#31
DECEMBER 2025

TīTī Times

KOTAHITANGA ISSUE

Meri Kirihimete Tītī Whānui

Rakiura Tītī Islands ADMINISTERING BODY
Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research
UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND Waipapa Taumata Rau NEW ZEALAND

Kā tangi te tītī.
Kā tangi te kākā.
Kā tangi hoki ahau.
Tihei mauriora.

The tītī is calling.
The kākā is calling,
and I wish to call.
Behold for there is life.

Contents

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Foreword image: *Morgan Coleman (Landcare Research..*

ISSN 2463-2961 (Print) ISSN 2463-297X (Online)

Kupu Whakataki/Foreword

Editorial

From Co-Chairs Jane and Corey

As we head toward Christmas, we hope you're feeling full of optimism for the New Year and the upcoming Tītī season.

This edition of Tītī Times is packed with stories that celebrate our people and our mahi. We feature a beautiful look back in history with one of our oldest active birders, Rosalie Foggo, who at 86 still gets into the pluckhole with her whānau!

There is an inspiring piece from Poutama's Manukau–Spurr whānau, who have reclaimed their place on this treasured motu, selling their tītī and building connections throughout Aotearoa.

Plenty is happening at the committee level, too. Inside, you'll find updates on the Constitution and Bylaws review, and the appointment of a new Work Programme Co-ordinator.

We also have some fascinating science updates and profiles, including work on taupata, anklet trematodes, new rat toxins, and burrow densities.

We were thrilled to see such a great turnout at the mid-year hui in September, with many attendees from the Beneficial Islands. Recently, the two tītī committees met to explore ways of working more closely together on shared issues.

You can also read about a hui our committee members attended with local government and agencies, where we discussed future joint strategies for managing taupata. Their support and commitment were heartening.

Important reminder: Permit Day is on 14 February 2026. We're encouraging whānau to submit permits online to streamline the process. You'll find the link on the website: https://rakiuratitiislands.nz/.

From us to you and your whānau—Meri Kirihimete and may the 2026 season be an absolute cracker!

Pride of Poutama

How A Pair Of Unlikely Birders Came To Be Sharing Tītī With Aotearoa

The Manukau-Spurr whānau are relative newcomers to the practice of birding, but their journey is deeply rooted in rekindling ancestral traditions. By embracing the legacy of their tūpuna and reconnecting with their manu, Poutama, they have revived cherished family customs that had lain dormant for generations. Through their commitment, the whānau honour their whakapapa and ensure that the cultural heritage of muttonbirding continues to thrive.

Stuart has a degree in commerce and management but chooses to work on a commercial trawler and crayfishing boat, fishing his ancestral waters around Ōtākou. Frankie is an educator at an eco resort on the Otago Peninsula, is fluent in te reo and knowledgeable in all things te ao Māori. Two of their children Levi (28) and Aurora (17) are active birders and continue to encourage the rest of their children to learn their way of life.

The Manukau-Spurr whānau's rights to Poutama come to them through Vera Spurr (Jose), Stuart's mother. 'We get our whakapapa from Tukuwaha who married Captain William Thomas and became Mary Thomas,' says Stuart. 'It would have been a strategic marriage as he had a ship and muskets at a time when the threat of Te Rauparaha was very real. Tukuwaha was the niece of the King of the Bluff our Upoko Ariki, Tuhawaiki or Bloody Jack. He gave Poutama to her and they planted a flax bush in the centre of Poutama to mark this. Harakeke does not naturally grow on Poutama.'

Stuart and Frankie's whānau have only been birding since 2001. Before them, Stuart's Grandfather's Mother, Blanche Flint, was the last to bird Poutama. 'We had a 75-year gap in our direct family line birding Poutama until our tupuna guided us back,' says Stuart. Then a chance meeting with Paul Barrett at a fish factory in Timaru reconnected them to Poutama. Today the Manukau-Spurr whānau are the only ones who remain on Poutama for the whole season; most of the others are only able to make it for the torch.

Harvesting tītī is the essence of what makes us Kāi Tahu,' says Stuart. 'Our tupuna birded to sustain themselves through the extreme southern winters as it was too cold to grow kumara south of Te Pataka o Rakaihautū (Banks Peninsula). Any excess tītī were traded with northern iwi. Nothing has changed really, this is still what we do today. 'We feel a strong connection to our tupuna while on Poutama,' says Stuart. 'We believe that the overlap of Te Ao Marama (the land of the living) and Rarohenga (the spiritual world) is much thinner on our sacred islands. We feel the tupuna everywhere on Poutama, watching over us and guiding us.'

Poutama Titi

Pride of Poutama Muttonbirds

The Pride of Poutama logo was designed by Dunedin-based Kāi Tahu artist, Joseph Wealleans.

Levi Spurr in the pluckhouse.

The Manukau-Spurr whānau sell tītī to the whole of Aotearoa. 'The power of Facebook and social media has made our toaka (treasure) tītī easily accessible to everyone.' The vast majority of their customers are North Island Māori. 'The demand for tītī is incredible!, says Stuart. 'When we first started birding we wondered how and who we would sell them to, but we very quickly discovered that when you have muttonbirds people hunt you down. There are so many emotions and memories associated with muttonbirds, they are the most sought-after kai in te ao Māori. We have built countless meaningful strong long term relationships with our many customers.'

Since 2012, Pride of Poutama has used a Facebook page and website to connect whānau across Aotearoa with their tītī, especially after a bountiful season. Social media has enabled many, including kaumatua, who previously struggled to find tītī, to relive cherished memories and share this taoka with loved ones. The expanded reach of Pride Of Poutama has benefited numerous Rakiura Māori whānau. Pride of Poutama approaches the sharing of their tupuna's mātauraka with deep respect and mindfulness, recognising the responsibility that comes with it as the internet has made once-private traditions more visible.

Innovative methods like bucket stickers have helped spread the word—families often repurpose their empty buckets, prompting conversations about where to find tītī among visitors. The name Pride of Poutama reflects the pride and joy in sharing their treasured tītī with others, knowing the happiness it brings to many.

One tītī delicacy Stuart and Frankie particularly enjoy sharing with the old people is tītī puk(u) (Kāti Mamoe dialect). It is made using a traditional process where the tītī gut remains fermenting inside the carcass. 'The bird is cleaned up the same as normal,' says Stuart, 'and we cut the head and wings off and add a small amount of salt to the area these were removed from. The birds are left to rot in a bucket.' The process can be sped up if the bucket is left in the hot water cupboard. When the bucket blows they are ready! The customer then removes the guts before cooking as normal. 'It's old people who crave these as they have happy memories of eating them with their loved ones in years gone by, says Stuart. And he adds that they only make tītī puk to order, as it is an acquired taste!

Catching and working tītī is very hard mahi (work), but selling them is even harder. 'The amount of time and effort required to market, process payments, package, prepare them for freighting and dispatch is crazy, it can be very stressful,' says Stuart. 'Another reason we do what we do is manaakitaka, or helping others, including customers and other birders. Providing our unique toaka to our customers is very rewarding. The stories we hear and the connections we make are heartwarming. Many of our customers give their birds away. We too give many birds and buckets away to worthy causes, to help others in te ao Māori who are

striving to whakamana (uplift) themselves and others. We get great satisfaction in giving a kai (feed) to koroua (elders) in the community.'

Kaitiakitaka is paramount to Stuart and Frankie. 'Everything we do is about ensuring the tītī flourish forever. There are so many things we do to protect our turakawaewae (connection to our homeland), Poutama,' says Stuart. This includes ensuring no new pests enter the island (whether they are vermin or pest plants), track clearing, educating others and rubbish removal. 'Today we work with the the Manaaki Whenua Scientists to help ensure the sustainability of tītī is through eradication of the weka, which were introduced in the 1920's as kai.'

