

# FAN-TALES NEWSLETTER HARATUA | MAY 2026



Photo credit: Rebecca Bowater

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

What an exciting milestone it was to see the first three kākā released from their temporary aviary and into the forest. It marks another important step in the return of this remarkable species to the Sanctuary. We now eagerly await the arrival of the next three birds, due next month.

Behind the scenes, Fraser Heal has been capturing the special moments and stories of this transition. His work will document the successful arrival of the kākā, continuing the storytelling approach developed for each of our species translocations. We look forward to sharing this film with you later in the year.

In other news, we are delighted to see growing interest in our Junior Ranger programme, with memberships now exceeding 80 members. We are also looking forward to our upcoming Junior Ranger activities in May and June, with a focus on fungi in May and a night walk in June to continue getting children engage and interested in nature.

June will also see the Save the Kiwi - National Kiwi Hui hosted in Nelson, with more than 100 delegates expected to attend. We are proud to welcome delegates to the Sanctuary for a special night walk experience during the hui.

Thank you for your continued and growing support, which helps make this important work possible.

Ngā mihi nui  
Chris McCormack  
Chief Executive



# News & Updates



## First kākā released!

A special milestone at the Sanctuary on the 28th April 2026 as we celebrated the release of the three kākā into the forest. Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō cultural adviser Aaron Hemi acknowledge the kākā and offered a karakia.

The three kākā have been given names by Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō and are named after Lake Constance, Blue Lake, and Lake Rotorua.

- ✿ Rotopōhueroa - Female
- ✿ Rotomairewhenua - Male
- ✿ Rotorua - Male

We look forward to seeing them thrive in the Sanctuary and region again - and welcoming soon our next three due to arrive around mid to late May.

Keep an eye out when exploring the Sanctuary.



## Let them be wild!



Most of you might have already spotted our new, most exciting residents, three cheeky young kākā, who will only rest from playing and investigating their surroundings when they are asleep!

To recover from the stress of the transport from Dunedin to Nelson, gain weight and feel home here the kākā were kept inside our aviary for several weeks. More details over pages 3 & 4.

## Gabion Completion



After months of hard work from Sanctuary volunteers from the Asset Management team and staff - repairs on the strengthening of the Carters Creek fenceline is now complete.

Our special thanks to all those involved and the effort placed into repairing the damaged area from the May 2025 rain event to help safeguard the Sanctuary.

## What's next?

During their time in the aviary, the kākā were well attended by a team of sanctuary volunteers, Natureland staff, and Brook Waimārama Sanctuary staff. The busy work included a morning and an afternoon shift where water is replenished, feeding stations cleaned and filled, droppings are scrubbed, food items poked onto branches, and enrichment in the form of rotten logs, branches, and native berries added.

However, once the birds can roam free, we need your help to keep them safe, and some dangers might be a little unexpected. Here the golden rules for all who want to be kākā-carers!

- Only looking, no touching! Kākā are in possession of extremely sharp and strong beaks which they use to investigate, climb, rip, and break. You would not like any of your body parts to be a part of those games. Even if the parrots would not intentionally harm or attack a person, they could accidentally injure you if you tried to interact with them. However, we do encourage everyone to keep an eye out for kākā, and report any sightings on the iNaturalist- App.
- Let them forage for their kākā kai! These forest parrots have one main job, which they are extremely good at if we leave them to it: foraging for natural food. Foraging keeps them entertained, well regulated, and they know exactly what should be on their menu- a mix of native berries, nectar, and bugs they find in rotting logs and dead trees.

## There are several reasons for never feeding kākā:

- At bird feeding stations a high density of various birds accumulates, all leaving food waste, doing their business, and all of it in one small place. This can lead to bacterial, viral and fungal infections. It is a hotspot for diseases which are transmitted between birds and can be a problem especially once avian influenza arrives in New Zealand.
- Bird food usually attracts and feeds mice and rats as well, which are an additional risk for parasites/diseases, and helps critters thrive in great numbers.
- When it is too easy for kākā to get food, especially very energy dense bird-food, they will soon start satisfying their curiosity and overflowing energy by destroying garden plants, decks, roofs, and more which can be harmful for them and costly for property owners.
- Wrong food will cause serious suffering and death! A common result is marrow bone diseases which causes deformities in the beak, spongy bones, broken feathers and leads to birds not being able to walk or even sit properly, or death.

