

# Sponsorship of the Stitchbird (Hihi) Recovery Programme

An opportunity to work together towards a brighter future for one of the world's most endangered birds.



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**Surviving on just three offshore islands, hihi currently fly a fine line between survival and extinction. A chance event such as a fire, the introduction of rats or the arrival of a new disease could lead to the disappearance of this remarkable bird.**



**To improve the odds for hihi, a recovery programme has been developed. The goal of the recovery programme is to establish further self-sustaining populations of hihi.**



**A lack of information about the Little Barrier Island population is the biggest obstacle to providing a secure future for hihi. We need to know more about their habitat requirements and factors limiting survivorship and population growth. Without this knowledge the establishment of new hihi populations may be a game of chance.**

# **Towards A Brighter Future**

**To secure the future for hihi funding is required. An opportunity consequently exists to become a sponsor of the hihi recovery programme.**



**Between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per annum for three years is required to obtain vital information from Little Barrier Island (see Appendix 1 for details). As the only site supporting a natural population of hihi, Little Barrier Island holds the secret to establishing new populations.**

**The hihi recovery group is open to ideas on how the returns for a sponsor could be maximised. On offer is the exclusive use of a Stitchbird Recovery logo for any marketing and/or product labelling undertaken. Other opportunities available include...**

**The opportunity to reward key clients, stakeholders and valued staff with an experience they will never forget**

- **Promote your support of the Hihi Recovery Programme in direct marketing to clients.**
- **Opportunities to visit Tiritiri Matangi, Kapiti or Little Barrier Islands to see and learn about the endangered hihi and other New Zealand threatened species.**
- **Receive presentations by key players involved in the Hihi Recovery Programme.**



**Positive exposure in the media**

- **Portray your organisation in a positive light, as a supporter of the recovery of one of the world's rarest birds.**
- **Extended promotional opportunities through the Hihi Recovery Programme's exposure in the local media.**
- **Recognition by the local community and community conservation organisations.**

**Recognition by the scientific community.**

- **Be acknowledged in journal articles, popular scientific magazines and at conferences.**
- **Worldwide recognition as a supporter of one of the world's most endangered bird species.**



**The fulfilment associated with participating and aiding in the recovery of one of our most endangered native bird species.**

- **The knowledge that you are helping to save one of the world's rarest birds.**
- **Be kept up to date on the latest breakthroughs and successes in the Hihi Recovery Programme that you have helped create.**
- **Receive educational material about hihi ecology, behaviour and conservation.**

## Appendix 1. Proposed Research Programme for Little Barrier Island Hihi

### Explanation

Little Barrier Island is crucial to the long-term security of hihi, yet little information exists about the status of the island's population. Research at this site is vital to determine the long-term viability and threats to this population, and to identify the necessary actions to ensure its security. Information gained from this research will aid the selection of future translocation sites and will improve management techniques aimed at establishing self-sustaining populations elsewhere. Research on Little Barrier Island will reduce the risk of repeating past failures and allow the limited resources available to hihi recovery to be used more efficiently.

A comparative study between the proposed Little Barrier Island research programme and information currently obtained from translocation sites will increase our understanding of the factors limiting translocated populations. Furthermore, it will allow improved selection of future translocation sites, or enable techniques to be developed to overcome obstacles to hihi establishment.

### Project Outline

The project will take three years to complete. Three years is required to obtain sufficient data on population dynamics and survivorship. Using a variety of techniques information will be obtained from Little Barrier Island on:

- breeding success,
- survival of adults and juveniles from year to year,
- habitat utilization,
- effect of food, weather, and competition with other species for resources on breeding success and survival,
- causes of mortality and the prevalence of disease.



Once complete a comparative study will be completed on the above research and information collected annually at translocation sites to understand the problems faced by translocated populations and to develop techniques to overcome them.

Operational Costs	Brief Costing Detail	Year				
		06/07	07/08	08/09		
<b>Travel</b>	Boat costs	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000		
<b>Field Supplies</b>	Binoculars, transmitters, mist-nets, bands, burrow scope, miscellaneous	\$8,500	\$2,500	\$2,500		
<b>Other Costs</b>	Pathology analysis	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		
<b>Total Operational Costs</b>		<b>\$13,500</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>		
Staff Costs	Brief Costing Detail	Hours	Rate			
<b>Temporary Field Staff</b>	80% field work/20% data entry, analysis and report writing	2240	\$20/hr	\$44,800	\$44,800	\$44,800
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>				<b>\$44,800</b>	<b>\$44,800</b>	<b>\$44,800</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>				<b>\$58,300</b>	<b>\$52,300</b>	<b>\$52,300</b>

## **Appendix 2. Conservation Efforts**

Being confined to one location is a risky position for any species. A major storm, the arrival of a new avian disease or the introduction of rodents to Little Barrier Island could be the final straw for the hihi.

To pre-empt such a catastrophic event, the New Zealand Wildlife Service initiated a translocation programme to establish hihi on other safe island sanctuaries. Between 1980 and 1986, transfers were undertaken to three island sites; Cuvier, Hen and Kapiti Islands. These islands had previously proven successful in the transfer and establishment of new North Island saddleback populations and expectations were high.

Although the transfers at first looked promising, a gradual decline followed until all birds had disappeared from Cuvier and Hen Islands. Kapiti Island fared somewhat better but also showed a disappointing decline over the subsequent decade.

When the Department of Conservation was formed in 1987 and took over responsibility for threatened species, the plight of the hihi, although improved was still tenuous. It was obvious that if any advances were to be made there was a lot still to learn.

Accordingly, through the 1990's the emphasis for the hihi recovery programme changed to combine research and translocation with the development of new management techniques to assist the recovery of hihi. A further series of translocations were undertaken, again using Kapiti Island as one site, but trialling two new locations; Mokoia Island and Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Both Mokoia and Tiritiri added a new dimension to the recovery programme when both capture and transfer projects were undertaken with the involvement of secondary school pupils at Rotorua Lakes High School and Glenfield High School. Much was learnt from studying hihi at these sites but frustratingly, hihi again did not prosper and without intensive management, these populations would also have declined to extinction.

Why then has it proved so difficult to establish new populations of hihi? The answer to this key question remains elusive, yet research hints at probabilities such as suitability of habitat, the presence of competitors, or the incidence of disease. To find out we must return to Little Barrier Island and the last natural population of hihi. Little attention has been paid to this population over the last decade. We have not identified the factors that may be limiting the Little Barrier population and even the size and extent of the population remains unknown.