A guide to
ESTABLISHING
A NEW KIWI
POPULATION

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Department of Conservation
Te Pāpai carrotai
**Having kiwi in your backyard is very appealing for many New Zealanders.** If you are a landowner, community group or an iwi considering the introduction of kiwi to your land, this document will give you an overview and understanding of what is necessary to make this a reality.

Developing and managing a habitat to ensure it is safe and appropriate for kiwi can involve a lot of hard work, as well as skills, time, resources, commitment and passion - ideally in perpetuity. This document explains how kiwi are managed, and who needs to be involved, as well as explaining the key considerations for establishing a new kiwi population and translocation.

We’ve also developed a checklist to help you understand the commitments and process involved in establishing a kiwi population.

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**How Kiwi are managed and who’s involved**

There are a number of organisations that can help you explore what is involved in establishing kiwi in your area. These all have resource material and expert advice to help any potential project. Kiwi recovery is guided nationally by the Kiwi Recovery Group through the Kiwi Recovery Plan. There are also taxon plans to strategically guide regional kiwi work on the various genetically distinct populations of kiwi. There will be one relating to the type of kiwi you plan to translocate.

*Kiwis for kiwi* (www.kiwisforkiwi.org) have resource material to help you understand what is involved in protecting kiwi. The Department of Conservation (DOC) can also offer specialist skills and advice, are responsible for allocating permits, and has staff to help the translocation process. They will also know who else in your area can help you.

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**How can you decide if your place is suitable for a kiwi translocation?**

The Kiwi Recovery Plan and taxon plans guide us on how to protect and hopefully grow populations of kiwi. Successful applications to establish new kiwi populations will be those that can best deliver the goals of these plans.

*Any translocation proposal and assessment must answer four fundamental questions:*

1. Does it meet either the Kiwi Recovery plan or taxon plan objectives?
2. Is the proposed site within current or former range of the species?
3. Are the causes of decline or loss of the species at this site understood and can these be managed?
4. Can the proposed source population sustain supply of kiwi for translocation?

Creating and maintaining your new kiwi population requires a long-term commitment. The ability to translocate kiwi is subject to being able to create an environment which will ensure the birds not only survive, but thrive.

*There are a number of reasons why you might plan a kiwi translocation. These could include:*

- To boost established populations or to establish new populations.
- To create a kohanga kiwi. This is where a population is intensively protected so it can grow in order to provide kiwi for other areas; or
- As a last resort in situations where kiwi are no longer safe.

*To get started contact your local Department of Conservation office.*
Key considerations for establishing new kiwi populations

Translocation of absolutely protected species, including kiwi, must be undertaken in accordance with DOC’s Standard Operating Procedure for translocation of threatened species. The local DOC office will be able to provide the series of documents you need, and help you understand them. Continued contact with Department of Conservation staff will be important, especially if your venture does not go as planned, as they will help you uplift the kiwi.

Current and former range
Specialist advice will be required so you can confirm whether, and which type of, kiwi may have resided on your site in the past. These considerations may influence where the kiwi are sourced from.

Causes of historic decline or loss
It will be important to understand any key factors leading to the decline or loss of kiwi on your site, if kiwi have resided there in the past. Typically, these factors include mammalian predation and habitat loss.

- Dog predation. Dogs are the most significant threat to kiwi. All dogs are a threat to kiwi and this risk needs to be managed via advocacy and direct control e.g. dog-free subdivisions, restricting dog access, dog trapping, managing pig control using dogs to best practice standards.
- Mustelid (weasel, stoat, ferret) predation. Studies have shown that where predators are not actively managed, only 5% of kiwi chicks survive.
- Cat predation. Feral and wandering cats can be predators of kiwi.
- Rats, pigs and possum competitors. Although they are not considered significant predators of kiwi, studies have shown that where these pests are managed, kiwi productivity can be greater and nest productivity is also increased. Control of these competitors to best practice standards will deliver other biodiversity gains at managed kiwi sites. The presence of kiwi may require some changes to existing pest control.
- Habitat loss. The long term viability of kiwi habitat needs to be considered.
- Vehicle strike. Vehicles could be a threat to kiwi in some areas.

