



Conservation House
18 Manners Street
Te Aro
Wellington 6011
www.doc.govt.nz
Ref: OIAD-5286

19 June 2025

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 27 May 2025, in which you asked for:

Could you please provide guidance on the following:

1. *Regulations and requirements for the translocation of native bird species into non-fenced environments.*
2. *Whether there is a different RTC percentage threshold for each species or survival rate expectation for the following species:*
 - a. *Weka*
 - b. *Kiwi*
 - c. *Kākā*
 - d. *Tieke*
 - e. *Kōkako*
 - f. *Tihi*
3. *What is the recommended minimum size for predator-proof fenced sanctuaries to support viable native bird populations?*
4. *Is there a best practice guide or framework available that outlines translocation protocols and habitat requirements for these species?*

Your guidance would be greatly appreciated as we consider future restoration and biodiversity efforts across our whenua.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *Could you please provide guidance on regulations and requirements for the translocation of native bird species into non-fenced environments.*

Translocation of native bird species are regulated via both the Conservation Act and the Wildlife Act. To ensure translocations are regulated under these Acts the DOC has developed a process to assess applications for the translocation of species. Information on this assessment process can be found on the DOC website at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/run-a-project/translocation/>

2. *Whether there is a different RTC percentage threshold for each species or survival rate expectation for the following species:*
- Weka*
 - Kiwi*
 - Kākā*
 - Tieke*
 - Kōkako*
 - Tihi*

There are different thresholds and survival rate expectations for most species and these components will form part of the assessment that is required for each different species and site that is proposed during a translocation application.

RTC (residual trap catch) isn't the only predator index that would be considered during assessment, as this is generally a measure of possum density and the species you are interested in will also have sensitivities to other predators (e.g. rats, mustelids and cats).

One of the fundamental principles of our translocation assessment is that proposed projects have assessed the reasons why a species no longer exists in the proposed release site and has developed a plan to address these. With native bird species predator control is often one of the key threats that will need to be addressed but there will be other considerations to be assessed.

Initial information on the requirements for most of the species (weka, kiwi, tieke, kōkako and hihi; see the individual pages for these species on the linked website) you requested can be found here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/run-a-project/translocation/translocation-success/>

Information on kākā can be seen in section 3: Assessing the suitability of a release site for establishing a kākā population in our "[Best practice techniques for the translocation of kākā \(Nestor meridionalis\)](#)"

3. *What is the recommended minimum size for predator-proof fenced sanctuaries to support viable native bird populations?*

There is no specific minimum size for predator-proof fenced sanctuaries as this is entirely dependent on the biology of the species you are trying to protect.

There is good guidance on this for the species you are interested in the web pages linked in the answer to question 2 above.

4. *Is there a best practice guide or framework available that outlines translocation protocols and habitat requirements for these species?*

There are best practice guide's for kākā and kōkako which can be found here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/run-a-project/translocation/best-practice/>

Translocation protocols for hihi can be found here:

<https://www.hihiconservation.com/-/Hihi-Best-Practice-Guide>

Also attached is the translocation protocols for kiwi “National Kiwi Translocation Guidelines 2021”.

We don't have published best practice documents for weka and tieke but the information in the web pages linked in the answer to question 2 provide an initial framework for these species.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	13 June 2025	National Kiwi Translocation Guidelines 2021	Released in full.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on DOC's website.



Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tim Bamford'.

Tim Bamford
Director Terrestrial Biodiversity
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai