

Kōkako Report, Tiritiri Matangi Island, 2015-2016 Season



Contractor: Morag Fordham

Breeding

The 2015-16 season turned out to be the most productive ever with 20 chicks successfully fledged. Although the season started with 13 pairs, by the end of the season we had 17 pairs and 15 of these attempted to breed. Two pairs who, in the past, have not tried to re-nest once their first attempts have succeeded, made second successful attempts. The earlier breeding birds started nesting at the beginning of October and we banded our last chick on 16 March.

The biggest upset was the breakup of Te Koha Waiata and Cloudsley Shovell who had been together since 1997 and produced over 20 chicks in this time. In late June, he was seen alone, at the edge of his territory, with an injured left leg (which healed shortly after). By early July, their grandson Bandit had paired up with Cloudsley Shovell and Te Koha Waiata was forced out of his territory.

A happier event was finding Poutama, who has remained single since he arrived on the Island in 2008, paired up with Tiara. He had a different mother to our other founder Taranaki birds. They produced one fledgling who will add new genes if he breeds.

The fortunes of the pairs in 2015/16 were as follows:

Bandit (JM-G) and **Cloudsley Shovell** (M-O): Cloudsley Shovell built two nests this season. The first nest produced one chick who disappeared around 10 days old. The second nest produced one fledgling: **Tioriori** (male, JM-WY).

Te Hari (YM-W) and **Phantom** (BW-M): In the past, once they have fledged a chick, they have not attempted to nest again that season. This season was different. Phantom's first nest produced **Sapphire** (male, JM-WW). Her second nest produced two more fledglings: **Haeata** (female, JM-WG) and **Wainene** (male, JM-WJ).

Chatters (RG-M) and **Te Rae** (OM-JO): Te Rae's first nest this season produced at least one chick but the nest failed a few days after hatching. One dead chick was found under the nest. Her second nest produced two fledglings: **Hemi** (male, RM-WR) and **Hohaia** (male, RM-JR).

Parininihi (OM-Y) and **Koha** (BM-R): Koha nested three times this season but all nests failed. This is the sixth season in which no eggs have hatched.

Noel (OM-R) and **Rehu** (OM-J): In past seasons, Rehu has not re-nested once she has fledged a chick. This season they produced **Hastie** (male, RM-GG) from the first nest and **Wynter** (female, RM-RJ) from a second nest.

Crown (GM-G) and **Pureora** (GM-R): Although Pureora built two nests this season she only used the second one. For the first time ever they successfully fledged two chicks: **Kanti** (female, GM-RW) and **Te Kaiwaiata** (female, GM-RJ).

Kikorangi (OM-G) and **Mawhero** (GM-W): Mawhero built three nests this season but did not use the first one. Her second nest failed but they produced **Wairua** (female, RM-RG) from the third nest.

Bariki (OM- RJ) and **Lucky** (unbanded): As usual, Lucky (along with her daughter Hinerau) was one of the first birds to nest this season. The first nest produced **Carter** (male, RM-JJ) and the second nest produced **Lydia Ko** (female, RM-GR) and **Parirau** (female, RM-RY).

Takara (OM-YB) and **Aria** (JM-Y): Unfortunately Aria decided to nest over the cliff this season. The nest was successful and produced one fledgling who is unbanded, gender unknown.

Puoho (RM-Y) and **Terewai** (RM-G): This season they had three nesting attempts. The first nest produced one chick who was too big to band when the nest was visited. The second nest failed and was found to contain two broken eggs. The third nest was abandoned round about the expected hatching time.

Miharo (JM-R) and **Mere** (RM-YJ): In their second season together this pair had four nesting attempts. The first nest failed and the second nest was abandoned part way through the incubation period. When checked it was empty so perhaps it was predated. The third nest was also abandoned during incubation but was found to contain broken eggs. Their fourth nest produced one fledgling who remains unbanded because the poorly built nest began disintegrating and the chick fledged early.

