

Minutes: Kākāriki Karaka Recovery Group Hui

Date: Friday 11 March 2022

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Chair: Ash Murphy

Attendees: Wayne Beggs, Yvette Couch-Lewis, Graeme Elliott, Andy Grant, Terry Greene, Archie MacFarlane, Anne Richardson, Tammy Steeves.

Guests: Megan Farley, Leigh Percasky, Mark Witehira (first hour only).

Apologies: Natalie Johnston, Andrew Legault

Purpose

To ensure success for kākāriki karaka recovery by initiating planning for translocations and other recovery actions in the 22/23 year.

Agenda

<i>Item</i>	<i>Lead</i>
DOC Operations Update	Wayne Beggs
Captive Programme Update	Anne Richardson
Release Plan for Remainder of 21/22 Season	Wayne Beggs
Consideration of Translocation Options for 22/23	Ash Murphy
Plan for 22/23 Translocation to Hawdon Valley	Ash Murphy
Any Other Business – Further RG Hui	Ash Murphy
Acknowledgement of Andy Grant's Contribution	Ash Murphy

Actions from Previous Meeting

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Outcome/Update</i>
1	Andrew to work with Megan and Dan to develop a research plan for Blumine staff.	No action yet.
2	Wayne & Ops team to obtain information on Blumine birds' breeding behaviours.	Behind schedule, but planned to occur.
3	Wayne and Anne to upskill Rangers to support Isaacs in event of COVID impacts.	DONE.
4	Andrew to work with Anne/Leigh & Archie to trial RFID bands and captive applications.	Trialled, bands too large, to be trialled again.
5	Andrew to work with Anne/Leigh on getting feeders required for Isaacs.	DONE.
6	Andrew to work with Terry/Andy on improving feeders to ensure out of reach of cats and are not encouraging birds to feed on ground where vulnerable.	No action yet.

7	Wayne & Ash to ensure recommendations followed for this season's translocations.	DONE.
8	Wayne & Ash to ask Governance Group to support travel for translocations if COVID Alert Levels become more restrictive.	DONE.
9	Archie to consider World Parrot Trust funding options and seek RG endorsement before progressing any arrangement.	Progressing for Orana Park aviaries.
10	Tammy to reach out to Nic Rawlence and see if/how RG can be involved.	DONE. Nic keen to discuss further with Tammy & RG.
11	Ash to advise Auckland Zoo of plan to phase out their role in captive programme.	No action yet.

Minutes

DOC Operational Update:

- See monthly February monthly report for full details. Key updates since as follows.
- **South Branch Hurunui:** 1080 Op successful and no rats/possums detected since. Currently 10 nests, mostly second/third nests. Fairly good year for breeding, especially given it's not a mast year. One release this season – one bird got caught in a trap in first week. Some naïve behaviours soon after release. SBH population anecdotally expanding – seen in new spots lately. Access issues largely resolved.
- **Poulter Valley:** 3 searches undertaken, 2 in average weather conditions, but no kākāriki karaka detected. One more survey planned (with mohua team). Current assumption is that there are no kākāriki karaka remaining in the Poulter.
- **Hawdon Valley:** No kākāriki karaka detected. Current assumption is that there are no kākāriki karaka remaining in the Poulter.
- **Blumine Island:** Complex logistics and recruitment issues delaying work here. Water feeders in place, not utilised – summer has been wetter than usual. 7 nests detected, 1 nest failed, but nests generally had quite low clutch size. No post-fledge monitoring.
- **Brook Sanctuary:** 3 releases undertaken, first 2 appeared very successful. A couple of birds appear to have been predated by falcons. At least 6 nests successful from first 2 translocations, and some second nests likely. Some concerns raised re. latest release: 1 bird starved, and some odd behaviours noted. Latest cohort released now flocking and feeding on invertebrates, which is to be expected for this time of year. A rat incursion was detected in late February at other end of Sanctuary (near visitor centre) and response has been activated.
- Query raised about return of deceased kākāriki karaka (captive and wild) to mana whenua, and whether feather can be made available too. RG supportive, process unclear.

Action 1: Megan to inform Isaacs of individual details of birds released to Brook that died or have displayed odd behaviours.

Action 2: Wayne & Yvette to determine process for return of birds/feathers to mana whenua.



Captive Programme Update:

- Best season ever at Isaacs and across total programme with the most chicks ever bred.
- Orana did well, but Auckland did not – two pairs, one nest each, half the chicks died.
- Blumine birds still average in terms of chick production, except one female (Jasmine) who is on fourth clutch and producing good chicks.
- For aviary expansion at Isaacs, the bigger aviary is yet to arrive (in Blenheim, awaiting transport) and the ones from Ashburton have arrived, but are yet to be built.

