

# FAN-TALES NEWSLETTER

## WHIRINGA-Ā-NUKU | OCTOBER 2026



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Kia ora koutou,

Spring has certainly arrived at the Sanctuary. The warmer temperatures and now the longer days are starting to make their presence – a great opportunity to dust off the hiking shoes and explore the Sanctuary.

It was personally a pleasure to take part in our recent Sanctuary-wide survey and explore more of the forest. A big thank you to our Pest Detection coordinators Peter Jamieson, Mika Verheul and everyone who hiked throughout the Sanctuary to place and collect the tracking cards, and our amazing field support volunteer team who checked the results. The best news of all – no incursions were detected.

Along the way, I was treated to tomtits, South Island robins, rifleman and the constant chatter of kākāriki karaka. At times, the forest was wonderfully noisy – a great reminder of the success of our restoration work and the incredible birdlife now thriving throughout the Sanctuary.

In other news, we welcomed 29 tuatara yesterday, bringing our population to 94 in the Sanctuary – an exciting milestone for the Sanctuary.

It was fantastic to host the recent Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce BA5, connecting with the Nelson Tasman business community. Thank you also to MD Outdoors, FreshChoice Nelson and Aliment Brewing for their ongoing support, and to everyone fundraising for the Sanctuary through The Spectacle. We are very appreciative of all the community support.

Finally, a huge thank you to our staff, volunteers, members, supporters and strategic partners. Your commitment continues to make the Sanctuary a truly special place.

Ngā mihi nui,  
Chris McCormack  
Chief Executive  
Brook Waimārama Sanctuary





## More Tuatara Welcomed to the Sanctuary

Yesterday, we celebrated the arrival of 29 tuatara from Takapourewa (Stephens Island) to the Sanctuary, marking another exciting milestone in our ongoing conservation efforts.

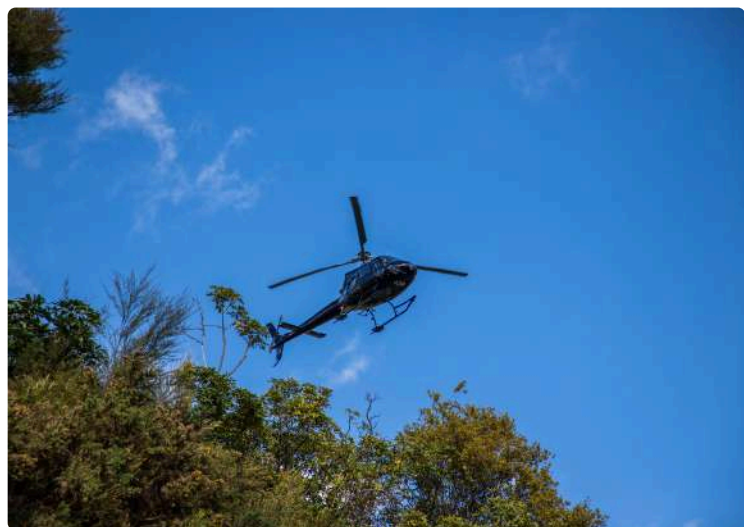
The translocation was coordinated by Ngāti Koata, as kaitiaki of Takapourewa (Stephens Island) tuatara, and the Department of Conservation, bringing these incredible taonga into their new home at the Sanctuary.

The tuatara have joined our existing population, strengthening the genetic diversity and future of this remarkable species in the region.

Each tuatara was checked, before being carefully released into their pre-drilled burrow within the mouse-exclosure fence.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in making this special translocation possible.

Photo credits: Elizabeth del Angel





## Seventeen years of five-minute bird counts

Written by Katherine Chamberlain

Simon Hoyle and I have recently published an analysis of 17 years of five-minute bird counts in the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary in the journal *Notornis*[1]. Our analysis covers 8 years prior to, 8 years following and the year (2017) of the pest eradication.

We found that most endemic species increased following the pest eradication, while most non-endemic species (both native and nonnative) declined. Compared to their pre-eradication baselines, bellbirds increased 2.3x, tūī 3.0x, South Island robin 17.2x and tomtit 17.6x. Orange-fronted parakeets increased each since following the first translocation in 2021.

Grey warblers and fantails, on the other hand, initially increased then declined, grey warblers to 58% their pre-eradication baseline, fantails back to their pre-eradication levels.

Both these species lack characteristics that make other endemics sensitive to mammalian predation. Silvereyes, formerly the most abundant species in the Sanctuary, declined to 30% their pre-eradication level. Blackbirds, chaffinches and song thrushes all declined.

Population declines were likely due to competition from growing populations of endemics no longer suppressed by predation. Our results are consistent with those of Zealandia and other pest-managed areas.



# Sanctuary Initiatives

The latest updates



## Kākāriki Thriving in the Sanctuary

On 1–2 September, we held our annual kākāriki karaka population count, led by the DOC kākāriki karaka team alongside Sanctuary staff and volunteers.

Using recorded calls at survey points across the Sanctuary, we counted almost 300 kākāriki on the first day alone. With the survey covering only around two-thirds of the Sanctuary and many birds not responding to playback, the population is now reasonably estimated to be more than 400 birds — making the Sanctuary home to the world's largest population of this critically endangered species.

It was fantastic to see large flocks, with the vast majority now Sanctuary-born. A huge thank you to Ngai Tahu, DOC, our volunteers and Nelson City Council staff for their support, and to Sean McGrath for capturing some fantastic images.

## It's Not Just About the Birds!

The discovery of other species in the Sanctuary is just as important as the birds we celebrate. The Sanctuary is not only about protecting our headline species — it is about protecting all the ingredients needed for a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

Gastrodia, a nationally critical potato orchid discovered last year, along with a small population of raukawa (Raukawa edgerleyi) recently found are just some of the many thriving in the mature forest

When the pests are removed, the rare species that have been here all along begin to reveal themselves.