Sarang (W-M) and **Discovery** (GM-RY): This young pair didn't nest in their first season together, but this time round Discovery built one nest which produced **Indigo** (male, GM-RG). He is the first offspring of a Mapara/ Waipapa pairing on the Island and combines the genetic heritage of Te Koha Waiata and Cloudsley Shovell with that of Crown and Pureora.

Tupoki (RM-GW) and **Hinerau** (RM-JY): Another young pair who didn't nest in their first season together. Hinerau appears to be an early nester like her mother Lucky, as she started building her first nest at the same time, but this failed. The second nest produced a chick or chicks who disappeared after a few days, possibly predated. Hinerau abandoned the third nest she was building and instead relined her first nest of the season which produced **Korihi** (male, RM-YR).

Poutama (OM-W) and **Tiara** (RM-WJ): This was their first season together. At two years old, Tiara is a young bird who has paired up with a very much older but inexperienced male. She took a long time to build her first nest but this failed. The second nest produced **Maui** (male, RM-RW) who will add new genes to the Taranaki lineage if he is recruited into the breeding population.

Taitoko (RM-JG) and **Freedom** (RM-YG): Although Freedom is one of last year's fledglings (Bariki and Lucky's offspring) she paired up with Taitoko (Takara and Aria's offspring) who is only two years old. They have a small territory squeezed in between three other pairs (Pouho and Terewai, Bandit and Cloudsley Shovell and Tupoki and Hinerau). Despite being only a year old she started to build a nest but didn't finish it. She then completed another nest and incubated but this failed. It was found empty so it was possibly predated. Freedom started to build a third nest but did not complete it.

Hotu (RM-J) and **Aquarius** (RM-GJ): Hotu (Bariki and Lucky's son) and Aquarius (Kikorangi and Mawhero's daughter) are both two years old. They appear to have established a territory in between Chatters and Te Rae and Takara and Aria. They did not attempt to nest this season.

Flieder (RM-W) and **Narangi** (RM-WG): Flieder, a single male (2011-2012 season) has had a territory at the northern end of the Island for a couple of years. Narangi, who is two years old, paired up with him later in the season. Unfortunately they are both Bariki and Lucky's offspring.

Single Birds

Te Koha Waiata (male, Y-RM) has been seen from time to time along the Cable Track, Ridge Road and Graham's Road.

The two Waipapa males, **Slingshot** (GM-WR) and **Tawa** (GM-J) remained together in Bush 21 and **Waipapa** (GM-Y), the only single Waipapa female, is settled in and around Lighthouse Valley. **Awatea** (RM-YW), a two year old female also frequents Lighthouse Valley and has been seen with Waipapa.

Rimu (male, GM/-) who is more secretive and harder to see than most, was seen once in July 2015.

The other two 2014/15 fledglings, **Royal** (female, GM-JY) and **Kahu** (male, RM-YY) have both been seen throughout the season. Kahu is regularly seen round the Visitor Centre area.

We have around 62 kōkako in residence, 32 males, 27 females and three unbanded chicks, gender unknown. Depending on how many survive over the next few months it will be interesting to see how many new pairs form and where they set up territories.

Summary of transfers to/from the Island

There have been no transfers to or from Tiritiri Matangi this season.

Birds assumed to be present at the finish of the breeding season (March 2016)

