

BIRD CALL



October 2018 Issue 42

What's New at Orokonui

As a community-led, not-for-profit conservation project, 100% of the revenue that we generate here at Orokonui is used to protect, manage and enhance the significant biodiversity values within our 307 hectare fenced ecosanctuary. This is a big job and we need all of the help we can get, so we're always cooking up exciting new ways that you - our wider community - can get involved.

And now your support can be as simple as enjoying a delicious cup of coffee . . . An exciting new development at Horopito Café - the purchase of a coffee roaster - means that you can now source freshly roasted coffee beans, ground to your specific needs, here at Orokonui!

This is all down to a bright idea from our Café manager, Simon, who is passionate about coffee and has devoted a fair amount of his adult life to the pursuit of the perfect blend . . . he learned to roast at Astoria, has been bestowed awards for his skill as a barista, and has managed coffee houses in New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia.

After much experimentation, and rigorous testing by an experienced focus group (Orokonui staff) we're proud to bring you the Horopito Café house blend! We're serving up this delicious brew at the café now, so drop buy and sample a cup, and buy a bag to take home. Every coffee you drink supports our big vision here at Orokonui!

Amanda Symon - General Manager



Try the Horopito Café house blend today!

Conservation Matters

Unfortunately our resident takahē pair, Quammen and Paku, laid an infertile egg this year. Our DOC colleagues suggested that we remove the nest - this may encourage them to re-nest, and then hopefully produce a fertile egg on the second attempt. If this also proves to be infertile then we may be able to receive foster eggs from the Takahē Recovery Programme.

With the onset of spring, weed control has increased. On a weekly basis, over a large area of the sanctuary, 2 - 3 volunteer teams tackle a wide array of weeds including gorse, blackberry, flowering currant and Darwin's Barberry.

We are expecting our first kiwi chick in the crèche this week - all 360 grams of fluffy cuteness. Our predator free environment is the perfect place for these chicks to grow to a larger size (ideally 1.2kg or greater) at which they can defend themselves from stoats.

A trail camera got this great shot of a male and female kiwi in the sanctuary. Note the significantly longer bill of the female (on the right).

Elton Smith - Conservation Manager



Two Tokoeka kiwi enjoying an evening snack of grubs found in rotten logs.

Forest of Knowledge

Term 3 has been a very busy time with more than 1,500 students working with us! The Education Team has been enjoying delivering new programmes to schools incorporating invertebrate advocacy. This programme is designed to inspire our tamariki to view our native invertebrates as deserving love and respect and conservation efforts. By introducing the invertebrates to them as conscious individuals with names and personalities, and asking the children to be quiet and gentle when interacting with them, we aim to encourage empathy and understanding for these species and their important role in our ecosystems.

Mitre 10 Mega has kindly sponsored us equipment for our ongoing citizen science project, "Open Valley Urban Ecosanctuary", working with The Valley Project - 120 families and 9 schools in North East Valley. In celebration of this great collaboration, we hosted 16 workshops at Mitre 10 over the school holidays, promoting Orokonui Ecosanctuary and backyard biodiversity enhancing actions such as making birdfeeders, bug bungalows, lizard lounges and Trakka tunnels for pest detection!

As always, we are looking forward to hosting many more schools next term in our beautiful living classroom!

Tahu Mackenzie - Head Educator



Wow -amazing backyard biodiversity creations from the Mitre 10 workshops!

Volunteers' Voices

Last month was extremely busy with our superstar ambassador Sirocco the Kākāpō staying at Orokonui. A group of 30 volunteer guides, escorts and first aiders contributed a massive 423 hours to ensure our guests could share this thrilling opportunity. We have had great feedback from the public regarding the quality of guide work that our volunteers have achieved, and for this, we are very grateful.

Currently, the annual Lizard Survey is underway, led by Alister Robinson. This is the fifth year of the survey, which has volunteers checking ACOs (artificial cover objects) every two weeks, and counting the number of skinks and geckos found beneath them. This provides important data on the growth of the various lizard populations over time, and is an exciting opportunity for volunteers to get up close and personal with these amazing animals.

We have a new volunteer who is helping us to establish a top quality compost system in collaboration with our cafe staff. This volunteer is highly skilled in the area of composting, hence we will be recording the process, which we will share in our upcoming communication - so keep your eyes peeled! We also have exciting plans for our upcoming volunteer celebration, including an entirely unique and special Orokonui experience . . . volunteers will be the first to know these details upon their finalisation.

We are always keen to recruit new volunteers and would love to hear from anyone that might want to pitch in. Tasks to be completed range from admin, maintenance, track clearing, pest monitoring, nest box building and much more! If this sounds like you, or you feel you have special skills useful to Orokonui, please contact me on volunteer@orokonui.nz

Alice Macklow - Volunteer and Membership Coordinator



Volunteers from Red Cross NZ help to stack firewood to keep our Visitor Centre warm.

Wishlist

We are still desperately seeking your unwanted whiteware . . .

A fridge for the café - good working order, 370 litre capacity or greater

An upright freezer for the café - good working order, 370 litre capacity or greater

A small (bar sized) fridge for the volunteers' quarters

A metal bucket with a lid to collect ashes from the fire for our compost - preferably around 10 litre capacity, with a lid

Kā mihi nui ki a koe (a big thanks) to

Gordon Tocker for the lovely rotting logs which our kākā and kiwi enjoy foraging in!



Open Daily 9.30am-4.30pm for Guided Tours and Self Guided Walks
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