



# TARANAKI MOUNGA

*He Kawa Ora — Back to Life*



ANNUAL  
REPORT 2018







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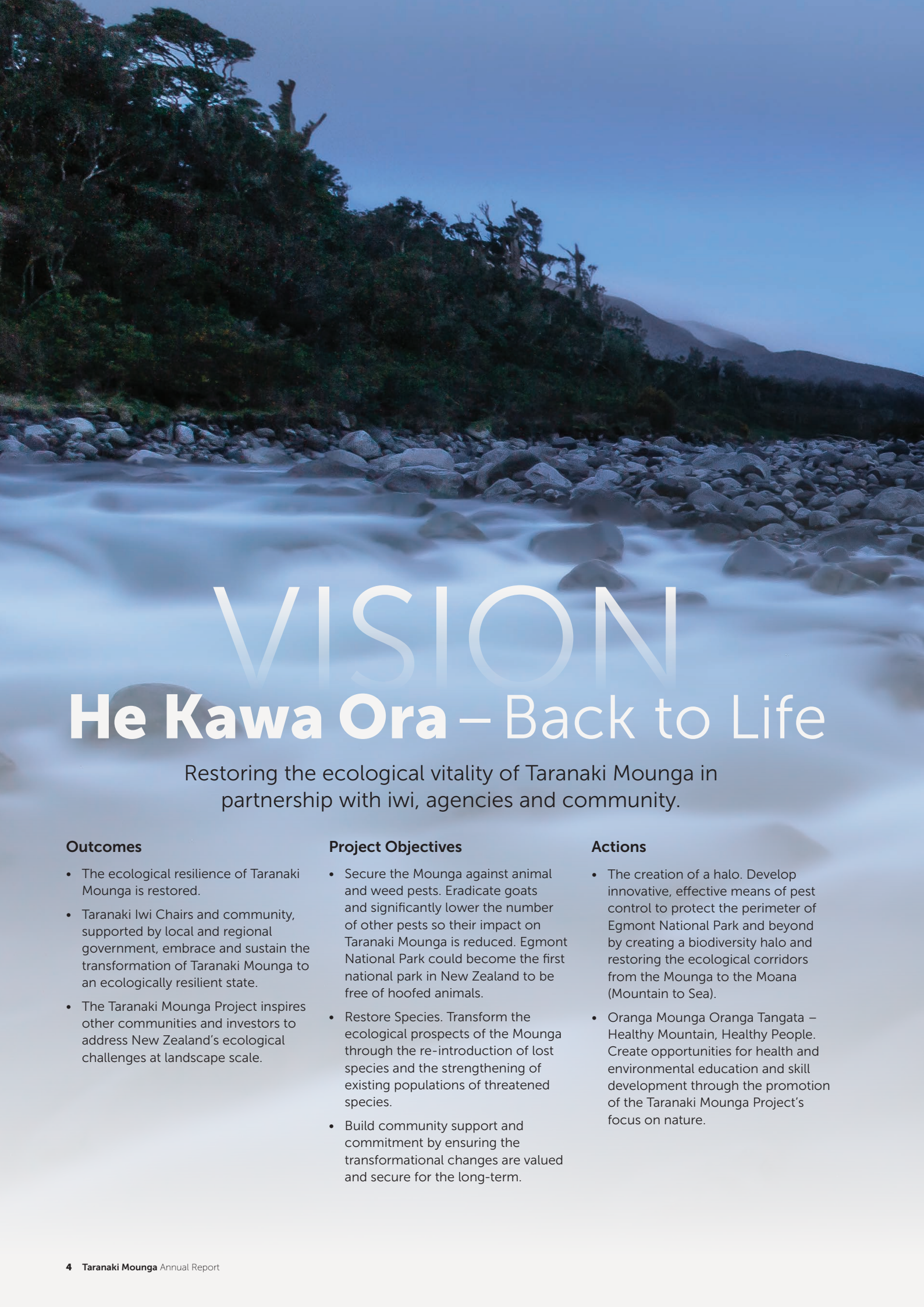
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# VISION

## 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 New Zealand's ecological challenges at landscape scale.

### Project Objectives

- Secure the Mounga against animal and weed pests. Eradicate goats and significantly lower the number of other pests so their impact on Taranaki Mounga is reduced. Egmont National Park could become the first national park in New Zealand to be free of hoofed animals.
- Restore Species. Transform the ecological prospects of the Mounga through the re-introduction of lost species and the strengthening of existing populations of threatened species.
- Build community support and commitment by ensuring the transformational changes are valued and secure for the long-term.

### Actions

- The creation of a halo. Develop innovative, effective means of pest control to protect the perimeter of Egmont National Park and beyond by creating a biodiversity halo and restoring the ecological corridors from the Mounga to the Moana (Mountain to Sea).
- Oranga Mounga Oranga Tangata – Healthy Mountain, Healthy People. Create opportunities for health and environmental education and skill development through the promotion of the Taranaki Mounga Project's focus on nature.





### **Restore**

more whio (blue duck), toutouwai (North Island robin) and North Island brown kiwi to the Mouna in 2018.



### **Extend**

the stoat trapping network to protect whio, toutouwai and kiwi.



### **Learn**

more about the ground-based rat control on 1000 hectares of land.



### **Design**

a strategy for the complete removal of goats.



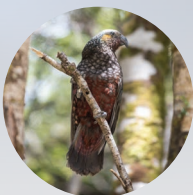
### **Develop**

a five-year weed control plan.



### **Reduce**

pest numbers significantly.



### **Investigate**

potential translocations of kākā.



### **Undertake**

a baseline survey on bat distribution and abundance.



### **Establish**

a seabird colony.









