



**TARANAKI MOUNGA**

*He Kawa Ora – Back to Life*

**ANNUAL  
REPORT 2017**



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Vision:

Mounga Taranaki with Seal Rocks Tapuae Marine Reserve

# He Kawa Ora – Back to Life

Restoring the ecological vitality of Taranaki Mounga in partnership with iwi, agencies and community.

Outcomes:

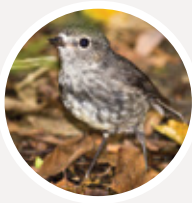
- The ecological resilience of Taranaki Mounga is restored.
- Taranaki iwi Chairs and community, supported by local and regional government, embrace and sustain the transformation of Taranaki Mounga to an ecologically resilient state.
- The Taranaki Mounga Project inspires other communities and investors to address NZ’s ecological challenges at landscape scale.

Project Objectives

- Secure the Mounga against animal and weed pests. Eradicate goats and significantly reduce pest numbers and impacts on Taranaki Mounga. This would be the first New Zealand National Park to be ungulate free.
- Restore Species. Transform the ecological prospects of the Mounga through the reintroduction of lost species and the strengthening of existing populations of threatened species.
- Build community support and commitment. Ensuring the transformational changes are valued and secure for the long term.

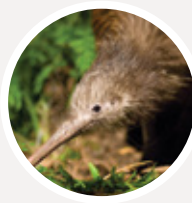
The project objectives may be complimented and enhanced by:

- The creation of a halo. Develop innovative, effective means of pest control to protect the perimeter of the Park and beyond including a biodiversity halo and ecological corridor’s between the Mounga and the Moana (Mountain to Sea) being restored.
- Oranga Mounga Oranga Tangata – Healthy Mountain, Healthy People. Create opportunities for health and environmental education benefits as well as skill development as a result of the close connection with nature and the Taranaki Mounga Project.



