

FAN-TALES NEWSLETTER HŌNGONGOI | JULY 2026



Titiwai, Glowworms in the Sanctuary

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

As we head into the quieter months at the Sanctuary, visitor numbers may ease, but our conservation work never stops. None of it would be possible without our incredible staff, volunteers, donors, members, sponsors, partners, and supporters — thank you for being part of our shared vision.

In this edition, you'll find a kākā update, highlights from recent Sanctuary activities, and more.

Last month I spoke as a guest at the Save the Kiwi National Kiwi Hui, and hosted inbound tourism agents on a guided night walk — a wonderful chance to showcase why this is one of New Zealand's premier nature-based visitor experiences. We were lucky enough to spot a kiwi, making the night even more memorable.

It was also a privilege to lead two night walks for our Junior Rangers, a programme now 90 strong and growing.

A sincere thank you to everyone who supported our recent fundraising efforts, including the kākā beer collaborations, the Sprig + Fern Quiz Night, and the 40 Years Below by Roger Lusby - fundraiser for the Sanctuary. Every contribution helps protect and restore this special place.

Finally, thank you to NBS and Nelson City Council for their continued partnership. NBS have renewed their sponsorship for another year, and we look forward to working closely with them - you may actually see my face around as part of their campaign.

Together, we're protecting this remarkable place for future generations. Thank you for being part of our journey and we hope to see you up exploring the Sanctuary soon!

Ngā mihi nui,
Chris McCormack



News & Updates

How to search for a lost kākā?

Our newest and cheekiest addition to the Sanctuary, kākā, are all roaming free now! But they aren't just highly inquisitive, they are also strong fliers.

These parrots (unlike their completely flightless cousins the kākāpō) are known to even cross open water between islands over 25km. Very impressive for a forest parrot! So, how do we make sure they don't just fly over the fence and leave forever?

Trying to make translocated birds, or any animal you translocate, stick around is called 'anchoring'. There are a few strategies to anchor kākā: One of them, in our case, is a 'soft release'. This means birds aren't just dropped straight into a new location but instead are kept in an aviary for a certain amount of time before release.

There are various opinions out there as to how long you keep kākā before releasing them. Most likely this depends on the individual bird. If you hold the birds too long in an aviary, they can become aggressive towards each other or get generally stressed from being confined to a cage. If you don't allow enough time for them to settle, they might just take off right away. It helps significantly if there are already kākā in the area, as they are very social creatures and the new ones will usually join the existing flock.

Another way of anchoring the birds is to continue to provide them with food well after they have been released. This is particularly important for captive bred birds like ours, as they haven't yet learned how to forage fully on their own. We offer the birds a kākā-specific diet, which they can rely on while they learn how to find food on their own. If kākā eat 'human food' like sandwiches or fish and chips, they can get seriously ill. Certain foods can make their beaks grow malformed, make their bones soft and can even lead to death.

Please never feed a kākā! Naturally, kākā are inquisitive and are well equipped to find food in native forests all year round. Their natural foods include native berries and seeds, nectar, honeydew, but also juicy insects hiding in rotten logs and dead trees - whatever is seasonally available. The longer birds have lived and foraged in an area, the more likely it is they stick around, and claim it as their territory.

But what if the birds do fly away? No translocation has a 100% success rate, and each translocation comes with risks. There are uncontrolled variables when you work with wild animals and conditions that are out of human control. But to bring back a species to their natural habitat, we need to accept this risk. It is either that or letting our species which make Aotearoa so special go extinct one after the other.

Despite all efforts made, two of six kākā did what kākā do best - they flew. To try and keep track of the kākā, we use radio telemetry: most of the kākā are equipped with a lightweight backpack with a tiny antenna (also called transmitter or radio tracker) which sends a simple radio signal.



Photo credit Phil Cochrane - Kākā with a transmitter antenna on their back.



Steffi using the antenna with a receiver.

How to search for a lost kākā? part 2

Each individual radio tracker runs on a different frequency, allowing specific birds to be identified/tracked. We then track the signal of a bird with a radio receiver and an antenna (also called aerial, or yagi). The radio receiver will translate the electromagnetic waves sent out by the radio tracker into sound, like a car radio, but instead of a whole song you just hear beeps.

There are about 40 beeps per minute, one for each radio-pulse that is sent out by the transmitter. The further away from the transmitter you are, the weaker the signal will be. If too close to the bird with its little backpack on, you will hear loud beeps. However, obstacles can block the signal, for example hillsides, rocks, dense vegetation, or buildings. The antenna has a directional view, when using binoculars to look at an object, we can have a more focused line of sight. This helps to narrow down the direction a signal is coming from.

Fingers crossed, our kākā will mostly stay inside the safe, invasive pest-free area of the Sanctuary!



Henry using the antenna with a receiver.



The receiver showing the frequency, the volume and the accuracy.



40 Years Below - a successful evening!

What a wonderful evening we shared at our 40 Years Below by Roger Lusby, a Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Fundraiser.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success. With more than 110 people joining us for the evening, the atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm, generosity, and a shared passion for protecting our native wildlife.