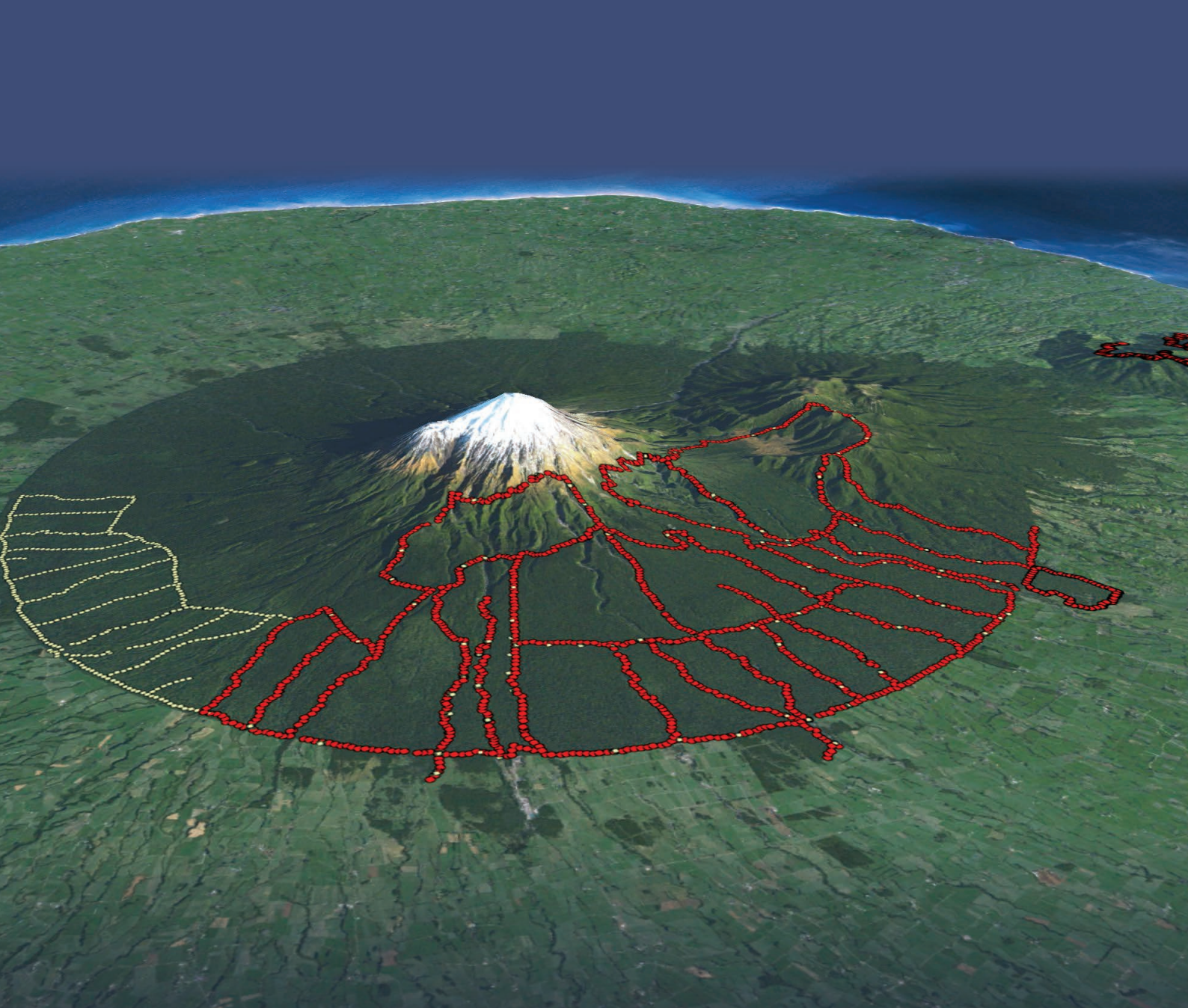
TARANAKI MOUNGA

*He Kawa Ora – Back to Life*

# Taranaki Mounga Project Area

In 2018 we made significant progress in  
pest management and species restoration  
in the large areas we manage.

