



Places for Penguins

a Forest & Bird Wellington Branch project



**Forest
& Bird**

TE REO O TE TAIAO
Giving Nature a Voice

Newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- Development around Wellington Harbour affecting kororā
- Latest breeding results
- Dogs and kororā advocacy
- Natural nest monitoring
- Kororā colony at NIWA
- Kororā on motorcycle

DEVELOPMENT AROUND WELLINGTON HARBOUR AFFECTING KORORĀ

Currently breeding kororā are coping with numerous developments around Wellington Harbour. The majority of the work requires an ecologist to be involved, especially as the development includes working on the coastline revetments – a kororā's favorite natural nest site.

The best way to minimise disturbance to kororā is to prevent them from settling into a site and to provide an alternative place to nest. This may need to occur up to possibly a year before the development work begins. However, if the kororā start to show breeding behaviours at a site the work will stop.

At the development site along Nga Ūranga ki Pito-One shared path a number of kororā found in the revetment area have been relocated. The birds, all of whom have been marked, have been relocated to the Eastern Bays area and are being monitored.

A detector dog has been used for monitoring all the development sites before any work is carried out.

Kororā are primed to return to their previous breeding site or to where they were born if they are new breeders.

New developments are also planned for next year. Luckily now the Shelly Bay development has stopped, we hope the kororā will be able to breed there with less disturbance and will return to their natural sites/nest boxes.



LATEST BREEDING RESULTS.



Our Moa Point site has done it again by producing the first chicks of the season. The lovely kororā couple successfully fledged two healthy chicks last year 🐧🐧. This couple have been known to double clutch, and they've been on the hunt for



their dream home - having swapped nest boxes in back to back breeding seasons!

The other sites have been much slower setting up breeding but we are delighted to report that at all sites the monitors have also reported eggs being laid, so the season is starting in earnest.

Matiu /Somes has also had a slow start to the season, similar to last season. This usually means that food in the area is harder to catch so the females are not gaining enough weight to produce eggs.

DOGS AND KORORĀ ADVOCACY

We are working with Wellington City Council to create clear and consistent messaging to encourage behaviour change in members of the public, especially for dog owners. Signage will be improved so dog owners know the right things to do, or the expectation, in each place.

The aim of this activity is to educate and promote behaviour change in the community, so people understand why kororā are important, and to encourage them to care and protect this precious taonga.

First stage is to:

1. Talk with the community, using interviews, to understand barriers and beliefs around dogs and kororā.
2. Develop key messages, using human-centric design, to establish the key locations and the type of messages that will make people care as well as including mana whenua messaging.
3. Once new signs are ready, old, inconsistent signs which do not support the messages or behaviour change goals will be removed.

NATURAL NEST MONITORING



It is interesting to see where kororā find places to build their nests. One pair has created a natural nest at the bottom of a sea wall. A penguin detector dog originally found evidence of a natural burrow in the sea wall. The kororā were very persistent in getting there as it was in a section that was also fenced off, on the seaward side. It



is in the redevelopment area planned for the cycleway.

To gain more knowledge about the pair a trail camera was installed near the entrance of the natural burrow. When there were definite signs of breeding, i.e., moving nest material into the nest site, the Department of Conservation recommended not moving or blocking off the kororā until they had finished breeding. It is very difficult to spot them in the nest as they have a very secure nest area above the high water tide mark and up behind a wall. Sometimes they can swim directly into the nest entrance. Also they have multiple entry points which is good, as rats and cats have been seen visiting the site.

It is thanks to the nest box monitoring team that we have all these interesting photos as they have been setting up the camera once or twice weekly.



Figure 1 Photo of kororā in nest using the burrowscope

KORORĀ COLONY AT NIWA

The kororā colony at NIWA is a fenced-in area with 13 nest boxes, which kororā access through a tunnel. A couple of years ago a team of NIWA and non-NIWA volunteers, led by Karin Wiley, spent several hours weeding the fenced area and re-planting with natives. Since then, Karin, David Mobbs and Anne Caton have maintained the colony and monitored the nest boxes on a fortnightly basis. Karin, Anne and David recently stepped down and a team of 6 volunteers from NIWA are now monitoring the nest boxes weekly. The native plants are thriving thanks to the hard work of Karin, David and Anne (David is still helping with the gardening – thank you!), and we have at least three pairs of kororā using the area.

The Uban Wildlife Trust has installed a webcam in one of the active nest boxes – the adults are currently sitting on a pair of eggs (the second was laid on the 11th September) - hopefully we'll have chicks to watch soon!

Search the Kororā Little Blue Penguin Nest NIWA on YouTube to get your kororā watching fix.

KORORĀ ON MOTORCYCLE



Ōwhiro Bay used a community planting day to talk with dog owners about keeping their dogs on leads. Plants were supplied by WCC to help enhance the kororā environment.

Two human kororā on a motorcycle were a talking point and reminded people that our kororā can be anywhere! An excellent way to spread the message.

Text and photos by members of the Pfp management team, except where otherwise credited.

Thanks to all our partners and supporters: Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, the Society for Conservation Biology group at Victoria University, Conservation Volunteers of New Zealand, NZ Penguin Initiative, Tumbleweed Tees, The Henderson Trust via the Nikau Foundation New World Miramar