We are delighted to announce that \$3,631.64 was raised for Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.

Thanks to the generous businesses and supporters who donated raffle prizes and helped make the night extra special:

Roger Lusby, The Boathouse, Pics Peanut Butter, Renaissance Organic Hair Salon
Classic Car Museum, State Cinema, MD Outdoors, Appleby Fudge, Potton & Burton Publishing, Page & Blackmore Booksellers, Brook Sanctuary Volunteers



Sanctuary Initiatives

The latest updates



Kids go free July School Holidays!



Looking for a fun family adventure? During the July school holidays, kids visit for free - under 16 years old at Brook Waimārama Sanctuary!

Explore our network of beautiful forest tracks, discover native plants and wildlife, and keep your eyes and ears open for our kākā as they soar through the trees or feed around the sanctuary.

Pack a picnic, bring your walking shoes, and enjoy a day immersed in nature. We can't wait to welcome you these school holidays!

National Kiwi Hui



Photo credit: Janina Castro (Save the Kiwi)

It was a privilege to be invited as a guest speaker at the National Kiwi Hui, hosted in Nelson early June, and to talk about the significant impact kiwi have made to the Sanctuary - especially our growing demand guided night walks.

As part of the event, more than 70 attendees enjoyed a night walk through the Sanctuary.

Save the Kiwi also played a leading role in supporting the Sanctuary with the successful translocation of kiwi pukupuku (little spotted kiwi).

Photography Competition



Photo credit: Paul Gardner

Winter is a special time in the Sanctuary. We're inviting photographers of all ages to capture the magic of the ngahere and be in to win some special prizes.

Whether it's a close-up of a tūi in the kōwhai, sunlight on the Brook Stream, or a moment of quiet wonder on the trail — your photo could be our competition winner!

Winners for the Autumn competition will be announced in the coming weeks!

Foundation Trust

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Foundation Trust exists to act as the Sanctuary's philanthropic and investment arm, receiving, protecting, and growing gifts, bequests, and endowments.

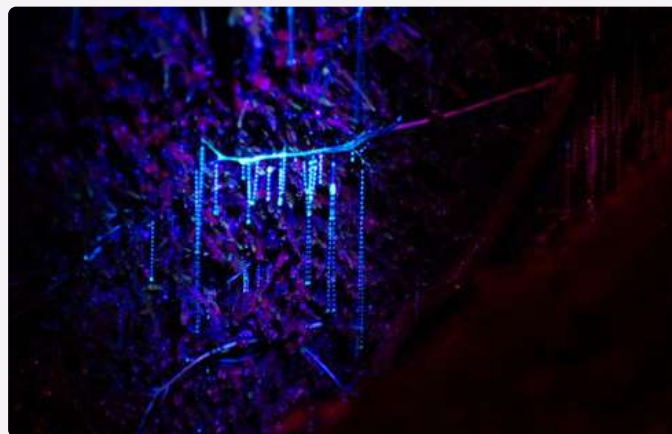
Its purpose is to:

- Build a significant capital fund that supports long-term sustainability.
- Provide an independent, trusted avenue for donors to make impactful contributions.
- Ensure funds are responsibly invested, transparent, and clearly separated from operational funding.
- Generate income for annual Sanctuary operations and, when appropriate, capital for major projects.

The mission of the Foundation is to create a long term, reliable funding stream solely for the benefit of the Sanctuary and its conservation vision. More information below;

www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/support-us/foundation-bequests

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.





Junior Ranger Programme

Become a Junior Ranger for unlimited entry, exclusive events, and hands-on conservation adventures!

More activities for our Junior Rangers are on their way as we have grown to over 90 rangers since the programme started in November 2025.

Each Junior Ranger receives a welcome pack including an embroidered badge, certificate, activity booklet, and colouring sheets to help them explore, learn, and protect — both at the Sanctuary and in their own backyards. Perfect for a gift!

Kalyan Yoga: in the Sanctuary

Gather at The Beech Glade classroom, within the beautiful Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, for a gentle and grounding hour of guided meditation in nature.

This session weaves together simple seated and walking practices designed to help focus and quieten the mind, supporting a deeper experience of presence and awareness. Surrounded by the sounds and stillness of the natural world, you'll be invited to slow down, reconnect, and come home to Presence.

When: 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, next session 12th & 26th July | 9:00–10:00am

Where: Meet at The Glade (please arrive 15 mins early to allow time to walk in)

Entry & Koha: \$5–\$10 koha donation, paid in cash directly to the meditation teacher

Sanctuary Members: Free entry as part of your annual membership benefits

Non-Members: Early bird special: \$10 per adult

Brook Valley Holiday Reserve

Get away from the holiday crowds and immerse yourself in Nelson's most unique campground—Brook Valley Holiday Reserve.

Offering camping, cabin accommodation, and a motor camp area with facilities, it's nestled in a lush, peaceful valley right next to the stunning Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.



Bookings: Not required, just turn up to the session.

