

# Fan-tales

## Sanctuary Newsletter



HŌNGONGOI | JULY  
2025

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Kia ora koutou,

As we move into the second half of the year, I'm delighted to share some exciting updates from across the Sanctuary.

Our Night Guided Tours continue to grow in popularity, with many visitors lucky enough to hear the call of a kiwi, a truly unforgettable moment. Others have been treated to glimpses of our tuatara and the magical glow of forest-dwelling glowworms. These special encounters are a powerful reminder of what we're all working hard to protect.

Kiwi pukupuku (little spotted kiwi) remain healthy and well-settled in their new surroundings, and our team continues to monitor their progress closely. On another exciting front, we're putting our full support behind the kākāriki karaka (orange-fronted parakeet) for Bird of the Year 2025. This vibrant native species has been part of our successful translocation work, and we'd love your help in spreading the word and gathering support when voting opens. If you would love to be part of this, please reach out to us!

While recent weather events have continued to challenge us, we're grateful to report no major damage since the heavy rainfall on May 26. The Sanctuary has shown great resilience. The team have been working extremely hard with ongoing repairs to the fence and I greatly appreciate the kind and generous support during our flood appeal.

Upgrades to the Visitor Centre toilets are underway and due for completion by late August, a huge thanks to our amazing volunteers and contractors.

The campground Rec Room is also being revamped with a new deck and better layout for education and group use. A new entrance and signage are in the works, and the old security hut will soon be removed to tidy the area.

We have plenty of exciting things on the horizon—so stay tuned!

Ngā mihi maioha,  
Chris McCormack  
Chief Executive



## STORM DAMAGE REPAIRS

Nelson has been hit by an extraordinary number of orange weather warnings in the last six months. Most have had little affect on the Sanctuary, but the one at the end of May did significant damage to the fence and fence bench track. Quick action by staff and volunteers has kept us biosecure, but the full repair of all the damage will take a lot longer.

The big challenge with stormwater around the Sanctuary is allowing water to flow into the Sanctuary without allowing pests to get in. This means that we need screens to keep the pests out, which then block easily with leaves and gravel. We are installing more stormwater structures that open during intense rainfall. This reduces the chance of damage to the fence and fence bench, but does increase the risk of pest incursions. These new opening structures will be monitored as part of the upgraded fence monitoring system which is currently being installed.

### Repair / upgrade work since May includes:

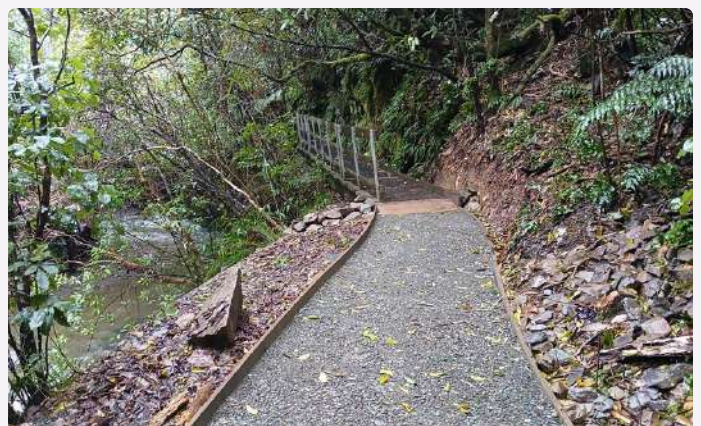
- The asset team have stabilised a slip and rerouted a boardwalk on the Loop Track.
- The track team have installed gabion baskets into a wash-out to stabilise the Loop Track.
- At the site of one of the fence line slips a stormwater culvert has been fitted with an opening front so that during intense rainfall it will open – preventing it getting blocked by leaves and gravel.
- Removal of slips and repair of track on the eastern side of the Sanctuary fence by contractors. We are fortunate to have the assistance of Mike and Craig, excavator and bobcat drivers, who prioritise emergency work at the Sanctuary.
- 10 new screens are being fabricated for existing swales which will allow more water flow and be easier to clear of leaves and debris.
- A gabion wall is under construction to fill a wash out close to the fence.
- The biggest slip, which breached the fence, has been surveyed and a plan for its stabilisation and repair is being drawn up by John Higginbotham, a local geotech who is kindly doing part of the work pro bono.



Chelsea standing next to new culvert with opening front

One of the visitor tracks – the Valley Track between the Forks and Flagstone Bridge has suffered a major slip and is currently closed. This track will remain closed to give it time to dry out and settle before a repair is undertaken in the spring.

