



WINGSPAN

2020 MEWSLETTER



PHOTO: SHANNON CAMPION



Without question, the last few months have been an unsettling and challenging time for all. The staff at Wingspan want to begin by acknowledging all those working in essential services, and the collective effort made by everyone staying at home. Tēnā koutou.

Although we have been unable to welcome visitors on-site, it has largely been business as usual at Wingspan. Most of us have been able to work from home and not much has changed for the birds. We have continued our research, made plans for the upcoming breeding season, taken in and rehabilitated injured raptors, commenced production of our next journal, and prepared for re-opening. Check out our awesome new set-up!

We have rearranged seating to comply with physical distancing guidelines. Tickets will be sold by section, bookings will be essential and pre-payment preferred. Contact details must be provided for tracing purposes. In the past we have been able to offer blankets and umbrellas to visitors; however, due to strict hygiene measures, and with winter's unsettled weather, visitors will need to rug up and bring along an umbrella or raincoat.





PHOTO: ©VANDY POLLARD

CALLING ALL BIRD NERDS

While the Wingspan shop continues to feature an array of goodies, from keyrings to magnets and T-shirts to books, we have an exciting new addition. Birds of prey eat a certain amount of roughage (bone, feather, fur) to help them digest their food, which is then regurgitated the following day; we call this “casting a pellet”. (In the photo above, Jarli kindly gives us a demonstration). We can tease these pellets apart and determine exactly what a raptor has been eating.

Our staff have been collecting pellets, drying them out and packaging them up, so you can conduct your own investigations! \$10 will get you a pack of five pellets, complete with detailed instructions on what to do with them. Who fancies themselves a bit of a forensic scientist?

JARLI MAKING HISTORY

Barn owls are New Zealand’s newest native raptor; there aren’t many out there and very few Kiwis know of them. We think it’s important to have some education around this fascinating species and, likewise, we think it’s important to have an ambassador for the species. So, in October last year, for the very first time, we picked up one of our captive bred barn owl chicks for training.



PHOTO: SHELLY MCGOWAN

Her name is Jarli (this translates to “barn owl” in Jiwari, an Aboriginal language). She is still learning but has been an absolute hit with visitors. Here’s a picture of Jarli dreaming of being an angel atop a Christmas tree!

THERE IS NO HALTING THAT MOULTING



PHOTO: ©VANDY POLLARD

Time stops for no-one. Shadow, who not too long ago was an adorable ball of downy fluff, has now completed her first moult.

However, her character hasn’t changed much, and she is still delighting visitors with her cheeky antics. One visitor captured this lovely image showing Shadow mid-moult. You can see all her new feathers are a rich, dark chocolate brown, while her old feathers are rather sun-bleached. A great opportunity to see it in such detail - soon she will be resplendent in her new attire.

BIRDIES & EAGLES

This past summer, Manawatu Golf Club notified Wingspan of a pair of falcons breeding on their course. Cleland Wallace from Massey University, who has been monitoring falcons in the area, asked for Wingspan's help in banding the chick, to help follow its progress. We're always keen to investigate new breeding sites, so Noel hopped into the ute at the crack of dawn and made the long drive down to check it out.

After the standard bollocking from the parents and with assistance from Cleland, Dr John Holland, and staff at the club, the young female was checked over, banded, and returned to the nest. We love it when everyone comes together to support kārearea in the wild, and what's more, Manawatu Golf Club chose to sponsor the chick! Kia ora, "Charlie".

PHOTO: ©CLELAND WALLACE



PHOTO: ©KATH MCINDOE

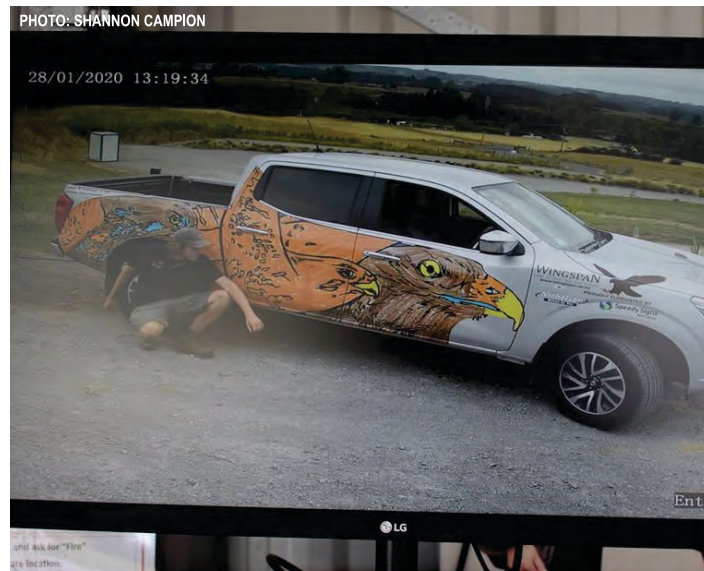
A HELPING HAND

With a busy summertime ahead of us, we realised we needed an extra hand (and glove!). Thomas had been volunteering with us since May 2019 and we were so impressed, we offered him the job. Lo and behold, we also had a new addition of the feathered kind: a wee male kārearea named Rusty. After a bit of a "warm up" from Noel, Rusty was introduced to Thomas and they soon became a highlight of our holiday displays. Thomas was a huge help over the summer period, lending himself to all sorts of odd jobs, he certainly wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty! Thank you Thomas, we couldn't have done it without you!

SMILE – YOU ARE ON CANDID CAMERA

If you're thinking you can pull the wool over our eyes, think again! Thanks to the support of Aon Insurance, Wingspan now boasts a brand-new security system, with cameras, floodlights, and sensors! This extra bit of security gives us more confidence that the site and the birds are safe and protected when we're not around. Now all we need to concern ourselves with is what newbie Thomas is up to, sneaking around the ute...

PHOTO: SHANNON CAMPION



CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY

As a charitable trust, we rely heavily on donations - but they are not necessarily always of the cash kind. Very generously, lifetime members and sponsors Edward and Wendy Goodwin surprised us with a much-needed sound system for our displays.

Sponsors Bruce and Hazel Painter bought us a bunch of new chairs to seat our guests, and sponsors Chris and Helen Dennett donated a freezer, ideal for storing food for our birds.

A massive thank you to Shelly McGowan and Corban Hirawani who donated a schmancy new computer to assist with our in-house graphic design. A lot may not realise we do not out-source our graphic design for things such as our annual journal, calendar and indeed this very newsletter... they are all created within Wingspan by our small but very talented team!

A huge thank you also to those who donate the food itself; trap caught mice and rats, steel shot rabbits and ducks, and to those who donate their time - our wonderful volunteers. You're all priceless.



GET DIRTY DAY



Another planting day has been and gone and thanks to our green-fingered friends, we now have an additional 1000 shrubs and trees growing on site! While the weather didn't play ball, volunteers nonetheless rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in. They managed to complete the job in the space of about an hour and a half. Absolute legends! The picture above shows one of our youngest contributors hard at work - the next generation of conservationists starting young!

We are so grateful to TRENZ, Trees That Count and Treeline Native Nursery also for your contributions.

A massive thank you to all our members and sponsors, we could not do it without you! Wingspan relies heavily on your support and our conservation programme continues due only to the amazing contributions from people like yourselves. We really are a people project!

If you would like to renew your membership, sponsorship or simply make a donation you can do so to the following bank account: Westpac account 031 545 0006730 00

If you have any questions, give the team a call (07) 357 4469 or drop us a line at wingspan.nz@gmail.com
Ngā mihi nui, The team at Wingspan.

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