# Let them be wild!

## “Let them be wild – never feed kākā”

If you want to help not only kākā but all native birds, the best way is to transform your garden into natural wildlife paradise! Great guidance on what plants to use can be found in the Living Heritage Plant Guide (find a free [download](#) on the Nelson City Council website), or local nurseries such as Titoki Nursery.

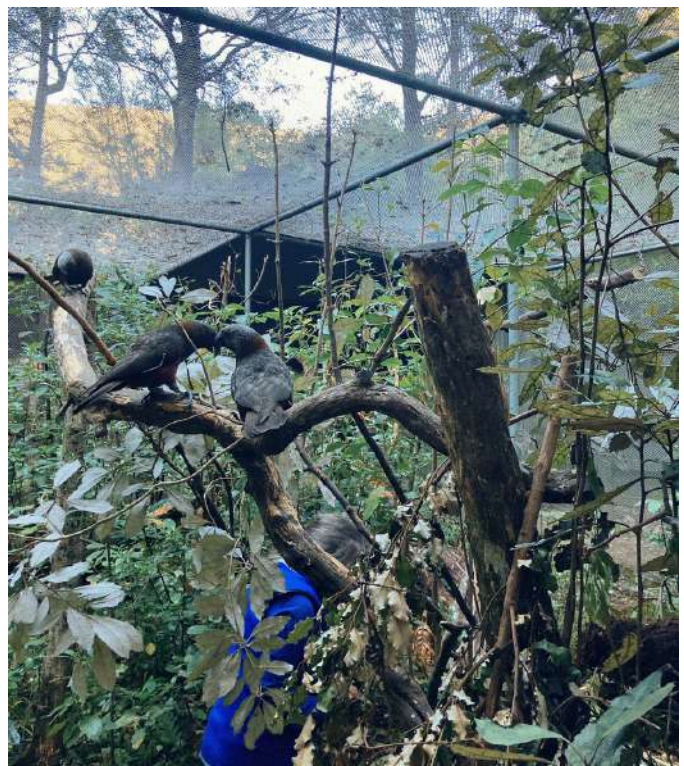
## Prepare your property and manage pests!:

If you are lucky enough to live or work somewhere with a large glass/ window front, it can be a real life saviour for various birds to put window stickers on to prevent bird strike.

However, different to the kākā in Wellington with Zealandia surrounded by suburbia, our birds have the luxury of having plenty of primeval forest adjacent to the Sanctuary, hence we don't expect them to show themselves in town. The only downside about the forest surrounding the sanctuary is, there are many mammalian predators present.

Kākā are the most vulnerable to predation by stoats when they are still young chicks in the nest, or females sitting on eggs. Therefore, supporting sustained small mammal pest control at landscape scale would make the biggest difference not only for kākā, but for all native birds, and even lizards, insects, and plants!

A big thank you to everyone who has been involved so far!



**Sadly, we farewell two long-serving Sanctuary volunteers who both contributed many hours of service and support. Our condolences go out to their families and friends. Sally and Ian will be greatly missed.**



## **Sally McLeod Grimmett**

Passed away on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, aged 75.

Dearly loved wife and best friend of Jeff. Adored mother, mother-in-law and grandmother of Sam, Danel, Willow and Coral of Oklahoma; Claire, Carlito and Charlie of San Francisco; and Jaime, Davy and Louis of Sardinia, Italy. Loved daughter of Bruce and Dorothy Hay, and much loved sister of Pit. Cherished by her extended family and friends.

Sally spent many hours supporting the Pest Detection Team and Visitor Centre Hosting as well as supporting the Fence Post initiative to support the funds towards the Sanctuary fence in its early days.