The Manukau-Spurr's latest project is thanks to the Bull Family. 'We were very blessed in December 2024 when Oraka-Aparima rūnaka flew us to Raratoka (Centre Island), off the coast of Riverton. The Crown returned this sacred island which had been confiscated, as part of our Treaty settlement. It had been used as a lighthouse station and a cow grazing paddock, destroying the native flora and fauna.'

Aurora Spurr nanao(ing) tītī.

Getting ready to load the gear onto the San Nicholas in Bluff

The Bulls, as a labour of love, have been transplanting tītī island rākau (trees) to Raratoka. These rākau have resulted in the return of the tītī. The cow paddock is very slowly becoming manu. We are trying to replicate what the Bulls have done where we live at Ōtākou. We too have small colonies of tītī, not just on the Otago Peninsula but in the whole Otago coastal region. We have begun engaging with key rūnaka members and local eco sanctuaries to slowly plant tītī island trees to help encourage the tītī to return to the Mainland.

Kia whakakapi i ka whāwhārua ā ō tātou tūpuna.

Kia mau tonu te mahi, Stuart and Frankie.

Frankie Manukau-Spurr carrying tītī in hui.

Tītī. Puk — Keeping old traditions alive (rotten gut in mutton birds)

The Manukau-Spurr whare on Poutama.

Working birds — Levi and Vera de-waxing and Stuart cutting.

Stuart Manukau-Spurr and Aurora Spurr during the rama out torching.

Left: Aurora Spurr with her very first bucket.

Right: Stuart Manukau-Spurr ready to nanao.

Below: Stuart Manakau-Spurr nanao-ing.

Trows Recognised For Their Outstanding Contribution To Conservation

Everyone is delighted to see Russel and Teresa recognised for their passion and commitment to giving some of our most vulnerable bird species a chance to thrive.

This is the story as it appeared in the Southland Times.

Long before predator eradication became a national priority, Russel and Teresa Trow had devoted themselves to protecting and restoring native biodiversity on Kundy Island and across the wider Tītī Islands.

The couple's commitment, spanning more than 40 years, has been acknowledged with their selection among the Tower Local Hero Medallists award.

Russel and Teresa Trow. Picture by Kerri Topi.

This puts them among 100 medallists who, in turn, form a pool from which the New Zealander of the Year Awards draw.

The Trows had recognised the threat posed by invasive weka and led painstaking work to remove them, creating a safe haven for taonga species such as tīeke (saddlebacks) and mātātā (fernbirds).

Kundy has now become "a thriving sanctuary and a vital source for repopulating other islands and even mainland sanctuaries like Orokonui", their citation reads.

"The Trows have pioneered bird transfer techniques, mentored others and modelled collaborative conservation."

This had transformed relationships between local birders, iwi and government agencies.

"Their decades of hands-on, voluntary effort have helped bring back endangered species, inspired trust and partnership, and shown the power of community-led conservation to restore ecosystems for generations to come.

Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body — Review of the Bylaws and Constitution

Report following a presentation from Renata Davis at the RTIAB mid-year hui on 20 September 2025

The RTIAB is beginning a formal review of the Constitution and Bylaws that guide the governance and management remain up to date, reflect the aspirations of whānau, and continue to meet legal requirements.

Before the Ngāi Tahu Settlement (1998), the ex-Crown islands were managed by the Department of Conservation. Following settlement, the islands were vested in Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, with management transferred to the RTIAB, which is required to manage the islands as if they are a nature reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

A Constitution and Bylaws were created in 2005 to set the rules for governance and harvesting. These have not been comprehensively reviewed since.

The Constitution sets the rules for how the RTIAB operates. It covers:

- The objects of the RTIAB
- Appointment and removal of members
- Procedures for hui and general meetings
- Powers and duties of the RTIAB
- Financial matters

The Bylaws set out the rules for managing and using the Rakiura Tītī Islands. They cover areas such as:

- Entry and permits (for whānau, spouses, and non-Rakiura Māori)
- Harvesting rules (e.g. no clubs, fences, pens, or dogs)
- Dogs, firearms, biosecurity, and buildings
- The role of supervisors
- Breaches and enforcement

It has been nearly 20 years since these documents were first created. Some provisions no longer reflect current practice or whānau expectations. Updating them will ensure they are modern, workable, and aligned with the Reserves Act 1977.

Final to changes the Constitution and Bylaws must be approved by the Minister of Conservation. These changes must firstly be approved by Rakiura Māori at a general or special meeting, and consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is required.

The review process involves the following steps:

1. Kick-off kōrero – a conversation was started with whānau at the mid year hui on 20 September 2025.
2. Initial feedback – whānau will be asked to share early thoughts and priorities.
3. Detailed legal review – Kāhui Legal will review the documents and discuss findings with RTIAB.
4. Draft amendments – Kāhui Legal will then prepare updated drafts.
5. Wānaka with whānau – proposed amendments will be shared, and more feedback will be gathered.
6. Revised drafts – changes will be made to reflect whānau input.
7. Consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu will be undertaken.

The approval process will involve the following steps:

1. The updated Constitution will be presented for approval by Rakiura Māori at an AGM or special meeting.
2. The updated Bylaws will be presented to the Minister of Conservation for approval.

Whānau are encouraged to be actively involved throughout the process. You can:

- Provide feedback now on what in your view works, what doesn't, and what should change.
- Reflect on the following key questions:
  - What's most important for governance of the islands?
  - What's working well under the current rules?
  - What could be improved?
  - If you could change one thing about how the islands are managed, what would it be?
- Join wānaka (dates tbc) to discuss proposed changes.
- Participate in hui where final decisions will be made.

From here, slides from the Mid Year Hui (presented by Renata Davis from Kahui Legal) will be sent to whānau and posted online. Kāhui Legal will complete a detailed review and report back to RTIAB. A wānaka with whānau will be held to discuss draft changes (date tbc).

Feedback can be sent directly to Renata Davis – renata@kahuilegal.co.nz. This review is a chance for whānau voices to shape how the islands are governed for the future. Your kōrero and whakaaro are essential!

RTIAB Mid Year Hui — September 2025

Judging by the turn out our Mid-Year Hui is as popular as Permit Day.

This year's hui at Murihiku was very well attended and everyone was very engaged with the presentations.

It was also heartening to see everyone chatting and sharing stories and experiences about birding with each other. The hui also gave the RTIAB a chance to receive feedback on their mahi.

Our whanau took a chance to catch up informally with the Tītī Island researchers from Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, which is now known as the Bioeconomy Institute.

This year we had more beneficial birders attend, which was great as they are keen to hear updates on the science and management programmes.

We also formally thanked Tane Davis for his outstanding contribution to the RTIAB as chair.

The Davis whanau contribution remains strong with Tane who is still an active member along with two of his sons, Kayne and Riki who also serve on the committee.

The format, food and whānau made for a very worthwhile day.

Tina Nixon
RTIAB Member

Recently-departed RTIAB board member Tane Davis and his wife Leanda.

Lots of mahi being done at the 2025 Mid-Year Hui.

Taupata Update

We aren't alone in our battle with taupata.

Recently the two tītī island governing bodies - the Rakiura Tītī Committee and the Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body got together with a range of staff from local government and central government agencies to discuss the threat taupata poses to our motu. The meeting was very positive and heartening.

All agencies expressed a willingness to help as taupata is also causing concern in some areas on the mainland. One of the issues is that it is a native and current legislation to give a plant pest status doesn't really cope with a harmful native species in the wrong place. Although it was acknowledged that getting taupata recognised as a pest species will be a challenge, people should be discouraged from using it wherever they can while we work on a legislative fix.

As we have been researching it for four years, the agencies acknowledged our two tītī governing bodies probably had a lot of very useful information to assist them which they will readily share. They commended us on the depth of our research.