Other future work includes installing another nine stormwater structures along with further track repair work around the whole Sanctuary fence. Thanks to the success of the public appeal after the May storm we have the funding in place to carry out all of this work which will make the Sanctuary more resilient to intense rainfall events.



Reconstructed board walk and slip repair on loop track



## "KIWI, CALM AND CARRYING ON: WEATHERING STORMS AND SETTLING DOWN"

10 of our kiwi pukupuku are fitted with radio tracking transmitters, so we have been able to monitor where they roam. Transmitters used are the size of a roses chocolate and weigh 10 grams. They are strapped above the knee on the kiwi leg using a hospital baby band and 3 rounds of electrical tape. We can then follow their movements by tuning into their radio channel using a hand-held directional aerial (like an old TV aerial).

The signal is a beep every 2 seconds. The transmitter doesn't appear to upset them in any way as they carry on with their daily/nightly lives. Using triangulation, we can, without disturbance, plot where they are sleeping each day.

We are reasonably confident they have settled into their claimed territories as it seems they have stopped wandering. Their chosen territory will be a selection of what they consider suitable burrows for sleeping each day, adequate food availability, and a compatible companion. Although the couple will only sleep together about 25-30% of the time they keep connected with nightly calling, this also signals to any neighbours as to what they consider as their territory.

Compared to what was overcrowding on Kapiti Island, and with the freedom of unlimited space to find a territory, some have taken the opportunity of their new life in a piece of paradise to take up with a new partner.



Below: Map of recent locations of the 10 tracked kiwi's

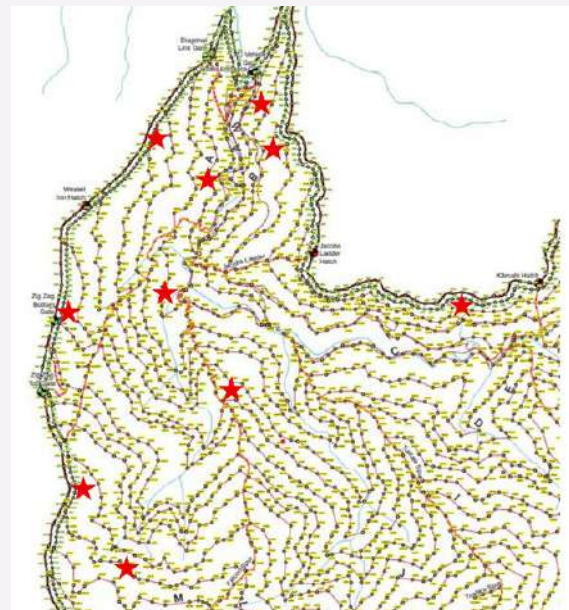


Image: Lucy Holyoake | DOC

## SHOCK KIWI REDISCOVERY

Kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi have recently been rediscovered in the wild on mainland Aotearoa for the first time in 50 years, shocking and delighting conservationists.

You can read more about this surprising discovery by clicking [this link](#).

Kiwi pukupuku were thought to be extinct from the wild on mainland New Zealand. It was believed all remaining kiwi pukupuku were in predator free fenced sanctuaries and offshore islands, all of which were descendants of an insurance population of just 5 birds translocated to Kapiti Island from South Westland in 1912.



## A NIGHT IN THE FOREST - TOURS THRIVING

We're delighted to share some great news about our Night Guided Tours – A Night in the Forest at the Sanctuary. Over the past month, these evening experiences have gone from strength to strength, with more bookings, more visitors, and plenty of memorable moments.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers and staff who have helped run these tours, your efforts are deeply appreciated.

Guests have been treated to some truly special sightings: several groups have heard kiwi calls echoing through the night, some have been lucky to spot a tuatara, and the glowworms have been nothing short of spectacular. The magic of exploring the Sanctuary after dark has left many visitors in awe, offering a unique glimpse into our nocturnal environment that simply can't be experienced during the day.

Attendance has remained strong with many evenings are fully booked. This success not only allows more people to experience the Sanctuary's wonders but also helps support our vital conservation work.

We look forward to welcoming even more visitors to share in the beauty, mystery, and magic of the forest at night as these tours will be available until the end of September and through the School holidays.