Restore

Toutouwai / North Island robin to the Mounga in 2017



Extend

the stoat trapping network to protect whio and kiwi



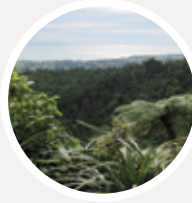
Install

a 1000ha ground-based rat control block



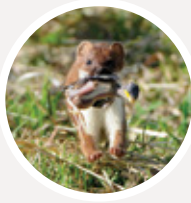
Design

a strategy for the complete removal of goats



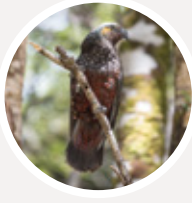
Develop

a five year weed control plan



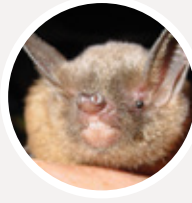
Reduce

pest numbers significantly



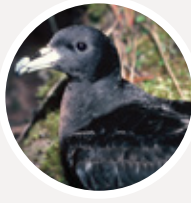
Investigate

potential translocations of kākā and kākāriki



Undertake

a baseline survey on bat distribution and abundance



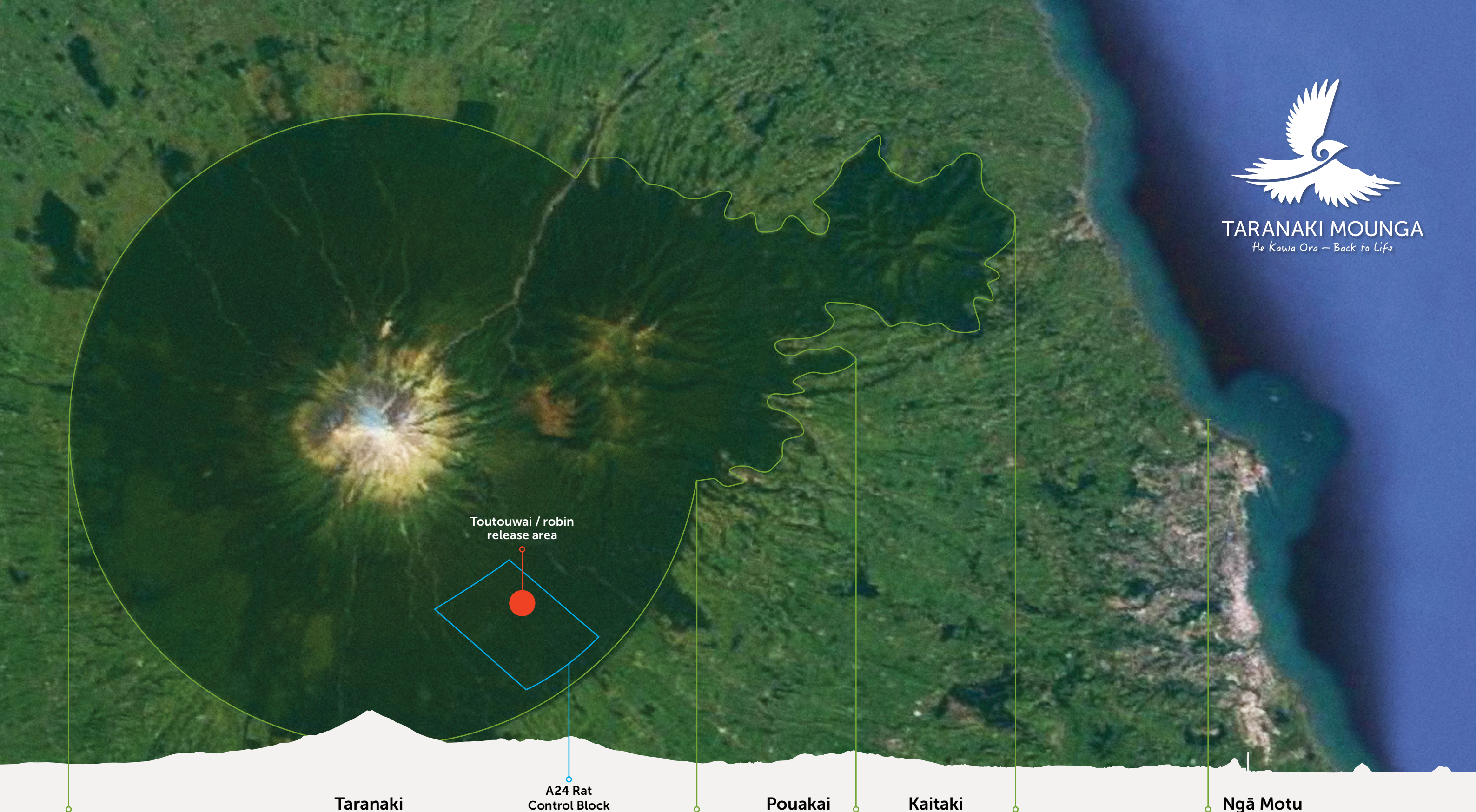
Establish

a seabird colony





**TARANAKI MOUNGA**  
*He Kawa Ora – Back to Life*



## Taranaki Mounga – Project Area

The project extends from the Ngā Motu / Sugar Loaf islands by New Plymouth to the peaks of Kaitake, Pouakai and Taranaki and over the 34,000 ha of Egmont National Park. Over time Taranaki Mounga

will work with groups including the Taranaki Regional Council, farmers and environmental groups like Wild for Taranaki to create a halo around the mountain to protect the perimeter of the park against reinvasion from pests.

In April 2017 toutouwai / robin were released on Mt Taranaki – the first time the birds have been in the national park for over 110 years. The manu (birds) were released into a 1,000 ha block with intensive rat control in the form of 2,160 A24 Goodnature self re-setting traps.





Kei runga te kawa  
Kei raro te kawa  
Kei mania te kawa  
He kawa nui  
He kawa roa  
He kawa ora!  
Kei ngā iwi o te motu me te ao tēnā  
koutou katoa. Ka mihi ka tangi tātou i hō  
tātou mate tuatinitini. Nō reira koutou te  
hunga kua tau atu ki te tatau o te pō, e  
moe. Kati, ka huri ki a koutou ngā kanohi  
o rātou kua riro, tēnā koutou.  
Ko Taranaki mounga te pou here i a  
tātou, koia te pou here i te kaupapa nei.

# Chair and Directors Report

We are very pleased to present the inaugural Taranaki Mounga annual report. The report brings together the many threads of what is a genuine celebration of collaboration, aligning iwi, community, business, government and philanthropic interests for an outcome that is bold and ambitious. A project that is genuinely inspiring landscape scale restoration – Taranaki Mounga is breaking new ground.

It is very humbling to be able to work amongst such a motivated, professional and passionate team. We are very fortunate to work alongside some outstanding partners, associates and supporters, all of whom have contributed to our early successes. Without the many committed and passionate people and organisations we would not now be in the position to contemplate the wider goals in restoring a resilient Taranaki Mounga and Taranaki region.

We have now completed our interim period and have pleasingly achieved all of our initial objectives. A particular highlight during this phase was the toutouwai translocation. We are seeing early markers of success with chicks already fledged. Beyond the toutouwai the translocation provided an opportunity to forge and strengthen significant new relationships and partnerships locally, regionally and nationally. In keeping with the theme of relationships and partnership we believe we have helped engender wider scale collaboration and leadership in the Taranaki region. Examples include the Wild for Taranaki community collaboration and the approach and investment by Taranaki Regional Council and other territorial authorities in developing the Restore Taranaki strategy. This is yet another ambitious ‘moonshot’ toward a Predator Free New Zealand.

We always work and operate in a way that is consistent with our values. As we do this we continue to learn and grow from the environment and communities that we operate within. Our values are very important and guide us in our approach.

We seek to be agile as we operate in a space where change is a given, and where the rate of change itself is changing, complexity is normal, paucity of good data is common and where threats to flora and fauna are increasing. Building resilience and adaptability within our system to deal with change and to minimise threats such that individual species can themselves adapt to the changing environment is important. The safe and restorative ecological space we are looking to create in the Taranaki mounga environment and the work being done in the ‘halo’ by the various community groups and agencies in the surrounding Taranaki region can only be successful if we are aligned, co-ordinated and collaborative. Only through such collective action and demonstrating our values will we achieve our vision and objectives. These are our values;

### Manaakitanga / Reciprocity:

Emphasise behaviour and activities that are mana enhancing toward others including generosity, care, respect and reciprocity. The consortium operates to ensure that other conservation projects are not required to compete with TMP for resources and are not duplicating effort. Other conservation projects are also able to contribute to a common coherent long term vision, through mutually reinforcing activities with coherent, consistent and measureable outcomes and objectives;

### Kotahitanga / Collaboration:

Recognising and enhancing a unity of purpose and direction where all are able and encouraged to contribute. Major expansions of effort can be achieved through collaboration with a common agenda in order to optimise impact. The parties maintain a highly collaborative approach with others aiming to grow commitment to a common long term vision, and associated outcomes and objectives for the Taranaki Mounga and region. The founding parties to this project will invite other like-minded parties to partner in this project; likewise this consortium will support off-mountain objectives 4 and 5, which will be led by others;

### Kia Tika, Kia Pono / Transparency:

- Being open, honest and transparent in our communication with each other
- to work in the spirit of co-operation;
  - operate a ‘no surprises approach’
  - respect the independence of each party and their individual mandates, roles and responsibilities;
  - recognise and acknowledge that the parties benefit from working together by sharing their vision, knowledge and expertise in exercising values of conservation and kaitiakitanga;
  - commit to the highest levels of engagement

### Transformational:

Aiming for a bold measureable transformation shift, not incremental change;

### Business like and Effective:

Focus on ambitious, shared, measurable conservation outcomes and objectives whilst ensuring best practice governance and management is utilised.