Contact: namaste@kalyanyoga.com





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 + gst.

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

Contact Chris directly - chris.mccormack@brooksanctuary.org.nz



NBS - Community

Did you know that the more people who bank with NBS, the more NBS can give back to the community and support organisations just like ours?

We're proud to be sponsored by NBS and be part of giving back to our local community.

NBS is also featuring the Sanctuary in their recent campaign.

NBS is not a registered bank.

www.nbs.co.nz



Waimārama Wildling Ale

A special thanks to the team over at Aliment Brewing (owners Jason & Monica) who have teamed up with Froth Technologies in support of the Sanctuary with their new brew - Waimārama Wildling Ale, which will hit the shelves and taps from Saturday, 18 July, around the country.

Amber Farmhouse Ale with Froth Tech Wildling Yeast!



TELTRAC

Our thanks and appreciation to the team at TELTRAC for going above and beyond to support the new fence monitoring system, ensuring everything is in working order to keep the area pest-free.

TELTRAC

Thank you to our Business Supporters

We're grateful to our Business Club & Kaitiaki members for their ongoing support of the Sanctuary. Their contributions help us protect native species, maintain our unique environment, and welcome visitors to experience the ngahere.

You can learn more about some of our Business supporters here:

Tahuna Beach Holiday Park - Kaitiaki Member

Sunrise Cleaning Services - Business Club

Duncan Cotterill - Business Club

Little Bird Audiology - Business Club

Find out more: www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/support-us/sponsors

Strategic Supporters



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



NBS

Community
We believe. We invest.



Recent snaps in the Sanctuary



Fungi - Matti Raven - Junior Photographer



Will Bixley - Adult Amateur Photographer



Miromiro | Tomtit, *Petroica macrocephala*
- Photo by Chris McCormack



Ryan Hunter - Adult Amateur Photographer

Santa Parade Float

For the very first time, the Sanctuary will be taking part in the Santa Parade with our very own float!

A huge thank you to David Garnett and our dedicated Assets Volunteer team for donating their time, creativity, and hard work to bring this exciting idea to life.

Our float will be inspired by glowworms, celebrating the magic and wonder that can be found throughout the Sanctuary. Watch this space for more updates as the big day approaches!

Please note: The image shown is an AI-generated concept only and is not the actual parade float.



Wētā Hotels

A special thanks to the team over at the [MENZSHED Waimea](#) for making wētā hotels for the Sanctuary - we are very grateful for their support and the work they do within the community.

These will be available for purchase from the Sanctuary Visitor Centre.





Transitioning to New Database System (Zoho)

We're now making great progress on the transition from the Infoodle system we've used since 2019, to our new system ZOHO. It's been a steep learning curve for a number of system users, but we are now making head way automating many of the processes which were previously very manual and time consuming (particularly) around management of memberships, and donations. Our thanks to Tim and the team at Digital Diligence for their help and support bedding in ZOHO. Our thanks also to ZOHO as the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary is the first not-for-profit organisation in the world to receive special NFP pricing on ZOHO.

Please note, if you recurring donations to the Sanctuary, at present the new system ZOHO will issue you a donation receipt for EACH donation, rest assured – it's on our list to develop, and quite possibly automate the issuing of an annual consolidated statement at the end of the tax year; in the meantime, please either save the individual receipts, or delete them – entirely up to you!



Tickets available from their website
www.mdoutdoors.co.nz



Email addresses:

with the new database (ZOHO), contacts must have a unique email address (or not have one) - the system won't permit multiple people (eg couples or parents/children) to share the same email address. If you previously shared an email address with someone else and you have a secondary/personal email address, please contact nick.tilly@brooksanctuary.org.nz with the details so that ZOHO can be updated so that you don't miss out on hearing from us.

MD Adventure Film Festival

MD Outdoors presents our Adventure Film Festival. A celebration of the people, places, and wild adventures that make New Zealand so special. This is about local films made by normal people— the weekend and everyday adventurers who get out there and just do it.

It's grassroots, it's real, and it's all about showcasing the epic missions and moments happening here in our own backyard.

Whether you're into hiking, biking, paddling, climbing, or just love a good yarn from the wild — this night is for you. Come be inspired, support local storytellers, and celebrate raw Kiwi adventure.

Become A Sanctaury 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.



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.



City Office | 54 Montgomery Square, Nelson | 03 546 2422

Visitor Centre - Sanctuary Entrance | 651 Brook Street | 03 539 4920

Postal Address | PO Box 744, Nelson 7040
www.brooksanctuary.org.nz

Support the future of the Sanctuary

The return of kiwi and other threatened species to the Sanctuary is only possible because of the ongoing support of our community.

Your support contributes to vital pest control, habitat restoration, species monitoring, and education programmes that ensure future generations can experience thriving native wildlife in Nelson.

Whether large or small, every contribution makes a real difference. By donating you are helping create a safer future for kiwi, tuatara, native birds, insects, and the unique forest ecosystems they depend on.

Thank you for standing with us and helping nature flourish.