

# Ewen lab hihi research update

July 2011



## ACCEPTED PAPERS AND MEDIA

• Ewen, J.G., Renwick, R., Adams, L., Armstrong, D.P. & Parker, K.A. (in press) 1980-2011: 31 years of reintroduction efforts of the hihi (stitchbird) *Notiomystis cincta* in New Zealand. In: Soorae, P.S. (Editor) Global Reintroduction Perspectives: additional case studies from around the globe. IUCN/SSC Re-introduction Specialist Group, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

• Check out Ali talking about her project on ZSL's new climate change website <https://www.zsl.org/conservation/climate-change/index.242.ZI.html>

• The subtle messages that put women off science – read what Patricia thinks in the BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14292081> or read an article by Nathalie in New Scientist "The high cost of being a women" 16 July 2011: 26-27



Giddy, Harry the hihi here!

Keryn McCracken from WISNZ has introduced Harry as a means of informing staff of the Recovery Groups sponsor about all things hihi – often using information provided in these newsletters. Go Harry!

## PRESENTATIONS, VISITS & NEWS *conference presentations, visits to and from group members etc*

- Both Ali (Imperial College London) & Kate (Massey University, Palmy) successfully upgraded their PhDs – CONGRATULATIONS
- Gemma Clucas was employed for one month by John to genotype the hihi samples from the 2010-2011 field season
- Leila, Patricia and John held interviews for a hihi research assistant position for the coming field season

## FEATURE STORY: 1980-2011: 31 years of reintroduction efforts of the hihi

### Introduction from this book chapter/case study:

The hihi or stitchbird (*Notiomystis cincta*) is a rare New Zealand passerine listed as *Vulnerable* by the IUCN (2011) and as *Nationally Endangered* by New Zealand's Department of Conservation (Miskelly et al., 2008). Hihi are the sole representatives of a New Zealand endemic bird family, the Notiomystidae that was historically widespread and common over the main North Island and surrounding offshore islands of the country. Following European colonization of New Zealand the hihi suffered a rapid decline in range and numbers until by about 1890 they had become restricted to a single remnant population on an isolated offshore island, Little Barrier or Hauturu (3,083 Ha). The relatively unmodified forest ecosystem on Little Barrier supports a hihi population estimated to be between 600 to 6,000 birds. The rough terrain and isolation make reliable population estimates difficult although there are indications that hihi abundance has fluctuated on the island since the late 1800's. Beginning in 1980, an ongoing national recovery program aims to increase the range and numbers of hihi using reintroduction. Initially a captive population was established with the view it would provide most founders for reintroduction, but later harvesting from wild populations has provided most birds. To date there have been 21 translocations to 8 different locations (see [www.hihiconservation.com](http://www.hihiconservation.com)). Here we review this recovery program and highlight the mixed success but growing optimism surrounding management of this species.



Flying hihi to their new home on Tiritiri Matangi in 2010. The reason for this translocation was a genetic one. We are now closely following the results of adding new genetic material.

## FUNDING *our major funders and new funding news*

### CURRENT AND PAST FUNDING – thank you!

+ British Research Council + Royal Society + Leverhulme Trust + Department of Conservation + AXA-fund + NERC + SoTM + ASAB + Massey University + Wesfarmers Industrial and Safety NZ Ltd.

## STAFF AND STUDENT CONTACTS

### Permanent Staff

- Professor Doug Armstrong (Massey University, New Zealand [D.P.Armstrong@massey.ac.nz](mailto:D.P.Armstrong@massey.ac.nz))
- Dr John Ewen (Institute of Zoology, United Kingdom [john.ewen@ioz.ac.uk](mailto:john.ewen@ioz.ac.uk))
- Dr Phillip Cassey (University of Adelaide, Australia [phill.cassey@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:phill.cassey@adelaide.edu.au))
- Dr Rebecca Kilner (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom [rmk1002@hermes.cam.ac.uk](mailto:rmk1002@hermes.cam.ac.uk))

### Post doctoral Research Staff

- Dr Patricia Brekke (Institute of Zoology, United Kingdom [patricia.brekke@ioz.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.brekke@ioz.ac.uk))
- Dr Nathalie Pettorelli (Institute of Zoology, United Kingdom [nathalie.pettorelli@ioz.ac.uk](mailto:nathalie.pettorelli@ioz.ac.uk))
- Dr Rose Thorogood (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom [rose.thorogood@gmail.com](mailto:rose.thorogood@gmail.com))
- Dr Kevin Parker (Massey University, New Zealand [k.parker@massey.ac.nz](mailto:k.parker@massey.ac.nz))

### PhD Students

- Leila Walker (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom [lkw24@hermes.cam.ac.uk](mailto:lkw24@hermes.cam.ac.uk))
- Aliénor Chauvenet (Institute of Zoology, United Kingdom [Alienor.Chauvenet@ioz.ac.uk](mailto:Alienor.Chauvenet@ioz.ac.uk))
- Kate Richardson (Massey University, New Zealand [k.richardson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:k.richardson@massey.ac.nz))

