



EAST TARANAKI

ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

Restoring Native Biodiversity. Protecting our Future. Together

Summer Newsletter 2022



Festive greetings from the ETEC team

Members of the East Taranaki Environment Collective team pose under a pohutukawa – New Zealand's very own Christmas tree – prior to a well-deserved holiday break after what has been a very busy 2022.

We at ETEC wish all our contractors, volunteers and supporters a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and we look forward to your continued support during 2023, which promises to be even busier than this year!

Pictured from left are Jayden Fabish, Kat Strang, Corbyn Fabish, Karen Moratti, Rebecca Somerfield, and Ash Bates.

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From the General Manager



ETEC GENERAL MANAGER
REBECCA SOMERFIELD

Heard of the East Taranaki Corridor?

In this newsletter there is a map that illustrates the extent of our project area, in which we work hard to protect native biodiversity through the control of animal pests.

It's a very large tract of land. Initially it was 13,000ha in size, but thanks to Jobs For Nature funding through the national kiwi charity Save the Kiwi, in recent times we have been able to expand the area under predator control to 18,000ha - all the way from Okoki to the north, to Te Wera to the south. It's all part of East Taranaki Environment Collective's long-term plan we call Te Whakakotahi.

East Taranaki Environment Collective is proud to be one of the largest community environment schemes in New Zealand. We are also proud of the fact that the acreage under our protection forms an important part of what is known as the East Taranaki Corridor, a series of inter-connected areas of protected habitat that will combine to act as refuge for native species including

kiwi, kōkako and long-tailed bat.

There are several such areas right down this north-south corridor that are the responsibility of fellow conservation organisations and iwi. We at ETEC are committed to fully collaborating with these key parties to achieve conservation goals for the benefit of all of Taranaki and New Zealand. We believe the East Taranaki Corridor has all the potential to become a corridor of national significance.

As a very busy 2022 comes to an end and we begin to look forward to an even busier 2023, we at ETEC would like to sincerely thank our band of employees and volunteers who do such a fantastic job in all sorts of ways. I would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Nga Mihi

This bomb goes off with a bang

Heard of an F Bomb? East Taranaki Environment Collective now has 40 of them doing their work in Everett Park Scenic Reserve 8km east of Inglewood.

In this case the F Bombs are a pest animal trap developed by Rewild, the Inglewood company owned by industrial designer Nick Jones. While officially the F Bomb name relates to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's opinion that the trap can humanely despatch ferrets, Nick Jones reckons it could also relate to what onlookers often say when the trap is sprung with a loud Bang.

"Everyone gets a fright when I demonstrate an F Bomb by asking someone to poke a stick into it and set it off," says Nick. "But overall the trap is designed to be an easy to use, safe and humane way of getting rid of ferrets and other small animal pests."

So far 150 of the traps, which are made of glass reinforced nylon, have been sold, and production will soon increase once new tooling arrives from China, Nick adds.

ETEC has purchased 40 of the traps and they are now in use within Everett Park Scenic Reserve, along with a variety of other traps including DOC 250s, self-setting Goodnature A24s, and Steve Allan Kat traps, which are possum and cat traps developed by Steve Allan of Whangarei.

Nick was on hand to demonstrate his F Bomb at a recent community day hosted by ETEC at the reserve. We have entered into a collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Pukerangiora Hapū to protect the ecosystem and biodiversity of Everett Park, 8km east of Inglewood, and the community day was held to demonstrate how this will happen.



INGLEWOOD DESIGNER NICK JONES
WITH ONE OF HIS F BOMBS

ETEC has taken responsibility for pest control management throughout the reserve, and it has already completed baseline monitoring of the area. This monitoring has shown that a large number of traps need to be set out to target mustelids, rats, possums and feral cats.

Help will be needed in setting up and maintaining the trap network, which is a major reason why the community day was held. There, ETEC representatives and members of Pukerangiora Hapū explained the cultural significance of the area, provided an update on the pest management project, and outlined the management plan going forward. There was also a short working bee which involved guests walking the area and picking up rubbish.

ETEC general manager Rebecca Somerfield said it was awesome to see so many people attend the community day and keen to be involved in caring for Everett Park.

"There's a lot of work to be done, something which I think was vividly illustrated by the amount of rubbish collected during the working bee. But Everett Park is a beautiful reserve which deserves to be cared for in this way."

Everett Park is the largest reserve on the Taranaki ring plain outside of the region's national park, Te Papakura o Taranaki. It is culturally significant traditional site as a mahinga kai and kāinga for hapū and iwi.