We have courageously adopted a new approach – a private public iwi partnership underpinned by common values, commercial discipline, best practice governance, management, monitoring, research, analysis and measurement to achieve our collective objectives. The ability to trial and implement new technologies and approaches in the war against predators. The opportunity to demonstrate the power of scale, partnership and collaboration to achieve transformational change. To develop insights and learnings to be shared.

We wish to thank all of our partners, supporters, associates and friends for their support, commitment and contributions. We are very pleased that you are part of our Taranaki Mounga whanau.

**Nō reira, whiria te kaha i uta, whiria te kaha i tai, whiria te kaha tuamanomano, whiria te kaha tuatinitini, whiria te kaha o Taranaki ! Tāwhia! Purutia tō mana! Kia mau, kia ita! Ita! Ita! Mau tonu e**

**Jamie Tuuta** - Taranaki Mounga Chairman  
**Jan Hania** - Taranaki Mounga Director





# Taranaki Mounga

## a “whole of community” partnership

### Taranaki iwi Chairs Forum

Right from the outset, the project principles and vision to restore ecological resilience and to undertake a process towards - He Kawa Ora has resonated with iwi and hapū. Iwi involvement in the development of the brand and project vision has also allowed us to contribute towards charting the pathway for our tupuna.

The objectives set out in the 15-month phase have been achieved and the partnership has become very successful. This has been demonstrated by the amount of collaboration with the wider community and other business and conservation groups, both regionally and nationally. Further, those iwi who have been able to actively participate now have participants contributing across a range of our projects with some of our local champions now actively embedded in the conservation space.

The translocation programme to reintroduce toutouwai/North Island robin back onto our tupuna maunga was particularly successful and involved alot of passionate groups. For iwi, the translocation process needed to be reviewed in the context of the people’s relationship with the taonga and we were very clear that relationships with mana whenua were paramount, before the removal and translocation of any species was carried out. Consequently, our relationship with Ngati Rereahu and the toutouwai that came back from Pureora Forest is something we will hold close for a long time. The relationship with mana whenua within the broader context of translocations will now form a key part of all future translocations back onto our mountain.

The collaboration between Tui Ora and the Department of Conservation has also been a highlight. Youth were given the opportunity to reconnect back to their tupuna, and this work is set to kick off again over the coming year with future collaborations with iwi in South Taranaki.

We are now looking to commit to the project long-term which will allow us to embed long-term principles and to set in place the required planning and resourcing to reach our vision of He Kawa Ora – Back to Life.

#### Hemi Sundgren

Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum representative

### Department of Conservation

The past year has been an extremely busy one for the Department and especially so in Taranaki where our staff have had to contend with numerous unforeseen challenges, not least of which has been the very demanding biosecurity response to Myrtle rust.

Despite these added pressures we achieved a good deal more than we had planned for the year both on and off Taranaki Mounga. Much of this work has resulted from the success of the Taranaki Mounga project partnership and is described in this annual report including the highlight for the year “the return of toutouwai to Taranaki Mounga”.

What isn’t decribed is the significance this partnership has had on the Department and the way we are now approaching conservation in Taranaki. Staff have described to me a change from managing biodiversity on a species by species basis to managing an ecosystem and planning conservation on a landscape scale. This shift is enabling greater flexibility and ambition in our planning and delivery. It is also changing the way we view the role of our partners. Not only do our partners help us in delivering conservation, they are also leading us and that is a good thing.

It is early days in this partnership and we have a lot to do, however, it has already been more successful than we planned and I am more optimistic than ever of our collective ability to bring Taranaki Mounga back to life.

#### David Speirs

Operations Director, Hauraki, Waikato, Taranaki Region

### NEXT Foundation

NEXT is proud to be a foundation partner of the Taranaki Mounga initiative. We support initiatives that are transformational, inspirational, and operating in a business-like way. They need strong leadership, the ability to scale up, and a model for long term sustainability.

Taranaki Mounga is an outstanding example of all of these attributes. It is a powerful collaboration between iwi, government, community, business and philanthropy.

NEXT views the Taranaki Mounga model as a blueprint for future large landscape scale environmental projects, particularly those looking to restore the biodiversity of our precious land – and making New Zealand a better place for our land, and our people.

#### Bill Kermode

NEXT Chief Executive



**TARANAKI IWI  
CHAIRS FORUM**





## Sponsors welcomed by ministers



Taranaki Mounga welcomed founding sponsors Shell New Zealand, TSB Community Trust, Jasmine Social Investments and Landcare Research to the project in September 2016.



The announcement was made at a function in New Plymouth attended by the Minister of Business, Innovation and Employment, Stephen Joyce, and the Minister of Conservation, Maggie Barry.

**"Taranaki Mounga is a very important part of proving what is possible... it was the game-changer, the inspiration that provided further fuel for us in Wellington to understand a vision of Predator Free New Zealand embraced at the community level"**

**Maggie Barry**, Conservation Minister

### Shell New Zealand

Supporting Taranaki Mounga Project has provided Shell with a unique opportunity to come together with iwi, business and the community to support transformational environmental change on Mount Taranaki.

The project has already achieved some notable outcomes – we are starting to hear toutouwai (North Island Robin) singing on the mounga, the kiwi population are increasing and the forest is regenerating as we get on top of pest populations. These successes are a direct result of the intensive work undertaken by the Taranaki Mounga team and the community. In addition to the community activity, Shell is really pleased to see our Taranaki staff embracing the project. They are loving the opportunity to be involved in toutouwai /North Island robin translocations, kiwi releases and

learning new monitoring skills that will enable them to continue conservation work in their own time.

