

Kōkako Report

Tiritiri Matangi Island

2023-2024 Season



Contractor: Morag Fordham

Season summary

The season started with 24 pairs. By December this had increased to 26 pairs. By the beginning of February this had dropped to 25 pairs when two neighbouring pairs separated. The female from the smaller territory paired up with the male from the larger territory leaving their respective partners single. The first nest was found on 23 September, and the season finished with the last chick fledging by 15 February.

This season there were 38 known active nests. Eleven pairs renested after failing, and one pair renested unsuccessfully after fledging one chick. Ten of our established pairs were unsuccessful this season. The other twelve established pairs were successful and produced all of the thirteen fledged chicks, including one unbanded fledgling. Only one of these pairs successfully fledged two chicks.

Although 14 chicks were banded, only 12 of these fledged. We now have four female fledglings, eight male and one unbanded, sex unknown.

Productivity this season was lower than the average since 2010 (see Table 1, p.6), but not as low as in the previous season.

Our oldest bird who would have been 26 in November has not been seen this season and is presumed dead.

Details of breeding season

Hemi and Te Rangi Pai: For the fourth year running Te Rangi Pai and her brother Hemi had no successful nests. She was found lining a nest on 8 November and had started incubating by 14 November. Although chicks were due around the beginning of December she was still incubating one egg on 14 December, and had finally abandoned the nest by 17 December. Both birds were found building a new nest on 18 December but this was not completed and Te Rangi Pai was found building another nest on 21 December. She had started incubating by 27 December but this nest had failed by 16 January.

Wakei and Phantom: Phantom and her three-year-old grandson Wakei have now been together for two seasons. Phantom only nested once this season. She was found building on 6 November and by 24 November she was incubating. Their chick **Tuatahi** (male) had fledged by 16 January.

Chatters and Te Rae: They have been together since the 2007-08 season. Te Rae was found incubating on 23 November, but the nest containing two unbroken eggs had been abandoned when checked on 1 December. On 9 December it was confirmed that she was lining a new nest and by 19 December she was incubating. By 5 January they were feeding a chick, **Fonn** (male), who had fledged by 7 February.

Parininihi and Wairua: This was their fifth season together. Wairua only nested once. She was found building her nest on 13 November, and had started incubating by 23 November. By 17 December they were feeding their chick **Rōreka** (male) who was banded on 31 December. He had fledged by 16 January. The nest also contained one egg.

Noel and Rehu: They have been together since the 2010-11 season. Rehu's nest was found on 26 October and she was still building it on 1 November. By 7 November she was incubating but the nest had failed by 27 November. On 6 December Rehu was found incubating in a new nest. By 24 December they were feeding their chick **Kiseki** (male) who was banded on 7 January and fledged on 27 January. The nest also contained one egg.

Crown and Pureora: They have been together since being translocated from Pureora Forest in August 2008. Pureora and Crown were unsuccessful this season. Her nest was found on 29 November and she had started incubating by 6 December. The nest had failed by 29 December and when checked was found to contain three eggs.

Sarang and Discovery: They have been together since the 2014-15 season. Discovery had two nests this season. She was found incubating on 12 November but the nest had failed by 27 November. She was found incubating in a new nest on 7 December and they were feeding chicks by 24 December. Their two chicks **Rondo** (female) and **A Cappella** (female) were banded on 9 January and had fledged by 27 January.

Rimu and Honey: This was their seventh season together. Honey only nested once. She was found incubating on 16 December, and by 3 January they were feeding a chick or chicks. By 7 January the nest had failed. Their territory has been reduced as at least one other pair has moved into the area.

Tama and Shelly: This was their second season together. Shelly only nested once. She was found incubating on 5 November, and by 24 November they were feeding one chick, **Tāne** (male) who was banded on 1 December. He had fledged by 21 December.

Slingshot and Jenny: They have been together since the 2018-19 season. On 5 November Jenny was found building her nest and had started incubating by 19 November. By 7 December they were feeding a chick or chicks but the nest had failed by 13 December. The empty nest had been disturbed and predation is suspected. On 14 December she was found lining a new nest and had started incubating by 21 December. On 13 January two small chicks were confirmed and the poorly covered nest was given extra cover. By 24 January there was only one chick, **Nuka** (male) who was banded on 27 January. He had fledged by 15 February.

Hotu and Haeata: Haeata was found building her nest on 2 November and by 16 November she was incubating. By 6 December they had two chicks who were banded on 22 December. However, only **Wedel** (male) was seen after fledging around 3 January.