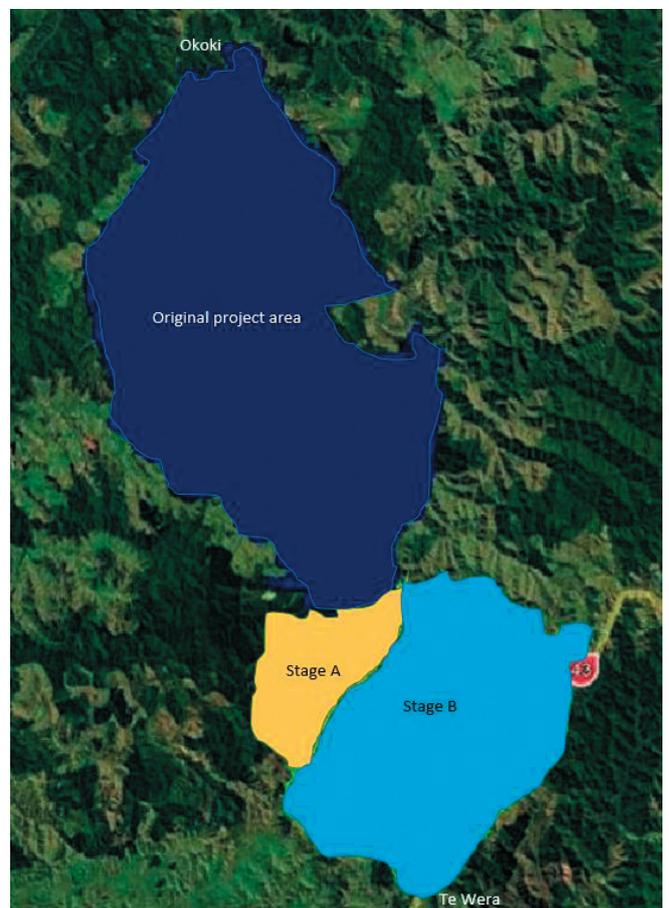
18,000 hectares of protection

The map alongside this article vividly illustrates how East Taranaki Environment Collective's operational footprint is growing.

Eighteen months ago ETEC received Jobs for Nature funding through the national charity Save The Kiwi that allowed us to successfully expand our area under pest management protection by an additional 1126 hectares during the 2021/22 financial year. That was Stage A, coloured yellow on the map.

The funding has also allowed us to now extend our pest control area by a further 4646 hectares in the current financial year. That is Stage B, coloured light blue on the map.

It all means that ETEC's pest control footprint now covers more than 18,000 hectares, extending all the way from the Urenui River at Okoki to the railway line at Te Wera. This is a very large tract of land, and it offers the potential for large conservation gains simply because it allows ETEC and its volunteers and supporters to increase the availability of protected habitat.



Unique Forgotten World collaboration protects kiwi



JONO WALTER (TARANAKI KIWI TRUST), SHANE REED (FORGOTTEN WORLD ADVENTURES) AND MAIA GIBBS (TARANAKI KIWI TRUST) LOAD UP DOC 250 TRAPS FOR DELIVERY ALONG THE RAIL LINE

A unique collaboration has been forged between a major central North Island tourism operator and ETEC to protect native wildlife in East Taranaki. And there's potential for the collaboration to extend into neighbouring King Country.

Forgotten World Adventures, which runs converted golf carts along the former Stratford-Okahukura rail line, has partnered with ETEC to place 69 pest animal traps along a 10 kilometre stretch of rail through rugged hill country at Te Wera, 35 km east of Stratford.

Recently representatives of ETEC, Forgotten World Adventures, Taranaki Kiwi Trust and Taranaki Maunga project placed one of the traps every 150 metres along the stretch of rail line Mohakau Rd to the mouth of the tunnel under Pohokura Saddle.

The rail line runs along the southern boundary of a recently enlarged ETEC pest management operational area, which now covers more than 18,000ha from Okoki to Te Wera.

ETEC general manager Rebecca Somerfield says the agreement allowing the placement of traps along the rail line is the perfect solution to what was potentially an expensive problem.

"The line runs alongside State Highway 43 which is actually the southern boundary of our enlarged area under pest management. If we had placed the traps along the highway, we would have had to prepare safety plans for the use of SH43 to regularly check them, which could have been an expensive exercise," she says.

"But this collaboration with Forgotten World Adventures will allow us to use their rail carts to check the traps, which will be a lot safer and logistically far more convenient. We're delighted."

Forgotten World Adventures general manager Kara Matheson says her organisation, which leases the disused rail line, is excited to enter the partnership, and is happy to donate time, staff and resources to the project.