Shell sees this project as a great example of community collaboration, for a worthy cause that will leave a lasting legacy for Taranaki. We feel privileged to be a founding sponsor. But the transformation is just starting. There is a lot of work to do to get the lasting change that we know is necessary. We want to be part of that.

### TSB Community Trust

The Taranaki Mounga project is about inter-generational transformative change – on so many levels. It invites us to stretch our collective imagination, to reach beyond our usual boundaries; challenging us to collectively redefine what we think is possible.

Beyond the capacity of any one organisation, its bold vision of facilitating transformational ecological change by necessity involves creative collaboration – through the weaving together of iwi, business, community and other stakeholders.

As a Foundation sponsor, the aspirations of Taranaki Mounga resonate strongly with TSB Community Trust's vision of beneficial change for Taranaki and its people, now and in the future, and our priority of child and youth wellbeing in our region.

Taranaki Mounga provides us with a meaningful opportunity to proactively

work with others to contribute to the success and wellbeing of Taranaki and its people, including the strengthening of community connections and resilience.

So much so, the Trust has committed to this project long term. Together as a Taranaki Mounga community we've already celebrated some amazing outcomes and we know that by working together we can continue to meet the challenges ahead.

### Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research is a founding sponsor of the Taranaki Mounga Project. We believe this project has enormous potential for learning how to achieve landscape-scale suppression, and in some cases eradication, of pests across public conservation land and adjoining private farmland. This is the way forward to achieving a Predator-Free New Zealand. The research expertise we bring to the project on pest and weed ecology and control, pest monitoring, native species monitoring, vegetation mapping, and social research will help improve its success, and document the underpinning science from which others can learn. Manaaki Whenua benefits from this partnership by demonstrating real-world outcomes of science applied across large-scales and across a complex landscape of private and public land.

## Award recognition of collaborative approach



Taranaki Mounga was honoured to win the Philanthropy and Partnership category in the 2017 Green Ribbon Environmental Awards. Another Taranaki project, South Taranaki Underwater Club Reef Life Project also won the Coasts and Oceans category.

The awards are now in their 27th year and recognise exceptional initiatives by individuals, communities, organisations and businesses to protect and manage New Zealand's environment.

**"This year we received close to 150 nominations – a significant increase on the last two years. We're seeing a growing sense of personal ownership to protect our environment and native species for generations to come,"**

**Nicky Wagner**,  
Associate Conservation Minister

Taranaki Mounga director Jan Hania says the win was an acknowledgement of all the incredible conservation work going on throughout the region.

**"There is an astounding level of collaboration in Taranaki with many players all working towards a common goal. Taranaki Regional Council, Wild for Taranaki, Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society, iwi and others are all contributing and supporting each other in many ways including volunteering,**

**sharing resources and skills to help achieve the challenge of restoring the ecological vitality in the region alongside the Taranaki community,"**

**Jan Hania**, Taranaki Mounga Director

## Region working towards common goals

Taranaki Mounga is working with many other conservation and community groups in the region towards the common goal of restoring the ecology of the Taranaki region.

The Department of Conservation, Taranaki Regional Council and a variety of conservation groups including the Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society and Project Hotspot were working in the conservation space long before the formation of Taranaki Mounga.

Significantly, a consortium of over 40 conservation and supporter groups has formed under the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum. Called Wild for Taranaki it aims to scale up predator control to a regional scale, and is very much aligned with Taranaki Mounga and Predator Free New Zealand 2050.

**"I would like to acknowledge the work that has gone on before us. DOC, Wild for Taranaki and community groups like the Taranaki Kiwi Trust have been doing restoration work and predator control in the national park for many years and without their considerable efforts the challenge ahead of all of us would be even harder,"**

**Jamie Tuuta**, Taranaki Mounga Chairman

Taranaki Mounga is already working collaboratively with many of these groups and in some instances is able to provide support which the groups can then leverage off in funding applications. Planning, strategy, training and volunteer co-ordination is also being looked at on a regional level.





# Objective One: SECURE

Secure the Mouna against animal and weed pests. Eradicate goats and significantly reduce pest numbers and impacts on Taranaki Mouna.

## Years of predator control gives project a head start

Years of predator control undertaken by the Department of Conservation in the national park has given Taranaki Mouna a good base to develop its ongoing predator control programme. Coupled with a new monitoring network across the entire mountain the project will be able to make science based decisions about future predator control.

The ongoing goat control programme and periodic aerial 1080 operations have resulted in a relatively healthy forest canopy in the project area. However the forests and forest regeneration are still under threat from many animal pests, and a small number of weeds.

DOC undertook a planned aerial 1080 predator control operation in the 2nd half of 2016. Weather delays meant the operation did not go completely as planned with a substantial delay between pre-feed and toxic applications. The aerial 1080 operation was completed in late December. Monitoring found stoats went from 3% relative index prior to the aerial application and were maintained at 0% up to five months post application. Rats were at 48% and were reduced down to 7%, increasing to 40% after five months. Possums were reduced from 21% to between 8-12%.

For the first time, a monitoring network has been established across the entire mountain so we can better understand baseline predator densities and trends. This will be further refined and developed as data is gathered and Landcare

Research will evaluate existing and historical data.

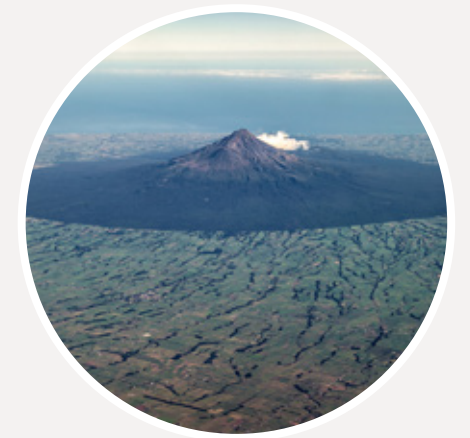
Given the large area and difficult terrain on Mt Taranaki aerially applying cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 pesticide continues to be the most effective method of predator control in the national park to protect our taonga species. The project will potentially increase the scale and frequency of predator control in the future.