To this end, the two tītī committees and the agencies, DOC and Environment Southland, will develop a communications strategy and a plan to get Southlanders to understand the threat taupata poses and provide further information on how they can help us and the endangered species.

We are confident that when Southlanders realise the impact taupata has they will help in any way they can.

Taupata Facts

- Taupata is a serious threat to our islands which are not just home to tītī but many endangered species.
- Taupata is a native which is in the wrong place and destroys our tītī's natural habitats.
- One of the worst impacts is that it turns the soil to dust and creates dense thickets.
- Taupata spreads via seed dispersal but is a popular plant in the Southern area, often used for hedging.
- The guano-rich soil of our islands is like anabolic steroids for taupata.
- Manaaki Whenua have been researching taupata for about four years so are gaining a good understanding of why it has been so successful and how to kill it.

Attendees at the mid 2025 taupata hui.

Tītī Islands Rodent Dog Surveillance: March–May 2025

Biosecurity Check Summary – Making Sure the Islands Stay Rodent-Free

Who Was Involved?

This season, Sandy King (with Mawson & Gadget) and Karen Andrew (with Mica) ran rodent dog checks for the Tītī Islands. They worked from mid-March to mid-May 2025, making sure that the 32 out of 36 rodent-free islands around Rakiura / Stewart Island stayed that way.

Why Do We Do This?

Each year, loads of gear, food, and supplies head to the islands for the tītī (muttonbird) harvest, which runs from 1 April to 31 May. Access starts 15 March so birders can get ready. With so much coming and going—by boat, chopper, and even private fishing vessels—there's always a risk that rats or mice might hitch a ride. The project, started in 2018 by the Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body, uses trained dogs to sniff out any unwanted rodents before anything leaves the mainland.

Project Goals

- Keep rodent-free islands free of pests.
- Encourage everyone involved to think "biosecurity first."
- Spread good pest-prevention habits to the wider community.

Where and How

- Most checks happened at Te Anau Heli hangar, Ocean Beach, Bluff, Invercargill Airport, and Halfmoon Bay wharf.
- Teams worked over 36 days, often travelling several hours for inspections.

Boat Checks

- ·14 different boats were inspected, with one checked three times.
- No live rodents or fresh scent found on boats or gear.
- Dogs indicated on 10 loads—these turned out to be old, lingering smells, not actual rodents.
- Some boats left without telling us, so we probably missed a few departures.
- It's much easier to check gear on the wharf before it's packed tight on a boat.
- Bait stations were checked and refreshed, but many started the season empty or with old, useless bait. Regular replacement is a must, especially if things get wet.

Helicopter Checks

- 142 chopper flights to the islands were notified; 124 were checked.
- Not every flight day was covered, but we hit most departures across multiple locations.
- Bait stations were set up in hangars and storage rooms, but mice were still found at all heli departure points.
- Dogs picked up on five loads of personal gear with possible rodent scent.

Other Risks

- Dried vegetation, seeds, and soil (often stuck under cages) can also be a biosecurity risk.
- At Rakiura Shipping's Bluff shed, both rat and mouse signs were found—the longer gear sits there, especially overnight, the higher the risk.
- Sometimes, boats are loaded but wait on the wharf for hours (even overnight) before leaving, which is when stowaway rodents could get on board after inspection.

How We Tell If There's a Problem

The dog handlers use their knowledge of their dogs and ask questions about when and how gear was packed to figure out if a dog is alerting to a live rodent or just an old scent. Mice are everywhere at helicopter sites, so gear needs to be stored in proper, rodent-proof containers—especially overnight. This season, a planned rodent-proof container for the Ocean Beach hangar didn't show up in time, but it's a good idea for the future.

Community and Teamwork

Birders, vessel operators, truck drivers, and crane operators were all helpful and open to working with the dog teams—often unloading gear for inspection and sharing info about upcoming departures. The response to the project was positive and supportive all round.

Recommendations for Next Season

1. Put rodent-proof containers in every hangar for storing gear overnight (as planned for Ocean Beach, but make sure they're in place on time).
2. Make sure bait stations have fresh bait in the lead-up to the season and check them regularly.
3. Keep pushing good biosecurity habits:
4. Use rodent-proof containers, especially for food.
5. Clean and check containers and gear for rodent signs before packing.
6. Pack as close as possible to departure time and keep bags closed.
7. Don't leave gear sitting at the loading site—especially not overnight.
8. Try to get gear inspected as near as possible to actual departure.
9. Help the dog teams by keeping other dogs away during inspections.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who made this work possible: the Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body, the Tītī Committee, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the Department of Conservation, Stewart Island Experience, boat crews, chopper pilots, truck drivers, office staff, and all the whānau and helpers. Special thanks to those offering accommodation and support, and to everyone who welcomed Karen's apprentice Kiah during checks. The ongoing enthusiasm and commitment from the Rakiura Māori tītī whānau makes this all possible—ngā mihi nui!

Mica.

Science Profile — Jo Carpenter

Jo Carpenter is a conservation ecologist at Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, based in Dunedin. She spends her time researching threatened species – mainly birds, but also sometimes frogs and lizards – and how best to conserve them. She always works to understand what drives invasive species like rats and mice so that we can better manage them. She is particularly interested in the important functions that species carry out in ecosystems like seed dispersal or litter decomposition and whether these processes can be restored. Her PhD was on whether the extinctions and declines in many of Aotearoa's forest birds had led to problems for the plants that depend on those birds to move seeds around.

In her spare time, Jo likes getting into the mountains on long tramping missions, reading fantasy novels, baking, and planting native trees. She was born on the Coromandel Peninsula and still has whānau there, which is nice for when she needs some sunshine and warm weather.

Jo Carpenter.

Jo Carpenter.

The trail camera set up. Jo Carpenter.

A trail cam image of a weka and a tītī. Jo Carpenter.

Researcher Profile – Amy Whitehead

Amy Whitehead is a wildlife ecologist at Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, where she works with numbers, maps, and models to help care for Aotearoa's native species — from the bush to the birds, and the stories they carry with them. Her mahi is all about understanding on what's working — and what's not — when it comes to conservation.

Amy Whitehead.

Amy grew up on a farm near Te Anau, with Fiordland as her backyard. As a kid, she was always out exploring the bush, asking questions, turning over rocks, and seeing what was living where. That curiosity grew into a lifelong passion for understanding how introduced species affect our native wildlife.

At one point in high school, she spent an entire year dissecting more than 500 introduced perch to find out if they were eating giant kōkopu — one of Aotearoa's treasured whitebait species.

Over the years, Amy has worked with the Department of Conservation, helping to care for some of Aotearoa's most iconic taonga — takahē, kākāpō, kakī, and whio. Her PhD explored how different management approaches affect whio populations, combining fieldwork with data and modelling to figure out what makes the biggest difference. It's all part of her drive to support better decisions for the species that need us most.

These days, Amy is part of Te Weu o te Kaitiaki team, working on several strands of tītī research. As part of this mahi, she is helping track adult tītī with tiny transmitters as they travel across the Pacific Ocean, building a clearer picture of how climate change might be affecting their long migrations and survival. She's also using modelling to estimate the size of the Rakiura tītī population by mapping where burrows are found. Alongside this, Amy is working closely with individual birding whānau who have generously donated their harvest diaries, helping explore why harvests may have changed over time. Her hope is that by weaving together science, stories, and mātauranga, the research can support the long-term care of tītī and help ensure they thrive for generations to come.