Sustainability of kiwi supply from the source site
- Expert advice should be sought to identify potential source populations. Key factors will be geographic and genetic proximity to your site and ensuring the translocation does not have a negative impact on the source site.
- Planning is required to ensure kiwi are sourced from different parents so there is enough genetic diversity in your new population.
- There may be a weighted priority list to consider for availability of birds and resources.
- New kiwi populations or top-ups are most likely to be established using kiwi from crèche islands or kohanga kiwi. However new populations can be established with “wild to wild” transfers of birds. These kiwi may be wild bred or kiwi which have been part of a BNZ Operation Nest Egg™ programme. Monitoring of the source population will help identify if the removal of 40 or more kiwi will have beneficial or negative impacts on that population.
- Kiwi will only be able to be caught when the population is unlikely to be nesting. This avoids negative impacts like nest desertion or injuring gravid females (carrying an egg).
Translocation planning

It is important to first consider why you would like to introduce kiwi to your site. Then develop a plan.

Requirements for the new site

Kiwi use a wide variety of habitat – forest, wetland, scrub, exotic plantations and pasture. Expert assessment of the suitability of your area is required.

- Potential future densities of kiwi will depend on the quality and quantity of food available at your site. The area needs to be large enough to receive the minimum of 40 founder kiwi, and then allow those kiwi to settle and breed and still have room for offspring. An exception may be if you are planning a kohanga kiwi, and plan to have a continuous turnover of breeding stock. In this case, progeny will most likely breed with birds unrelated to those in the kohanga kiwi, because they will be released to pair up with wild birds. A minimum of 500ha with predator control is a general guide on the mainland. Ultra-secure sites can be much less than this if being used primarily as kohanga kiwi. For rarer taxon, generally larger areas and higher levels of predator control are required.

- Kiwi can have a large home range and could disperse widely. You need to consider where kiwi may wander, if you want them to wander and what you would do if they wander into unprotected areas. Long-term security of the land is important and management must be confirmed.

- A pest control programme based on best practice management of pests and predators must have been implemented and monitored on site for at least three years, unless it is a pest free site (e.g. island site or predator fenced). A dog control plan needs to be in place to minimise this threat and may include aversion training for hunting and working dogs. The safest option, especially for pet dogs, is to avoid any possible encounter by keeping them away from kiwi areas.

Relationships and support

Your kiwi project will be exciting but will require considerable and sustained effort and support, from your neighbours, your community, local iwi and partner organisations.

When planning for your translocation, it is important to recognise the spiritual significance of such events to Tangata Whenua, early in the planning process. Identify and involve local iwi, from both your area and the area the kiwi are coming from, in the project. It is also important to engage your local community in the project. It is important to establish strong relationships with Department of Conservation staff, the regional kiwi forum, the Kiwi Recovery Group and Kiwis for kiwi, to ensure you have good support and undertake informed planning with your project.

The release of kiwi onto your site is a wonderful and moving celebration of all the years of hard work and planning that have gone into establishing your kiwi site. There is also a great deal of detailed planning, resourcing and effort that goes into the release, which can become a significant and popular occasion. You will need to consider how you can optimise the advocacy opportunity of that release event.

Kiwis for kiwi may be able to provide examples of planning documents from other projects to help you.

Ongoing population management

Once kiwi have been successfully translocated to your site, there is a significant amount of ongoing management, training, reporting and monitoring and planning required.

Post release monitoring of the kiwi is required, with reporting back to DOC, the Kiwi Recovery Group, iwi, local supporters and other interested parties. Ongoing site protection, pest control and monitoring is also essential to protect your new kiwi population.

Medium and long term planning is needed to ensure the kiwi and their habitat will be protected for many years to come. You also have the option of training to be a kiwi handler, if this is deemed necessary or appropriate.