## Trialling a new approach to aerial predator control

As part of DOC's aerial predator control operation, ZIP (Zero Invasive Predators Ltd) undertook a trial over a 1,600 hectare block on Mt Taranaki to test the ability of a modified technique for using aerial 1080 to completely remove all possums and rats from forested areas on the New Zealand mainland.

The trial block was pre-fed with non-toxic bait four times because of weather delays, followed by an application of toxin at a rate of 4kg/ha. In comparison, a standard aerial 1080 operation uses one application of prefeed, and toxin is sown at a rate of 2kg/ha.

Results were very encouraging. Pre-trial monitoring in the block indicated that possum density was low (6%) and rat density was extremely high (with an estimated starting population of 2,000 rats). Intensive monitoring for 42 days after the application of toxin found evidence of one surviving possum (suspected to have migrated into the block from outside the trial block) and an estimated 15-20 rats.



The modified technique appears to offer the potential to be able to completely remove possums from an area. If invading possums are able to be prevented from re-establishing a population in an area, then this could remove the need for the repeated application of aerial 1080 to control possums. ZIP plans to do further trials of the technique elsewhere in New Zealand, and the learning from these trials will inform the planning of future predator control operations in Taranaki and elsewhere.

## Stoat trapping gives kiwi and whio extended safe zone

Extending the existing stoat trapping network in the national park will pave the way to bring more whio and kiwi back to the Mouna.

Stoats are a particular threat to whio, they attack females on the nest, eat eggs and young ducklings.

At the start of the project the stoat trapping network encompassed 9,000 ha. Stage one of the extension was completed in June 2017, increasing the network by 400 ha, with a further 1,200 ha to be completed.

**"These new traps are going to extend the range of protected habitat for whio and kiwi so they will be able to disperse across a greater protected area of the mouna".**

**Ali Beath**, DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger  
The trap network also got a helping hand from design technology students at New Plymouth Girls High School who made some of the trap boxes. The students earned 6 NCEA credits for their work.





## SECURE

### Rat trapping network a world first

A 1,000 ha network of Goodnature A24 rat traps, in what is known as the toutouwai release block, is the largest area of these rat traps ever installed.

While the majority of these 2,160 traps were deployed for Taranaki Mounga by contractors, a community trapping training day saw the final 30 traps installed and set by the public to complete the network. The trapping training day provided an opportunity for the community to upskill and learn about the self-resetting trap in the field.

Goodnature A24's reset themselves and can kill up to 24 times. Coupled with an automatic lure dispenser they reduce the amount of time traps have to be checked and re-baited. The network is being monitored to ascertain its effectiveness with a view to potentially extending it in the future.

### Weeds in our sights

A plant known as 'rhubarb on steroids' and a climbing vine that can cover the forest floor and understory up to 4 m high are the first two in the projects sights. Climbing Asparagus (*Asparagus scandens*) prevents native shrubs and trees from establishing and can also ringbark and kill soft barked plants. Chilean Rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*) was introduced from South America and looks like ordinary garden rhubarb but on a larger scale. It is banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand.

The project weed team is controlling known Gunnera sites to ensure it does not re-establish. This will streambanks and damp bluff areas to retain their natural vegetative cover for fauna communities like glow-worms. A feasibility study to eradicate climbing asparagus is underway to ensure the Kaitake Range kohekohe forest will regenerate and thrive.

### The last goat standing

Mt Taranaki is highly unusual in terms of pests; It has no deer or pigs meaning there is only one species of large grazing animal in the Park – the feral goat. Taranaki Mounga aims to remove all goats by 2023.

Goats were first reported in Egmont National Park in 1910 and by 1920 large herds of goats were destroying huge areas of forest. In 1925 the Park Board appointed a ranger to control goats and brush-tail possums. A goat control team has been working on the mountain since then – it has the dubious distinction of being the world's longest running goat team.

In 1950 a bounty was introduced for goats, with the bounty forming part of the rangers wages. Recreational hunters have always been able to hunt goats with a hunting permit. Over the years the main form of goat control has been ground hunting with dogs and rifles. Helicopter shooting has been used in the alpine grasslands but most of the remaining goats now live in the lower-altitude tall forest.

Since 1925 over 100,000 goats have been killed in the national park. In 2017, it was estimated there were around 1,000 goats left. Taranaki Mounga has appointed a project leader who is working with local and national experts to develop a feasibility assessment and plan to make Taranaki New Zealand's first ungulate free national park. Supporting this outcome through good neighbours and regulatory support from local councils will be essential in securing this investment and outcome.

### Halo will protect from re-invasion

The creation of a biodiversity halo to minimise pest and weed reinvasion is an objective that will enable Taranaki Mounga's work to rid the national park of predators.

Taranaki Mounga has been working with other organisations, in particular the Taranaki Regional Council, on plans to protect the 100km perimeter of the national park. Work is also being undertaken by Wild for Taranaki towards an ecological corridor between the Mounga and New Plymouth city to the sea.

The TRC already works with landowners bordering the Park and together with Taranaki Mounga will look to trial innovative predator control on the Park perimeter in 2018. An outcomes monitoring framework is in development and a more comprehensive data monitoring programme will be established across both the mountain and farmland, as predator control expands.







# Objective Two

# RESTORE

Restore Species. Transform the ecological prospects of the Mounga through the reintroduction of lost species and the strengthening of existing populations of threatened species

### **Returning toutouwai /robin a symbolic milestone**

Collaboration was the key to returning toutouwai/North Island robin to Mt Taranaki in April 2017 after a 110-year absence.

