

Bush Telegraph



News from April to May and key events coming up in June to August
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June
2025

20,000 Pest Captures Celebration!

The Rotokare Halo has been a part of our project for ten years now. In those ten years, the project has seen 20,000 pests caught! This number was reached on the 1st of April.

The initial project was formulated to reduce stress on the fence and to ensure that any spill over from the reserve was safe in the halo.

Initially, the project was a small halo area, and this has expanded to 4700 hectares.



This saw the introduction of a role specific to the management of the halo. This was taken up by Aaron Jacobson, eventually Kane Bretherton took over the role and has been presiding over it ever since! With the addition of Lance Moseley to the team as Halo Ranger, this space has been hauling in kills.

The success has been mirrored by the survival and breeding of Pāteke in the halo space. This could only be possible with a relentless and adaptable feral cat management plan implemented in 2019.

Through the years, there have been volunteers, funders, landowners, and staff who have contributed to the success of the project. A huge thank you to Toi Foundation who have recognised the value in financially supporting this project.



Our celebrations were made extra special due to this amazing rat in a trap cake created for us by Cakes by Anette with love.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the Goble family for donating a pair of crampers

Thank you to Uhlenberg Haulage and Vickers Quarries for donating metal for the ridge track.

Thank you to Mangatoki WI for your generous donations of Pens!

Thank you Kings Theatre Stratford for all the behind the screen wizarding to enable us to show "I am the River, the River is Me"

Thank you to Audrey Thompson for providing delicious working bee lunches

Thank you Eltham School Reunion for donating a share of the proceeds from the raffle held during the Eltham School Reunion

Biodiversity & Sanctuary

A Mouse in the House.



Autumn is our highest risk time of year for rodents inside the fence. This year, six mice have been found within the fence. Five of these mice were found in the car park area. The car park is one of our highest risk areas due to the access of vehicles into the reserve. Our robust trap network and amazing volunteer team removed the incursion quickly. These incursions outline the need for checking vehicles for any stowaways and to keep up with home trapping. Thanks to everyone for the ongoing support with our responses.



In May we completed our full sanctuary tracking card run. We were happy to say this round did not pick up any detections of pests inside the fence. We were soaked to see some frogs and lizards on the cards. A massive shout out to the team who volunteered to help with this run.



Image: DOC

Piri and Piki Take Rotokare.

At the start of June, Finn Bucannon and the pest detection dogs, Piri and Piki, completed the annual pest detection audit. The team had a very boring walk around the space, which was an amazing result. There were a couple of areas that the dogs showed interest in. Response traps were deployed. These areas were consistent with mice previously picked up in traps.

Gratiola Concinna II.

Our second *gratiola concinna* translocation has been completed. Twenty plugs from Cold Creek, Auroa, were planned at Rotokare on the 24th of June. This time, the site selected to be its new home for this small creeping herb is closer to the boardwalk in hopes that the plant will establish as well as the last transfer and Rotokare visitors to experience this special plant. We are hoping for another successful growing season with more flowers this summer.



A massive thank you to the Hooper family, the Department of Conservation, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Tupaia for all helping to make this possible.

Biodiversity & Sanctuary

The Fungal Foray.

The annual Fungal Foray was held in Urenui this year.

The Fungal Foray is an event where experts, passionate and people from all over come together to discuss all things fungi. Part of the foray is trips to sites where they may be able to find some samples of fungus.



Two groups of fungi foragers came out to Rotokare, and we had some exciting results. While some samples are still being analysed, we are very excited to see what they have found. A standout find from the group was a massive bracket fungus found here at Rotokare. Doctor Peter Bucannon said it was the largest he had seen in his 45 years of looking. He expected this particular fungus to be around 30 years old! All preliminary results were posted on i-Naturalist.



What's Going on Outside the Fence?

Halo outcome monitoring occurs once a year. We head out into the Halo bush fragments to monitor the impact the Halo project is having on the distribution and diversity of pests and natives. Pest numbers are consistent with previous years, with mouse numbers down slightly from last year. This indicated the team is doing a great job at suppressing pests in the halo.

Results from five-minute bird count are still being reviewed, however it's clear that North Island Robin have been detected in more halo fragments than any other years. We are so delighted to see them return to our community.



More Pāteke to Rotokare!

May marked another pāteke translocation as we continue to support the Pāteke Recovery Group as an overflow site. Moturoa school were lucky enough to be present at the release and even opened a few boxes! The pāteke population at Rotokare continues to do well both in the fence and in the halo. We hope that pāteke will continue to do well and spread into other pest-free spaces.



Biosecurity & Halo

A total of 20,685
pests have been
caught in the halo.

72,000 Screws, And a Whole Bunch of Man Hours Equals a Stronger Fence.

Our corporate working bees and volunteers have been the backbone of the fence remediation project. Clarus and Te Ara o Te Ata team from Mount Messenger recently came out to lend a hand putting some screws in the fence.

After being up for over fifteen years and the fence is still in good condition; however, maintenance and upkeep of the fence are essential to protecting Rotokare. Screws were placed ensuring that the mesh stays strong and that any old or damaged screws were replaced. Tec screws and penny washers were placed along the mesh. This was done for all 8.2 km of the fence.



We are happy to announce that the project has been completed. The last screws went in on the 26th of July. This project has been a huge effort from the team. A huge thank you to Fonterra Hapori Programme for their financial support. A special shout out to Paul Mackle for the extra effort put into the efforts pictured here with his golden screw!