Departmental documents guiding the process

Ask your Department of Conservation office staff to access these for you

- Translocation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)—planning through to reporting for DOC translocations (DOCDM-315121)
- Translocation Proposal Form (DOCDM 59825)
- Explanatory Notes for the Translocation Proposal Form (DOCDM-774881)
- Translocation Guide for Community Groups—the translocation process: from the idea to reporting (DOCDM-363788)
- Outline of a translocation proposal (DOCDM- 382549)
- Getting the go ahead for a translocation (DOCDM- 652465)
- BNZ Operation Nest Egg National Translocation Proposal 2010 – 2019 (DOCDM-622455)
- BNZ Operation Nest Egg Translocation Guide (DOCDM- 675257)
Suggested process

Include:
- Project information
- Source site information
- Timeline
- Key support people
- Source of technical advice
- Budget and funding source
- Project skills and capacity

DOC and the Kiwi Recovery Group will consider, make recommendations and then provide support in principal. They will contact any local kiwi forum.

The DOC and Kiwi Recovery Group assess and support or make further recommendations. This may take up to six months.

Using specialist approved handlers. The release event will require considerable planning and logistics.

They will have conditions to abide with

Need skills and equipment

Include succession planning

Continue to share reports and information to DOC, iwi and interested parties
# Checking your readiness

This checklist has been developed to help you outline the requirements for introducing kiwi onto your site, to help you identify what you have done to date and what still needs to be done. You can then fill in the sections of the Translocation Proposal form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>DO YOU HAVE?</th>
<th>DONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Information from discussing the idea with specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A written outline of what you want.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships and support</strong></td>
<td>Leadership and technical support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iwi support - both from potential source and release site</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enough landowners and people to make it happen easily</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Information from specialists on where your new kiwi could come from</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Department of Conservation support and access to Best Practice documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Established contacts with Kiwi Recovery Group, Kiwis for kiwi, local kiwi forum</td>
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<td>Secure long term funding both within the project and from external sources</td>
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<td><strong>Habitat suitability</strong></td>
<td>Long term security for the land e.g. is it public land or covenanted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Confirmation that the habitat is suitable (area and type)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Information on the carrying capacity of the site</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Habitat corridors or protected linkages to other current or potential kiwi populations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A strategy to avoid initial dispersal in place e.g. kiwi call anchoring, temporary anti-dispersal fences, telemetry monitoring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning in place for long term dispersal e.g. a greater protected area, community buy-in and future possible translocations to elsewhere in the vicinity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Threat management and monitoring</strong></td>
<td>A clear idea of threats to kiwi and actions in place to mitigate them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Predator control programmes (including data collection) following best practice, which have been implemented for at least three years and which will be continued:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Ferret;</td>
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<td>- Stoat;</td>
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<td>- Cat control; and</td>
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<td>- Kiwi-safe trapping methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A control plan for all types of dogs which is being implemented</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A pest monitoring programme which has been implemented for at least 3 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Possum, rat and pig control in place</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kiwi</strong></td>
<td>Kiwi monitoring and data collection ability and commitment either within your project or with outside support</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing advocacy</strong></td>
<td>Advocacy potential identified and options planned</td>
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<td>Education potential identified</td>
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<td>Research potential identified</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Taxon Plans</strong></td>
<td>Confirmation that the release contributes to other taxon plan actions (list). Note: If your project aligns with regional needs it will help secure funding and support</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note:* The checklist is designed to help you identify the requirements for introducing kiwi onto your site. It includes questions about your readiness in various categories, such as strategy, relationships and support, habitat suitability, threat management, and ongoing advocacy. You can use this checklist to outline the requirements and determine what still needs to be done before proceeding with the translocation proposal.
Thank you!

Special thanks to the Northland Kiwi forum and kiwi projects in the Northland and northern Auckland areas who have had successful translocations and who contributed their learnings to this handout.