

EAST TARANAKI ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

Restoring Native Biodiversity. Protecting our Future. Together

Winter Newsletter 2023



Teaching our Tamariki

Deep in native bush at Everett Park Scenic Reserve, cousins Bodhi Somerfield, Henry Somerfield and Cooper Day pose with an animal pest trap they checked while learning all about the value of conservation. East Taranaki Environment Collective places great value on involving our region's tamariki in its pest management activity. In this newsletter we profile some of the ways we are engaging with our young people.

Read all about the project | Page 2

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From the General Manager

Our tamariki are key to our future

I'm proud of the photograph that features on the cover of this newsletter, because two of the boys are my sons and the other youngster is their cousin. They look after one of the pest trap lines East Taranaki Environment Collective has placed within Everett Park Scenic Reserve east of Inglewood – my husband and I regularly take them out to the reserve so they can check if the traps have caught any stoats, ferrets, rats or possums. The good news is that my family's tamariki love the task, even when it means traipsing through the bush in the middle of winter.

Young people are now a vital part of all our pest management operations. For example, of the 13 contractors who help maintain the numerous trap lines within our 18,000 ha eastern Taranaki project area between Okoki and Te Wera, almost half of them are teenagers. They are fit, enthusiastic, and rapidly gaining knowledge on the importance of our operations as we work to restore native biodiversity and provide a protected area for native wildlife to thrive.



ETEC GENERAL MANAGER
REBECCA SOMERFIELD

We are working hard to ensure this help can continue. Right now we are in the midst of a Youth Kaitiakitanga Programme, in which Year 6, 7 and 8 pupils from primary schools throughout the Inglewood area are heading out into the field and to our headquarters to learn all about caring for the environment. As is outlined in the article below, so far ETEC has hosted children from nine schools.

In addition our education volunteer, retired teacher Kaye Corlett, has been busy visiting schools and playcentres throughout Taranaki, taking the children through one-hour programmes designed to instil the value of conservation.

I'm very proud of the fact that much of this good work couldn't be done without the help of ETEC's fantastic group of volunteers. So it's a hearty thanks to everyone – of all ages.

Ngā Mihi

ETEC's Youth Kaitiakitanga ambassadors

Here's something pupils from nine Taranaki primary schools have in common – they are Youth Kaitiakitanga ambassadors for the East Taranaki Environment Collective.

The Year 6, 7 and 8 children – from Inglewood, St Patrick's Inglewood, Waitara Central, St Joseph's Waitara, Kaimata, Waitoriki, Egmont Village, Norfolk and Huirangi – have been attending workshops with ETEC staff to learn all about the organisation's quest to save our region's native biodiversity.

There, they are learning that ETEC is kaitiaki of 18,000ha of East Taranaki land, and that pest control work is critical to the survival of many native species including kiwi, kōkako, and long-tailed bat.

A total of four workshops are being held. The first has been at Everett Park and has focussed on pest control, with the pupils shown what pest animals exist in New Zealand, how traps work, how they are baited, and how trap lines are positioned so they can be regularly checked.

ETEC's headquarters in Inglewood has been the venue for the second workshop, which has been all about pest monitoring – how methods and equipment such as chew cards, tracking tunnels, trail cameras, and wax tags are all used to help ensure pest numbers are being reduced and kept low enough to aid the survival of native species.

Further workshops will educate the pupils on New Zealand's native bird species, and how ETEC staff conduct special surveys to keep an eye on population numbers.



ETEC CONSERVATION MANAGER KAT STRANG TALKS TO PARTICIPANTS
IN THE YOUTH KAITIAKITANGA PROGRAMME.

ETEC general manager Rebecca Somerfield says the Youth Kaitiakitanga programme is essential to future success of the organisation. "Care of our biodiversity is vital to the future of the natural environment in Taranaki and the rest of our country," she says. "With that as background, it is essential that our tamariki are made aware not only of the importance of biodiversity, but also of methods for improving it."



Methanex sponsorship helping to grow kōkako population

Sponsorship support by Methanex New Zealand Ltd is helping East Taranaki Environment Collective's efforts to re-establish a population of the North Island kōkako.

The effort is centred on the 3854ha Pouiatoa Conservation Area, located between Okoki and Pūrangi, which is cared for by ETEC on behalf of the Department of Conservation and local iwi Ngāti Maru and Ngāti Mutunga.

In 2018 ETEC translocated 20 of the birds from Te Hauturu-o-Toi (Little Barrier Island) 80 km north of Auckland, to a 1000ha core block within the conservation area.

Methanex NZ financially assisted this translocation in line with a company objective to support projects which honour Te Taiao (the natural world) by enhancing and developing the environment. Now Methanex has extended its support of the kōkako project with a new one-year sponsorship agreement

that will allow ETEC's field team to continue to protect and monitor the native birds.

ETEC conservation manager Kat Strang welcomes the sponsorship, saying it will greatly assist her organisation's goal of establishing a self-supporting kōkako population in eastern Taranaki.

"The Pouiatoa is a great location for this project, as the core area has plenty of the tall native tree species such as tawa which the kōkako love to inhabit," she says. "But we need to continue to care for the birds by continuing to carry out necessary pest control work and monitoring the population to make sure it is effective."

In September each year the ETEC field team conducts a census survey of the kōkako population to estimate numbers of pairs and singles, as well as where they are located.

