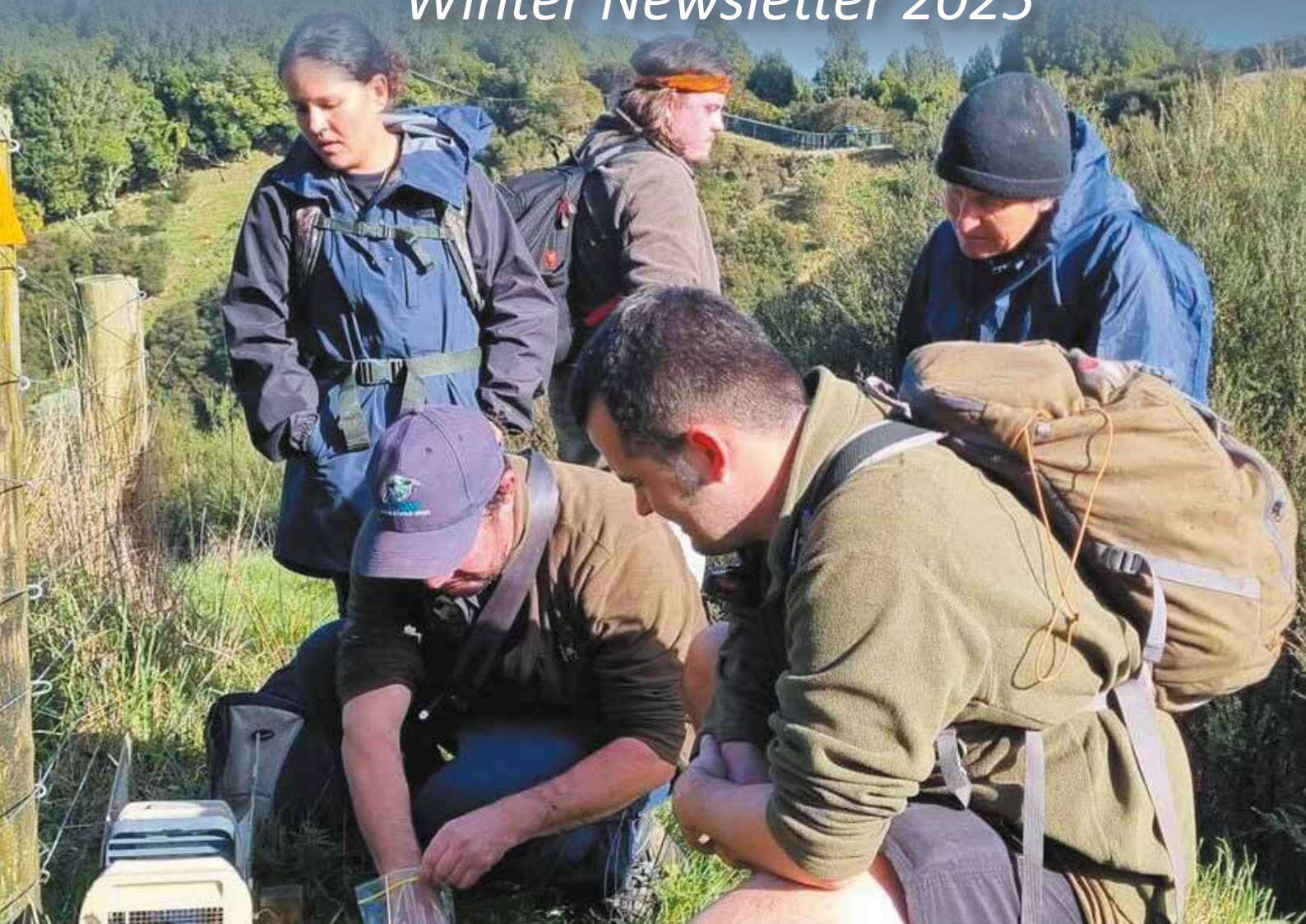


EAST TARANAKI ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

Restoring Native Biodiversity. Protecting our Future. Together

Winter Newsletter 2025



All about pests

East Taranaki Environment Collective ranger Olly Sleep (foreground) discusses trap-baiting techniques with attendees at a pest control hui hosted by ETEC, with Rotokare hosting the field trip within their halo project. The hui is a great way for pest control professionals to meet up and discuss their work.