Trapping Workshop

Our Halo Ranger was part of a trapping workshop organised by the team at Taranaki Regional Council to help educate rural farmers on how to trap their farms.

The group went through setup, maintenance and repair of traps. This is all a part of the goal of educating people on pest management and engaging the community in the management efforts. Thanks to the Taranaki Regional Council for the continued support and collaboration.



The Pest Control Hui

The Pest Control Hui field trip made its way to Rotokare this year. This annual event aims to spread information and knowledge around trapping in Taranaki. Trappers, conservationists, students and all came together from all around Taranaki to listen to talks and participate in workshops. We were happy to have a group come to Rotokare and see how we run our network.

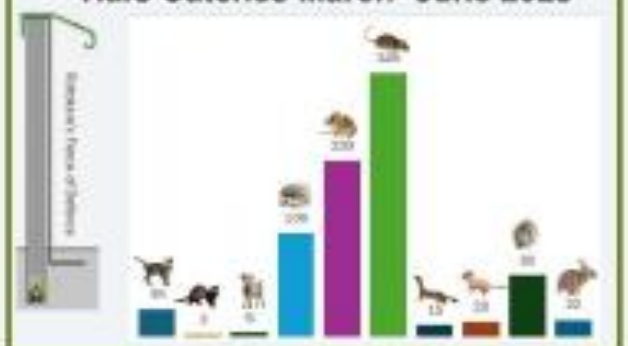


Classroom refresh

This summer, we took on the massive task of sanding and painting the classroom. A small and dedicated volunteer group got stuck in. Now the classroom, built in 1903, looks fresh to last many more years.

Thanks to Jenny Kerrisk, Guy Oakley, Ray Lawrence, Paul Mackle, & TET for funding the paint.

Halo Catches March- June 2025



Education

World Biodiversity Day

Rotokare hosted World Biodiversity Day this term. This day saw schools from all around Taranaki coming out to Rotokare to learn all about biodiversity.

Together with Rotokare, Taranaki Regional Council and Puke Ariki, the team put together an amazing day with educators guiding Tamariki through the bush, teaching them about critters and explaining connections all linked to biodiversity. We even managed to get ex-Rotokare educator Sophie out of retirement to talk all about lizards.



This was an awesome day of coming together and learning for all groups involved. The tamariki thoroughly enjoyed the event and even had an impromptu possum talk by Wayne Rollands from Taranaki Regional Council. A huge thanks to Lauree from the Taranaki Regional Council, who made this day possible. World Biodiversity Day at Rotokare was an amazing event.

TOPEC Trapping Workshops

TOPEC came to Rotokare for practical work experience. It's so awesome to see the next generation of trappers keen to get their hands dirty and practice practical trapping inside the reserve. Their team got some tips from Kane and Lance and even got involved with our mouse response.

Ambassadors

Traps and Ethics

Chauncy from Predator Free Taranaki came out to chat to our Junior Ambassadors all about biosecurity!

This was their second biosecurity-focused workshop. The first workshop was headed by Lance, our very own Halo ranger.

Biosecurity is always the first focus of Ambassador workshops, as it is one of the most important parts of what enables Rotokare to provide a safe habitat for vulnerable species.

Senior Ambassadors learned about conservation ethics in their latest workshop this term, resulting in a lively mock debate. The topic was Rotokare conservation group vs "Blackrock Coal Mining Industries". This workshop was intended to get the ambassadors to think about the choices that conservationists make and how they affect particular projects.



Did you catch us on Seven Sharp?

On May 28, Rotokare was featured on TVNZ's Seven Sharp, highlighting our fence remediation project.

Reporter Carolyn Robinson visited the week prior, meeting team members Lance, Fiona, and long-time volunteer Ray Lawrence. Adrian guided Carolyn along the walkway, sharing Rotokare's history, the Trust's formation, and our guiding kaupapa. Lance and Fiona discussed bird monitoring using the 5 Minute Bird Count and detailed the fence repair, replacing fixings from 2007/2008.



The segment offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on our progress and share the vital, behind-the-scenes work protecting this unique ecosystem with a national audience.



Latest Photos!



Coming Up at Rotokare

- High Risk Tracking Card Run:
 - Cards out from Sunday, 20th of July
 - Cards in from Sunday, 27th July.
- Hihi breeding surveys.
- Ridge walk, new metal being spread.
- Lake track updates.
- Lizard monitoring devices are getting off-season check and maintenance.
- Ambassador field trips.
- Night tours.

Rotokare Wish List

The items on this list will help staff and volunteers with their tasks—we welcome donations and contributions towards sourcing:

- Instep crampons
- Children's binoculars
- DeWalt Cordless 18V Angle grinder
- DeWalt Batteries
- We are looking for someone with graphic design skills to help us with a project. Is this you? Contact us!
- Silky saws
- Folding saws
- Rechargeable batteries, AA, AAA, watch

Rotokare works hard to deliver significant conservation and community outcomes. If you'd like to help us, please lend us a hand by:

- Contributing wish list items
- Donating towards current projects
- Volunteering at our monthly Sunday working bees (9am—12pm, with free lunch!)
- Becoming "Friends of the Lake" (FOL) with a \$30-\$50 annual donation

Members of



Partnered for Taranaki Kōhanga Kiwi at Rotokare (TKKR) Project



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