Pairs					
Males	Bands	Females	Bands	2015-16 fledglings	Bands
Bandit	JM-G	Cloudsley Shovell	M-O	Tioriori (m)	JM-WY
Te Hari	YM-W	Phantom	BW-M	Sapphire (m)	JM-WW
				Haeata (f)	JM-WG
				Wainene (m)	JM-WJ
Chatters	RG-M	Te Rae (T1)	OM-JO	Hemi (m) (T2)	RM-WR
				Hohaia (m) (T2)	RM-JR
Parininihi (T1)	OM-Y	Koha	BM-R	no offspring	
Noel (T2)	OM-R	Rehu (T2)	OM-J	Hastie (m) (T2)	RM-GG
				Wynter (f) (T2)	RM-RJ
Crown (W)	GM-G	Pureora (W)	GM-R	Kanti (f) (W)	GM-RW
				Te Kaiwaiata (f) (W)	GM-RJ
Kikorangi (T2)	OM-G	Mawhero (W)	GM-W	Wairua (f) (W/T)	RM-RG
Bariki (T2)	OM-RJ	Lucky (T2)	Unb.	Carter (m) (T2)	RM-JJ
				Lydia Ko (f) (T2)	RM-GR
				Parirau (f) (T2)	RM-RY
Takara (T2)	OM-YB	Aria	JM-Y	1 x unbanded	
Pouho (T2)	RM-Y	Terewai (T2)	RM-G	1 x unbanded	
Miharo	JM-R	Mere (T2)	RM-YJ	1 x unbanded	
Sarang	W-M	Discovery (W)	GM-RY	Indigo (m) (W)	GM-RG
Tupoki (T2)	RM-GW	Hinerau (T2)	RM-JY	Korihi (m) (T2)	RM-YR
Poutama (T1)	OM-W	Tiara (f) (T2)	RM-WJ	Maui (m) (T2)	RM-RW
Taitoko (T2)	RM-JG	Freedom (T2)	RM-YG	no offspring	
Hotu (T2)	RM-J	Aquarius (W/T)	RM-GJ	no offspring	
Flieder (T2)	RM-W	Narangi (T2)	RM-WG	no offspring	
Single Birds				<p>Key (T1) = 50% Taranaki (T2) = 25% Taranaki (W) = Waipapa</p>	
Males	Bands	Females	Bands		
Te Koha Waiata	Y-RM	Waipapa (W)	GM-Y		
Slingshot (W)	GM-WR	Awatea (T2)	RM-YW		
Tawa (W)	GM-J	Royal (W)	GM-JY		
Rimu (W)	GM/-				
Kahu (T2)	RM-YY				

Future actions

We shall continue to manage the population to optimise its genetic composition, for the benefit of the Taranaki birds and the long-term Tiritiri Matangi population.

It is anticipated that, providing the levels of pest species at Paraninihi in Taranaki remain low, and the permit is approved, we will be moving kōkako off Tiritiri Matangi to that site in August and September 2016.

There has been no progress with the captive programme proposed by the Zoo Association, under which the island/captive population will be managed as a single unit. Consequently, any planned actions relating to that programme are currently on hold.

In the longer term, it remains important to find ways of increasing the genetic diversity of the Tiritiri Matangi population. In our view, egg swaps are the best way of doing this if they can be arranged.

Acknowledgements

It was a great help having our trained volunteers available again. With so many pairs to monitor we were rather stretched. Unfortunately, two of our volunteers, Sandra Whyte and Maureen Lander left the team early in the season due to other commitments. We were very sorry to lose them. At the end of the season Heidrun Schinke had to leave the team as she and her husband moved back to Germany. This was a great loss as Heidrun has made such a valuable contribution to the kōkako monitoring over the past few seasons. She will be missed very much. Yvonne Clarke very kindly did many extra days to help.

A special thank you to Kay Milton and John Stewart who have given up so much time, not only to do the field work and training of new volunteers, but to attend meetings and help with the paperwork and banding of chicks.

Many thanks to all our other volunteers who helped out on Tiritiri Matangi Island this season – Gina Wilson, Alison and Roger Bray, Alison Forbes, Geoff and Terri Beals, Karin Gouldstone, Hester Cooper, Jim and Chris Eagles, Val Lee, Yukiko Kojima, Kirstin Foster, Mary-Ann Rowland and our new volunteers, Chris Hannent, Dani Hefer, Kathryn Jones and Julie Scott. Getting out of bed before dawn to follow these wonderful, if somewhat elusive, birds through the bush and scrub of the Island can be a challenge, but it is rewarding when we do find those nests which sometimes produce fledged chicks.

We are also grateful to Ian Fraser from Auckland Zoo who maintains the Tiritiri Kōkako Studbook for us.

Thanks to our rangers, Dave Jenkins and Matt Mold for the use of vehicles and equipment when needed.

We appreciate having Conrad and Kirsten O'Carroll and their whanau from Ngati Tama, Taranaki provide us with a list of the names we use for the Taranaki chicks.

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