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ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE**
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From the General Manager..

Whew! ETEC's been so busy in such a wide variety of ways

Just a short message from me in this latest newsletter – there's been so much going on in recent months that we need as much space as possible to tell you what has been happening!

In fact there's been so much activity that we've chosen to double the size of this newsletter edition.

Why so busy? Well, as you read the newsletter you will note there has

been plenty of activity involving fellow conservation organisations. Amongst other things we've hosted enthusiasts hunting for fungi, helped iwi study koura, worked with lizards, organised a very successful fun run, and joined in on the planting of native seedlings.

All of that has been on top of our 'normal' duties protecting our precious flora and fauna from introduced animal pests along the rugged country of the Eastern Taranaki corridor.

So – enjoy the read! Kat.



Pouiatoa a hot spot for FUNNZ visitors

There's an organisation called the Fungal Network of New Zealand (FUNNZ) that each autumn organises a week-long visit to a part of Aotearoa where members can admire, photograph and collect various fungi.

Why autumn? Because that time of the year is the height of the mushroom season.

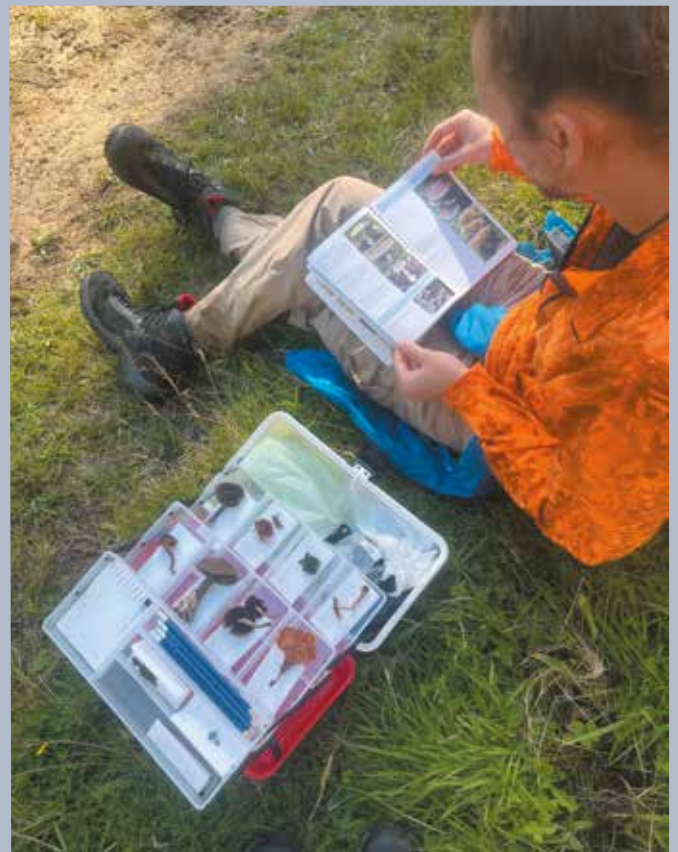
These visits, known as Fungal Forays, have been held each year since 1988, and up until now the only time Taranaki had hosted FUNNZ was in 1999 when members based themselves in Inglewood and visited our national park, Te Papakura o Taranaki.

This year the Fungal Foray visited our region for a second time, basing itself at Urenui. And during the week the East Taranaki Environment Collective hosted the mycologists at the Pouiatoa Conservation Area near Purangi and at Everett Park.

The remote Pouiatoa is relatively understudied, so it was awesome to have some experts visit to learn more about what's out there.

Overall, during the FUNNZ visit some 154 observations of 60 different fungi species were recorded, and samples of fungi were also collected for further DNA analysis.