Get in early with your permit!
Go on line to
https://rakiuratitiislands.nz/

Rakiura Titi Islands Administering Body Annual General Meeting

TAKUTAI O TE TĪTĪ MARAE

207 Colac Bay Road

Saturday 14 February 2026

@ 9:30am

Call Of The Islands Strong For Rosalie

Rosalie Foggo, now aged 86, first went to Big Island when she was nine years old. Even at that tender age she had a job. It was collecting lalas. I had to ask her what 'lalas' were. 'Sticks for the fire,' she explained, with a degree of surprise at me not knowing what lalas were! I went on to visit my tītī whānau and friends after that while in Bluff, I asked them all if they knew what lalas were. They all did.

On talking to Corey Bragg — it is thought the word 'lala' is our take on the Māori word for sticks _- rakau. We Rakiura Māori often pronounce the R as a L. Rosalie says that we also use B instead of P as in 'bunui' rather than 'punui' (an endemic species or type of fern). 'Maori who came off Codfish always had an L and B in their language,' says Rosalie. 'Everyone on Big Island definitely used the B and L.'

Rosalie and her brother Russel were introduced to birding through their dad Harold (Huka) Ashwell. Rosalie was about 10 when she learned to gut. 'I couldn't wait to try it, all I have ever wanted to do was bird- some people say the smell is terrible, but I never notice it!'

She says while the stomach contents of the birds harvested in the nanao isn't always very strong – it can be a different story in the 'torch,' when some of the stomach contents, called ruatekakata can be very stinky.

Rosalie chuckles while saying she loved missing school. School work was always taken down but she rarely did it. 'I remember one of the dinghies turned over and my schoolwork was in it so that was good!'

After a few years, at the age of 12, Rosalie was allowed to go nanaoing. "Everybody seemed to go out about that age and on Big Island all the women nanaoed. This wasn't the case on some of the other islands where women only helped prepare the birds after they had been caught by the men - they weren't allowed to catch them.'

A simple stick was used to pry the birds out of their burrows. 'We sort of coaxed them and they would fight with the sticks and then we would grab them out.' As she got older, cane rods with barbless fishhooks were used. 'That was good, my word I enjoyed the cane rods as it made it so much easier!' she says. Then later, number 8 wire with a sharp curve at the end was used.

All the nanaoed birds on Big Island were huied and taken back to the workhouses to be plucked and cleaned.

Rosalie Foggo.

The birds were plucked by hand and still are by her whānau. 'We did take a plucking machine a few years back, but it ripped the birds. I wanted to throw it away, it was that annoying! We only used it for a couple of seasons about 20 years ago. Eventually I said if you can't damn well pluck them by hand you shouldn't be here!'

Rosalie was also taught the art of water cleaning by her father, Huka. 'He was a very good water cleaner and so were Margaret Bragg and Frida Scott and Sonny Cross - they were all good. Not everyone is good at it though, some never get the rhythm or they can't stand the heat needed to get the feathers to rub off.'

The community space that was the pluck house kindles fond memories for Rosalie. 'I loved sitting beside the copper, especially on a cold night, listening, learning and talking,' she remembers.' Once cleaned, the birds were hung up overnight and cut up the next day in preparation for gutting.

'In those days there were regulations from the Health Department — you were required to hang them for 8 hours.' The Department attended the annual muttonbird meetings to ensure everyone knew the rules.

Food during their stay was mainly muttonbirds; there were no freezers for years, but Rosalie remembers that

her whānau also caught quite a bit of fish. 'Huka used to smoke the fish up the chimney of the open fire we cooked on. Somehow the fish tastes twice as nice on the island as it does at home!'

These days Rosalie has hung up her nanaoing hook and supports her whānau by cooking. She also still loves to get into the pluck house. However, she leaves the gutting and packing to her kids and grandkids.

Big Island was mostly a peaceful place but occasionally there would be the odd difference of opinion. 'Margaret (Bragg) and I had a difference of opinion for 40 years over where a track went on our two manus. I would say it goes this way and she would say no it goes that way. But it was never a big problem between us.'

Getting to the islands has changed a lot over the years – Rosalie remembers the trips on the Wairua vividly. 'One season we went down on the old Wairua and came home on the new Wairua!' The old Wairua ended her service in 1958, to be replaced by the new ship with the same name the same year. The "new" Wairua was decommissioned in 1985.

Getting the birders from the Wairua onto the islands was no easy task because few islands have easy landings. A launch towed the clinker dinghies into the shore where people were off-loaded and then formed long chains to pass the gear up the hills. 'Kids didn't have life jackets or anything and sometimes it was terribly rough, but no one was hurt.' Little kids were often passed along the human chain like parcels. 'It was really tough work and no such thing as you being a woman or girl – everyone got something to carry up the hill – even if you were a kid.' After the Wairua was decimmissioned, the Ashwells used one of the many Bluff-based fishing boats to get to Big Island.

The next big change was with the arrival of helicopters. 'It made a huge difference, because when the boat landed the gear it was left down the hill and could take weeks to be carted up to the whares.' With a helicopter, the gear arrives in a 'tank' or wool pack from a boat moored near the island and is deposited right where the birders live and work.

Rosalie says she has seen a decline in bird numbers. '"Sometimes they are hard to find, and it seems to me that the east side has had a bigger decline than the west side islands.' Rosalie also fears that one day the decline may be be severe. She says in the case of Big Island a few decades ago, it was a very popular island, and this may have impacted on the tītī population.

Rosalie's dad Huka was a keen historian and penned a book on place names. One regret Rosalie has is that she should have listened more to her dad. 'Nowadays I really wish I had listened more. And now if you want to know something there isn't anyone around to ask - they have all gone,' she says wistfully.

However, Rosalie is more than playing her part now to pass her knowledge on and is a keen teacher of our tikanga to her mokopuna. Kyle, for example, was four years old when he started going to the islands with Rosalie. 'He loved it! He especially loved the visits from legendary pilot Bill Black who had a great affinity with the islands. He had some great talks with Bill.' Shanee was the next of her grandchildren to go and she still goes to the island for a fortnight each season.

School and jobs play a big factor in whānau deciding if they can visit the islands and for how long. Rosalie says she is pretty happy with the way the RTIAB is assisting birders. She herself was a committee member for many years and says it wasn't an easy job and the committees of today face many issues previous committees have dealt with and she is a big supporter of the translocations of tīeke.

Rosalie has noticed some changes in the flora and fauna since birds such as the tīeke were translocated to Big Island in 1964. 'They just love it and they are everywhere, it's lovely to see!'

Rosalie still loves a good feed of tītī. And her tip is to put some apple in the stuffing. 'But I have to be careful how much I eat as I get gout!'

She is determined to keep going to the islands as long as she can. 'People say, Rosalie aren't you too old to go down, you might die! I just tell them if I die down there that would be all good.'

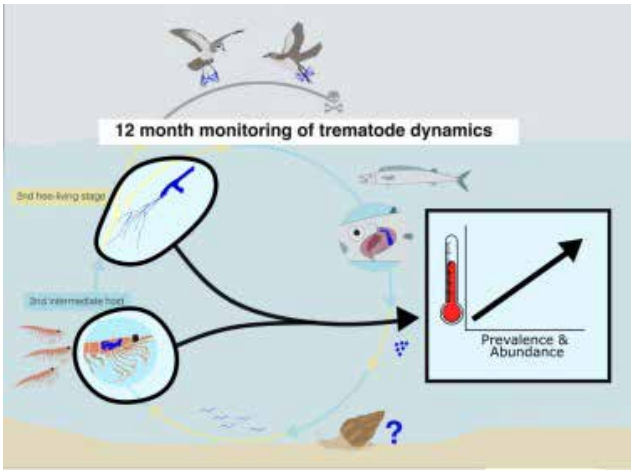
Trematodes And Sea Temperature Rise

Global warming is making a big splash when it comes to changing our oceans. Parasites like trematodes really don't like it when the temperature changes, and that can seriously shake up the communities around them.

