

Eradication of Pacific Rats (*Rattus exulans*) from Whenua Hou Nature Reserve (Codfish Island), Putauhinu and Rarotoka Island, New Zealand

Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*) were eradicated from three islands in southern New Zealand in 1997 and 1998. In August 1998, two aerial applications (9.7 kg/ha and 9.4 kg/ha) of 2 g Agtech cereal pellets containing 20 ppm brodifacoum, were made over the whole of 1396 ha Codfish Island (Whenua Hou Nature Reserve) for the eradication of Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*). Preparation for the eradication included the eradication of Pacific rats from 144 ha Putauhinu in August 1997 so that a second population of a fernbird (*Bowdleria punctata wilsoni*) endemic to Codfish Island could be established there. A bait drop was also carried out on 88 ha Rarotoka (Centre Island) on the same day as Putauhinu, to eradicate Pacific rats as the first step in the restoration of that island. A single drop of 12 kg/ha of Talon 20P cereal bait containing brodifacoum at 20 ppm was used for the Putauhinu and Rarotoka eradication. To protect the fernbirds on Codfish Island which were at risk from the aerial bait drop, a ground bait station network on a 50 m x 25 m grid covering 37 ha was set up and operated in conjunction with the aerial drop. With no sign of rats having been detected for two years after the respective bait drops, the three eradications have been declared successful.

AUTHOR	McClelland, P. J.
YEAR	2002
SECONDARY TITLE	International Conference on Eradication of Island Invasives
PUBLISHER	IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group
PAGES	173-181
CONTROL METHOD	Baiting
REGION	NZ
LINKS	https://www.hear.org/articles/turningthetide/turningthetide.pdf (https://www-hear.org/articles/turningthetide/turningthetide.pdf)

Submitter No: ~~1851~~ 657

Submitter Name:
Rakiura Titi Committee

Date Received: 25/9 /17

[SCIENCE \(/TAGS/SCIENCE\)](#) / [ENVIRONMENT \(/TAGS/ENVIRONMENT\)](#)

Southern island 'sanctuary for rare birds

From [Our Changing World \(/national/programmes/ourchangingworld\)](#), 9:06 pm on 29 June 2017



[Alison Ballance \(/authors/alison-ballance\)](#), Senior Producer

[@alisonballance \(https://twitter.com/alisonballance\)](#)

[alison.ballance@radionz.co.nz](#)

[mailto:alison.ballance@radionz.co.nz?](#)

[subject=Southern%20island%20sanctuary%20for%20rare%20birds](#)

Putauhinu is a remarkable sanctuary island, and its story is one of loss, renewal and conservation in action.

Rat-free for two decades, Putauhinu is now home to rare land birds, including tieke or South island saddlebacks, toutouwai or robins, and tutukiwi or Snares Island snipe – and all three species are on the move, to other, newly rat-free, Tītī Islands.



Putauhinu from the air. Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance

Putauhinu is one of 36 Tītī Islands, scattered around the coast of Rakiura - Stewart island. Home to millions of sooty shearwaters, the Tītī islands are used by Rakiura Maori for the cultural harvest of tītī, or muttonbirds.

A river of tītī walk through the forest before dawn to reach take-off points around the island Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance

Southern island sanctuary for rare birds



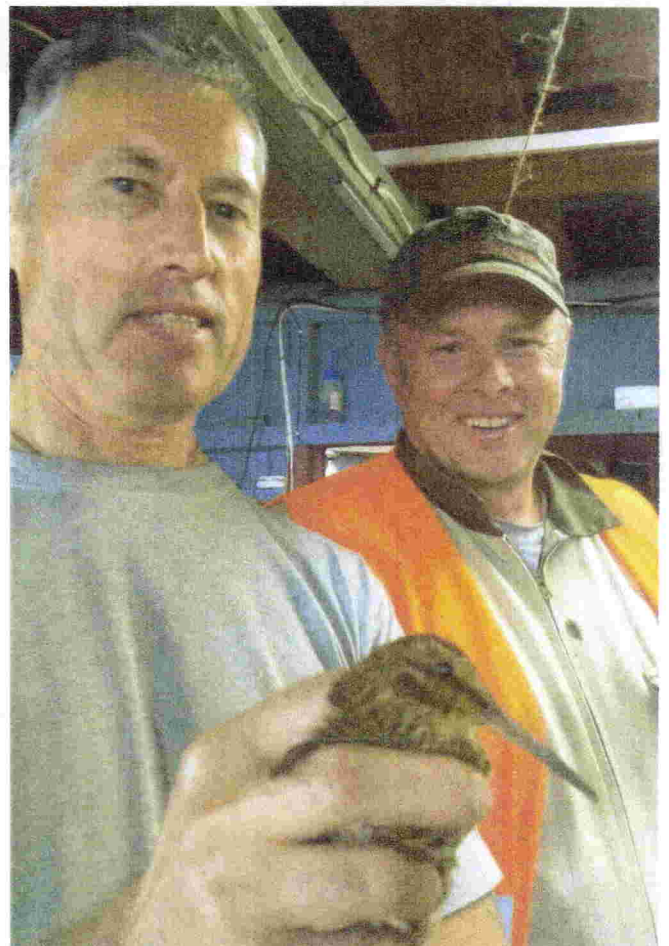


Tane Davis is a muttonbirder whose family has 'birded' in the Tītī Islands for centuries.

