

# Welcome to Winter in the Abel Tasman



*Lower Moutere School Abel Tasman Youth Ambassadors Seery Lynch, TK Howells, Zac Walker and Cordt Horrell and teacher Ross Fitzsimmons at the whio release, Wainui Stream, February 2023*

## **Welcome to winter from the Project Janszoon Team**

Kia ora and welcome to the latest news and info from Project Janszoon. It was a long, busy summer with plenty of activity – whio releases, monitoring programmes, education activities and lots of volunteers hard at work controlling weeds.

As winter rolls in, we are collating our pest monitoring data, counting our kākā chicks, and celebrating data that shows native South Island robins are being seen and heard in more areas of the Park. All this sciency-stuff will make it easier for us to determine how best to protect the biodiversity gains made in over 10 years of mahi with our partners the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust and DOC, so that future generations of people (and native birds, lizards, snails etc!) can enjoy this rich and wonderful ecosystem at its best.

## **Trampers' favourite bird makes a comeback**



A small forest bird, much loved by trampers for its habit of popping up in the bush to look for insects in their footprints, is making a comeback in the coastal areas of the Abel Tasman National Park.

Work by Project Janszoon, the Department of Conservation and the [Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust](#) to restore and protect taonga species like toutouwai/robin and kākā in the Abel Tasman National Park is showing exciting results, with significant increases in the number and distribution of robins and other rat-sensitive forest birds recorded.

To assess the impact of pest control operations, Project Janszoon has used acoustic monitoring technology to track forest bird population distribution and call rates at over 120 sites since 2019. The results from 2022 demonstrate a remarkable recovery of robins in the Park – robins are an indicator species that respond well to predator control - clearly demonstrating that a stringent approach to the control of pest species plays a critical role in restoring and protecting population recovery of forest birds.

[Read the full story here](#)

**Have you heard the kākā calling?**





*Kākā mum sitting on eggs*

*Image: Dan Arnold*

The Project Janszoon 2022-23 breeding season for kākā has resulted in six fledged juveniles flying from their nests.

The season had an early start with the first nesting activity recorded as early as October. In total, Project Janszoon has released 35 kākā into the Park, the last in 2019, and it is heartening to see some of these banded birds starting to settle in to breeding, with six pairs observed displaying nesting behaviour this season. In total we've recorded 20 kākā chicks fledging from nests we've been keeping an eye on since we started releases.

DOC and Project Janszoon staff were kept busy through the summer monitoring kākā breeding activity, using a mix of physical visits and trail cameras set up to record visits by parent birds and any predators, and maintain trapping networks around known nest sites.

[Read the full story here](#)

## **Whio flying high in the Park**



*Whio released at Wainui Stream in February 2023*

*Image © Ruth Bollongino/Fern Photos*

Project Janszoon has released a total of 16 whio/blue duck this year. The first release in February saw 11 newly fledged whio helicoptered into the deeper reaches of the Park. Two birds were released at Wainui Hut, three at Evans Creek and six at Falls River. The whio were hatched and raised at the [Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust](#) in Christchurch as part of the Top of the South Breed for Release programme.

Abel Tasman Youth Ambassadors from Lower Moutere School came along for the day and helped release the birds.

Abby McCall, the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust coordinator, flew in with Nelson Helicopters Pilot Thomas Darling and iwi representative Jonboy McGregor (Te Atiawa) to release the birds at Evans Clearing.

The remaining six birds were carried from there by longline under the helicopter to a location upstream on Falls River, where DOC Ranger John Henderson was waiting to release them.

Another five birds, a bit too young to make the grade for release in February, were taken into Evans Clearing in March and released into prime whio habitat. Not long after they were released, two wild birds turned up to

check them out. We hope they made friends and will be happy in their new home!

We've now released 41 whio in the Park – well on the way to the 50 birds considered to be the number needed to occupy all suitable habitat in the Park's interior.

[You can read about the whio release here](#)

## **The Pou Whenua of Ngāmamaku-Wī Parana**



*The Pou Whenua of Ngāmamaku-Wī Parana*

*Video: Robyn Janes/Media Fix*

In April this year, a new video telling the story of the Pou Whenua of Ngāmamaku-Wī Parana was released. Ngāmamaku-Wī Parana was a Mārahau Chief of Te Ātiawa. He was one of the founding fathers of Te Taihū. The story is told by his descendants Ropata Taylor and Ngawaina Joy Shorrocks. In the year 1934, Ngāmamaku was the resident Chief in Mārahau. He was respected and admired by both Māori and Pākehā and was recognised as a leader of people and a spiritual servant of the people.