Planning for Remainder of 21/22 Season:

- Concern raised around Ops being spread too thinly – Recovery Group reiterated importance of ensuring that core functions are consolidated and performed well.
- Around 50 chicks in captivity, need to do one release later this month and one in April.
- **Fifth Translocation:** Planned for later this month (22/23 March) to Brook Sanctuary. Not planning to use transmitters. Probably 23 birds for this release.
- **Sixth Translocation:** Discussion on whether last translocation of the season should be to Brook or a mainland valley. Significant concerns raised around a first release to Hawdon or Poulter at this time of year (April, winter), high chance of failure. Similar thinking around release to South Branch, although birds could learn from local birds. Brook is lower altitude and birds more likely to survive, although potentially limited benefits from further translocations this season (over 100 birds to be released). RG recommended remaining translocations this season to be to the Brook.
- **Monitoring at Brook:** Excellent opportunity to look at recruitment in the Brook. Need to monitor breeding numbers and parent birds. Need to determine number of birds surviving and breeding (and ideally which birds) to inform future supplementation. There is significant uncertainty over how or where birds will go at the Brook over winter, so need detailed monitoring to understand what happens. Brook currently showing same patterns as Mainland releases, that subsequently failed for unknown reasons after a 'honeymoon period'. Essential that monitoring of birds continues over 22/23 too. Need an army of monitoring volunteers at Brook.
- **Communication Opportunities:** Potential opportunity at Brook, to coincide with fifth release there. Brook wants to do a video, have requested funding. Also want a live stream from a nest for their internet. RG recommends DOC support, especially to encourage local support for monitoring and predator control efforts.
- **Support to Brook:** Robert from the Brook has asked for RG/GG letter to local councils on importance of predator (rat and stoat) control around the Brook. RG supports.

Action 3: Wayne to work with his team and Brook to ensure appropriate monitoring plan in place for 2022, Andrew to support.

Action 4: Wayne to ask Brook to focus communications on engaging community (including reporting sightings of parakeets to Brook) and seek Comms and Governance Group support.

Action 5: Megan to lead request for a letter to councils and talk to Lionel Solly (NSI Ops).



Consideration of Translocation Options for 22/23:

- Range of options considered for translocation focus in 22/23, aiming to establish a new population. Based on this season, expect 150+ juveniles available for release.
- **Mainland Valleys:** RG recommends we don't take our eyes off the Mainland Valleys, these are a stronghold for good reason – don't abandon them. Cat control essential.
- **Poulter Valley:** Logistically challenging, not recommended by Ops. Needs further survey to confirm any birds. Major access issues.
- **Hawdon Valley:** Preferred Mainland site for release by Ops. Good site for birds, has been a stronghold in the past.
- **South Branch Hurunui:** Could be an option. True left is genetic hotspot. Try to spread them further down the valley. Further surveys soon.
- **Blumine Island:** Only 45 birds released there, maybe need more. Still unclear on why poor breeding rates/population limited – actions urgently required here! Still a priority to bring back some more genetics to Isaacs, recommend that this is done in 2022 but not beyond, could occur later in winter or spring.
- **Brook Sanctuary:** Consider based on monitoring over 2022. May be useful to increase under-represented genetics there (specifically offspring of Hone/Daisy).
- **Other Sites:** RG recommends update and finalisation of site matrix, focusing on South Island sites and consider potential future state of sites. Priority for this year.
 - **Fiordland Islands:** Worth considering, but lower priority than mainland sites.
 - **Orokonui Ecosanctuary:** Several concerns raised, not currently recommended.
 - **Banks Peninsula:** Not a current option, with predator control not targeting rats. RG recommends engagement with Predator Free Banks Peninsula to share what is required for kākāriki karaka translocation. Could focus on Living Springs.
 - **Perth Valley:** ZIP eradicated pests over 100,000 hectares and will be there for 5-10 years. Still an experiment at this stage, and risks regarding hybridisation, access, predator control into future, and requires substantial paperwork and relationship building (e.g., with local Ops, local rūnanga). High risk, not currently recommended.

Recommended Translocation Focus for 22/23:

- Re-establishment of population in Hawdon Valley, get as many birds in there as possible, translocations possible across whole season (into April 23).
- Also, specific translocation to Brook to improve genetics.

Action 6: Megan to develop research plan for Blumine Island, Andrew to support.

Action 7: Megan & Anne to plan to translocate Blumine eggs to Isaacs in 2022.

Action 8: Anne/Leigh determine whether Hone/Daisy offspring have gone to Brook or can be bred next year for translocation to Brook.

Action 9: Wayne & Yvette to engage with Predator Free Banks Peninsula and Living Springs over future translocation options to Banks Peninsula.

Action 10: Wayne to begin planning and preparation for translocations to Hawdon in 22/23.