Rakataura and Aquarius: This was their sixth season together and once again they were unsuccessful. They are a frustrating pair to follow as a substantial part of their territory is inaccessible. As far as we know she only nested once this season. On 8 December she was found incubating in an old nest that she had refurbished. On 24 December they were feeding a chick or chicks but by 30 December the nest was empty and predation is suspected.

Ocarina and Dawn: This was Ocarina and his younger sister Dawn's third season together and once again they had no successful nests. Dawn was found incubating on 24 November but the nest had failed by 29 November. Her abandoned nest contained at least one egg and possibly two. She was found building a new nest on 7 December and had started incubating by 18 December. By 9 January the nest had failed.

Sapphire and Pūtōrino: This was their fifth season together and this time round they again fledged one chick. On 11 November Pūtōrino was found incubating but by 24 November the nest had failed. On 2 December she was found incubating and by 20 December they were feeding a chick. **Iorangi** (female) was banded on 1 January and by 24 January she had fledged.

Apato and Koto: Koto and Apato have been together since the 2018-19 season. On 25 October Koto was found incubating, but by 22 November the nest had been abandoned. It contained one large egg and one smaller egg. She was found lining a new nest on 24 November and had started incubating by 29 November. Although chicks were due by 16 December at the latest, Koto was still incubating three eggs on 22 December. By 24 December the nest had been abandoned.

Lyric and Waitangi: This was their fourth season together and once again they had no successful nests. Waitangi was found building a nest on 2 November and had started incubating by 17 November. By 14 December the nest had failed and on 15 December she was found lining a new nest. Waitangi had started incubating by 19 December, but the nest had failed by 28 December. It contained three broken eggs and predation is a possibility.

Bátor and Skye: Bátor is Te Hari and Phantom's three-year-old son and six-year-old Skye is Crown and Pureora's daughter. This was their third season together and they had one successful nest, fledging one chick. Skye was found refurbishing last year's nest and had started incubating by 29 November. By 18 December they were feeding one chick who had fledged by 24 January. As this nest could not be accessed we have one unbanded juvenile, sex unknown. It is hoped that we will be eventually be able to catch, band and sex this bird. The nest also contained one egg. The family were seen together on 11 February, but from 14 February Bátor has been repeatedly seen with Marihi. Skye was seen alone on 6 March and the fledgling has been seen, once, alone and away from that territory.

Tātākī and Erenora: Five-year-old Erenora and her three-year-old brother Tātākī are Chatters and Te Rae's offspring. This was their second season together and once again they had no successful nests. On 10 November Erenora was found incubating in a nest she had previously used when she was with Yindi. By 6 December the nest had failed. It contained two eggs and one broken egg which possibly contained a chick who failed to hatch. She was found building a new nest on 10 December and had started incubating by 14 December. By 5 January the nest had failed.

Haar and Oran: Five-year-old Oran, who is Rimu and Honey's daughter, is paired with her three-year-old brother Haar. This was their second season together and they successfully fledged one chick. Due to the nature of their territory, this pair is difficult to find and follow. Oran was found incubating on 12 November and by 24 November they were feeding their chick **Tūpari** (male) who was banded on 8 December. He had fledged by 23 December and continued to be fed mainly by Haar. By 31 December we suspected that Oran was incubating in a new inaccessible nest down the cliff. However by 20 January this had failed.

Te Kōkī and Hina: Te Kōkī is Hotu and Haeata's son and Hina is Chatters and Te Rae's daughter. This was their second season together and once again they were unsuccessful. Hina's nest was found on 25 November and by 30 November she was incubating. Although chicks were due by about 18 December, when checked on 26 December she was still incubating an egg. By 28 December she had abandoned the nest.

Honesty and Miro: Honesty is Ocarina and Skye's son and he was the last fledgling of the 2020-21 season. Miro is Noel and Rehu's daughter from the 2021-22 season. This was a new pairing as last season Honesty was paired with Joy. Miro was found building a nest on 25 November and was incubating by 7 December. By 27 December they were feeding a chick or chicks, but by 2 January the nest had failed. When checked it contained one broken egg and predation is suspected.

Awenga and Wai Ata: Awenga is Chatters and Te Rae's son from the 2021-22 season and Wai Ata is Sarang and Discovery's daughter from the 2020-21 season. This was their second season together and they had one successful nest. On 15 November Wai Ata was found building a nest. By 28 November she was incubating and by 17 December they were feeding two chicks. The chicks were banded on 31 December and were both seen in the nest on 11 January, but the nest was empty on 14 January and only one fledgling **Kiri** (female) has since been seen.