**Places are still available, if you haven't booked for a Night in the Forest experience, [click here to book.](#)**





## DONALD FRASER:

### LIFE MEMBER AND TUATARA CLUB MEMBER OF THE BROOK WAIMĀRAMA SANCTUARY

25 March 1939 – 22 July 2025

Don was a totally committed volunteer at the Sanctuary from the get-go in 2003/4 building trapping tunnels. He participated in most of the activities in the Sanctuary such as monitoring, track cutting, assets team, guiding, and planting and weeding. His contributions were typically understated but extremely valued by us all today. Notably:

- he was involved in a team with Ian Stewart to name important features and spurs in the Sanctuary
- he developed the first wayfinding maps for volunteers
- rescued historic artifacts from the river, (water pipe remnant outside the Visitors' Centre)
- built and installed wētā boxes around the loop track.
- coordinated the native plant information panels around the look track
- recently took responsibility for the planting and beautification of our public entrance to the "hidden valley"
- in the days before he died, he was designing a wētā box for sale to the public to raise funds for the Sanctuary!

Donald Fraser was meticulous, a quiet achiever, a true gentleman and a lovely generous and giving man. A Sanctuary treasure is lost but wow what a volunteer and a legacy – thank you Don.

Kua hinga he totara i te wao nui a Tane. Okioki i runga i te rangimarie

A service to celebrate his life was held at St Stephens Community Church.



Don in his happy place - in the Sanctuary!



Don releasing tīeke into the Sanctuary, April 2021  
Photo credit: Andy MacDonald

## VOTE KĀKĀRIKI KARAKA FOR BIRD OF THE YEAR

**Glow Up for the Kākāriki Karaka: Bright, Bold, and Back from the Brink!**

Our team at the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary proudly supports the kākāriki karaka. As the South Island's largest fenced sanctuary, we protect native wildlife and restore threatened ecosystems. By visiting or voting, you help protect biodiversity and ensure a thriving future for taonga species like the kākāriki karaka.

Voting opens: 9am Monday 15 September

Voting closes: 5pm Sunday 28 September

We have a dedicated page on our website to **Keep you up to date!**

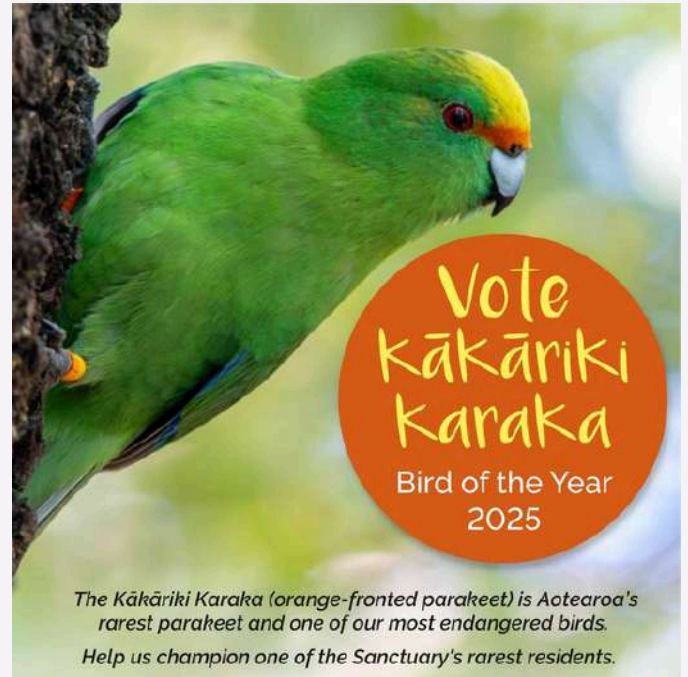


Photo credit: Kākāriki Karaka - Sean McGrath

## SANCTUARY GIFT SHOP

### A Special Thanks

We're incredibly grateful to those who donate handmade goods for sale in our Visitor Centre.

- Pam Pope – for her beautifully crafted cushions
- Anna Low – for her warm and cosy beanies

Be sure to pop up to the Sanctuary and browse the latest selection – your purchases help support our ongoing work!



## FINALLY! WE'VE KILLED THOSE PESKY GREMLINS!

Regrettably, many readers may have experienced annoying gremlins or a glitch in the matrix within our database in recent years! Some people (but not all), have sometimes (but not always) received supporter subscription (aka membership) renewal notices when they shouldn't have or when they have already paid! Our sincere apologies for these nuisance messages - we're now confident that we have fixed the issue.

Testing seems to confirm we've now fixed the issue permanently (fingers and toes crossed); going forward, people should only receive reminders when they are actually due. Henceforth, the database will (automatically) send reminders as follows:

- 30 days before subscription expiry
- 14 days before subscription expiry (only if) the subscription hasn't been renewed in the previous fortnight
- 14 days after subscription expiry (if not paid)
- 30 days after subscription expiry - (if not paid) notice the subscription has changed been 'lapsed' status

Once again, apologies for messages previously sent when they shouldn't have been, we're confident these are now a thing of the past!