Planning for Hawdon Valley Translocation in 22/23:

- Planning discussion, considering mainland site translocation guidelines.
- **Habitat:** Nothing wrong with Hawdon. Dense red beech stands, perfect for nesting.
- **Aviary Siting:** Suggest near eastern confluence of Hawdon near bivouac, there is a clearing above where aviaries could be sited. Area on true right is good – ‘parakeet city’, but recommend true left for release aviaries and to use same site across season.
- **Auto-Feeders:** Required for anchoring. Suggest these are spread out across both true right and true left. Should be easy to service. Recommended that sunflower seeds used for anchoring, but consider switching later to pellets or a pellet/seed mix. Feeders must have cat deterrent fences and methods to prevent kākāriki feeding on the ground.
- **Predator Control:** Pre-work to include installation of extensive trapping network and bait stations, Archie also putting together a pest control application (will cover possums too). Current modelling suggests a mast is unlikely in 22/23.
- **Nest Protection:** Use tinning and trapping around trees. Trade-off with monitoring – don’t want tinning to reduce monitoring effort. Are we doing enough monitoring, and how we maintain monitoring and predator control/nest protection post-J4N funding?
- **Predator Research:** No update available. Could research students help with predator control research? Hawdon great location for this. Expect students to start in 2023 via J4N funding; Uni of Canterbury and Manaaki Whenua researchers could supervise.
- **Parakeet Hybridisation:** Hybridisation in Hawdon seen as a low risk, given numbers planned to be released and use of larger cohorts for release. As such, RG recommends letting natural hybridisation processes occur, unless this becomes a threat to success of the translocation, in which case control must be considered. Monitoring required to achieve this. No active management of hybrid nests to extend to no nest protection for hybrid pairs. This represents an evolution of the RG’s thinking on hybridisation, important to capture this and share with Governance Group.
- **Releases:** Likely to occur throughout the season and right to end. Larger release cohorts recommended, up to 40 individuals (so may need more release aviary capacity). This increases chances of success, reduces carbon footprint (fewer helicopter trips) and can relieve pressure on Isaacs re. holding large numbers of juveniles over Christmas.

Action 11: Andrew to work with Terry/Andy/Archie on improving feeders to ensure out of reach of cats and are not encouraging birds to feed on ground where vulnerable.

Action 12: Graeme to circulate updated mast modelling from James Griffith when available.

Action 13: Tammy to set up kākāriki karaka predator control research priorities meeting with RG members to identify research questions for postgrad students going forward.

Action 14: Archie, Megan and Andrew to develop a monitoring and research plan for the Hawdon translocation, for RG consideration.

Action 15: Tammy to work with interested RG members to capture the RG’s thinking on hybridisation risk and management.



Portfolio of Potential Translocation Sites:

- Governance Group have requested consideration of further translocation sites for establishing new populations over next 2 to ten years.
- Andrew (with input from some RG members) has put together the translocation site matrix, but RG notes this is not currently producing expected outcomes on site priority (e.g., some sites that are less good ranked above better sites). RG also notes that North Island sites included where this is no longer a focus, weightings may be too concerned about hybridisation where this is manageable, and potential future-state of sites not considered.
- Additional sites could be added, including Banks Peninsula and Perth Valley, and ensure islands where yellow-crowned parakeets are present (e.g., Chalky).
- RG would like to have site matrix presented for consideration/discussion at next hui.

Action 16: Andrew to work with RG to update and finalise South Island Site Matrix to enable future translocation site prioritisation and planning.

Action 17: Andrew to present updated Site Matrix at next Recovery Group Hui to enable planning for future translocations to start (e.g., paperwork).

Future Recovery Group Hui:

- RG support having regular hui in March, June and October each year, these timings are most useful for Ops team's work. Suggest focus for each as follows:
 - **March:** Check in on current season progress, plan focus for next season.
 - **June:** Post-season debrief, check-in on planning for next season.
 - **October:** Focus on ensuring season on track, support available.
- Yvette requests hui not set for Wed/Thurs, and RG support that and not having hui during school holidays.
- RG request Governance Group meeting minutes circulated to RG.

Action 18: Ash to send out placeholders for June and October RG hui to RG.

Action 19: Ash to circulate minutes from each Governance Group meeting to RG.

Recognition of Andy Grant's Contribution to Kākāriki Karaka Recovery:

- All RG members noted the enormous value Andy Grant has contributed for this species' recovery over more than twenty years, as well as his support to individual recovery group members.
- Andy noted that he is pleased to see how the species' recovery is tracking but cautioned that "this species can disappear quicker than a toddler grabbing something it's not supposed to have".
- Andy will continue to be involved with kākāriki karaka recovery, including through volunteering with Ops and is able to provide support to the RG, which the RG was most appreciative of.
- 'Andy's Annexe' is planned to be installed in the South Branch.