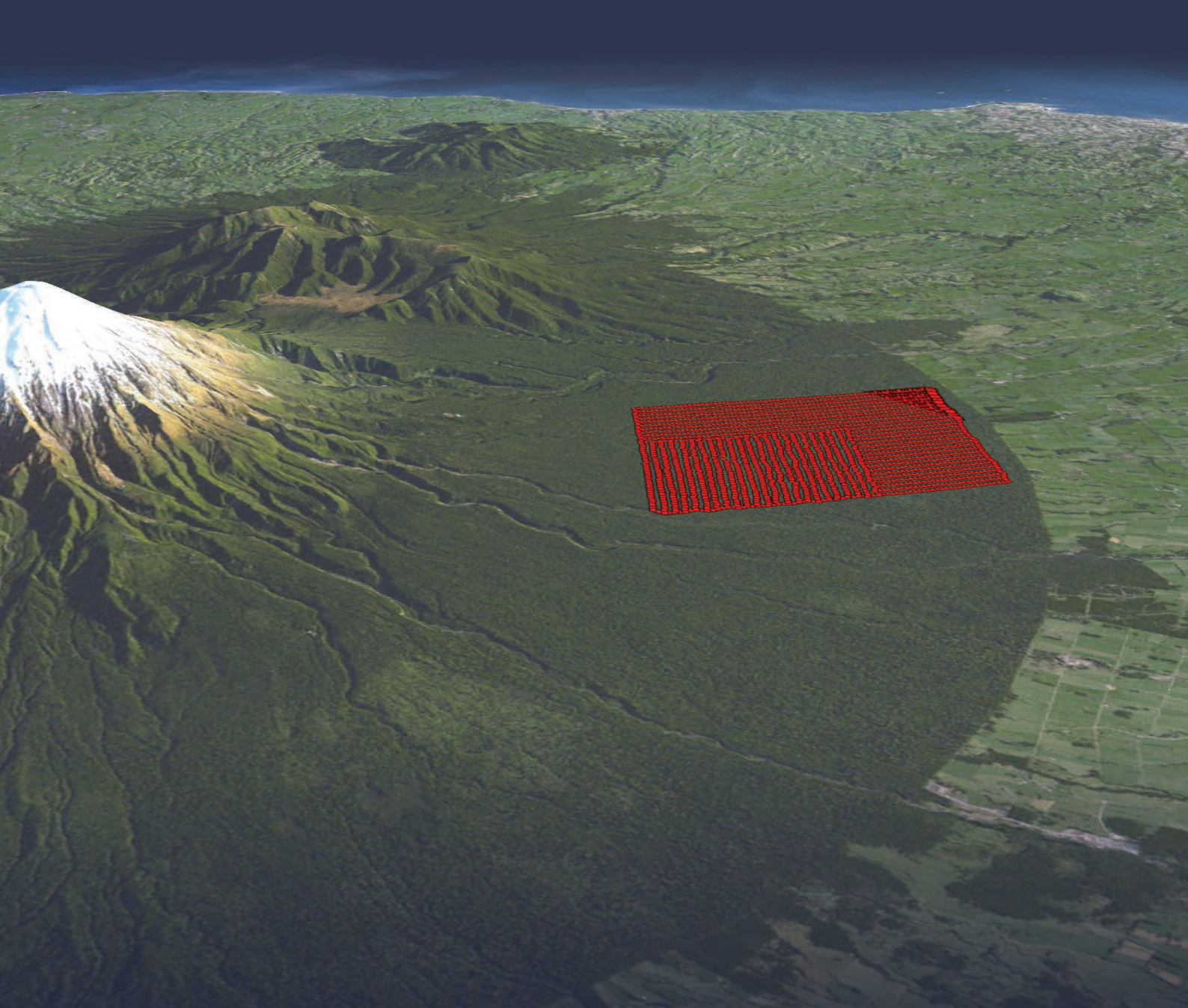




# Taranaki Mounga

- More than 3000 DOC200 traps were regularly checked and reset.
- Taranaki Kiwi Trust manages two stoat lines.
- 34 sensor cameras captured images on the Kaitake Range.
- Zooniverse citizen science project identified predators from sensor camera images.
- Community groups like START Taranaki made and monitored traplines.
- 12 whio were released along three rivers.
- New whio dogs, Tai and Marti, located more than 69 ducklings and 59 fledglings on the eight monitored rivers.
- 19 kiwi were released in 2018.
- 95 North Island brown kiwi were released since 2006.
- By end of 2018, 18 kiwi were monitored through transmitters.
- More than 100 kiwi will be released over the next five years.
- Engaged Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum, iwi and hapū of Taranaki.
- More than 300 of our community have participated in the release of taonga species.
- *iNaturalist* was used to identify flora and fauna.





## A24 rat control block of 1000 hectares

- Goodnature A24 traps operating in this block.
- Rat numbers down to low enough level where returned species are thriving.
- Total of 95 toutouwai released since 2017.
- Ongoing monitoring indicates breeding, with a number of recorded sightings of non-banded toutouwai.
- Over 500 of our community have participated in the release and monitoring of toutouwai in this block.





- 250 DOC200 traps set and monitored by Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust.
- All trap catches logged on Trap.nz.
- *Restore Kaitake* initiative established with Taranaki Regional Council's, Taranaki Taku Tūrangā – Our Place, Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki. This area is targeted to be possum-free.
- 16 sensor cameras on the Range capturing images.
- *Zooniverse* citizen science project used to identify predators from sensor camera images.
- New Plymouth Community Corrections and crew have made over 200 traps now on the Range.
- Students participating in New Horizons Aotearoa programme have made traps which will be set on the Pouakai Range.
- Working with local hapū, Ngā Māhanga a Tairi, towards their aspirations for this area.
- Kākā and seabird translocation preparatory work underway.





## Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands

- Three rat trapping lines along Centennial Park and at Paritutu.
- All trap catches logged on Trap.nz.
- 100 T-Rex traps are set and monitored by students from Francis Douglas Memorial College.
- Trap setting also supported by New Plymouth Boys' High School and staff from Shell New Zealand.
- *Penguin Cam* captures live video footage from a blue penguin nest.
- *iNaturalist* used to identify flora and fauna, as well as, logging climbing asparagus sightings.
- Working with Ngāti Te Whiti and Ngā Māhanga a Tairi to incorporate their aspirations for this sacred area.
- Working collaboratively in the area with additional groups including, Department of Conservation, Ngā Motu Marine Reserve Society, Port Taranaki, Shell New Zealand, New Plymouth District Council, Taranaki Regional Council and Wild for Taranaki.



A close-up photograph of a brown kiwi bird's head. The bird has a long, straight, brown beak and a small, dark eye. Its feathers are a mix of brown and tan, with some fine, dark hairs visible on its face. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a natural, forested environment.

Heheua te mangemange nui kia tupu  
whakaritorito te toi a te kawa ora

Clear the obstruction to let  
well-being flourish



# Chair and Director's Report

We are proud to present our second Taranaki Mounga Annual Report. We are now well into year three (Stage Two) and are pleased with how the Project is progressing. We have a lot of great examples which are shared in this Report, but we wanted to acknowledge our enriched partnerships with iwi, community, business, government and philanthropic interests.

We share the goal of restoring the ecology of the Taranaki region. Examples of how we support others in the community to achieve their goals include the Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust who have set and are monitoring over 250 predator traps on the Range; Taranaki Kiwi Trust who use technology like skyranger to monitor kiwi across the mountain; working with the Ngā Motu Marine Reserve Society to provide a live stream penguin camera; Taranaki schools growing mealworms for toutouwai and participating in our Zooniverse citizen science project and non-traditional conservation programmes like START Taranaki (a programme for youth) all contribute to the myriad of skills and passion needed to achieve this goal.

## Regional approach to become predator-free

Our project was pleased with the May 2018 announcement that the Taranaki region would become the first large-scale project to receive funding from Predator Free 2050 Ltd. Taranaki Taku Tūranga - Our Place, Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki is led by the Taranaki Regional Council which aims to install intensive, multi-species predator control over 700,000 hectares of the Taranaki region. Taranaki Mounga is working closely with the council and Restore Taranaki to support the predator-free target. This work bodes well for our aspirations because a virtual barrier of trapping measures, will hinder the re-infestation of predators on our Mounga, ranges and on the islands off the Taranaki coast.

## Working alongside iwi and hapū

Our work and guidance by the iwi and hapū of Taranaki underpins our principle of kotahitanga. We are grateful for the guidance of the Taranaki Iwi Chairs who have helped to steer our work and our planning for the future.

It has been heartening to see pro-active and iwi-led restoration projects developing on and around the Project area. The predator control work developed in and around Ngā Motu with the support of Taranaki Iwi, Ngā Māhanga a Tairi, Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Te Whiti is an example. It is great to see our community partners who also work in this area understand its history and significance to its people.

Ngāti Tawhirikura is doing some great work in the Waiwhakaiho catchment, with a view to developing a management plan that extends up onto the Mounga.

Ngā Ruahine and its 'I WHIO, I could live here' project is in development for the Kaupokonui.

Ngā Māhanga a Tairi, Taranaki Tuturu and Te Ātiawa worked with LearNZ to facilitate virtual field trips with schools from all over New Zealand. This project, called 'Map my waahi', enabled classes to log in and learn about our Mounga, key historical areas in Taranaki by engaging with key iwi representatives and looking at how GIS and Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) mapping and data collection works. The Project has also attended

Rangatahi forum for Te Ātiawa, Taranaki Iwi and Ngā Ruahine. We look forward to participating again in the future.