Participants also uploaded their observations to the national bio-recording network iNaturalist, contributing to overall knowledge of biodiversity in the Taranaki region.



A FUNGAL FORAY PARTICIPANT CHECKS OUT HIS COLLECTION DURING THE VISIT TO POUIATOA



Kiwi Supporting Kiwi

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



creative
brands of substance

Todd Energy Everett Park Fun Run a big success

What a way to celebrate East Taranaki Environment Collective's 20th birthday.

In June more than 250 people participated in the inaugural Todd Energy Everett Park Fun Run, making their way along a choice of three trail runs through the beautiful 85ha reserve 12km east of Inglewood.



Everett Park is a precious example of the podocarp forest that used to blanket the entire Taranaki ring plain, and is now the region's largest reserve outside our national park, Te Papakura o Taranaki.

These days it is administered by the Department of Conservation, which for the past three years has engaged ETEC to undertake pest control there in collaboration with Pukerangiora hāpu, which holds mana whenua over the area.

This work has proved so successful that late last year ETEC and Pukerangiora were named joint winners of the Environmental Action in the Community category at the annual Taranaki Regional Council Environment Awards.

That was worth celebrating – so it was decided to combine that success with the fact that this year ETEC is 20 years old, by inviting the Taranaki community to take part in the trail run through the park.

On a beautiful Sunday morning in June, participants ran and walked along a selection of 2.5km, 4.5km and 9km routes, with each finisher receiving a specially-made medal. The Oakura Volunteer Fire Brigade added to the atmosphere by offering participants BBQ sausages and coffee for a koha donation.

ETEC general manager Kat Strang says entry fees for the event raised more than \$5000, which will be used



HAPPY DAYS – RUNNERS THOROUGHLY ENJOYING THEMSELVES DURING THE TODD ENERGY EVERETT PARK FUN RUN.

to help fund work in Everett Park, which ranges from pest management operations to using the place for environmental education involving local schools.

“So we are delighted that the event has been a win-win for everyone – the community got to enjoy an incredible remnant of old-growth forest, our pest management operations will benefit from additional funding, and we got to celebrate ETEC reaching 20 years old.”

The fun run is almost certain to become an annual event, she adds.

Pest control hui a success

During autumn East Taranaki Environment Collective held its second annual pest control hui. More than 65 attended the event, which was held at Ngāti Maru iwi's Te Upoko o Te Whenua Marae.

The hui featured speakers from the Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Department of Conservation, and Tiaki te Mauri o Parininihi Trust amongst others. Talks included topics such as toxin choice, lure effectivity, volunteer management and possum control.

The following day, Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust hosted a field trip where attendees were able to learn how they run their halo project through various trapping methods.

This event is a great way for professionals in pest control throughout the Taranaki region to meet up and talk about what they have learnt through their 'on the ground' mahi over the past year.

In June ETEC also hosted a contractors evening, where our contractors and volunteers were able to ask any questions about their work. Such events are also important as they help create a network of helpers who can contact and assist each other when necessary.



TARANAKI KIWI TRUST PRESENTING AT PEST CONTROL HUI

Helping our iwi check out native koura

East Taranaki Environment Collective recently hosted a group of young people from Ngāti Mutunga in the Pouiatoa Conservation Area as part of the iwi's Kimihia Koura – a Curious Minds project that is studying our freshwater crayfish.

The group spent the night in the area, and during darkness they used torches to spotlight local streams and the Waitara River, searching for the koura. Nets were also placed at strategic locations to catch and then release eels as part of the study.

“We found heaps of good-sized koura, and also tuna (eels), bully and giant kokopu,” says the iwi on its website. “It was a special evening exploring the awa and staying the night.”

ETEC general manager Kat Strang, who accompanied the group and showed them around, says her involvement in the study was a welcome change.

“It was nice to be looking down into water instead of looking up into trees! But the event was also a reminder that our native biodiversity includes life both on land and in the water.”

Porotahi and Pororua Taranaki's miracle babies

Meet Taranaki's miracle babies – a pair of kiwi chicks whose story of survival has inspired local iwi Ngāti Maru to give them special names: Porotahi and Pororua.