"It will be great to see the rail corridor utilised for the protection of our native wildlife," she says. "It's going to be a unique way of transporting and checking traps along ETEC's southern boundary."

Forgotten World Adventures runs its tourism operation along 143km of disused rail line, and would be keen to see pest animal traps placed along the entire corridor, says Kara Matheson.

"But this would be too big for us to do ourselves. Our core business is tourism, while ETEC's core business is animal pest control. It makes sense to collaborate and we'll have discussions regarding the potential for this to happen some time in the future," she says.



Kiwi supporting kiwi

Proud to be the designers of this newsletter, sharing the good news about the work ETEC is doing in our community.

tgm
tgmcreative.co.nz

Good news from latest Kōkako survey

Here's encouraging news about our resident population of North Island kokako, which were re-introduced into ETEC's operational area in 2018.

Over a period of nine days from September to November, our field team surveyed the area to see how well the population is surviving in our forest. A total of 39 kilometres of tracks and ridgelines, spanning 1450ha of the Pouiatoa Conservation Area, were covered in the search for the elusive manu.

This year the ETEC team made contact with seven kokako pairs and five single birds – a total of 19 birds which was two more than last year's survey. Three of the kokako were banded and 13 were unbanded, which proved that our birds are breeding well and the chicks are surviving into adulthood.

"That's really good news," says ETEC conservation manager Kat Strang. "Four years ago we realised that unless something

was done, we might never again hear the call of a kokako in the eastern Taranaki bush because of more than two decades of predation of eggs and chicks by pest animals.

"We responded by releasing a small number of birds that had been hatched on Little Barrier Island. We're delighted that our latest survey has shown that this re-introduction campaign is working."

The Kokako belongs to a group of endemic New Zealand wattlebirds, an ancient family of birds which includes the North Island and South Island Saddleback and the now-extinct Huia.

The South Island Kokako is assumed to be extinct, and populations of the North Island Kokako had been in decline until several initiatives, including ETEC's re-introduction programme, have begun to reverse the trend. As a result, the species has been officially re-classified as At Risk, rather than Threatened.

Welcome to Olly, Ash and Daniel

New East Taranaki Environment Collective staff member Olly Sleep may have just turned 17, but he has years of experience in conservation and pest control.

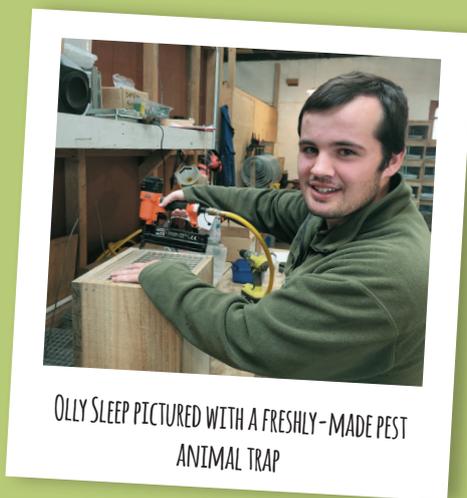
Olly has been employed by ETEC

as an apprentice ranger as part of the Predator Free New Zealand apprenticeship scheme, and he has immediately become an important part of the field team.

It hasn't been hard. Prior to joining ETEC, not only was he already undertaking pest control on the family farm, but he was helping other community organisations with their pest control work. As a result, he received recognition from New Plymouth Boys' High School for his community service in 2020, and he has just received a New Plymouth District Council volunteer award.

Well done Olly – and we're delighted to have you join us.

Meanwhile, Ash Bates and Daniel Reardon have been employed on one-year Jobs For Nature contracts to build new pest traps, replacing traps that have been in use for up to 15 years. They're doing a great job, making so much progress that we are now investigating the potential of building traps for fellow conservation organisations as well.



OLLY SLEEP PICTURED WITH A FRESHLY-MADE PEST ANIMAL TRAP

Sparky charms more Taranaki locals

Sparky the one-legged kiwi has again visited Taranaki, and once again he has been a hit with the people who met him.

Sparky is under the care of the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre's Robert Webb, and his job is as a living public relations ambassador for conservation work.

This time around he visited Inglewood and Puketapu schools, and attended corporate events in Inglewood and New Plymouth. During the school visits other organisations, including Taranaki Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Te Kohanga Ahuru and Taranaki Kiwi Trust also provided updates and demonstrations on their kiwi conservation work.

Sparky's visit was sponsored by Greymouth Petroleum.



SPARKY WITH HIS CARER, ROBERT WEBB.

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