



Beehive launch of the Kiwi Recovery Plan, August 1991. Rt. Hon. Jim Bolger, Lindsay Pyne, Kevin Smith and Denis Marshall. Photo: Lance Lawson

juvenile survival rather than inadequate breeding. However, the relatively slow rate of breeding makes it difficult for populations to recover when faced with other threats.

Kiwis have proved to be robust animals that can be handled and transported with little apparent harm. The North Island brown kiwi breeds regularly in captivity and both great and little spotted kiwis have done so occasionally.

BNZ sponsorship good news for kiwi

Fortunately, the plight of the kiwi has been recognised before the bird reaches the brink of extinction. The Department of Conservation is now well into the first stage of its Kiwi Recovery Programme, launched in August in partnership with the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Bank of New Zealand.

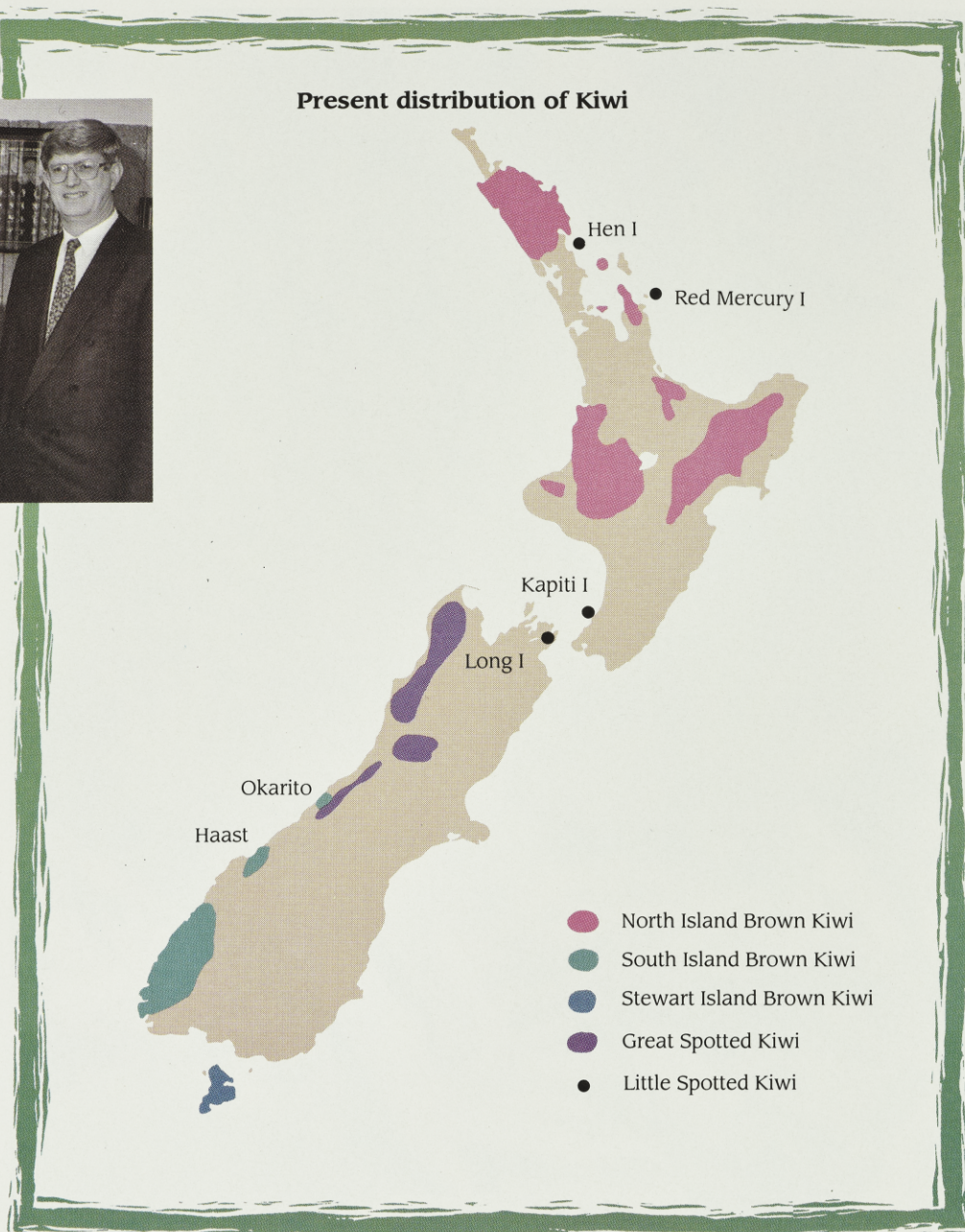
The Plan and the partnership were first announced by a world authority on conservation, Sir David Attenborough, at the conclusion of a superb, eye-opening television documentary on the kiwi produced by the Natural History Unit of TVNZ.

"Once again New Zealand is leading the way in conservation. By forming this coalition for research and action, you can address the threats the kiwi faces and ensure it can flourish at home on the mainland," said Sir David.

"The Kiwi Recovery Programme is a marvellous alliance . . . and a source of great hope, because it is New Zealanders who are the guardians of this remarkable survivor."

The authors of the Kiwi Recovery Plan were Dr David Butler of the Department's Threatened Species Unit, and Dr John McLennan of DSIR Land Resources. They prepared a five year programme of research and management aimed at the long term goal of maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the current abundance, distribution and genetic diversity of kiwi. It will be co-ordinated by the Threatened Species Trust Programme, a partnership between DoC and Forest and Bird.

The Bank of New Zealand will provide substantial financial support, and will also actively promote the programme through its nationwide network of branches.



The Managing Director of the Bank, Mr Lindsay Pyne, presented the Recovery Plan to the Prime Minister, Mr Bolger, at a function attended by the Minister of Conservation, Mr Denis Marshall, and Forest and Bird's Conservation Director, Kevin Smith.

In accepting the plan, Mr Bolger said the programme would ensure a more promising future for the kiwi.

"We are now taking steps to save this unique bird, our national emblem, before its position becomes critical," said Mr Bolger.

A whakawatea (clearing of the path) was later held at the National Museum and Art Gallery (Te Whare Taonga O Aotearoa), bringing the Maori community alongside the partners to endorse the programme. Maori people wanted to participate in the Recovery Programme because of their deep relationship with the kiwi and the natural world.

According to many Maori traditions, the kiwi is the oldest of Tanemahuta's bird family. It was Tane, the god of the forest, who, with different wives, created much of the natural world including birds, trees, stones and humans. At significant moments in Maori life – deaths, marriages or other great events – the kahukiwi (kiwi feather cloak) is drawn over the shoulders

as a privileged symbol of chieftainship and high birth. The cloaks, which are nearly always named, are great taonga (treasures) that carry the wairua (spirit) of the birds themselves. Today, however, it is only through kiwi that die naturally or through things like road accidents that the Maori people gather the prized feathers and continue the tradition of kahukiwi.

The Bank of New Zealand's General Manager of Group Policy and Development, Mr Thomas Tennent, said it was significant that a world authority of the stature of Sir David Attenborough had been so forthright in his support of the partnership.

"This interest and support tells us that this recovery programme has a significance that transcends our own shores, and we once again have an opportunity to demonstrate to the world our leadership in caring for the preservation of native species," said Mr Tennent.

The Minister of Conservation, Mr Marshall, said the kiwi was one of our most precious treasures – a symbol of our identity and pride.

"I commend this plan to you. I hope it sparks unprecedented co-operation and sustained effort to turn the kiwi away from the edge of the cliff," said Mr Marshall. 🦜