DOC and the Taranaki Mounga team started planning the translocation in 2016, with an initial focus on ensuring the release site had intensive predator control.

The birds were translocated into the 1,000 ha robin block where there were very low predator numbers after an aerial predator control operation. Additionally, through collaboration with DOC and Goodnature, an extensive network covering 1,000 hectares of self-resetting A24 rat traps with automatic long life lures were deployed throughout the block.

The 50 manu (birds) that were released, came from the rain forest of Pureora Forest Park. Taranaki and Te Atiawa iwi leaders visited with Ngāti Rereahu, the mana whenua of Pureora, forging what will be an enduring relationship with the iwi. In turn, representatives from Ngāti Rereahu were hosted at Muru Raupatu Marae prior to the birds release.

“Our role is to make sure the birds are safe . We can see that they’re going to be protected here, its just that smooth transition from one paradise to another.”

**Frances Hughes**, Ngāti Rereahu

School children from around Taranaki, and even staff at Shell’s Kapuni Plant grew mealworms to feed the robin. The mealworms were used to entice the toutouwai when volunteers including a large group from nearby Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust travelled to Pureora to pre-feed and later help catch the birds.

50 birds were caught over two trips to Pureora and those at the releases described the moment they were released on Mt Taranaki as highly emotional.

Kerry Williamson from Shell helped carry one of the boxes in and says as a local who grew up two rivers over from the release site he felt very special.

“You feel kind of like a guardian. I’ll bring my girls back here and say I was involved in bringing these birds back,”

**Kerry Williamson**, Shell NZ

After the toutouwai were released volunteers continued to monitor the area, and will return for pre-breeding monitoring in Spring.

The last record of a robin being seen on Mt Taranaki was in 1905. Taranaki Mounga chairman Jamie Tuuta says

“It is hoped this will be the first release of many. For me personally to be able to hear the voices of the toutouwai to hear their song which we haven’t heard for many years and to enjoy that song and bring my children back here, that’s something special.

**Jamie Tuuta**, Taranaki Mounga Chairman





PHOTO Mark Dwyer

## Hoani Eriwata

### A dedicated volunteer

Whether it is helping catch toutouwai, releasing kiwi or monitoring manu on the Mouna, Te Atiawa representative Hoani Eriwata is one of the project's most dedicated volunteers.

Hoani was part of the catching team that travelled to Pureora Forest to help catch the first toutouwai / North Island robin to be returned to the mountain. He has also been involved in monitoring the released birds and he says working to bring toutouwai back to the Mouna was an environmental wake-up call.

**"I wanted to get more involved at a personal level and concentrate on the environment,"**

**Hoani Eriwata, Volunteer**

His passion for conservation started at primary school when nature study was part of the curriculum. He now teaches North Taranaki school children and hapū about the importance of protecting their local river catchment through

the educational group Te Whenua Tōmuri. Later this year, Hoani is co-ordinating an environmental Curious Minds project with Otaraua Hapū that works with Waitara High School students who will monitor watercress and whitebait populations on the Waitara River.

DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger Emily King has worked closely with Hoani and says he's a wonderful example of conservation in action.

**"Hoani has a strong connection to the forest and he appreciates other people who do too. What I admire about him is he shares his knowledge openly and has a calming influence while in the bush. He's a beautiful person."**

**Emily King, DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger**

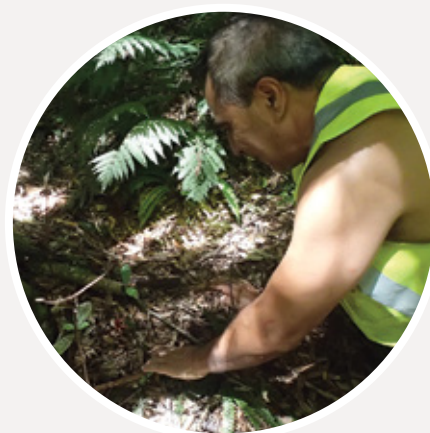


PHOTO Mark Dwyer





# RESTORE

## Mealworm farming helps public “connect” with Mounga

From pre-schoolers to petroleum workers - the Taranaki community pitched in to bring North Island robin back to Mt Taranaki by growing mealworms.

Mealworms were farmed at over a dozen Taranaki schools, Shell NZ offices and in private homes. The worms are the larvae of the darkling beetle and toutouwai find them delicious so they are useful to entice the birds when you are catching them and then to keep them in the area they are released.

Ratapiko School Principal Lisa Hill says growing the mealworms gave her pupils a connection with Mt Taranaki and the Taranaki Mounga project.

“It allowed our children to see how we as a community can help the Mounga and the animals that live there.”

**Lisa Hill**, Ratapiko School Principal

Perhaps student Aurora Tarasiewicz-Thomas from Ratipiko summed it up best.

“I feel like a hero, because the robin is a native bird and we’re helping by growing them food.”

**Aurora Tarasiewicz**, Ratapiko School Pupil

## Kiwi to be intensively monitored

Taranaki Mounga is working closely with the Taranaki Kiwi Trust to protect kiwi on Mt Taranaki.

Around 80 Western North Island brown kiwi have been released onto Mt Taranaki in the last ten years. However little is known about what happens to the kiwi after their release.

Taranaki Mounga is supporting an intensive monitoring programme which will see up to 20 kiwi released with transmitters. Along with Kiwis for kiwi the project has helped purchase a Skyranger which allows monitoring from the air.

Taranaki Kiwi Trust Chair Sue Hardwick-Smith says this sort of intensive monitoring hasn’t been done on the mountain before.

