

# Ewen lab hihi research update

March 2015



## ACCEPTED PAPERS, MEDIA & OUTREACH

- No new papers this month although we are close with one requesting revisions in Biological Conservation and another about to be submitted to Notornis (see below).
- Patricia was interviewed for ZSLs Meet our scientists – see the interview here <https://www.zsl.org/science/news/meet-our-scientists-patricia-brekke>

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

- **Congratulations** to Patricia whose contract at ZSL has been made permanent
- Thanks again to Rachel who can't get enough of hihi and has been on Kapiti island helping band the birds
- **Congratulations** to Victoria who was awarded a British Ornithologists Union research grant of £1765 for her project titled "Importance of social connections for winter survival of juvenile hihi, *Notiomystis cincta* in New Zealand."
- John has been organising the upcoming Hihi Recovery Group meeting and talking with the Department of Conservation around an updated Terms of Reference for the group.

## FEATURE STORY: Abstract from Chris Smith's (hihi field tech. 2012/13 season Tiritiri Matangi) manuscript titled "Age and sex criteria for the hihi (*Notiomystis cincta*) with additional details on moult patterns."

Hihi are a small threatened passerine endemic to New Zealand, for whom few methods are known for aging and sexing wild unbanded individuals. We monitored hihi on Tiritiri Matangi island over 3 years, studying moult and other sexing and aging techniques. Juvenile hihi before their first preformative moult can be sexed by the white bases of primary coverts on males, which appear brown in females (see image below). After juveniles undergo their preformative moult, they appear similar to adults; however juvenile males retain old feathers in their primary coverts, alulas, or sometimes greater coverts or inner primaries, while adults undergo a complete moult. These patterns can be difficult to see in juvenile females, but wear of juvenile tails is much greater than in adults at any given time of year. Moult in the outer primaries and secondaries in autumn also indicates an adult. This information should help inform future translocations and attempts to monitor the viability of wild populations.



## 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 + NZ Safety Ltd + Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund + BOU.

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