Rēkohu and Yindi: Yindi is Te Hari and Phantom's daughter from the 2018-19 season and Rēkohu is Slingshot and Jenny's son from the 2020-21 season. This was their second season together and they had one unsuccessful nest. On 10 December her nest was found at an early stage of building and by 18 December she was incubating. However the nest had failed by 23 December. It contained two broken eggs and predation is suspected.

Aweawe and Joy: Aweawe is Sapphire and Pūtōrino's son from the 2021-22 season and Joy is Te Hari (now deceased) and Phantom's daughter from the 2020-21 season. This was a new pairing as last season Joy was paired with Honesty. They have carved out a small territory bordering Rimu and Honey's territory. They had one unsuccessful nest. Joy was found lining a nest on 1 December and was incubating by 7 December. By 29 December the nest had failed and was found to contain one egg.

Whistles and Te Hia: Whistles is Waipapa (now deceased) and Shelly's son from the 2021-22 season. Te Hia is Apato and Koto's daughter from the 2020-21 season. She was paired with Tama for the 2021-22 season but they separated and she spent most of the following season on her own. This was a new pairing and they have a very small territory. They had two unsuccessful nests. Te Hia was found incubating on 19 November, but by 28 November the nest had failed. There was possible damage to the back of the nest indicating possible predation. On 29 November she was found building a new nest and was incubating by 7 December. They were feeding a chick or chicks on 23 December, but the nest had failed by 27 December.

Themba and **Marihi**: Themba is Rimu and Honey's son from the 2022-23 season and Marihi is Parininihi and Wairua's daughter from the 2020-21 season. Marihi had established a small territory near Bátor and Skye where Themba joined her this season. She was found lining a nest on 16 December but she was never seen incubating. When the nest was checked on 12 January it looked damaged and contained two broken eggs, suggesting predation. By 14 February Marihi was being seen with Bátor. Themba has remained in their old territory.

Other Birds

Probably due to the lack of available males, **Aroha** and **Atarau**, who are two of Sarang and Discovery's daughters from 2020-21 and **Dianella**, Parininihi and Wairua's daughter from the 2021-22 season, all remain single.

Luna, **Kopakopa**, **Kaiako** and **Awhi**, all young females from last season have also been sighted.

Sapphire and Pūtōrino's unbanded fledgling (UB9) from the 2022-23 season was caught, banded, sexed and named **Hēnare** (male). Since October he has constantly been seen with **Moana** (female) who is Tama and Shelly's daughter from last season. They have taken up residence around the area near the Implement Shed/top of Little Wattle Valley.

Sadly **Te Hari** (male), who turned 25 in November 2022 was last seen on 26 March 2023 and is now presumed dead.

Hanamichi (female) also from the 2022-23 season has not been seen since 2 April 2023 and is presumed dead.

Population summary

As far as we can tell, during the 2023-24 season we had a maximum of 61 adult kōkako on the Island, 27 males and 34 females. With the addition of this season's fledglings, this gives us, at the beginning of April 2024, a likely total of 74 (35 males, 38 females and one of unknown sex).

Future actions

In the longer term, we will continue to manage the population as best we can to optimise its genetic composition. Translocations both on and off the Island could continue to play a role in this, especially if there are other sites that wish to receive birds from us. If the opportunity arises we would also look at the possibility of egg swaps with the Hunua Ranges.

Season	Nesting females	Nests	FE	% FE	FP	% FP	YF	% YF	OU	No. fl.	Ave fl/nest	Ave fl /female
2010-11	5	12	8	66.7	2	16.7	2	16.7		2	0.17	0.40
2011-12	5	6	3	50.0	0	0.0	3	50.0		3	0.50	0.60
2012-13	9	15	9	60.0	2	13.3	4	26.7		6	0.40	0.67
2013-14	10	21	11	52.4	2	9.5	8	38.1		12	0.57	1.20
2014-15	11	16	5	31.3	6	37.5	5	31.3		5	0.31	0.45
2015-16	15	30	10	33.3	4	13.3	16	53.3		20	0.67	1.33
2016-17	16	30	17	56.7	2	6.7	11	36.7		13	0.43	0.81
2017-18	14	21	7	33.3	8	38.1	6	28.6		9	0.43	0.64
2018-19	12	26	8	30.8	11	42.3	7	26.9		10	0.38	0.83
2019-20	13	18	11	61.1	2	11.1	5	27.8		6	0.33	0.46
2020-21*	17	33	15	45.5	6	18.2	12	36.4		18	0.55	1.06
2021-22*	17	23	8	34.8	7	30.4	8	34.8		9	0.39	0.53
2022-23	21	37	19	51.4	7	18.9	8	21.6	3	9	0.24	0.43
2023-24	26	38	22	57.9	4	10.5	12	31.6		13	0.34	0.50
Totals		326	153	46.9	63	19.0	107	32.9	3	135	0.41	0.71