“To find out where they’re going, are they staying where they were put, or are they moving away, are they surviving, are they breeding, the transmitter can tell us all this information,” she says.

**Chair Sue Hardwick-Smith**, Taranaki Kiwi Trust Chair

Previously, kiwi have been monitored by Taranaki Kiwi Trust, DOC and volunteers using kiwi call counts and acoustic recorders but this new method will provide a lot more information.

“We all want the same outcome - a large viable population of thriving kiwi on the mountain. This kiwi monitoring programme will give the Trust a much better picture of kiwi behaviour and the information will be useful as Taranaki Mounga works to control and reduce predators in the national park.”

**Jan Hania**, Taranaki Mounga Director

“It is fantastic that Taranaki Mounga is supporting this work, we couldn’t do it without them and they’re great people to work with,”

**Michelle Bird**, Taranaki Kiwi Trust Manager

## Bat survey underway

Research is being undertaken to establish the distribution of pekapeka-tou-roa / long-tailed bats, and the even rarer pekapeka-tou-poto / short tail bats, on the Mounga.

Bats are important for restoring the eco-system as they act in a similar way to bees and pollinate species. The rare parasitic plant Dactylanthus that is found on Mt Taranaki is pollinated by the short-tailed bat. They are New Zealand’s only native land mammals and very vulnerable to predation by cats, stoats and rats.

It is thought small populations of the bats are found on Mt Taranaki. A baseline survey on their distribution and abundance was begun in the summer of 2017 with more work planned for next year. The information will be used to make informed decisions about how the project can help the bats survival on the mountain.

## Whio population to expand

The whio/blue duck population on Mt Taranaki was designated ‘functionally extinct’ by 1945 but additional predator control will enable Taranaki Mounga to increase the number of breeding pairs in coming years.

A predator programme covering 7,500 ha of the park was started in 2003. With a lot of hard work by DOC, the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust and Whio Forever the whio population has now built up to 33 pairs.

In the first year of the project whio dogs were used to monitor the local whio population to capture baseline data. This information, and more gained from further monitoring, will be used to plan how best to increase the number of breeding pairs from the current 33, to at least 50, which is considered to be a viable population level.

Already, an increase in the stoat trapping network has enhanced the protected area for blue duck with new protection underway. This will allow further releases of captive reared juveniles.



PHOTO Jenny Feaver

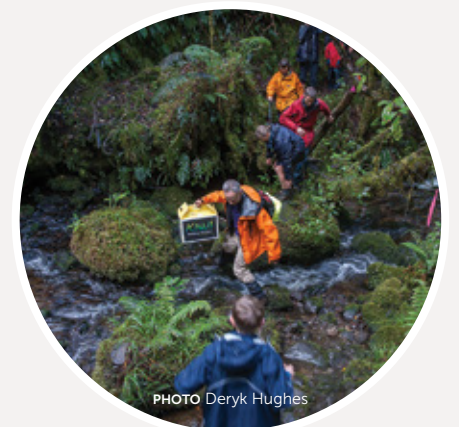


PHOTO Deryk Hughes

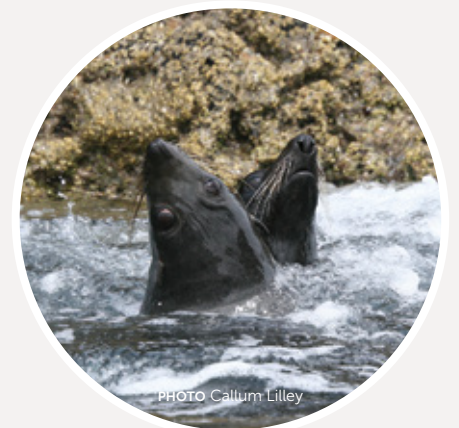


PHOTO Callum Lilley





## Objective Three

# SUSTAIN

Build community support and commitment.  
Ensuring the transformational changes are  
valued and secure for the long term



### New brand outlines Taranaki Mounga's vision

A core group of iwi leaders joined Taranaki Mounga team members to develop the logo and vision for the project.

He Kawa Ora – Back to Life was the inspiration for the logo, which was designed by New Plymouth web and graphic design company, Little Rocket.

The logo tells the story of the project and its vision for the Mounga. It incorporates the mountain into the silhouette of a native bird using a koru to represent the 'new bird song' and new life that will return and flourish on Mt Taranaki and the ranges to Nga Motu/Sugarloaf Islands.

### Mounga contributes to youth wellbeing

A collaboration of Tui Ora, DOC, iwi, Ngati Ruanui Tahua and the Health Promotion Agency are involved in leading and co-designing a youth wellness pilot project under the banner of Oranga Mounga Oranga Tangata.

The Tiki Toa project aims to provide meaningful opportunities for young people to interact with Te Tai Ao (the natural environment) and connect with Te Ao Māori for wellbeing. Students co-designed the programme, with assistance and advice from the Health Promotion Agency. Former All Black and mental health advocate Sir John Kirwan was an early supporter and visited the region twice to discuss opportunities to use nature to promote youth wellness.

Workshops have been held on the Mounga facilitated by Tui Ora and assisted by DOC where youth participants talked about how good it was to be in the outdoors. While most knew about the legends of the Mounga, some had not visited the mountain before.

Students took part in trips around Egmont National Park. Tui Ora partnered with two New Plymouth schools to identify children who would benefit from connecting with nature, says Project Manager Hinenui Wano-Bryant.

**"We look at different aspects of health and merging it with the Mounga. It's different to the other services we provide as we use the natural environment as a way of challenging and inspiring the young people – in a way connecting to the outdoors transforms their lives,"**

**Hinenui Wano-Bryant,**  
Tui Ora Project Manager

Highlights were seeing some of the rangatahi (youth) experience snow for the first time while staying at the Manganui Lodge where they got to learn survival techniques for the alpine environment.

