

# Kokako come home

How can the The Mangaroa/Ohotu Trust restore their forest and reintroduce a vanished species to their area—the kokako, a bird iconic to their iwi?

For each of these solutions... → →

Add some possible outcomes or consequences.

Apply for funding to do this work.

Nga Whenua Rahui is a government fund that can be used for conservation projects that will protect indigenous ecosystems on Maori land. →


Work out priorities - what needs to be done first?

Set up monitoring lines to find out what pests are there and how many. →

Begin the pest control programme & monitor results.


Listen to the land owners.

Find out what they think the area should be like. →

Find out what they think needs to be done.


Hold discussions between the Tūhoe iwi and Te Whānau a Apanui. The kokako will come from Matahi Valley, Waimana in the Otamatuna (Tūhoe) area.

Get permission from the Department of Conservation. Explain how the relocation operation will be carried out. →


Research methods of stress free relocation for the kokako.

Decide whether the kokako should be put in an aviary first or whether the kokako should be released straight into the wild. →


Explain this theory to DOC.

Nga Whenua Rahui staff will simulate a perfect kokako environment by playing recordings of kokako songs in the bush. They will adapt to their new home quickly and with less stress than the traditional aviary method. →


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For each of these solutions...



Add some possible outcomes or consequences.

Build knowledge and skills in the capture and handling of kokako by spending time with experts. 

Receive training from someone who had successfully caught kokako before.

Travel to the Matahi Valley to catch the kōkako. Play their own song to them as part of a typical dawn chorus blended with songs of other birds in the area. 

When the kokako comes to investigate, the catching team will net them.

Give each bird a health check.

Fit each bird with individualised identification bands and a transmitter so they can be monitored in their future home. 

Release the birds, at Ngapukeariki. Play their song to them from a network of speakers suspended in trees along prominent highpoints. Keep doing this every morning for three weeks or until staff are satisfied the kokako have accepted their new surroundings. 

### So what happened?

Pest control took place for several years before the kokako were released.

Lots of time was spent learning and mastering new skills and knowledge about kokako before any attempt to catch and move the birds was tried. It worked! There are over 30 kokako in the area now.

It took imagination, dedication, modern technology and the kokako's own song to make it possible.

The people who took part in the project, ngā hapu Te Whānau a Apanui and Nga Whenua Rahui staff, have many reasons to feel proud. This is the largest transfer of the species yet and the first successful release straight into the 'wild' with minimal use of an aviary.