## Ngā mihi, Shell New Zealand

Shell New Zealand is one of our valued founding sponsors. In early 2018 the company announced the sale of its assets, permits and eventual departure from New Zealand. Strong in its commitment to biodiversity in this country and to our own restoration work, it will continue to support our Project until 2021.

On behalf of our Board, we want to thank Shell for this ongoing support also. We would like to thank Rob Jager ONZM, former Shell New Zealand Chairman, who has brought a huge amount of governance, business and health and safety expertise to our Board. The passion and commitment of Shell staff who regularly volunteered and provided their expertise on a number of fronts to our project will also be missed. We offer our best wishes to all those who have been part of our Taranaki Mounga journey and we hope they will continue to volunteer with us.

### Jamie Tuuta

Taranaki Mounga Chairman

### Jan Hania

Taranaki Mounga Director





# Partners

## Department of Conservation

2018 was another busy year for the Department, especially in Taranaki where our staff dealt with a number of emergencies in addition to their heavy workload. Throughout this time, we have continued to progress and integrate well with the Taranaki Mounga Project.

Our business-as-usual work on the mountain continues to align with the project's objectives, strengthening conservation and partnerships throughout the region. Highlights from the year, detailed in the Annual Report, include the successful breeding of our recently introduced toutouwai population, the highest number of whio fledglings ever reported and our long-running goat control project, with current knockdown numbers at the lowest recorded in decades. The restoration project on the Kaitake Range has also been a highlight, with local conservation groups, schools and the community working together for a shared conservation goal based on extremely low predator numbers.

We are continuing to work more closely with our partners than ever before, allowing us to achieve our collective goals. It is a very exciting time for conservation in the region, with Taranaki Mounga Project and the Department leading the way together.

### David Speirs

Operations Director, Hauraki, Waikato, Taranaki Region

## Taranaki iwi Chairs Forum

The Project principles and vision to restore the ecological resilience and to undertake a process towards He Kawa Ora continues to resonate with iwi and hapū.

Iwi involvement is growing and the Project's vision continues to allow us to contribute towards charting the pathway for our tūpuna.

Collaboration with the wider community and business and conservation groups continues to grow. Further, more iwi and hapū have been actively participating and contributing across a range of our projects, with some now actively embedded in the conservation space.

The re-introduction of toutouwai, whio and kiwi on to our tupuna maunga has been successful and involved a lot of passionate groups. These relationships with mana whenua from across Aotearoa within the broader context of translocations are important and a connection we cherish. We thank them all for allowing us to relocate their taonga to our maunga.

The collaboration between Tui Ora and the Department of Conservation has also been a highlight.

Youth were given the opportunity to reconnect with their tūpuna through the Tiki Toa programme. In addition, the Taranaki Mounga Project's support

of our Iwi-led Rangatahi Forum has been successful. We look forward to extending these opportunities to our youth to participate in this space. During 2018 other relationships with the Project have formed with iwi and hapū and we are excited to see these flourish.

We look forward to setting in place the long-term planning and resourcing to reach our vision of He Kawa Ora – Back to Life.

### Hemi Sundgren

Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum representative

## NEXT Foundation

NEXT is a proud foundation partner of Taranaki Mounga. The way the Taranaki community is embracing the Mounga initiative is giving it enormous potential. It is a powerful collaboration between iwi, government, community, business and philanthropy and an excellent example of the transformational, inspirational, and business-like attributes NEXT looks to support in all its projects.

### Bill Kermode

NEXT Chief Executive





PHOTO: Peter Florence

## Shell New Zealand

When we first signed on to Taranaki Mounga Project as a founding sponsor we did it believing in the founding partners and their big and ambitious goal of bringing the Mounga back to life. We have not looked back. In a short time the progress has been phenomenal.

Toutouwai have returned and are now breeding on the Mounga after more than 100 years away. We have huge increases in whio and kiwi populations, and importantly pest numbers are down so our native wildlife have a fighting chance to thrive.

With Shell New Zealand's transfer of business to OMV, completed at the end of 2018, I am extremely pleased that we had this fantastic and unique opportunity to partner with the Taranaki Mounga team on this project, the results of which will outlive us all.

In my time of more than a decade at Shell Taranaki and Shell New Zealand, this project will always stand out to me as a huge highlight of our social investment programme.

It was also a wonderful opportunity for our staff, many of whom have been involved from the beginning. I know how passionate our staff are about this project and I'm sure many of them will want to continue their involvement in the project and put their enthusiasm and skills to good use. Taranaki Mounga Project belongs to all of us. It's a gift we're all

giving and receiving – for ourselves and for future generations. I hope, like me, you enjoy hearing the birdsong increasing on the Mounga and knowing we've all played a part in this incredible journey

### Rob Jager

Former Chairman, Shell Companies New Zealand & General Manager Shell Taranaki

## TSB Community Trust

As a foundation sponsor, TSB Community Trust believes the aspirations of Taranaki Mounga resonate strongly with our vision of beneficial change for Taranaki and its people, now and in the future, and our strategic focus on child and youth well-being in our region.

The Trust is committed to supporting increased access to opportunities for the Taranaki community, a thriving environment, cohesive communities and thriving whānau across generations.

Taranaki Mounga Project, with its bold vision of transformational ecological change, provides us with a powerful opportunity to work with others in our community towards these long-term outcomes.

For the Trust, it is an outstanding opportunity to work towards long-term intergenerational impact that stands to benefit the people in our region and the land for generations to come.

**Maria Ramsay**, Chief Executive

## Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research is a partner of the Project and provides underpinning research on pest ecology and management, biodiversity responses, and social research.

Work began in 2018 on understanding how predators are distributed across the wider landscape, how they use different habitat types, computer optimisation of trap distributions on the ringplain and measurements of pre-control predator abundances.

In early 2019 radio-collared stoats and ferrets will be tracked to understand where they move and how they re-invade controlled areas. This work will guide more effective predator control in the future. At the end of the possum eradication programme on the Kaitake Range in 2019, computer modelling will provide a statistical basis for declaring eradication success. Bird count data have been analysed to design future bird monitoring programmes that will measure the response of bird populations to predator control. Finally, work will begin shortly on understanding the barriers and incentives that motivate people to be involved in biodiversity conservation initiatives in Taranaki.

### Grant Norbury

Researcher / Capability Leader







# Objective One: SECURE

Secure the Mouna against animal and weed pests, eradicate goats and significantly reduce pest numbers and their impact on Taranaki Mouna.