These discoveries are a wonderful reminder of just how much there is still to learn about the Sanctuary. At 690 hectares, with vast areas of mature forest, there is an incredible amount of habitat to explore and potential species yet to be discovered.

Every plant, fungi, invertebrate and animal has a role to play in a thriving ngahere, and protecting them all is at the heart of what we do.



Distinctly toothed compound leaf of raukawa juveniles



Gastrodia

# Sanctuary Initiatives



## BA5 at the Sanctuary

What better place to connect than surrounded by birdsong, native forest and the Sanctuary after dark?

We were delighted to host the Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce BA5 (Business After 5), with guests learning about our conservation work and future plans before exploring the Loop Track - even Ruruku (tuatara) was out.

A big thank you to the Chamber, Aliment Brewing for the beers, and Booster Wine Group for their generous contribution of Spinyback wines.

We also thank our incredible staff and volunteers for making the evening possible.

It was fantastic to share the Sanctuary and showcase the work helping wildlife thrive.



## Hidden Valleys Tour Special!

Looking for a different way to experience the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary?

Join our special 90-minute Hidden Valleys of Waimārama guided tour during the School holidays and grab a 30% discount deal!.

Discover what makes this Sanctuary unique – even the most knowledgeable visitors are surprised by what they learn from our expert guides.

We have a school holiday special on our Hidden Valleys of Waimārama Use promo code: HIDDEN30

## A Night in the Forest Special!

Experience the magic of the forest on a guided night tour.

We have a special 25% off night tours during September and October. Use promo code: NIGHT25

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.

**Bookings can be made online**

**[www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/visit/guided-tours-experiences](http://www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/visit/guided-tours-experiences)**

# Sanctuary Initiatives



## Sanctuary Santa Parade Float Making Progress!

Our Sanctuary Christmas float is coming together nicely, with sharp rocks, cliffs and vegetation appearing in abundance!

We're sure our volunteers working along the valley floor tracks will barely notice the odd missing bit of vegetation or a few rocks mysteriously disappearing from the boardwalk — all in the name of Christmas!

The glow worms are currently being bred and trained in a jam jar, while our Godzilla-sized tuatara is shaping up to be the star of the show!

Everything is currently being assembled behind the gates, where the magic is taking shape.

Eve, our Junior Ranger Facilitator, will soon begin the important work of breeding various junior versions of Brook wildlife to escort Santa on his parade.

We look forward to show casing the Sanctuary at this years Santa Parade.

## Supporters We couldn't do it without you!



### Kaitiaki Membership

Our Kaitiaki (Guardian) membership 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 for more information - [chris.mccormack@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:chris.mccormack@brooksanctuary.org.nz)

## 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.

# Supporters



## Waimārama Wildling Ale

A special thanks to Aliment Brewing for their support towards the Sanctuary - the Waimārama Wildling Ale has shown great interest around the country, even promoted in Air New Zealand's Koru Magazine.



## Spinyback Wines!

Another thanks to Booster Wine Group for supplying their wines to support the BA5 with their Spinyback range of wines.

Every bottle sold helps support Tuatara conservation and the protection of New Zealand's wild places, while their commitment to sustainable winegrowing helps ensure they can be enjoyed for generations to come.



## MD Outdoors Quiz

A huge thank you to the team at MD Outdoors for supporting the Sanctuary through their Great Outdoor Quiz Night at The Boathouse, Nelson which raised an incredible \$1,700+ for the Sanctuary!

Some of our amazing volunteers also joined in to show their support — a fantastic effort from everyone! And congratulations to Team Randy Rampage for taking out the win!

We're incredibly grateful for the support of our community and everyone who helped make the night such a success.

Make sure you pop into MD Outdoors store in Nelson City for all your outdoor needs — their gear certainly comes in handy when exploring the Sanctuary!



## Fresh Choice Community Fund

A huge thank you to Fresh Choice Nelson for their generous \$500 Community Fund contribution supporting the work of the Sanctuary and our Junior Ranger Programme.

## Strategic Supporters



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**NBS**

**Community**  
We believe. We invest.



## Recent snaps in the Sanctuary



Tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatus*), credit: Elizabeth del Angel



Kākā encounter with Asset Volunteer Barry - photo credit: Barry



The deep rich forest of the Sanctuary



Night Guided Tour - photo credit: Philly Orphan



## Annual General Meeting - Save the date

Mark your diary! Our AGM will be held on Thursday, 22 October 2026, at 12 noon at the Rutherford Hotel.

We look forward to seeing our members, supporters and community there.

## Upcoming Events

### Nelson Arts Festival

11 days of unmissable arts experiences  
in Whakatū  
[nelsonartsfestival.nz/events/](https://nelsonartsfestival.nz/events/)

### Isel In Spring

15 October 2026 4:30pm-7:30pm - We will be  
present with our Sanctuary stall.  
[www.nelsontasman.nz/events/isel-in-spring/](https://www.nelsontasman.nz/events/isel-in-spring/)

## Seated & Walking Meditation

Lose Yourself in Nature. Coming Home to Presence.

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

Next sessions

- Sunday, 11 Oct - 9:00am
- Sunday, 25 Oct - 9:00am



## Become a Sanctuary Member



**Join today**

## 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.  
er 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.

[www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/support-us/membership](https://www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/support-us/membership)



## 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

The return of kiwi and other threatened species to the Sanctuary is only possible because of the ongoing support of our community. Every donation helps protect not only kiwi, but many other native species that call the Sanctuary home.

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.

# Donate today!

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  
Email: [info@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:info@brooksanctuary.org.nz)  
[www.brooksanctuary.org.nz](http://www.brooksanctuary.org.nz)