## MEET THE TUATARA: NEW ZEALAND'S BIZARRE ANCIENT REPTILE

Just don't call them lizards.

Tuatara are not lizards but the world's only surviving members of the ancient Rhynchocephalia lineage. Once widespread, they now exist only in New Zealand, where conservationists have begun reintroducing them to predator-free sanctuaries.

These slow-maturing reptiles can live for decades, with eggs that take over a year to hatch.

From December 2024 to present, 65 tuatara have been released into Sanctuary with more planned to be translocated this Spring. You may be lucky enough to spot one from the Loop Track during a visit to the Sanctuary.

**[Click here to learn more about New Zealand's ancient and extraordinary reptile.](#)**



The tutatara were released into a special mouse-free enclosure within the main sanctuary. © Robert Schadewinkel



Tuatara are the last surviving species of an ancient reptilian lineage. © Justine E. Hausheer / TNC

## BWST & FOUNDATION AGM

Save the Date: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

Location: To be confirmed



## THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS & INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the businesses and individuals who have generously supported the Sanctuary. Your contributions help us protect and celebrate the unique environment we care for, and we are truly grateful for your commitment.

Special thanks go to:

- Nelson Airport
- Cutting Edge & Cuik
- Nelson Pine Ltd
- SeeReed Visual Communications

Your support makes a real difference in our conservation work and in creating unforgettable experiences for our visitors.



Thanks to the generous support of Nelson Airport, the Kākāriki Karaka flags will soon be flying proudly at the terminal.



Thanks to the team at Cutting Edge and Cuik Technologies Ltd for supporting the Sanctuary with advertising our amazing attraction to visitors at the Nelson Airport.

CUIK (pronounced - kwick), is Nelson Tasman's premier platform for high-visibility, high-impact outdoor advertising.



Thanks to Jane from SeeReed Visual Communications for creating our amazing Kākāriki Karaka visuals.



## RECENTLY SNAPPED IN THE SANCTUARY

If you have some great photos taken in the Sanctuary that you'd like to share, please tag us on Instagram and Facebook @brooksanctuary or email them to [events@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:events@brooksanctuary.org.nz)



*Tubaria sp*

Photo credit: Rebecca Bowater



Bell Hoodie

*Calyptella campanula*

Photo credit: Rebecca Bowater



*Ramariopsis pulchella*

Photo credit: Rebecca Bowater



Glowworm | Titiwai

*Arachnocampa luminosa*

Photo credit: Tim Duff



Reticulated Stag Beetle

*Paralissotes reticulatus*

Photo credit: Henry Hart



Fischer's Egg

*Claustula fischeri*

Photo credit: Henry Hart



Tutu green spindle

*Tatosoma lestevalata*

Photo credit: Henry Hart



Verdigris Waxcap

*Gliophorus viridis*

Photo credit: Henry Hart



Chris's children inspecting fungi

Photo credit: Chris McCormack

## ENDEMIC SPECIES FEATURE

### HAUMAKĀROA

*Raukaua simplex*

We often cover animals in this series, but the plants within the Sanctuary are equally significant and worth protecting. Since the removal of possums and ungulates, the understory has been able to thrive. Plants that were previously targeted by selective grazing due to their palatability are now recovering..

One of those special plants is haumakāroa. This species was restricted to the upper ridge near Falcon Spur and is now common in that area. The species is in the ivy family; Araliaceae, a family shared with five fingers and lancewoods (genus *Pseudopanax*). Haumakāroa is in the genus *Raukaua* which includes the 'At Risk' species *raukawa* or *Raukaua edgerleyi* and the odd divaricating shrub *Raukaua anomalus*.

Species in this genus begin life with three leaflets forming a compound leaf, shedding two of their leaves when they reach a certain age/height. In haumakāroa, the leaves form beautiful ornate patterning when they are young and become more simple when they are older.

Araliaceae is one of a few families that form inflorescences (a group of flowers) in the shape of an umbel. Umbels are when flowers arise from a central point, like in carrots and fennel.

For haumakāroa, the umbels are arranged with one central umbel only containing female flowers, surrounded by umbels with only male flowers. This floral arrangement is an odd feature of these plants, and a gift for those who learn to look closely at the diverse forms of life around us. I expect that this species will become a lot more common the more its seeds are spread throughout the montane beech forest, providing food for moths and other insects.

We have intentions to reintroduce *Raukawa* (*R. edgerleyi*) when we can obtain locally sourced plants, as we are a safe haven for these vulnerable species.



Haumakāroa



This image shows the more simple adult leaves