## Enhancing current predator control work

Predator control increased and included the early adoption of new technology and learning. In addition, trap networks were expanded, targeting predators that haven't been addressed previously. 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.

Taranaki Mouna will conduct an aerial 1080 predator control operation in the first half of 2019. The previous activity was in 2016. This work is a sustained control operation to be delivered with a number of other predator controls and will treat more than 34000 hectares in the Egmont National Park. It will utilise expertise from Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP), OSPRI and Department of Conservation to ensure a safe and successful operation.

An increase of trapping network, especially on the Kaitake Range, with an additional 250 A200 traps and 2162 self-resetting A24 rat traps on a 1000 hectare 'robin block' in the Egmont National Park is one of many tools being implemented. Recent monitoring has shown we remain a long way from our target without a multi-tool approach.

The project increased its monitoring at 32 different locations across the Park. We used a total of 320 separate devices, including tracking tunnels and wax tags, to record pest numbers. In November

2018 rats were recorded at 90 per cent of the tracking tunnels and possums were recorded at 31 per cent of the wax tags. Stoat numbers were low, probably because the checks were conducted during birthing season. Our team will conduct monitoring several times in 2019. The work will give us a good understanding of predator numbers on our Mouna pre- and post-aerial 1080.

## Taranaki Taku Tūrangā – Our Place Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki

Led by the Taranaki Regional Council, Towards a Predator-Free Taranaki will invest \$47 million in the first five years of the project with the ultimate aim of removing stoats, rats, and possums across 700,000 hectares of farmland, urban land, public parks, reserves and the Park by 2050.

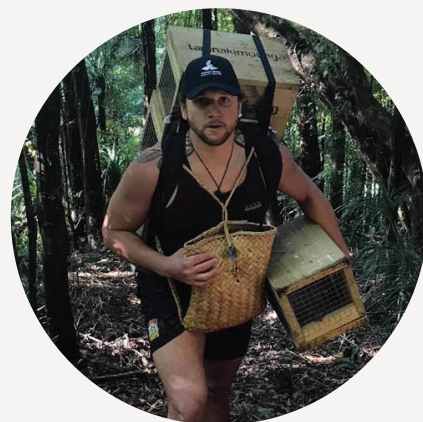
Our project is proud to support this work and Restore Taranaki. In July 2018, Restore Kaitake held an open day to tell Okato, Oakura and Omata residents about predator control in the Kaitake area. More than 300 residents learned about the collective, multi-tool approach to predator control on 8500 hectares of land. The project aims to remove possums between the Timaru Stream and Oakura River and prevent re-infestation.

The Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust has already installed 250 DOC200 traps on the Range. This will be increased to 600 traps targeting weasels, stoats, ferrets and feral cats.



In conjunction with the trapping, a zero-possum trial prescription of 1080 will be conducted and more than 120 wirelessly-monitored modified leg-hold possum traps will be installed as a detection network. This system will tell us when possums re-invade Kaitake and will also allow comprehensive monitoring of their numbers before and after aerial operations.

The Towards Predator-Free Taranaki work in the Kaitake area includes the use of traps with wireless nodes which will alert a rural landowner's cellphone when the trap has been set off. An intensive network of more than 2500 wirelessly-monitored traps at Pukeiti will create a 'virtual barrier' that will defend the Kaitake area from re-infestation. In urban areas, the aim of a trap in the backyard of one in every five homes is achievable as we all work towards a Predator Free 2050.



*Tama Blackburn carrying DOC200 traps to be set on the Kaitake Range.*





*Students from Francis Douglas Memorial College showing their rat catch at Centennial Park.*

### **Citizen scientists help detect predators**

In 2018 34 motion sensor cameras began operating intermittently on both the Kaitake Range and around the Egmont National Park. Images are uploaded to a Citizen Science platform called *Zooniverse*. Taranaki schools at Omata, Oakura, Okato and Auroa and 'citizen scientists' have been identifying predators, birds and plants as they learn about predator control. The identification of pests in more than 5000 images is providing valuable information on types of predators and their location so our team can place traps strategically in areas with large infestations. The images also provide good data before and after aerial operations.

### **Community gets behind trap making**

Having robust trap boxes available for conservation groups and volunteers to set and monitor on the Kaitake Range and on Centennial Park, across from Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands, has been made easier this year with the support of businesses and groups. TimberCo, a Taranaki business, has donated hundreds of metres of timber from which more than 400 traps have been made by groups that include New Plymouth Community Corrections, START Taranaki, Francis Douglas Memorial College, New Horizons Aotearoa and their participating schools, Devon and Manukorihi Intermediates, Coastal Area School.

### **School adopts a special part of Taranaki**

Since the beginning of 2018, 150 Year 10 students from Francis Douglas Memorial College have made a visible and rewarding impact in their own 'backyard'. Under the leadership of teacher Tina Dalliston, 100 T-Rex traps (2 per box), forming three trapping networks have been built, installed, maintained and checked every two weeks by the students.

As a result, the number of rodents on the mainland is being significantly reduced. Therefore, the offshore islands are being protected. Declaring Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands predator-free and the protection of some 19 species of seabirds and threatened plants and lizards are among the wider aspirations of the Taranaki Mounga Project.

Their work was recently acknowledged at the Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards when the school won the Action in Education Award.

Congratulations to the school which have also worked alongside Ngāti Te Whiti and allowing pupils to gain a greater appreciation of the cultural significance of the area.





# Tina Dalliston

Making a difference in our own backyard

PHOTO: Mark Dwyer



IMAGE TOP: Tina Dalliston (middle) with students from Francis Douglas Memorial College.

IMAGE IN CIRCLE: Students get ready to deploy T-Rex traps along Centennial Park.

The dream of Francis Douglas Memorial College teacher Tina Dalliston to create an environmental stewardship programme became a reality when her Year 10 students made, laid and monitored 100 T-Rex traps in New Plymouth's Centennial Park.

"This ongoing work helps us to remind students that we all have an impact on others and our environment and we need to be conscious of how we manage that," says Tina.

DOC Biodiversity Co-ordinator Tim Sjoberg, is grateful for Tina's drive and leadership, which in turn has provided opportunities for 150 students to learn about biodiversity and how they can make a difference.

"Tina is the driving force behind this predator control work. We're so grateful to her and the school for supporting this initiative. As a result, we have had a reduction in pests swimming across to Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Island which we hope will see some 19 species of seabirds and also threatened plants and lizards thrive again," says Tim.