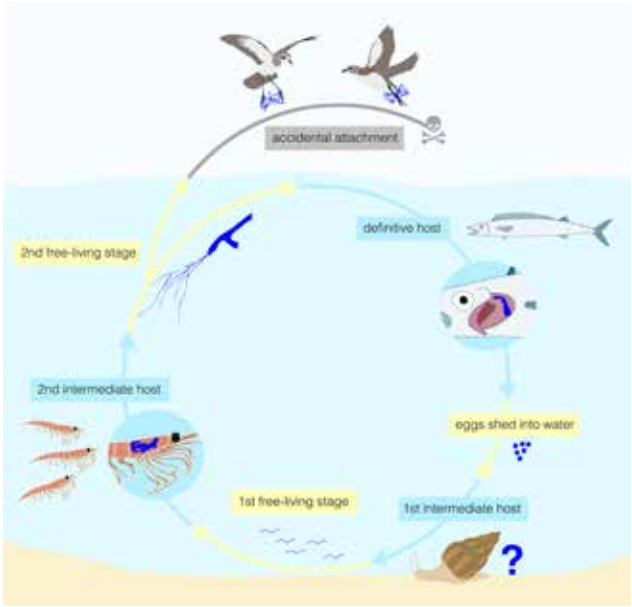
Copiatestes spp. (from the Syncoelidae family) are these pretty mysterious trematodes with weird life cycles, and they've been linked to a mass die-off of seabirds in the Chatham Islands. While they're out hunting at sea, seabirds (including titi) sometimes get their legs caught up in the sticky, free-floating stages of Copiatestes, which messes with their ability to take off and land.

To see what's going on, Dr Jerusha Bennett (Marine Parisitologist, University of Otago), in collaboration with others from the University of Otago, Tohu Environmental and Hokonui Rūnaka, has been looking at how changing sea temperatures affect Copiatestes thrysitae at different points in its life. Specifically, these are the points when infects its second-intermediate host, Nyctiphanes australis euphausiid, and then as it takes on the second free-living infective stage floating in the water. She has done so by sampling plankton every couple of weeks for a whole year in Otago Harbour.

She has found that when the water gets warmer, there's a noticeable jump in both how common and how many Copiatestes infections turn up in euphausiids—sometimes in just a few days or weeks after temperatures go up. But, interestingly, she hasn't found a link between temperature and the number of free-living stages. The euphausiids that were infected also tended to be smaller than the healthy ones. More infections in euphausiids after warm spells means seabirds feeding near the coast are more likely to get tangled up, especially the smaller species that eat these little creatures. So, even short-lived heatwaves can ramp up the chances of birds getting snared in Copiatestes filaments, which could spell trouble for whole ecosystems if there's a big parasite outbreak.



You can view a 4 minute YouTube video which discusses this article here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAt9cONTD88&t=2s



The lifecycle of Copiatestes.

Dr Jerusha Bennett.

Putauhinu Weka and Rat Incursion Response 7th–12th September 2025

Background

During the 2025 tītī season, a weka sighting was reported on Putauhinu Island. The Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body (RTIAB) funded a response to locate and remove the bird, coordinated by Karina Marsden-Davis and Pania Lee. The operation was scheduled for September to ensure safety and maximise the likelihood of success, as the island would be less populated and the weka more responsive to calls during the breeding season.

Response Planning

Various methods were considered:

- Trained weka dog: None available locally.
- Trapping: Labour-intensive and costly.
- Poisoning: Ecological, legal, and ethical concerns.
- Call-back tapes: Chosen as the most practical method, using territorial and distress calls to attract the weka for dispatch with a shotgun.

A safety plan was developed, focusing on firearm use. The team acknowledged the challenge of locating a single, roaming bird on a large island, requiring both the hunting team and the weka to be in the same place at the same time.

Team and Logistics

The team included Rewi and Jana Davis, Jeff Pennicott (Putauhinu birders), Pete McCelland, and Jo Hiscock (experienced hunters). Strict helicopter weight limits necessitated two flights to transport all essential gear, including firearms, food, and a generator.

Rat Sighting and Response

Upon arrival, two team members observed what could have been a rat. Although uncertain, the team decided to initiate a response:

- Observers were interviewed separately for accuracy.
- Karina coordinated delivery of response equipment (traps, tracking tunnels, chew tags, trail cameras) from DOC.
- Sandy King and certified rodent dog, Gadget, were flown in to check the area and helicopter; no indication of rats was found.
- Snap traps (in mesh covers), tracking tunnels, and trail cameras were deployed and checked daily, with no detections. Wax/chew tags were added for long-term monitoring.
- Devices will be checked at the start of the 2026 tītī season or earlier if needed. Unused gear was stored for return to DOC.

Weka Response

The island was divided into hunting areas, with teams consisting of a shooter and a guide/spotter using call tapes. Calls were played every 100–150m, focusing on open habitats and tracks for visibility and safety. The entire coastal area was circumnavigated twice, with 59 hours spent actively calling for the weka. Weather and wind affected the operation, but only four hours were lost to rain.

Results

No weka or rats were detected. The response was prompt and appropriate, demonstrating best practice for incursion management. The lack of detections suggests no established rat population, but this does not mean that ongoing monitoring is essential. The operation builds on previous successful responses, such as the mouse incursion on Big Island in 2025.

Recommendations

- All helicopters, boats, and gear should be checked with a rodent dog before departure.
- RTIAB should maintain a biosecurity contingency fund for rapid responses.
- Develop RTIAB response kits (traps, covers, tracking tunnels, chew/wax tags, peanut butter bait) stored on the mainland for accessibility.
- Continue collaboration with DOC for biosecurity and gear backup.
- Regular biosecurity checks of hangars and gear are vital.

Suggested Rodent Response Kit Contents:

- Sighting interview form
- Fish bins x2
- Rat/mouse snap traps x20 each
- Trap covers (mesh) x20
- Tracking tunnels x40, covers x20

- Wax/chew tags x50
- Cruise tape, marker pen, notebook, pencil
- Peanut butter (crunchy) x2 jars
- Consider trail cameras (5) with AA batteries

