have generally kept away from hungry moa through an interesting tactic. Its seed is pooped out by a passing korimako in the canopy of a beech tree where it germinates on the bark of the tree. Its roots run along the tree and pierce beneath the bark where it taps into the tree's vascular network. With sugar and water in abundance it grows and grows into a lush round topiary bush. Around Christmas, a traffic light of colours emerges from the unsuspecting canopy. The flowers are guarded with petals, only allowing entry by those who have the code to get in - these exclusive VIPs are the honeyeaters: korimako and tūi, and native bees who use a twisting motion to release the petals with explosive results. These showy mistletoes or pirita in te reo, have become rare. Their palatable leaves make them a prime target for the brushtail possum. These endemic species are still present at the Sanctuary to some extent. The green mistletoe, a species found in abundance at the motor camp, is the least threatened. Red mistletoe has been found in some small numbers in the highest points of the Sanctuary. The plants that are found are in their full glory without any intruder to strip them down to their parasitic roots.

One tantalising plant was found by our weeding team leader, we suspect it to be a white mistletoe. We want to know the extent of these plants within the Sanctuary, whether we have more species than we first thought or whether some will need reintroduction.

Below, yellow mistletoe, photo credit: John Barkla



Our best bet is to ask our volunteers to keep an eye out and take pictures of mistletoes they see and note down where they were found. We can then map out these populations and let our volunteers know of our findings. Chelsea has made an information booklet on mistletoes, if you're interested, ask for a copy!

Mistletoes are having a hard time in the wild as most are declining. The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary offers a safe haven for these and other plants to thrive as they once did.



Above, green mistletoe germinating on lancewood, photo credit: Taylor Davies-Colley



Red mistletoe in The Sanctuary,

Compiled by Henry Hart



## SPECIES FEATURE

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### PŪTANGITANGI Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata*

Pūtangitangi are perhaps better known as paradise ducks, though they are actually shelducks. Shelducks, all of which belong to the genus *Tadorna*, are pied waterfowl belonging to the same family as ducks, geese and swans. While shelducks are found throughout the world, pūtangitangi are endemic to New Zealand. The only other shelduck present in New Zealand is a rare vagrant from Australia, the chestnut-breasted shelduck.

Pūtangitangi are usually associated with pastureland, where they graze on the seed heads of grasses, clover and grains, and wetlands, where they feed on aquatic weeds, crustaceans and molluscs. However, they can also be found in the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, swimming in the Brook Stream, flying across the valley, and perching high in the canopy, where they look decidedly out of place with their webbed feet.

Pūtangitangi reach sexual maturity at 2 years. The female has a white head, the male black. The male call is a deep 'zonk zonk' while the female's is a higher pitched 'zeek zeek'. Pairs return to the same breeding territory year after year. In August or September, a pair will produce a clutch of 5-15 eggs, though more typically 8-9, laid in a large nest of grass lined with down. Nests are usually placed on the ground, concealed under logs or long grass. Occasionally, pūtangitangi nest in holes high in a tree.

The female incubates the eggs for 21-22 days, leaving them unattended 2 to 3 times a day to feed. Both parents care for the ducklings. Pūtangitangi are vigilant and protective parents and will fake a broken wing to lure a predator away from their young. Ducklings can fly at about 8 weeks of age. At this stage their plumage is similar to that of an adult male, though the females have small white patches around their eyes and bills which expand over the next few months to cover their heads and tops of their necks. Offspring may remain with their parents for up to 3 months.



Photo credit: Dave Young sourced from iNaturalist.org



Photo credit: Michael sourced from iNaturalist.org

Moulting takes place from December to February. Pūtangitangi are unable to fly when moulting, which makes them highly vulnerable to hunting and predation. Seeking safety in numbers, they congregate in flocks around ponds, lakes and riverbeds. Pūtangitangi were a valuable food source for Māori, who rounded them up in large numbers while they were moulting. When Europeans arrived, pūtangitangi were not common and their numbers declined through the 19th century. The conversion of forests to pastureland, devastating for many other species, was advantageous to pūtangitangi as they have a preference for grasses and clover. They also benefited from the creation of stock ponds, though the introduction of hunting restrictions likely had the greatest impact on their survival. These handsome birds are now common and widespread across New Zealand.

Compiled by Katherine Chamberlain


## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

From all of us at the Sanctuary to all our newsletter readers - to all our supporters, volunteers, staff, funders, sponsors - have a wonderful holiday season break. Enjoy time with family and friends, eat well, laugh lots, travel safely on the roads.

We encourage you to get along to the Sanctuary during the holiday period, you might like to discover the new Upper Valley Track - it's a fairly big walk - it's all uphill one way, and all downhill in the other direction!

Click on the image below to download another wonderful creation by the very talented MUCI Illustrations.



Meri Kirihimete  
from us at the   
Brook Waimārama  
Sanctuary!