"We are excited about having another 150 Year 10 students in 2019 to carry on this great work Tina helped to start."

The efforts by Tina and the students were rewarded with a 2018 Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards.

"We were really grateful for all the organisations who have partnered with us to allow delivery of this programme and to the Regional Council for the recognition that validates the programme in the eyes of our boys," says Tina.

Francis Douglas Memorial College Deputy Principal Tim Stuck says, "it is great to see our young leaders taking a keen interest in biodiversity and environmental management as both a passion and potential profession in the future. And this opportunity was presented, thanks to Tina."





# Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust

Community led goal of restoring the range

For more than 10 years the Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust, formerly Okato Development Trust, has been quietly setting traps in an endeavour to restore native species to the Kaitake Range.

Although kākā and kiwi in the Kaitake Range are a distant memory, the momentum for their return is growing. The injection of traps from the Taranaki Mounga Project, the awareness brought to local residents by Restore Kaitake and the success of Towards Predator-Free Taranaki have accelerated the work by the Trust whose volunteers have surged from eight to 40.

With the increase comes a demand for new traps with Taranaki Mounga supporting the build of over 200 which are now part of nearly 250 currently active on the Range. Over the last year the Trust and its volunteers have been actively setting traps, made by community groups, then regularly checking and maintaining them. The Trust's Chair,

Pete Morgan, is overwhelmed by the community response and says people are becoming more aware of the value of biodiversity.

"We're all working towards the same thing - having more native birds, wildlife and plants, intertwined within our daily lives. It's pretty cool," he says.

*IMAGE TOP: Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust volunteers.*

*IMAGE IN CIRCLE: Young volunteers for the Trust.*







# Sian Potier

## Taranaki Kiwi Trust

Working as a project co-ordinator for the Taranaki Kiwi Trust, Sian organises a team of 10 volunteers who release and monitor kiwi with transmitters in the Park.

Sian (pictured above) enjoys this field work so much that she also does it in her own time.

"Going into the bush and tracking kiwi is the best part of my job," says Sian.

The Trust has been releasing kiwi on the Mouna since 2006. About 95 kiwi have been released and by the end of 2018 18 kiwi with transmitters on them.

"It is great being able to release kiwi into an area that we know has low predator numbers. We are giving kiwi the best chance of survival and that is thanks to many different groups and people that work hard to keep predator numbers down," she says.

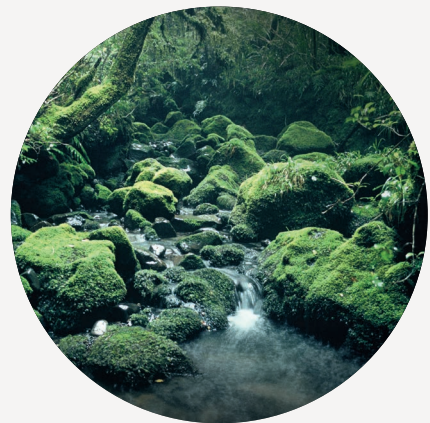
In addition to volunteers using handheld telemetry gear to monitor kiwi, Kiwis for kiwi and Taranaki Mouna helped to purchase a Skyraider flight case for aerial monitoring.

This intense monitoring supplies the Trust with information that helps it understand where the kiwi are going and whether they are breeding and surviving.

"It is really important to closely monitor a sample of these kiwi so we can get a better understanding of survival rates and where they are dispersing to, post-release. We want to make sure kiwi released to the Mouna in the future are given the best chance to live and breed."

Sian can already see the benefits from the work of the many different conservation groups working together in predator control and translocation of native birds.

"It is awesome to hear robin calling and coming across groups of rifleman when out monitoring kiwi."



Taranaki Mouna Project Manager Sean Zieltjes says supporting the great work by the Taranaki Kiwi Trust has been easy.

"The Trust are awesome. Sian, Sue Hardwick-Smith and all their volunteers are doing such great work," says Sean. "We've had a few community groups be part of a kiwi release this year. It's great for them to see our taonga up close."







# Objective Two

# RESTORE

Restore species by transforming the ecology of the Mouna by re-introducing lost species and strengthening existing populations of threatened species.



## More toutouwai on our Mouna

In 2018, 45 toutouwai were translocated into the 1000 hectare robin block located close to the Egmont Visitor Centre.

This number adds to the 50 toutouwai released in April 2017 after an absence of over 110 years.

The success of this and last years' translocation has seen unbanded toutouwai in the monitored block. This indicates successful breeding. Visitors to the Mouna have reported encountering curious toutouwai and this recent release will continue to build the population.

An intense rat trapping network of 2162 self-resetting A24 traps has seen rats reduced to only 1 to 2 per cent during breeding and fledgling season. This is well below the 5 percent threshold recommended for a safe habitat for native birds to flourish.

About 120 tracking tunnels have helped us track the reduction of rats in the area," says Taranaki Mouna Project Manager Sean Zieltjes. "We are pleased with the results and are up to the challenge of keeping these numbers low."

These translocations would not be possible without the help of Ngāti Rereahu, whose rohe was the original home of toutouwai, and the tireless work of the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust and volunteers.

*IMAGE LEFT: Two of the 12 whio released in three rivers in 2018. PHOTO: Pat Murphy*

*PHOTO TOP RIGHT: Vicki Zieltjes*

## Boosting kiwi numbers on Mouna

Taranaki Mouna is working closely with the Taranaki Kiwi Trust and Kiwis for kiwi to boost and protect kiwi populations on the Mouna.

In 2018 the Taranaki Kiwi Trust released 19 North Island brown kiwi, bringing known numbers to about 95. Up to 18 of these kiwi have transmitters. Along with Kiwis for kiwi, the project has purchased a Skyranger for aerial monitoring.

Work is under way with Kiwis for kiwi to release another 100 birds over the next five years.

Kiwi eggs safely collected in Taranaki will be hatched at an incubation centre. When they are about four weeks old, the chicks will be sent to a predator-free creche site where they can grow safely before being transported to the Mouna and released. Some of the kiwi will be tracked and monitored to ensure they survive and to understand their dispersal pattern.

## Our secret weapons for finding whio

Tai and Marti have been successfully sniffing out whio in Taranaki.

Both conservation dogs have helped to locate a record number of 69 whio ducklings and 59 fledglings on eight rivers in the 2018 season.

DOC Biodiversity Ranger Joe Carson is thrilled with their efforts and says Tai and Marti are their secret weapons.