Their story began during logging operations last year at the Mangaoapa forestry block east of Stratford. The block owner, Parininihi Ki Waitōtara, has partnered with East Taranaki Environment Collective, Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Te Kahui Maru and NZ Forestry in a research project into the impacts of pine harvesting operations on kiwi populations.

As a part of this research, five kiwi are carrying transmitters on their legs so their whereabouts can be monitored. One such kiwi, a male called Mapere, was incubating two eggs in his burrow when the logging started, so he abandoned the nest.

The researchers recovered the eggs and took them to the National Kiwi Hatchery Aotearoa in Rotorua in the hope they could continue to be incubated and hatch.

“But we didn't hold out much hope,” says Kat Strang, general manager of East Taranaki Environment Collective.

“The male had been away from the eggs for two nights so they were cold, and the eggs were quite young – normally kiwi eggs are collected when they are at least 40 days old to give them the best chance at artificial incubation. So we gave them a very low chance of survival.”

Despite all those odds, the two chicks hatched – and Porotahi has now been released into the Rotokare Scenic Reserve east of Eltham as a new ‘founding’ kiwi who will replenish the population with new genetics, while Pororua has been released in the Pouiatoa Conservation Area near Purangi.

But first he was taken to the Mangaoapa forest for a blessing ceremony as a way of welcoming him back to where he originally came from. Then a convoy of



MIRACLE BABY PORORUA PRIOR TO HIS RELEASE INTO THE BUSH AT POUIATOA

representatives from PKW, ETEC, NZ Forestry, Ngāti Maru and Ngāti Mutunga transported the bird to the Pouiatoa where it was released.

Ngāti Maru CEO Anaru Marshall says Porotahi translates to first severing, which represents the bird's first severing from its father when it fled the nest due to the forestry activity. And Pororua means second severing, representing the separation of siblings to spread the gene pool.

PKW Te Rau Matorotoro/Procurement Co-Ordinator Jenny Feaver says the adventure of the two little kiwi is a heartwarming story of how these taonga are capable of beating severe odds to survive.

“But we all still need to help our kiwi thrive. In this case, we know kiwi are happy to live and breed among pine plantations, but we need to know more about what happens before, during and after harvesting of the trees,” she says.

Catch, check and release season for our precious kiwi



Each year, an important period is known as the kiwi catch season – the most appropriate time to catch selected birds for such things as health checks or so they can be translocated to other parts of our country.

ETEC's ranger staff are highly skilled in handling kiwi, and therefore often lend a hand to help fellow conservation organisations during the kiwi catch season.

This year the team has headed to Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in Waikato, and to Rotokare Scenic Reserve east of Eltham where they helped catch kiwi for translocation to the Capital Kiwi Project, which is working to restore a large-scale wild kiwi population in Wellington.

Our ETEC rangers also needed to catch a few specially monitored kiwi in our own operational area for health checks – including the notoriously elusive Murf, who is usually ready to run for it when the rangers get too close. But after one false start the rangers got him and changed the battery on the transmitter attached to his leg. Murf was in good shape too, weighing in at a hefty 1.9kg.

THE NOTORIOUSLY ELUSIVE MURF, WHO RUNS FOR IT WHEN RANGERS GET TOO CLOSE

And further kiwi news: our rangers have recently been out deploying Acoustic Recording Devices (ARDs) in our expansion block to monitor the kiwi population. This is the southern part of our project area where the Save the Kiwi NZ Jobs for Nature funding allowed us to expand our mustelid trapping by another 5000 hectares.

Four years ago, we worked with Taranaki Kiwi Trust to carry out a survey in our proposed expansion block, deploying ARDs in 50 sites in the area. ARDs were deployed during the breeding season, when kiwi are calling most frequently, near pockets of native bush and areas of plantation forest.

ETEC is now repeating this survey methodology using the same ARD locations to monitor and compare any changes over the four-year period.