## **Ian Miles Holden**

Born in Dunedin, March 22, 1933, to Len and Grace Holden. Beloved brother of Noelene Fussell-Steegstra. Resident of Nelson and formerly of Kaitangata; Pines Beach, Christchurch; and Dunedin. Loved husband of the late Marie Holden (nee Davis). Cherished Dad, and father-in-law of Nancy, Tony (deceased), Paula and John, and Maria Holden. Wonderful Grandad of Jamie and Jaz; Billie and Kayla; Marshall and Abby; Arlo; Jack and Elliott. Treasured Great-Grandad of Harry, Charlie and Leo; Archer, Zack and Isabella. Good friend of Gavin and many others. The stopwatch has run out for our beloved active, gentle, Ian - accomplished runner, passionate Orienteer and 'human gazelle', 'Tuatara' volunteer track builder, stonemason and gardener of The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary, Mr Fix-It of the Nelson Toy Library, avid and generous gardener, booklover and 'code-cracker'. Ian worked as an Electrician for NCC, on hydro-dam builds; and as an X-ray Technician for Dunedin Hospital. Ian was deeply loved by his whanau. He will continue to be an inspiration to us and will forever be in our hearts.



## A Fungi Adventure



Join our guided Fungi Tours and explore the incredible diversity of fungi thriving in the ngahere.

Learn how these fascinating organisms support the health of the ngahere, spot unique species with knowledgeable guides, and experience the sanctuary in a whole new way.

Perfect for nature lovers, curious minds, and anyone wanting a deeper connection to Aotearoa's native environment.

Spots are limited – book your Fungi Tour today and don't miss out!

Secure your place now and step into the world beneath the forest floor.

[Book your Fungi Tour](#)

## Discover the Ngahere After Dark



Experience the magic of the forest on a guided night tour. After a brief introduction at the Visitor Centre, head into the ngahere with our knowledgeable guides as it comes alive after sunset.

Listen for ruru and kiwi pukupuku, and take in the soft glow of resident glowworms beneath towering trees. All proceeds support the Sanctuary's vital conservation work.

We can also accommodate large group bookings – please get in touch to discuss options.

[Book your Night Tour](#)

## Sanctuary Merchandise



Looking for a new cup or a gift for someone special? Our enamel Campster Mug is a perfect gift. Durable and stylish, it's perfect for enjoying your morning coffee at home or by the campfire.

Available now for \$25 at the Visitor Centre and the Sanctuary Town Office.

We also have a variety of merchandise in the Sanctuary Visitor Centre - including these uniquely designed tuatara t-shirts

## Summer Photography Competition - Winners!



Thanks to Nelson City Framers & The Gallery for producing these beautiful images as prints, to be awarded to Diane and Sam - Summer Photography Competition winners.

Now it's your turn! Entries for the Autumn Photography Competition are open from 1 March - 31 May 2026! head out on the tracks, keep an eye out for those special ngahere moments, watch for fungi, and start snapping – we can't wait to see what you capture.

## TUKU - Tuatara Night Walks

Recently, we hosted Tuatara Night Walks as part of the Tuku 26 Whakatū Festival. We are grateful to Nelson City Council for their support through a \$450 + GST funding grant, which helped cover wages and keep the walks affordable.

We originally offered four night walks, but due to high demand, added two more sessions. All six walks sold out, with a total of 72 guests enjoying a special experience through our mouse-exclosure to hear all about tuatara and the opportunity to see them, followed by a walk around the Sanctuary to discover other magical nocturnal wonders.





## Kaitiaki (Guardian) Membership

Our Kaitiaki (Guardian) membership (formerly the Brook Business Club) is the ideal sponsorship for businesses of any size — \$1,000 per year or \$100 per month.

### Kaitiaki receive:

- Opportunity for collaborative opportunities through social media
- Acknowledgment on the Brook Sanctuary website with a hyperlink to your website
- Display the Sanctuary logo on your website or marketing materials
- Add a dedicated partnership page on your website
- 5 individual or 2 family memberships
- 10 general admission passes to share,
- 20% off tours for your team or clients
- 

Or contact Chris directly - [chris.mccormack@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:chris.mccormack@brooksanctuary.org.nz)



## Jasmine Social Investments

A special acknowledgement to Jasmine Social Investments who have been a strategic supporter of the Sanctuary for many years.