"They will find these rare native blue ducks in tiny holes and point to them. It was amazing to find so many whio chicks. They are making a real difference," she says.

To further boost the programme, 12 juvenile whio were released into Taranaki rivers in early 2018 as part of the Whio Forever partnership with Genesis Energy. Up to seven of the birds were released into brand new territory on the Patea River and Te Popo Streams which are now protected by the stoat trapping network extended as part of Taranaki Mouna.

In 1945 the whio population on the Mouna was designated 'functionally extinct' because of predation by stoats and rats. A predator programme covering 7500 hectares was started in 2003. After a lot of hard work by DOC, the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust and Genesis Energy National Whio Forever programme, the whio population has now built up to 27 pairs in 2018. The number is expected to reach 50 breeding pairs within 10 years.

Taranaki Mouna Project Manager Sean Zieltjes says whio are extremely territorial and a pair needs at least one kilometre of river to themselves, so increasing the stoat trapping network gives them more safe areas to live and breed.





# Emily King

## Restoring our taonga species

PHOTO: Mark Dwyer

DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger Emily King will be satisfied when native birds are abundant and self-sustaining.

She says near-eradication of pests will allow taonga species to thrive. "When that happens, I'll hang my hat."

Emily pictured above at a toutouwai release, has been working with DOC in Taranaki for 10 years and was part of the team that established the Taranaki Mounga Project. That early design work was more than five years ago, and the project was finally launched late in 2015.

She says decades of work by many people laid the foundations of Taranaki Mounga.

"It's not just about us. It's about supporting the longstanding work

of groups including Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, Taranaki Kiwi Trust, the Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust and Ngā Motu Marine Reserve Society. "These groups and their volunteers are critical to our successes," says Emily.

Emily's expertise in areas of species recovery and working with threatened fauna made her the perfect person to lead key projects like returning toutouwai to the Mounga. Her skills allowed the work to be done in a way and at a scale never before contemplated in Aotearoa.

Taranaki Mounga Director JanHania, attributes a lot of the project's successes to Emily's hard work and passion to protect the region's biodiversity.

"Emily is an incredibly important part of our team and we rely heavily on her experience to navigate species recovery programmes as we work toward he kawa ora. Her steady, thoughtful and thorough guiding hand keeps us up-to-date with the latest thinking in species recovery and her experience within the system helps us to avoid the dead ends. Every project needs an Emily and we're lucky we've got ours," says Jan.

*IMAGE RIGHT: Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust has been instrumental in the success of toutouwai releases and ongoing monitoring.*  
PHOTO: Pat Murphy











# Objective Three

# SUSTAIN

Build community support and commitment by ensuring the transformational changes are valued and secure for the long-term.



**TARANAKI MOUNGA**

*He Kawa Ora — Back to Life*

## **Mounga contributes to youth well-being**

The Tiki Toa project entered its second year with a new cohort of rangatahi. This youth wellness pilot project is a collaboration by Tui Ora, DOC, iwi, Ngāti Ruanui Tahua and the Health Promotion Agency which worked together to co-design it 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.

Workshops on the Mounga have been facilitated by Tui Ora, with the assistance of DOC and other conservation groups. Students 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 aged between 10 and 13 took part in trips around Egmont National Park. Tui Ora partnered with two New Plymouth schools, Devon Intermediate and Te Pi'ipi'inga Kakano Mai Rangiatea, to identify children who would benefit from connecting with nature.

Looking at different aspects of health and merging it with the Mounga is important to Tiki Toa. The use of the natural environment is a good way to challenge and inspire young people.

## **The gift of time**

In 2018 the number of Taranaki people who wanted to release and monitor toutouwai increased. We offered opportunities for pre-feed trips and pre-catch monitoring at Pureora Forest Park, post-breed monitoring of the 2017 releases, two translocation releases into the robin block on our Mounga and pre-breed monitoring of the 2018 releases for a month.

Te Kere Davey from Hawera spent a day in the bush as part of the pre-breed toutouwai monitoring. He had supported the 2018 toutouwai release earlier in the year and wanted to volunteer and learn more about these curious birds.

"It was a really awesome opportunity being able to see how our toutouwai were doing in their home on Taranaki Mounga," says Te Kere.

"As an uri of Taranaki Iwi, it was awesome to be able to play a small part in the kaitiakitanga of our Mounga. I definitely encourage uri from all of ngā iwi o Taranaki as well as people from the wider community to take up any opportunities to participate in the Mounga Project kaupapa."

## **New rangers enhance Project delivery**

In late 2018 six additional rangers were contracted to the Project to work on a number of initiatives. Their duties include setting up new trapping networks to help groups like the Kaitake Ranges Community Trust continue their work and enable more community groups to participate. The rangers monitor toutouwai (North Island robin) and bat species and share the work Taranaki Mounga is doing with our communities.

The new team has made an immediate impact.

Taranaki Mounga Project Manager Sean Zieltjes says the new team brings experience that ranges from working with native bird species and alongside communities to having a deep understanding of mātauranga Māori and experience in predator control.

"But they are also a breath of fresh air and their enthusiasm is infectious," says Sean. "We've been spoilt with the people we have on board."

All different but the common theme is their passion for the outcomes of the Project."

*IMAGE: Hoani Eriwata, Te Atiawa representative, blesses toutouwai prior to their release onto the Mounga.*

*PHOTO: Pat Murphy*





# Tiki Toa

## A community for rangatahi

The Tiki Toa project is successfully supporting rangatahi as they interact with Te Tai Ao and connect to Te Ao Māori for well-being.

Forty pupils aged between 10 and 13 from Devon Intermediate and Te Pi'ipi'inga Kakano Mai Rangiatea participated in this project in 2018.

The programme is a collaboration between Tui Ora, DOC, iwi, Ngāti Ruanui Tahua and the Health Promotion Agency.

Tiki Toa Project Manager and Tui Ora Public Health Team Leader Hinenui Wano-Bryant is pleased with the success of the project and the positive impact it has had on the students' involved.

"Connecting taiohi to the Mouna gives them a sense of belonging whilst also making them realise they are part of something bigger. It's truly amazing to see the awe filled looks each time they visit the Mouna.

In 2018 the project complemented its usual hikoi with additional activities on the Mouna.

"Thanks to the Mouna Project we were able to be a part of a kiwi release and assist with creating traps. These projects may seem small but they were hugely motivating for the taiohi. It made them feel really special to be a part of something tangible that will be a significant moment in terms of restoring the mouri of the Mouna," says Hinenui.