Many helpers make light work at Everett Park

It's awesome how many individuals and organisations are helping ETEC care for the beautiful Everett Park.

The Department of Conservation organised a planting day in the reserve. More than 400 trees were planted, with Te Ihowai helping dig the holes, and Todd Energy staff and Huirangi and Waitoriki schools planting the seedlings.

And a big thanks to ETEC sponsor Todd Energy for cooking up a fantastic barbecue.

In another event, engineers, geologists and environmental staff from Todd Energy took a break from their usual work to assist our team with resetting half of our GoodNature A24 rat traps in the reserve.

ETEC's predator control work in Everett Park is supported by Todd

Energy's sponsorship. Last year, our monitoring saw a 0% tracking tunnel rat index achieved through this mahi, which is down from 72% tracking rate before the traps were installed!

A crew of helpers from another of our sponsors- Ballance Agri -Nutrients - also recently joined ETEC for a volunteer day in Everett Park. The team assisted with resetting our A24 GoodNature traps in one half of the 85 hectare reserve.

These automatically resetting traps can kill up to 24 rats before they need resetting every three to six months. A number are installed throughout the project area, helping to keep our rat index low.

Thanks everyone – all your assistance is really appreciated.



HELPERS BUSY DURING A PLANTING WORKING BEE AT EVERETT PARK

Trap expansion to protect birds in the Pouiatoa

Way out in eastern Taranaki hill country there is the Pouiatoa Conservation Area, a 3900ha tract of land that, because it is so rugged and remote, is pretty much in its original state.

That makes it the perfect location for New Zealand's native bird species to thrive. But it is also the perfect environment for animal pests, particularly possums and rats. And that is why the Pouiatoa is predator trapped by the East Taranaki Environment Collective.

ETEC centres its operations on a 1000ha control area, which is where a population of North Island Kōkako were translocated a few years ago and have now settled and are breeding. Kōkako are particularly vulnerable to nest predation by rats and possums, so keeping these pest numbers low is key to their breeding success.

A major part of the pest control involves the placement of several hundred self-setting A12 possum and A24 rat traps supplied by the New Zealand company GoodNature.

Over the past year ETEC has been extending the A24 trap lines in the Pouiatoa, and infilling the spaces between to provide more robust rat control. Thanks to funding from the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund, we have been able to add 159 new traps to our 956-strong A24 trap network.

The A24 traps use gas canisters and a slow releasing bait, allowing them to reset automatically and kill up to 24 rats. In the Pouiatoa, these traps are rebaited and given fresh gas every 9 months.

ETEC offers a big thank you to the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund for helping fund this trap network expansion.

A big thank you also to this year's New Plymouth Boys High School prefects who spent a day in the Pouiatoa, re-setting traps. This work was carried out with the assistance of staff from the Taranaki Regional Council and Department of Conservation.



AN A24 RAT TRAP

Sponsors to the rescue for rat trap supply

East Taranaki Environment Collective receives help in so many different ways.



A perfect example is ETEC's supply of rat traps and tunnels for sale to the public for just \$10.

In recent years ETEC has been fortunate to be supplied these traps and tunnels by Towards Predator-Free Taranaki, the large-scale project launched in 2018 that aims to protect our region's plants and wildlife.

However funding for that project has come to an end, so ETEC has been working hard behind the scenes to make sure we can continue providing rat traps and tunnels to the community at no extra cost.

And we've been successful. So it is a big thank you to the following:

- Swiss-Belhotel International Hotels and Resorts for sponsorship assistance;

- Pest Control Solutions for supplying rat traps at a discounted price;
- TimberCo for donating time to cut and groove timber;
- New Plymouth MenzShed for assembling the tunnels.

All of this means that you can still buy rat traps and tunnels from us for the \$10. Just in time to deal to the traditional build-up of rat numbers over winter.

Thanks, Move Foundation

Each month, Taranaki real estate company Move donates a portion of sales income to a nominated charity. In March ETEC was the beneficiary, receiving \$533 which will be used to purchase lure for its mustelid traps. Thanks, Move.