**"They thought snow would be soft and powdery when it was more like ice."**

Devon Intermediate Principal Jenny Gellen says the project is boosting 10-12-year-olds self-worth which is crucial to communities. "It's an awakening as the kids don't realise their potential and now they're learning. They come back really excited and enthusiastic. They know it's OK to express yourself as that's all part of developing a holistic child."

The programme is being evaluated by researchers from the Health Promotion Agency but initial feedback is positive. Taranaki Mounga is now considering how to best support the pilot health project.

### Citizen scientists help track toutouwai

The public has been helping with the toutouwai/robin project by reporting sightings of the bird through a Citizen Science project.

Early on, the birds were seen around the mountain, in areas like Holly Hut, the Ahukawakawa Swamp and one seems to be often spotted near the North Egmont visitor centre.

As robin are a friendly bird the public have a good chance of spotting one, and even getting a photo so we can try and see the birds colour bands.

NatureWatch NZ's Shane Orchard, who helped set up the science project reporting bird sightings are a great way for people to get involved.

**"It helps track how well the birds are doing on Mt Taranaki and also helps build up a national picture of toutouwai in New Zealand."**

**Shane Orchard,** NatureWatch NZ  
Sharing data and data commons principals will be essential to enable effective management, collective decision making and growing collaboration.





SUSTAIN

Jenny Kerrisk, Volunteer

# Great neighbours contribute to translocation success

As a tramper Jenny Kerrisk used to cover a lot of ground. It wasn't till she began volunteering at the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, and more recently helping Taranaki Mounga bring back robin to Mt Taranaki, that she learnt to take her time in the bush.

"I come from a tramping background so a lot of my attitude was ground covering A to B, but now I've learnt to take notice of the bush and wildlife, especially birds, like toutouwai, tieke, and hihi, they're all my favourites now."

Jenny Kerrisk, Volunteer

After eight years volunteering at Rotokare she has done it all, weekly trap clearing, track clearing, bird monitoring – you name it. This year she was one of a group who travelled to Pureora Forest to pre-feed toutouwai/robin before they were caught and released on Mt Taranaki.

"Robin haven't been on Mt Taranaki for an awfully long time, so it was kind of weird to think we carried those boxes into the forest and you let the birds out and when they come out and sing all those other birds in that bush have

never actually heard that sound before, its quite emotional," she says.

Jenny will return to Mt Taranaki to monitor the robin. Volunteers from Rotokare have contributed over 1,300 volunteer hours towards the translocation of the toutouwai and are likely to spend many more helping monitor the birds in spring.

Taranaki Mounga Director Jan Hania says the help from Rotokare has been invaluable.

"Collaboration really is the key to making real change to the environmental landscape in Taranaki and with neighbours like Rotokare and other groups under the Wild for Taranaki banner I know we can achieve great things for the biodiversity of the region."

Jan Hania, Taranaki Mounga Director

For Jenny, conservation volunteering has provided her with wonderful opportunities and she would recommend it to anyone.

"The satisfaction of not only working in a fantastic beautiful office, but always feeling useful. There's always been something I can contribute, I started off being really fit, not so much of that now, doesn't matter what your fitness level is there's always something you can do," she says.

## Mounga video goes viral

Two-way communication with the community has been an important aspect of the Taranaki Mounga story. A facebook page has proved to be very popular with around 1,500 people following the project's progress in its first year.

One of the most widely shared videos on the Facebook page was about the legend of the Mounga and his journey from the Central Plateau to Taranaki. It was narrated by Taranaki Mounga chair Jamie Tuuta and went "viral" with over 80,000 views by the end of the financial year. We are well placed to hit over 100 thousand views in 2018.



PHOTO Gordon John





Moenohotu Plaister, Ngāti Rereahu and Kevin Parker, Parker Conservation

PHOTO Mark Dwyer



Jan Hania – Taranaki Mounga Director, Chris Liddell – NEXT Foundation, Adele Meyer, Darryn Ratana – DOC, Hemi Sundgren, Devon McLean – Taranaki Mounga Board



PHOTO Mark Dwyer

# Our People

## Taranaki Mounga Board

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**Jamie Tuuta,**  
INDEPENDENT CHAIR

**Hemi Sundgren,**  
IWI REPRESENTATIVE

**Devon McLean,**  
NEXT FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE

### OBSERVERS

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**Maria Ramsay,**  
TSB COMMUNITY TRUST REPRESENTATIVE

**Rob Jager,**  
SHELL REPRESENTATIVE

### OUR TEAM

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DIRECTOR

**Sean Zieltjes,**  
PROJECT MANAGER

**Emily King,**  
SENIOR BIODIVERSITY RANGER

**Adele Meyer,**  
PARTNERSHIPS RANGER

**Darryn Ratana,**  
PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER

**Robyn Janes,**  
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**Andrew Macalister,**  
GOAT TEAM LEAD

**Gareth Hopkins,**  
DOC OPERATIONS MANAGER,  
NEW PLYMOUTH



TARANAKI IWI  
CHAIRS FORUM



TSB  
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PHOTO Rodney Allen

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Gotcha traps  
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Taranaki Schools  
Tiaki te Mauri o Parininihi Trust  
Tui Ora  
Puke Ariki  
Ngāti Tawhirikura Hapū  
Find Your Tribe  
Project Hotspot including Elise Smith

Ngā Motu Marine Reserve Society  
Ngāti Tama  
Ngāti Mutunga  
Ngāti Maru  
Te Atiawa  
Taranaki Tuturu  
Ngāruahine  
Ngāti Ruanui  
Nga Rauru  
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**TARANAKI MOUNGA**  
*He Kawa Ora – Back to Life*

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[taranakimounga.nz](http://taranakimounga.nz)