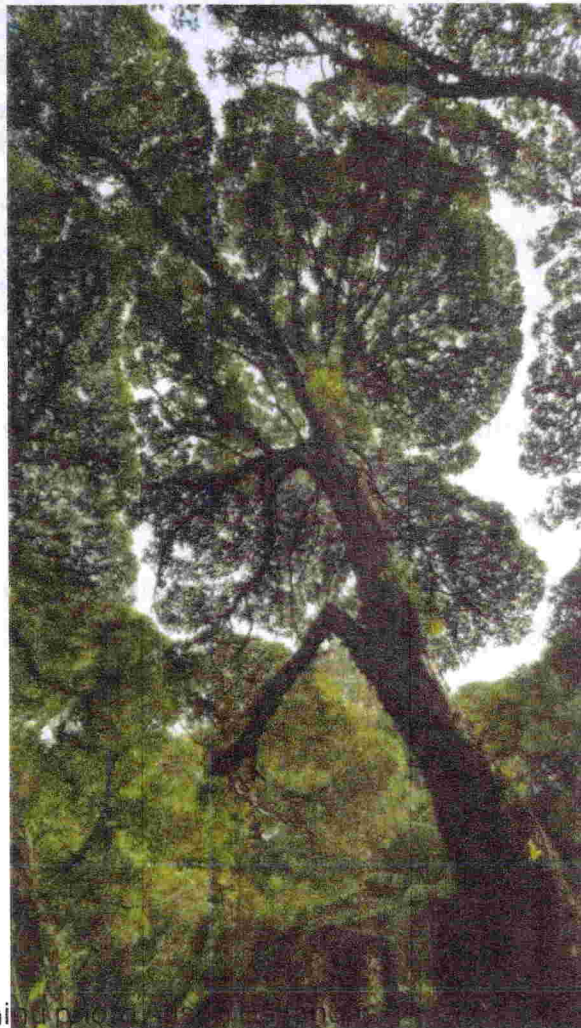
Tane is also chair of the Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body, the body set up to manage 18 former Crown Tītī Islands which were returned to Ngāi Tahu in 1997, as part of their Treaty of Waitangi settlement.

The remaining 18 Tītī Islands are privately owned, and are known collectively as the Beneficial Tītī Islands.

The Rakiura Tītī Islands are to be managed in a way that ensures the sustainable harvest of tītī, and they are also to be treated as nature reserves. Each year, the committee develops conservation work plans, and this year they developed an ambitious plan to move three rare bird species from Putauhinu to two other islands.



Tane Davis and Peter McClelland with a tutukiwi or snipe
Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance



Rata tree canopy Putauhinu photo by Alex Wilson



Kiore, or Pacific rats, were eradicated from Putauhinu in 1997, and since then a number of rare birds have been successfully translocated there. Stewart Island snipe became extinct after rats invaded nearby Taukihepa or Big South Cape Island in the early 1960s, and in their place snipe have been relocated from subantarctic Snares Island.



Travel boxes containing snipe are passed to the fishing boat Conchita to be moved to Mokinui Island, also known as Big Moggie. Photo: Ros Cole / DOC

Thirty-three snipe were caught on Putauhinu and released on nearby Mokinui Island.

A tieke or South Island saddleback. Photo: Ros Cole / DOC

Tieke or South Island saddlebacks were rescued from Taukihepa during the rat invasion in the 60s, and now thrive on a number of islands.



Toutouwai or bush robin. Photo: Ros Cole / DOC

Insect-eating toutouwai or robins do well on Putauhinu, as the tītī fertilise the island with marine nutrients when they are breeding on the island, and as a result invertebrates thrive there.

The Davis whanau carry travel boxes containing tieke and toutouwai for release on Rukawahakura or Joss's Island. Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance

Forty-nine toutouwai and 36 tieke were caught on Putauhinu and released on Rukawahakura or Joss's Island, on the east coast of Stewart Island. The birds were flown there by helicopter, accompanied by Tane Davis, and John and Lee Pennicott from Putauhinu.

Charles Davis pays tribute to his daughter Lania and her husband Lawrence, who were responsible for getting rid of rats on the island. The family, including mokopuna Winiata and Ngakau were there to meet and release the birds, and Charles says it was an emotional day for him, as he hadn't seen tieke for more than 40 years.



Lawrence and Ngakau releasing and watching tieke / saddleback fly away on their new home, Rukawahakura Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance

The bird-catching team on Putauhinu, including birders Tane Davis (left) and John Pennicott (second from right). Photo: RNZ / Alison Ballance