



Photo: 'Mr Hot Pink' at Beveridge Track, Jacqui Geux.

Whitehead/popokotea survey – Waitākere Ranges October 2019 & February 2020

Gillian Wadams, report as at March 2020.

During November 2016 a meeting was held to review the Ark in the Park whitehead/popokotea programme. Due to a lack of evidence of successful establishment translocations were placed on hold from 2016. Monitoring is to be undertaken for 5 years (until after the 2021 breeding season). After this date the status of whitehead at Ark in the Park will be reviewed again. The probability of success of further translocations from various possible source sites will be assessed.

An experienced Ark volunteer (Jacqui Geux) undertook a survey at sites within the Ark as well as outside on a paid contract basis. Following previous surveys, two unbanded fledglings were seen and photographed at Long Road after the breeding season, in March 2018. Based on this Jacqui completed another round of survey at Long Road in late February 2020.

Methodology

A Foxpro speaker was used to play a selection of whitehead calls, some of which had been recorded in the Ark in the past.

On each survey track the surveyor walked 100 metres then stopped and listened for any whitehead calls, if none were heard then 10-30 seconds worth of recorded calls were played. The surveyor then listened again and if no response moved on.

If a whitehead did respond then the calls would be used to lure them in closer in order to see if the bird was banded or not and record the bands if applicable.

The 2019-2020 survey was less extensive than previous recent years due to the very low numbers of birds found. Previously locations were chosen based on past sightings as well as informal habitat assessments that indicated potentially suitable whitehead habitat. Surveys were carried out along public tracks, as well as the predator control lines created by Ark in the Park.

During this survey the following locations were surveyed in **October 2019**:

Long Road to Sylvia's Grove (return) am visit
Tramline, Big Spur to AiP bait line K4 (return)
Arataki Beveridge Trk to picnic table (return)
Pukematekeo access rd to summit
Fenceline from dam (return)
Opanuku Pipeline Trk to Mountain Rd return
Long Road to Sylvia's Grove (return) pm visit

And in February 2020:

Long Road to Sylvia's Grove (return) am visit
Long Road to Lower Kauri Track (return) pm visit

Results

One whitehead only was found. A male bird, seen and heard repeatedly at Beveridge Track, near to the Arataki Visitors Centre carpark.

This bird is banded YH-OM and was translocated to the Ark from Tiritiri Matangi in 2016.

In previous years he has been recorded in the same location with a female and two juveniles.

Appendix 1: Number of whitehead translocated from Tiritiri Matangi to Ark in the Park

Year	Number translocated	Cumulative total
2004	55	55
2008	51	106
2011	50	156
2012	97	253
2013	100	353
2014	100	453
2015	100	553
2016	100	653