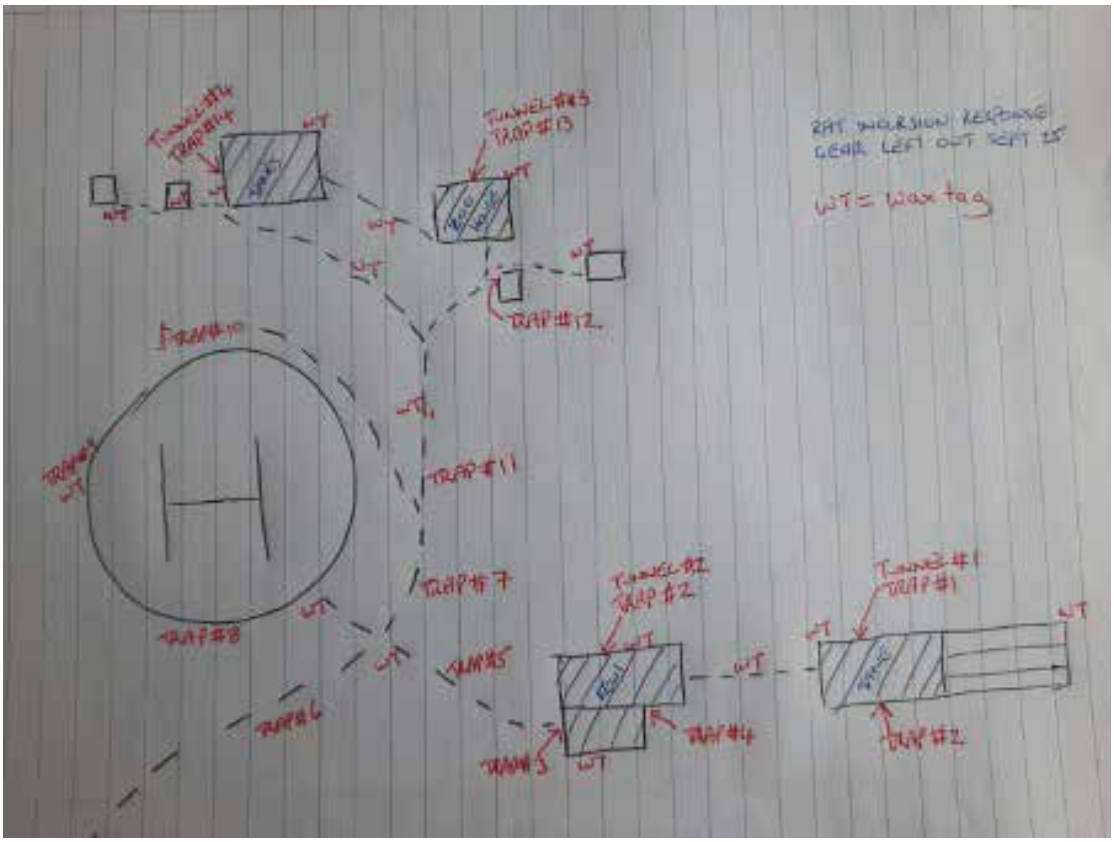
Bird Observations

- Common: kakaruai, tīeke, tui, bellbird, red/yellow-crowned kakariki
- Uncommon: matata, tutukiwi
- Occasional: riroriro, kahu, skua (1), kaka (4)

Acknowledgements

Thanks to RTIAB, Karina Marsden-Davis, Ros Cole, Kathryn Pemberton (DOC), Sandy King and Gadget, Rewi and Jana Davis, Jeff Pennicott, Pete McClelland, Jo Hiscock, and Te Anau helicopters.

Areas covered by hunting teams (does not include the last days hunting due to issues with the GPS. NB many of the tracks shown were covered several times which does not show on the map. Tracks only cover the locations actually hunted i.e. not any tracks used in transit to/from starting and finishing hunting each day.



Layout of rat response devices on the Davis manu (Putauhinu Island) 12th September 2025

Weka and Tītī Research on Rakiura Tītī Islands

What we found, what it means, and why it matters

***Team**: Jo Carpenter and Phil Lyver, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research.*

What Was This Research All About?

Weka were introduced to some of the Tītī Islands from Rakiura around a century ago, mainly as a source of kai. Weka are an important part of Aotearoa's ecosystems: they help with forest regeneration by spreading seeds, killing invasive mammals like rodents and rabbits, and maybe even help keep ecosystems healthy by gobbling up dead and rotting things. However, weka also like to eat tītī eggs and chicks if they get a chance, which has led to concerns about whether weka might be impacting tītī on the Tītī Islands.

We wanted to figure out how tītī breeding success (the proportion of eggs that live to become fledged chicks) differed across islands with weka and without weka. If weka were having a severe impact on tītī, we would expect breeding success to be much lower on islands with weka. We were particularly interested in whether the eradication of rats from some islands may have increased the impact of weka on tītī, by allowing weka to become more abundant.

How Did We Do It?

We monitored tītī breeding success at three sites with weka, and two islands with no weka. We found tītī eggs shortly after they had been laid, by looking into burrows with an infra-red illuminated camera on the end of a long bendy cable (called a burrowscope). Once we found a burrow with an egg and a parent tītī, we set up a trail camera on the entrance to the burrow to record the comings and goings of the parents, and any possible weka interactions. We then went back again in late January and mid April to see how the nests were going, and whether there was a chick developing.

What Did We Find?

Tītī breeding success was quite variable across the five sites, with the lowest breeding success being 39% and the highest being 88%. One way to think of those numbers is that if we were monitoring 100 eggs, then 39 of them ended up becoming fledged chicks at the first site, and 88 became fledged chicks at the other site. When we crunched the numbers statistically, we ended up finding that overall, tītī breeding success was not significantly worse at the sites that had weka. However, there was quite a lot of uncertainty because some weka sites had similar rates of breeding success to the weka-free sites, while one site with weka had much lower breeding success.

At the sites with weka, our trail cameras recorded weka eating tītī eggs on two occasions, and killing chicks on eight occasions. We think the eggs may have already been abandoned by the tītī parents, as it seems unlikely a weka could steal an egg from a feisty adult tītī. Most chick predation happened early in the season shortly after hatching, when the parents had left the burrow to go to sea and forage.

We did notice a trend where the weka site with the lowest breeding success had more weka detections on the trail cameras than the other two weka sites. This site does not currently have much weka control happening, whereas the other two sites do.

What Does This Mean for Managing Tītī?

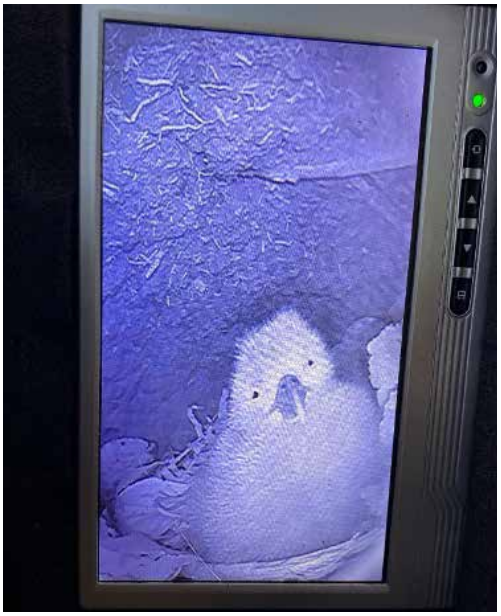
Our study found the impact of weka on tītī breeding success was similar to that found on Taukihepa twenty years ago by Grant Harper, when rats were on the island. Grant's study estimated an average of 80% of tītī nests were successful in 2003 (with rats controlled, but weka present), but did not compare this against sites that had no weka. The average breeding success across our three sites with weka was 64%, which was only slightly lower than the two weka-free sites. We conclude that weka may have some impact on tītī breeding success at the sites we monitored, but is quite variable, at least in the year that we measured. The variability in tītī breeding success between all five sites makes it tricky to predict how beneficial weka eradication might be. At some sites, it might improve things a lot for tītī, whereas at other sites it might not make much difference.

Some people view weka as a nuisance, while others value them as a source of feathers, food, and rich oil. One management option could be an organised, well-supported

harvest of weka to keep their numbers down without completely wiping them out. This could potentially help tītī, and also conserve weka and the cultural and ecological values they provide.

Weka captured on camera removing a tītī egg at one of the weka sites.

Weka captured on camera dragging a chick from its burrow at one of the weka sites.



A chick visible in its burrow using the burrowscope. Credit: Morgan Coleman.

Burrowscoping a tītī burrow to see if is still active. Credit: Luke Sutton.

Aurora Metzger showing the burrowscope screen with a tītī and their egg. Credit: Jo Carpenter

Mapping The Future Of Tītī

Amy Whitehead

For generations, Rakiura Māori have cared for tītī through knowledge of the land and sea and a customary harvest relationship. Understanding how many tītī are present across the wider Tītī Island group is a key part of this knowledge that will help support sustainable harvest decisions and long-term care of the population.

Over the past four years, researchers from Manaaki Whenua and Rakiura kaitiaki have worked across many of the Tītī Islands, counting burrows in over 2,000 circular plots. In each plot, they recorded not only the number of burrows but also the plants present, the steepness of the land, and the distance to the coast. The team are deeply grateful to those who generously gave access to their islands—your support made this work possible.