"Overall, these census results are very encouraging, because they indicate that North Island kōkako are breeding within the Pouiatoa Conservation Area," says Kat. "Hopefully we are succeeding in establishing a self-sustaining population. It will be a slow process to build up this population, but the support of Methanex will be vital to this."

As part of the sponsorship agreement, ETEC has undertaken a workshop on pest control with Methanex staff. This was recently held at Everett Park Scenic Reserve, where Methanex' finance team spent a day checking and re-setting traps and listening out for birds. ETEC manages the pest control at Everett Park on behalf of DOC and Pukerangiora hapū.

Jenny Wells, Methanex Director, Business Support, was thrilled to join the team for their volunteering day. "At Methanex we're proud to support our community as much as we can. By partnering with the East Taranaki Environment Collective we're helping our local environment in a meaningful way, and being able to come along and see, firsthand, the difference our investment can make is really special."



ETEC RANGER JAYDEN FABISH DISCUSSES PEST MANAGEMENT WITH METHANEX DIRECT OF BUSINESS SUPPORT JENNY WELLS DURING A VISIT TO EVERETT PARK.

Thanks for all your help, Karen

Karen Moratti, one of East Taranaki Environment Collective's original employees, was recently farewelled.

Karen was employed as an administrator, and she was invaluable as she took responsibility for a very wide range of tasks over the past seven years.

ETEC general manager Rebecca Somerfield says our organisation is extremely grateful for Karen's service. "We will miss Karen's kindness, commitment and passion, and wish her all the best on her new adventure."

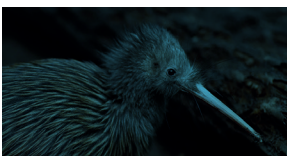


KAREN MORATTI

Funding Support

Trustees and employees at East Taranaki Environment Collective would like to acknowledge and offer thanks for the continued support being provided by our organisation's funders and sponsors.

Funding has recently been received from a number of parties, including Taranaki Electricity Trust, Toi Foundation, and Save the Kiwi. This funding as well as funding from other supporters is allowing ETEC to continue its pest control work throughout 18,000 ha of East Taranaki country, restoring our region's biodiversity and allowing native wildlife to thrive.



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

What happens to kiwi when pine plantations are harvested?

How many kiwi live in commercial pine plantations? And what happens to them during and after harvesting of the trees?

These are important questions, because *Pinus radiata* make up more than 90 percent of exotic forestry plantations in New Zealand, with the total planted area continuing to rise. This is leading to increasing discussion on whether commercially-grown pine forests can help New Zealand's conservation effort by providing habitat for our native fauna.

Trouble is, pine forests are grown so they can be harvested. And this harvesting, particularly clear-felling, can seriously impact kiwi populations that live there. So what can be done to reduce this impact?

East Taranaki Environment Trust has joined forces with Parinihi ki Waitōrara (PKW), Ngāti Maru iwi and Taranaki Kiwi Trust (TKT) in a special project that is seeking to answer these important questions. The study site is the 410ha Mangaoapa forestry block at Matau, which is owned by PKW. This block, which is predominantly pine with small tracts of native bush, is to be harvested from the end of this year.

Five kiwi have been caught within the pine block for this study so far. They have been weighed and health-checked, and radio transmitters have been fitted to their legs. Their location is now being checked every two weeks/monthly using radio telemetry, and once the tree harvesting begins this monitoring will be increased so decisions can be made to ensure the welfare of each bird.

ETEC's involvement in the study project has been to provide academic information and advice to ensure that the data collected answers the research questions. These questions include whether there are changes in survival, breeding, foraging hours, habitat use and movements, and roost selection during different phases of the harvesting.

Conservation manager Kat Strang says previous research has already found that pine plantations are a commonly used, though sub-optimal, habitat for kiwi.

"This research project will now help answer important questions on how kiwi use this habitat, and how this changes during different phases of harvesting. We feel the knowledge gained from this research can result in the introduction of measures that will help both our kiwi and the harvesters."



ETEC CONSERVATION MANAGER KAT STRANG USING EQUIPMENT TO TRIANGULATE FOR KIWI WITHIN THE MANGAOAPA FORESTRY BLOCK.

MenzShed comes to the rescue

New Plymouth MenzShed recently answered the call for help on an important project – to build specially-designed wooden boxes to transport kiwi throughout the North Island.

National organisation Save The Kiwi had asked East Taranaki Environment Collective to build the boxes which were to be used for a major translocation project involving the transporting of more than 100 birds from Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in Waikato. And just when work pressures began to make this difficult to achieve in time, a representative of MenzShed walked into our Inglewood headquarters to find out what ETEC is all about.

One thing quickly led to another, and soon the MenzShed members (who aren't all men, by the way) were busy building the boxes at their Strandon premises in New Plymouth.

A total of 12 boxes were constructed, and they were delivered by ETEC to Maungatautari in time for the big translocation project, which saw 61 kiwi transferred to Tongariro and a

further 50 transported to Wellington. ETEC general manager Rebecca Somerfield says the help from MenzShed underlines the value of voluntary organisations.

"Now that we've established this symbiotic relationship with MenzShed, we're hoping there can be more joint projects in the future," she says.



MEMBERS OF NEW PLYMOUTH MENZSHED BUSY ASSEMBLING THE SPECIAL BOXES.

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