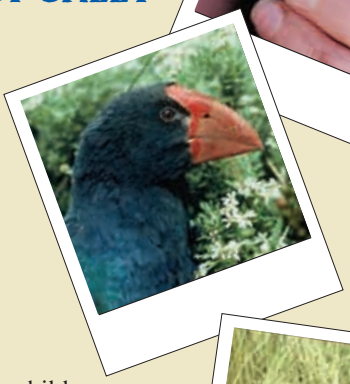
LETS TALK TAKAHE

FACT SHEET



SAVING A SPECIAL NEW ZEALANDER

Develop better understanding of our living world (Level 2, 3 and 4)
Learning about the continued conservation and protection of the Takahe fits well into the objectives of the science curriculum. However there are also many opportunities to crossover into English, Social Studies and Technology with some of the ideas listed on the rear of this sheet.

Social Studies: Resources and Economic Activities

Besides talking about conservation, there is opportunity to talk about the power of one child to make a difference. Mitre 10 responded to a letter written by Sophie Smith who was then ten, who talked about the need for support and funding for the Burwood Bush Takahe Rearing Unit. One letter has resulted in a long term commitment by Mitre 10 to support the Takahe until at least 2011 (with over $320,000 donated so far) .

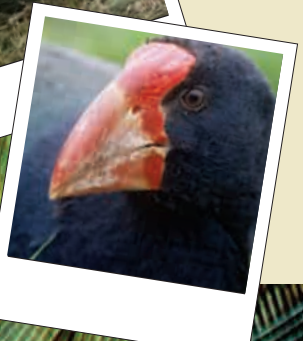
THE TAKAHE TODAY

In 2007 the population was devastated by stoats. The stoat was introduced into NZ in the 1900's as a pest control and has been devastating for many of our native bird populations who were accustomed to no predators (other than humans). Talking about the long term effects of an introduced species is an important part of understanding how to protect the Takahe and other native fauna and flora.
The Department of Conservation has since increased its control areas within the National Parks, with pest control measures that include stoat traps and fences to help make the natural environment safer.
It is estimated that there are 230 Takahe left, with ninety of these still living in their natural habitat in the Murchison Mountains. The remainder live on predator free off-shore islands. Some are hatched and cared for at the Burwood Bush Takahe Rearing Unit. Such a small population makes them vulnerable to extinction particularly if there is a disease outbreak or an increase in predator numbers.

ESSENTIAL TAKAHE FACTS

- Takahe were rediscovered in 1948 by Dr George Orbell.
- An adult Takahe is about the size of a hen, 50cm high and weighs 3 kg.
- Their shelter is also their food. Takahe eat mostly tussock.
- The Takahe's closest relative is the Pukeko but Takahe are stouter with stubbier legs and a bigger beak.
- Naturally occurring Takahe populations are only found in the Murchison Mountains near Te Anau.
- One to three eggs are laid each season by each mating pair.
- When two fertile eggs are laid, one egg is taken from the Takahe to be hatched at the Rearing Unit.
- The chicks are returned to their natural habitat once they have gained enough weight to be safer.
- Takahe nest on a raised, messy nest made of tussock grass.
- The Takahe does have wings which they use for courting and showing their dominance.

See www.mitre10takaherescue.co.nz for more resources to use in the classroom.



MITRE 10 TAKAHE RESCUE

New Zealand National Parks & Conservation Foundation

Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawbai

ACTIVITY 1 – SHOPPING FOR THE CHICKS

It's Saturday afternoon and you have a problem. You've been given the job to help raise a Takahe chick that was found yesterday. The equipment that you needed was mislaid by the couriers and you are going to need to make do with everyday items until Monday. All you have to shop from is Mitre 10 and a supermarket. Make a shopping list of the different things you'll need. Remember you are going to need to create a pretend Takahe to feed them with too! Remember to include food, feeding tools, something to enclose them in.

ACTIVITY 2 – FIND OUT AND ANSWER

What makes the Takahe so unique? And what are some of its special features? Find out the answer to some of these questions.

1. What (besides being flightless) do the Moa and Takahe have in common?
2. When was it discovered that the Takahe were in fact not extinct?
3. What farm animal is the Takahe a similar size to?
4. What is the main source of food for the Takahe?
5. What are the biggest dangers to the ongoing survival to the Takahe?

ACTIVITY 3 – IS THAT A PLANE? NO IT'S SUPER TAKAHE

The Takahe's environment changed faster than the Takahe could adapt to it to ensure its survival. You have been given the power to change its design in an instant evolution experiment. What three features would you change? Draw a picture of your new Super Takahe Design and label the changes.
*Only one rule: the Takahe must remain flightless.

ACTIVITY 4 – THE POWER OF A LETTER

The plight of the Takahe was dramatically altered when a ten year old wrote one letter. Sophie Smith was passionate about saving the Takahe and wrote to people who might be able to help. And they listened! What are you passionate about? What do you think needs to be changed in the world today? Choose a topic that is important to you and write a letter to a newspaper, a member of parliament or an organization. One child can make a difference!

ACTIVITY 5 – ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER

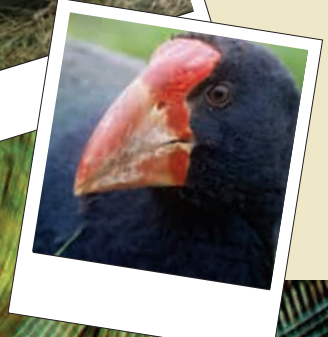
Comparing the Takahe to other similar birds helps us to see what sets it apart from other birds. Create a same and different chart comparing the Takahe to the Pukeko (its closest cousin) and the Kiwi (our most famous flightless bird) Take a look at food, habitat and appearance.

ACTIVITY 6 – EUREKA! YOU'VE REDISCOVERED THE MOA!

The Takahe was once thought extinct, but then was rediscovered. There have been Moa sightings over the years but nothing confirmed. You're out tramping near Arthur's Pass where you find an injured adult Moa, and close by some of her eggs. You know you need to keep them safe and protect those eggs. What would you need to do to ensure they were protected? Who would you need to tell? Work out a plan of action to protect the Moa and her eggs from all the media attention they will get.

ACTIVITY 7 – MITRE 10 TAKAHE RESCUE KIDS ART COMPETITION

Create your own Takahe artwork on A3 card, canvas or paper and enter your creation into the Mitre 10 Kids Art competition for 5 to 10 year olds. Closes November 3rd 2009. Download an entry form from www.mitre10takaherescue.co.nz



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