Using this information, the team went on to build models to identify the types of conditions where tītī are most likely to establish burrows. They found that burrows are more common on coastal ridges, especially under vegetation like tūpare, koromiko, and tētēaweka. These patterns align with previous findings, showing that while burrow density has increased on some islands, it has declined on others.

Based on these patterns, the researchers estimate there are approximately 3.7 million tītī burrows across the Tītī Islands, producing an average of 2.2 million chicks each year. As you well know, these numbers will vary naturally each season, but they provide a picture of the population and how it may be changing over time. Encouragingly, the most recent population estimates closely match those made in the late 2000's, suggesting relative stability over the past two decades.

This work helps Rakiura Māori understand what makes good breeding habitat, track long-term trends, and support the continued health of the tītī population. As climate change and other global pressures increasingly affect seabirds, robust data is more critical than ever for guiding effective management decisions.

Manaaki Whenua — Landcare Research & University of Canterbury researchers measuring burrow plots on the Tītī Islands (clockwise from top left, James Arbuckle, Kate Wootton, Jo Carpenter).

Trending towards the development of increasingly targeted pest control tools

Anticoagulant rodenticides are the most important tool for controlling rodents globally. Island eradication and mainland conservation programmes have been enabled by the use of brodifacoum baits which have played a major role in numerous global and national success stories.

Despite the eradication of predators from many islands and regional successes, second generation anticoagulants (SGARS), such as brodifacoum, are known to be highly persistent and bioaccumulate on repeated use, leading to concerns about contamination of deer and feral pigs and other secondary and tertiary poisoning risks.

Hence research in New Zealand by practitioners, industry, CRI's, DoC and University teams, spanning more than 20 years has looked at alternatives, not aiming to replace but reduce over-reliance on SGAR's. Niche "low residue" products have been produced containing cyanide, cholecalciferol, diphacinone, PAPP, and diphacinone in combination with cholecalciferol.

Diphacinone with cholecalciferol, as a synergist in the same bait, is an equipotent slow-acting alternative to brodifacoum, and neither of these compounds are not persistent. The rodent-specific toxin norbormide is now a focus, particularly as inconsistencies in palatability that hampered its utility have been rectified, and field trials have demonstrated its effectiveness against ship and Norway rats.

Norbormide is 100 to 150-fold more toxic to rats than to birds and most other mammals, including humans. A historical database in over 50 species demonstrated species specificity. However, these early studies were not carried out in accordance with recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) test guidelines and hence are not enough to enable NZ EPA approval in New Zealand.

New studies completed in 2024/25 in accordance with current test guidelines have focused on data-gaps in chemistry, genetic toxicology, non-target toxicity, general ecotoxicity and environmental fate. Norbormide has been shown to lack genotoxicity, indicating no carcinogenic potential. Acute dermal toxicity in rats is absent, and it is not irritant. Acute toxicity following oral administration for Norway rats, of between 5.3 and 15.0 mg/kg was confirmed. The lack of toxicity (i.e., LD50 > 1,000 mg/kg) previously reported in five bird species and numerous mammalian species, including rhesus monkeys, has been further confirmed by ecotoxicology studies in birds, earthworms, fish and Daphnia. These studies on norbormide all demonstrate very low or no risk to human and environmental health. The evidence for selectivity is stronger now than in 2020 when initial submissions were made to the regulatory agencies(EPA/MPI) in New Zealand. The availability of norbormide in 2025/26 or beyond for conservation groups and others will be dependent on the EPA response to filing of information to EPA which started in 2020 with new information filed in in 2024 and earlier this year and whether more research is deemed necessary for hazard and risk classifications.

The key attributes are in summary: Selectivity, low welfare impacts, no secondary poisoning, no residue impacts/ bioaccumulation, no food safety risks, no/ low risk to companion animals, livestock and humans. Nevertheless, it should be viewed as just another tool to be used alongside other toxic baits and traps and monitoring tools.

Professor Charles Eason from Lincoln University has spent his career working with medicines and pest control products, first in Europe and then in New Zealand. He's an expert in how pesticides affect animals and is known around the world for making sure different toxins are safe and effective.

Connovation
CONSERVATION BY INNOVATION

Pharmacokinetic basis for vertebrate pesticide developments leading to D+C, PAPP and Norbormide

Charles Eason, Lee Shapiro, Elaine Murphy, Shaun Ogilvie, Dave Rennison, Margaret Brimble and Duncan MacMorran

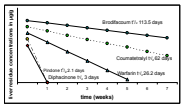
CHALLENGES

NZ ecosystems require unique tools to protect native species.

Conventional vertebrate toxic agents (VTAs) are broad spectrum.

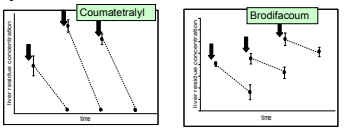
Second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) cause secondary poisoning, non-target deaths, residues in game and livestock.

Figure 1. HEPATIC PHARMACOKINETICS ($T^{1/2}$) OF 1ST GENERATION ANTICOAGULANTS (FGARS) AND SGARS.



Hepatic half-life ($t^{1/2}$) of anticoagulants in rats following sublethal dose (c.LD_{10}).
Starting concentrations approx. 0.6 to 1.2 µg/gm.

Figure 2. TENDENCY OF SGARS TO BIOACCUMULATE VS FGARS.



FGAR cleared, SGAR bioaccumulates after 12 weekly sub-lethal doses. Coumatetralyl used as an example of a FGAR with a moderate half-life. Diphacinone's tendency to bioaccumulate would be negligible compared with these two compounds.

International demand for alternatives to SGARs are fuelled by environmental, regulatory and political pressures to counter global contamination of wildlife and anticoagulant resistance Maron 2024. Rat Poison's Long Reach. Science 385: 134-137.

Ideal toxins are target specific, humane, have an antidote, and are readily metabolised / excreted and biodegraded.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (PD)

A PD strategy has focused on compounds with systemic $t^{1/2}$ of < 12 hours (e.g cyanide, diphacinone, (PAPP) and norbormide) or days (e.g , cholecalciferol and diphacinone). Specificity is enhanced through the delivery vehicle, the application strategy, and / or choosing compounds with different degrees of selective toxicity.

PRODUCTS WITH IMPROVED TARGET SPECIFICITY, HUMANENESS AND / OR SAFETY

	COMPOUND	ATTRIBUTES	RISKS AND MITIGATION
	**Feratox®-cyanide pellets (mid-1990's)**	Kills "on the spot"; no or low residues or secondary poisoning risks; proven humaneness in possums.	Hazardous compound, Restricted use (licensed operators); pellet formulation safer than pastes.
	**Feracol® -cholecalciferol-Vit D3 (late 1990's)**	Naturally occurring; low secondary poisoning; low toxicity to birds; effective against rats and possums. Low residue risks vs SGARS. Background concentrations in all animals, birds etc.	Primary poisoning e.g. companion animals. Clear instructions re use of bait stations and safety precautions.
	**RatAbate® Diphacinone (late 1990's)**	Low (transient) residue risks, less likely to bioaccumulate versus SGARS; no secondary poisoning; less toxic to birds than most rodenticides; targets rats.	Antidote available.
	**Double Tap® Diphacinone (D) with cholecalciferol (C) synergist (2018)**	Effective on possums and rats with a single feed; comparable potency to SGARS (brodifacoum) – without SGAR residue/ bioaccumulation risk. Registered for ground control, R&D plans focused on aerial application for landscape scale pest control.	Clear instructions re use of bait stations. Residue exposure risks and the requirements for buffer zones and withholding periods which are 3 years and 2 km for deer hunters after brodifacoum use, are by comparison, minimal for D+C.
	**PredaSTOP® Para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP) (2012)**	Stoats and feral cats are very susceptible; partial selectivity based on mode of action and baiting strategy; low risk of secondary poisoning; humane. Registered for ground control; current research focused on aerial application.	Clear instructions re use of bait stations. Antidote available.
	**Oblitorat® Norbormide (Applications submitted to MPI ACVM and EPA)**	Uniquely toxic and effective/humane for rat control. Not toxic > 40 species including birds, invertebrates, fish and other mammals. Historical data supplemented by OECD guideline studies demonstrates low/no risk to human and environmental health.	No antidote needed but standard precautions for rodenticides should be applied. Clear instructions re use of bait stations.

