



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST
CHARITABLE TRUST
(March 2012)**



Northland Hospitality

A very successful presentation was made on the work of the Trust to the Northland Conservation Board recently. The Board members seemed genuinely impressed with what we have achieved to date and a Board member, Tracey Andrew-Smith, has indicated she would like to assist us, using her professional skills and talents. Tracey actually lives right by the forest at the Pukenui Estate on Maunu Road. She believes there is a resident kiwi living not too far from her home. I have asked her to attend our next meeting as an observer.

Further to which, I will be attending the Northland Kiwi Hui later this month at the Waimate North A&P Showgrounds. Some of our volunteer trappers may also be coming along. Kiwi listening is coming up in June and listening sites are being set up to continue to monitor the few kiwi left in the forest.

I have recently written a letter to the Editor of the Northern Advocate regarding kiwi and dogs, stressing the need to keep the forest free of these animals and also giving the Trust a bit more exposure.

The work in the Ark-in-the-Park area is now winding down and it will all start again next September. I have asked Max Hutchings to give us a written record of the Ark-in-the-Park efforts and successes, plus a breakdown of costs to date and a guesstimate of costs for next years trapping and poisoning.

Stoat boxes and cat traps are now in place around most of the forest but we will still need to purchase more if we are to get a sign-off from DOC to release kiwi in the next few years.

I attended one day at the Northland Field Days at Dargaville, manning the WDC display, starring Pukenui Forest. It was in the Northland Biodiversity tent and saw a number of people expressing interest in our work. It was well worth the effort.

On March 13th, Alan Martin and I are meeting Ngairie Tyson of the Landcare Trust to discuss funding options. Ngairie is an expert in this area but, in the end, we will have to do the leg-work or employ someone to do it.

One of two weta boxes put in the forest now has a small population of cave wetas! Weta are indicator species and tell us how our predator work is doing. More wetas mean fewer rats are present.

Finally, a forest gecko has been taken to Kiwi North after being mauled by a cat. It has shed its tail but is recovering at the museum, where it is receiving lots of 'TLC'. It came from Three Mile Bush Road and the people who brought it in are happy for it to be put into the forest when it has fully recovered.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (Part-time)