Jasmine Social Investments is a foundation established by Sam Morgan following the sale of Trade Me to Fairfax in 2006.

## World Parrot Trust supporting the Sanctuary

At the World Parrot Trust, we are proud to support the translocation of Kākā to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. Staff and volunteers at the sanctuary are showing once again that dedication and partnerships for nature conservation are key to protecting New Zealand's natural heritage."

Luis Ortiz-Catedral, Oceania Regional Director,  
World Parrot Trust



## Bowater Toyota

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Bowater Motor Group for their continued support over the years. Their ongoing generosity and partnership play a valued role in helping us protect and celebrate our native taonga.

Bowater Motor Group has recently carried on their support with the gift pack with every vehicle purchase.

Thank you to the team at Bowater — we appreciate all the incredible work you do to support your community.





## Become a Sanctuary Volunteer!

The Sanctuary is only possible thanks to the dedication and care of our 300-strong community of volunteers. Each year, they contribute over 20,000 hours, and we simply couldn't do it without them—they are the backbone of everything we achieve.

We are currently looking for volunteers to help in the following areas:

- Asset Management
- Fish Support
- Planting and Gardening
- Track Maintenance
- Weeding
- Events & Promotion
- Tour Guiding
- Visitor Centre Hosting

If any of these opportunities sound like a good fit for you, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch to show your interest.

## Recent snaps in the Sanctuary



Sulphur Tuft *Hypholoma fasciculare* - Photo by Rebecca Bowater



*Roridomyces austroroidus* - Photo by Rebecca Bowater



*Cruentomycena viscidocruenta* - credit Rebecca Bowater



Ruru | Morepork - credit [Chris Bernard](#)

# NOTICE BOARD



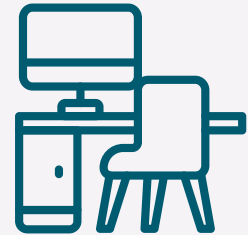
## Winter Hours

We have now moved into our winter hours opening from Wednesday - Sunday, 10am - 4pm.



## Small Office Space available

We have a small office space available for rent at our Sanctuary Town Office — ideal for a small team or individual workspace. For enquiries or to arrange a viewing, please contact [Nick](#).



# Become a Sanctuary Member



## Why Become a Member?

Becoming a member of the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary means you're directly supporting the protection and restoration of native wildlife while enjoying year-round access to one of the South Island's most unique conservation landscapes.

### Membership benefits include:

- Unlimited Sanctuary entry — visit as often as you like to walk, explore, and reconnect with nature - during our opening hours
- Priority access to events and experiences — from guided tours to seasonal activities and expert talks.
- Monthly Fan Tales newsletter – our avidly read monthly newsletter sent out to over 5000 people all over the world
- Support for conservation action — your membership funds weed and pest control, habitat restoration, and species reintroduction programs.
- Connection to the Sanctuary community — invitations to member briefings, behind-the-scenes updates, and impact reports.

Becoming a member is more than a ticket — it's a commitment to sustaining native forest, wildlife, and a legacy that future generations can enjoy.

## TRANSITIONING TO NEW DATABASE SYSTEM

We are currently part way through transitioning to a new database system (ZOHO). We are getting closer to fully automating the process of issuing donation receipts and membership cards for new and renewing members. We anticipate that there will quite possibly be a few hiccups along the way - we ask for your patience as we work to get the new system up and running correctly!



# Social Media Highlights

What's been happening online:

## Keep up to date on Socials

Keep up to date on our socials for the latest news, updates, and behind-the-scenes content.

Follow us to stay connected and never miss an announcement.



## Support the future of the Sanctuary

Anyone who needs a receipt to claim their donation rebate from IRD, but hasn't received one from us should contact Nick Tilly ([nick.tilly@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:nick.tilly@brooksanctuary.org.nz)), ideally with the date and amount of your donation.

(Please note, membership payments are not tax-deductible and cannot be claimed as donations).

**The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Trust**

**NBS: 03-1354-0561993-00**

Please include your member ID as the reference.

**DONATE TODAY**