CONCLUSIONS

- A range of tools for the control of invasive species which do not bioaccumualate or cause secondary poisoning and have some degree of target specificity is the result of deliberate strategy.
- The potential of D+C and PAPP have yet to be realised. Trials of aerially sown PAPP baits in 2025, at ultra low densities for control of stoats, are showing promise. Aerial application of D + C is in the planning stage.
- Norbormide is the most significant advance in recent times. If approved by EPA it will allow for more targeted control of rats in settings where safety and minimised non-target impacts are of paramount importance.
- Integration of humane, low residue and selective toxins / delivery systems offer the opportunity to reduce over-reliance on SGARSs for endangered species protection.

The research team acknowledges the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Department of Conservation, Predator Free 2050, The Biological Heritage National Science Challenge and the Ministry of Primary Industries for support and funding to development tailored pest control technologies.

Andrew Gormley— Science Team Leader — Wildlife Ecology and Management — Manaaki Whenua

Andrew Gormley is a quantitative ecologist by training — that means he is someone that is not afraid of numbers and is interested in using mathematical models to better understand animal ecology and the effects of potential management strategies. Andrew grew up in Ōtautahi, and initially studied statistics at university. After a three-year stint working at Fisher & Paykel, Mosgiel, he realised there was more to life than the quality of ovens and dishwashers.

He enrolled in Marine Science at Otago University in 2000 where he finally found a rewarding area in which to apply his quantitative skills. He completed his PhD at Otago University on Hector's dolphins in 2009. Using a long-term photo-ID catalogue of Hector's dolphin dorsal fins around Banks Peninsula, he was able to estimate vital life-history parameters such as adult survival and reproductive rates. This information was then used in a population model to explore how different by-catch rates would affect the viability of the local population.

Andrew has worked in Australia in the area of wildlife management trying to untangle the effects of introduced species (foxes, wild-dogs, feral goats, deer) on a variety of native Australian species (including bandicoots, potoroos, and even brushtail possums!).

Joining Manaaki Whenua in 2010, he has worked on wide range of research projects.

Andrew counting burrows.

Andrew's main contribution to the Tītī Research Program is to update the tītī population model by giving it a multi-island structure, and to include the new information collected as part of Te Weu o te Kaitiaki. The model will be able to provide insight as to what are the constraints of management at the manu-level given the global effects of climate, and the inter-connectedness of populations across the islands, as well as local-scale effects such as weka and taupata.

Although his work is mostly desk-based, Andrew was part of the burrow-counting team in 2023. "Not only was this a privilege and an amazing opportunity for me to visit some of the islands, it was also extremely valuable to gain some insight into the ecology of the birds, as well as the vast knowledge of the birders".

Andrew Gormley

Zane Moss — New Work Programme Co-Ordinator for Rakiura Tītī Island Administering Body

With Tāne Davis's resignation as Work Programme Co-Ordinator, the RTIAB trustees have been on a search for someone to fill the role. What has made this role a little more difficult to fill is that the funding, largely from Te Rūnaka O Kai Tahu, is not guaranteed annually. Despite the lack of guarantee of funding we received five applications.

The role is designed to support our mahi and implement our annual work programmes and the Rakiura Tītī Islands Management Plan. We narrowed the selection down to three candidates. All candidates were evaluated and measured against a skills and attributes matrix for this role, then interviewed by Tina Nixon, Corey Bragg, and Robyn Smith.

The three candidates were of a very high calibre, but one stood out as possessing both a raft of relevant technical and professional skills and considerable knowledge of our mahi, so the decision by the panel was unanimous.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Zane Moss as our new Work Programme Co-Ordinator. Zane has over two decades of experience in environmental management, freshwater and terrestrial ecology, as well as policy development and implementation in his former role as CE of Fish and Game Southland. With Zane's expertise, knowledge, and first-hand experience of muttonbirding, ((Zane is married to Jane Kitson and is a birder on Pūtauhinu) we are of the view that he is more than capable of delivering our work programmes and adding value to our islands, our birding community and mahinga kai practices.

We can reassure you all that once Zane indicated an interest in applying for the role, Jane removed herself entirely from any aspect of the appointment process. Clearly, there could be a perception of a conflict of interest, so all future engagement with Zane regarding his performance or employment conditions and oversight will be led by Corey Bragg and Jane will not be involved.

Zane Moss.

Zane acknowledges that he's more commonly behind the camera rather than in front of it.

Kotahitanga — In Action

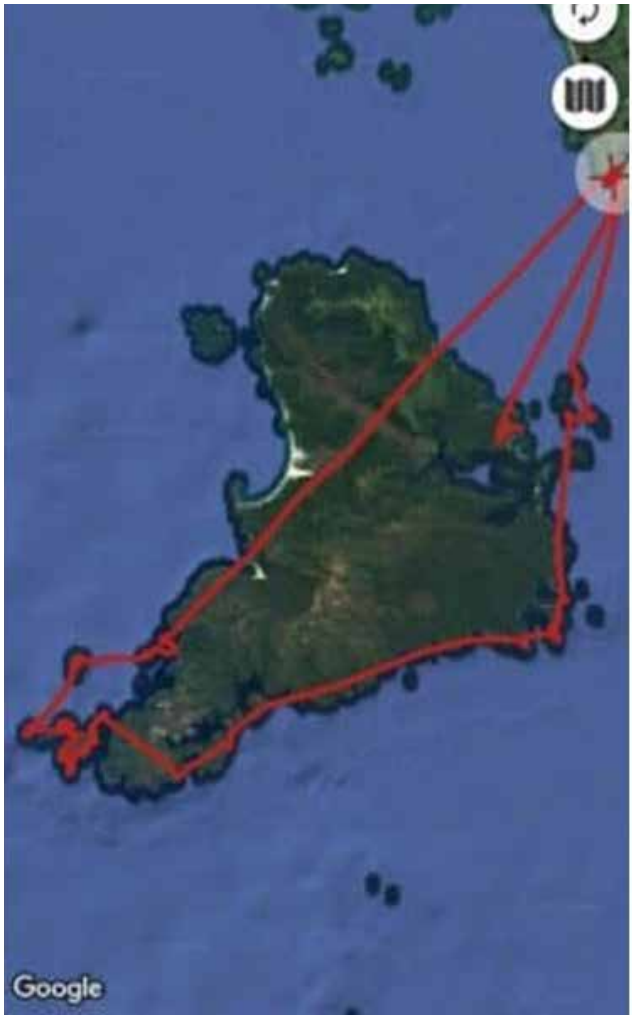
On behalf of all tītī birders, a big thanks to the organisers of the chopper to check on our whare after the big blow.

Reti and Ranui Bull started the ball rolling and then others pitched in with money and connections. Both the Rakiura Tītī Committee and the Rakuira Tītī Islands Administration Body assisted where they could.

'The moment of relief and aroha we all felt when seeing our whare still standing was strong. Our treasured whenua, however, shows the signs of Tāwhirimātea's force — so be ready for a clean-up of your manu. Get those chainsaws serviced, and your sleeves rolled up! It's clear that our connection to the island remains strong — a taonga that binds us across generations,' said Reti on Facebook.

Facebook was used to great effect to communicate with everyone and share the pics of the whare and whenua.

Again, well done tītī whānau!



Above: Ernest Island.

Top right: Northern group of islands.

Bottom right: Flight path.

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