## **Project Janszoon Education Programme update**



*ATYA students and teachers at Adele Island during the ATYA retreat in February this year.*

*Image: Caroline Crick*

Project Janszoon Education Programme has been busy the past six months. The summer kicked off with the powhiri in October farewelling the 2022 ATYA students and welcoming the 2023 crew.

The 2023 ATYA crew's activities in the Park started with the high school students doing an overnight Ecoblitz at Waiharakeke. Former ATYA student Bradley Shields (now working for Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) came back as an expert and shared his knowledge about innovative trap technology and using eDNA. Lower Moutere ATYA took over a trapline from Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust and caught their first stoat.

The summer retreat in February saw the whole crew and their teachers checking out the Beech Seedling Trial on Adele Island and then enjoying some great activities over the whole weekend.

We also squeezed in a trip to Rawhiti Caves and The Grove with local botanists Phillip Simpson and Simon Walls and went fungi hunting at Bark Bay. We've got the winter ATYA retreat planned for the end of July.

Our Adopt-a-Section schools have been busy in the Park each term. Waimea College undertook an Ecoblitz with Hurunui college students monitoring fish, invertebrates and the shoreline. Motueka High School continues to use their adopted section for outdoor education and for NCEA credits for Biology and Geography.

Ngatimoti School students continued their quarterly litter intelligence survey as part of their visits to the Park, with some interesting finds as the dunes change post weather events.

Motupipi School have used Totarani for camp and other classes are using their site at Wainui for monitoring weta motels and linking classroom learning to their site.

At the end of this year, Project Janszoon's Education programme will be 10 years old, and we are working on ways to celebrate that milestone – watch this space! As usual we'd like to thank our amazing teachers who make this programme possible and also a big shout out to Abel Tasman Sea Shuttles for their ongoing support getting students in and out of the Park.

## **Project Janszoon Restoration update**





*Restoration volunteers Yvonne, Kevin and Anne take a break from sleeving seedlings at Hadfield Clearing,*

*Image: Helen Lindsay*

## **Hadfield Clearing**

Due to the very wet spring of 2022 we continued to plant at Hadfield Clearing right into December - there are now parts of the site that are too wet to plant even at the end of the summer. This is good news for the wetland restoration as it indicates that the drains are continuing to silt up, which will help with the long term goal of returning the site to a wetland ecosystem.

Large areas of shelter have now been established for future introduction of more kahikatea trees and discussions are being held around how the restoration will be maintained and enhanced into the future.

You can read more about [wetlands in the Abel Tasman National Park here](#)

## **Fire Smart**

Restoration assistant Lésa Heaton and the volunteer team have been doing a wonderful job throughout the summer maintaining the foreshore gorse control around sand spits and campgrounds.

A favourite place for the volunteers is Onetahuti Beach, where they often have a quick swim at the end of the day even into the cooler months.

The dune binding plants are establishing well, particularly the pīngao planting at Anchorage and the spinifex and pīngao plantings at Bark Bay and Apple Tree Bay.

## **Beech Seedling Trials**

There have been no beech plantings this year due to the fact that in the last few years, viable beech seed has been hard to find. We're hoping to collect enough this year to propagate some for planting in 2025.

## **Rātā recovery**

Most of the planned rātā planting sites have been completed with mixed results - some sites are doing really well, but there are others where the trees struggle a bit. Over all, the goal of extending seed source populations has been achieved and we will continue to look for isolated sites where trees can be planted to expand the range of seed source.

## **Drone survey counts pāteke**



*Drone operator Steve Hussey took some great shots of pāteke in the wetlands around Hadfield Clearing  
Image © Steve Hussey Photography*

Every year around late February, we survey the pāteke/brown teal populations in the Park to see how they are doing. As well as going on foot and by kayak, we've found a drone is a good tool for getting an aerial view of the birds in their natural habitat. Here's a shot taken above the wetlands behind Awaroa.

Big thanks to [Steve Hussey Photography](#) for the drone work.

It's Conservation Week soon - from 14-20 August. As usual we will be working with our partners in DOC and the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust to celebrate. Keep an eye on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for more info on activities planned.