Tiki Toa students also connected to nature through a digital story mapping programme during a LearNZ field trip. On this field trip they learnt about tikanga Taranaki protocols and practices, Taranaki stories, restoration activities on the Mouna and visited Rotokare Scenic Reserve to complete a health check on a kiwi.

The future brings more opportunities of growth for Tiki Toa with the aim of reaching more young people with a programme that increases wellbeing. Exciting times!



IMAGE TOP: Tiki Toa students, mentors, DOC and Taranaki Kiwi Trust staff.

IMAGE RIGHT: A Tiki Toa student learns how to use telemetry gear to monitor kiwi.









# START Taranaki

Manaakitanga is a cornerstone of both the Taranaki Mounga Project and START Taranaki, an organisation which supports young people. 2018 was the first year the two projects worked together and the support they gave each other was huge.

PHOTO: Vicki Zieltjes

The collaboration came about after the TSB Community Trust, which invests in both projects, thought they could benefit from working together.

START Taranaki is an at-risk youth programme located in Kaponga, South Taranaki. The group have been helping to make traps.

Taranaki Mounga Project Manager Sean Zieltjes said without the traps endangered species such as the whio and kiwi would be under serious threat.

"To have a non-traditional conservation outfit getting stuck in and providing additional traps, which will help to protect three main water bodies on the back of our whio habitat area, is phenomenal," he said.

The two organisations monitor the traps 12 times a year.

START Taranaki Operations Manager Piers Duncan says a big part of their programme is connecting youth to the natural environment.

"To be able to extend that learning into being involved with Taranaki Mounga adds huge value to the

outcomes sought through our programme," says Piers. He said it was the first time the students, who spent three weeks in isolation in the bush, had made the traps, giving them the opportunity to give something back to the community. "Some really enjoyed the building side of things which is ultimately a success for them," he said.

Some of these guys come from disadvantaged backgrounds so they don't get to experience a lot of success.

So, seeing something from start to finish is massive for them and keeps up a connection with the bush."

Piers gives credit to Taranaki Mounga for wanting to understand the journeys of the students.

"Having our young people connected to positive role models in the community who believe in them and understand them is a game changer. I feel there is real reciprocal value in START's relationship with the Project, which in turn, brings about an even greater social return outside of the service-level outcomes for each programme".

As well as learning carpentry skills, predator control and conservation, some students have attended toutouwai and kiwi releases and one young person even completed work experience with the Project. The students' experience on the has made them aware of the possibility of a career in conservation.

"We are grateful to have this opportunity and we have enjoyed working with all the amazing people involved from the Taranaki Mounga Project. They have worked so hard to cater to a hard-to-reach and vulnerable sector of our community' says Piers.

"We look forward to seeing the pay-off that is rapidly occurring as the restoration project on Taranaki Mounga continues."

*IMAGE TOP: Todd Williams, previously from START Taranaki, releases a toutouwai with students from the programme.*





EUFORBIA MOUTILLIA





# Tony Green

## Picture perfect

Every project has its characters and ours is Tony Green. His energy and passion for the environment are equalled by his amazing photography skills. He has taken some of the project's most captivating images.

"I love everything the Project stands for," says Tony pictured above. "It is also the excitement of finding a toutouwai nest while out monitoring, or seeing people's reactions at a whio release, it is all just magic."

Tony's photos have been shared around the world and have been a way for the project to showcase its work. His images, especially of whio, toutouwai and project volunteers, have featured not only in Taranaki Mounga publications and social media, but also in those of the Department of Conservation, NEXT Foundation and many conservation groups.

As well as taking impressive images, Tony has been volunteering for the Project for more than two years, the first time at a toutouwai pre-breeding monitoring day. Since then he has participated in toutouwai post-breeding monitoring, toutouwai and whio releases and a volunteer day for A24 self-resetting traps. On top of that, he volunteers for other organisations such as the Rotokare Scenic Reserves Trust, DOC, Te Whenua Tomuri Trust, Pukorokoro Miranda, Purangi Kiwi, Owae Marae, Sandy Bay, Birds New Zealand and Taranaki Athletics.

"Taranaki Mounga is a wide-ranging project that allows me to pick and choose where I see a need and be able to join in or do my own thing," says Tony.

"The team put a lot of faith in my ability to do the tasks I'm asked to do. I enjoy working on this Project."

DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger Emily King says Tony is a treasured volunteer of the project.

"We are so grateful for the gift of his time. He is incredibly enthusiastic about everything and is very knowledgeable about birds," says Emily. "His quirkiness and liveliness is contagious and we love having him with us."

Emily notes his generosity of care, even when he should be looking after himself.

"He had an injury, but that didn't stop him greeting a monitoring team after a long day with hot drinks and muffins. He is a very special man."

In October 2018 Tony was honoured for his participation in conservation at the Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards.

On behalf of the Taranaki Mounga team and Board, we congratulate Tony on this well deserved accolade.



IMAGE IN CIRCLE: A banded toutouwai  
PHOTO TOP: Tony Green





PHOTO: Tony Green

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Tui Ora  
Ngati Tawirikura hapū  
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Te Ātiawa  
Tony Green

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# Our People

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- Hemi Sundgren  
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- Rob Jager  
SHELL REPRESENTATIVE



Mervyn English



Maria Ramsay



Rob Jager





PHOTO: Keith Finnerty

### The Taranaki Mounga Project team

**From left** - Gareth Hopkins, DOC Operations Manager; Jan Hania, Taranaki Mounga Director; Brandon Kingi, DOC Lead Ranger; Emily King, DOC Senior Biodiversity Ranger; Sean Zieltjes, Taranaki Mounga Project Manager; Fern Brand, DOC Partnerships Ranger; Tui MacDonald, Taranaki Mounga Communications; Michael Blanks, DOC Ranger; Georgina Tubby, DOC Ranger; Michael White, DOC Ranger; Darryn Ratana, DOC Partnerships Manager; Tim Sjöberg, Biodiversity Coordinator and Cody Luckin, DOC Ranger.

**Absent** - Andrew Macalister, Goat Team Lead; Robyn Janes, Digital and Project Liaison, Tama Blackburn, DOC Ranger

**TARANAKI IWI  
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# TARANAKI MOUNGA

*He Kawa Ora — Back to Life*

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Heheua te mangemange nui kia tupu  
whakaritorito te toi a te kawa ora

Clear the obstruction to let  
well-being flourish

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ANNUAL  
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