Table 1: Annual summary of kōkako nesting success/failure on Tiritiri Matangi since 2010

FE – Failed at egg stage, FP – Failed at pullus (chick) stage, YF – At least one young fledged, OU – Outcome unknown

*One female-female pair omitted from the figures for 2020-21 and 2021-22

Territorial pairs in 2023-24				Unpaired birds, March 2024			
Male	Bands	Female	Bands	Male	Bands	Female	Bands
Hemi	RM-WR	Te Rangi Pai	RM-GR	Hēnare	YM-JW	Aroha	YG-GM
Wakei	WM-YY	Phantom	W-M	Fonn	GY-WM	Atarau	WM-Y
Chatters	G-M	Te Rae	OM-JO	Kiseki	RW-WM	Awahi	YM-GY
Parininihi	M--	Wairua	RM-RG	Nuka	JY-WM	Dianella	GyM-GyR
Noel	M-R	Rehu	M-J	Rōreka	GW-WM	Kaiako	YM-GR
Crown	GM--	Pureora	GM-R	Tāne	GR-WM	Kopakopa	YM-GJ
Sarang	W-M	Discovery	GM-RY	Tuatahi	RG-WM	Luna	YM-GG
Rimu	M--	Honey	RM-YY	Tūpari	GyR-WM	Moana	YM-JR
Tama	RM-WG	Shelly	RM-R	Wedel	GyG-WM	A Cappella	JW-WM
Slingshot	M-WR	Jenny	-/RM			Iorangi	RR-WM
Hotu	M-J	Haeata	RM-W			Kiri	YR-WM
Rakataura	GM-W	Aquarius	RM-GJ			Rondo	YGy-WM
Sapphire	JM-WW	Pūtōrino	GM-JW				
Ocarina	RM-Y	Dawn	RM-GG				
Apato	GM-JR	Koto	RM-JG	One unbanded bird of unknown gender (Ub10)			
Lyric	WM-RY	Waitangi	GM-Y				
Bátor	WM-JR	Skye *1	GM-WW				
Tātākī	RM-YG	Erenora	RM-RY				
Haar	GM-RJ	Oran	GM-GY				
Te Kōkī	RM-JW	Hina	RM-Y				
Honesty	GM-YG	Miro	GyM-GR				
Awenga	GyM-GyY	Wai Ata	GM-RW				
Rēkohu	GM-YR	Yindi	WM-GG				
Aweawe	GyM-JY	Joy	WM-WY				
Whistles	GyM-GyG	Te Hia	WM-YW				
Themba *1	YM-GW	Marihi *2	RM- YW				

*1 Unpaired since February

*2 With Bator since February

Fledglings from 2023-24 are shown in green.

Table 2: Birds present at some stage during the 2023-24 season

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to the wonderful team of trained volunteers who, despite the often adverse weather, put in so many hours to find the nests, check on their progress and keep tabs on what the birds are up to: Kay Milton, John Stewart, Yvonne Clarke, Gina Wilson, Alison Forbes, Alison and Roger Bray, Karin Gouldstone, Kathryn Jones, Chris Hannent, Geoff and Terri Beals, Yukiko Kojima, Julie Scott, Val Lee, Luca Kornélia Kósa, Janet Petricevich, Simon Downer and Heidrun Schinke (a previous team member who made a special trip back from Germany to participate this season).

A special thanks to Kay Milton who does most of the paperwork and gives her time to attend meetings, and to John Stewart for his work on data recording, liaison with academic collaborators and, again, being our principal bander of chicks. Thanks to Simon Fordham for helping with the banding.

Thanks also to Kathryn Jones, Luca Kornélia Kósa, Janet Petricevich and Simon Downer who accessed most of our nests this season.

Thanks to Emma Gray, Darren Markin, JP Mower and John Sibley for helping us in several ways during the season. Thanks also to the many other SoTM members who gave us helpful sightings of individual birds.

Also thanks to Debbie Marshall and Gail Reichert who managed the often necessary changes to our ferry bookings.

Special thanks to the Chisholm Whitney Charitable Trust for funding a good portion of the kōkako management on Tiritiri Matangi Island and thanks to Constellation Brands NZ (CBNZ) for additional funding towards this project.

Thanks also to Explore Group for allowing us to travel free on the ferry, to DOC for allowing us to use the accommodation on the Island, and to our DOC rangers, Talia Hochwimmer and Keith Townsend, for their assistance and support when needed this season.