SPONSORSHIP IS A MASSIVE HELP
IN RAT TRAP SUPPLY

Keeping an eye on our lizards

Lizards have recently been featuring in East Taranaki Environment Collective's activities.

During autumn ETEC rangers Olly Sleep and Halle Aish participated in a day of lizard monitoring at Rotokare Scenic Reserve east of Eltham.

Monitoring involved checking tree wraps and ground tiles, which are artificial refuges for geckos and skinks. The monitoring allows Rotokare to track the state of the lizard population within the fenced sanctuary.



THE COPPER SKINK RELEASED IN EVERETT PARK

Then a few weeks later Everett Park received a copper skink that had been salvaged from the big roadworks project on SH3 south of New Plymouth.

The New Zealand Transport Agency had been granted a wildlife permit by the Department of Conservation to allow for the search and relocation of lizards along the highway between Junction St and Mangorei Rd.

Lizard salvages such as this are undertaken to protect native fauna from the impact of habitat loss and displacement during road construction projects. And release sites for the lizards must also be carefully selected so they are ecologically appropriate.

Everett Park was chosen to be a release site for this work, not only due to its similarity to the source location, but also because of ETEC's pest control operations there, which now includes trapping for mice, a major introduced predator of our native lizards.



ETEC STAFFERS HELPING OUT AT ROTOKARE

Participating in the monitoring day was not only educational for our rangers, but was also in line with ETEC's policy of collaborating with and helping fellow conservation groups as much as possible. We also hope to carry out some of our own lizard monitoring within Everett Park and the Pouiatoa Conservation Area in the future.

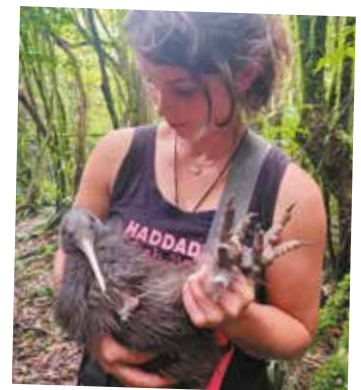
Halle is our new ranger

Introducing ETEC's new ranger, Halle Aish.

Halle holds a Bachelors degree in Ecology and Biodiversity from the University of Waikato. Before joining us she volunteered with the Pirongia Te Araoro ō Kahu Restoration society on Pirongia maunga and in Pureora forest, doing pest control and kōkako monitoring, and was a member of the committee board, focusing on improving their social media.

She also worked with Trees for Survival as a facilitator during her time at university, organising plantings with schools around Hamilton.

Halle also interned with ecological consulting company, Boffa Miskell, during the summer of 2024. There she was able to assist with research projects, surveys and salvages for various native species including long-tailed bats, native freshwater fish and a number of our native frog and lizard species.



HALLE AISH

Since joining ETEC Halle has quickly proved to be a valuable member of our team of rangers.

Kōkako sing a song of thanks to Methanex

Methanex New Zealand has been a major supporter of East Taranaki Environment Collective's effort to re-established a population of the endangered North Island Kōkako in Taranaki.



A CLOSE UP OF THE NORTH ISLAND KOKAKO,
HAPPILY LIVING IN THE POUIATOA

In 2018 the methanol manufacturer helped fund the translocation of several of the birds from Te Hautoro-o-Toi/Little Barrier Island to 1000 ha within the Pouiatoa Conservation Area. Since then, thanks to a solid campaign of pest management and predator control, the kōkako are thriving and breeding.

Methanex NZ has continued to support our kōkako project, helping fund not only the pest management operations but also ETEC's annual monitoring programme which takes place at the start of each nesting and breeding season.

So it was very pleasing this year when two Methanex teams visited the Pouiatoa, and were not only able to spot the rare bird in its natural environment, but also hear its distinctively clear organ-like song.

We think that was the ideal reward for representatives of a company that is a strong supporter of ETEC.



WAY UP IN A TREE THERE'S A KOKAKO, CLOSELY WATCHED BY METHANEX STAFF



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