

## TITI INLAND COLONY

### Longbush Ecological Trust, Gisborne

Professor Dame Anne Salmond, Chair, 11 February 2011



*Tyler the Titi, one of the first chicks reared at Longbush. Named after Geoff Tyler of Tyler Associates, our honorary auditor.*

We are thrilled to report a fantastic outcome to our first translocation of titi (petrels) to Longbush. The Ecoworks team and the Longbush Trust **achieved a world first**, with five chicks from Young Nick's Head successfully fledging and flying to sea, the first time this has been achieved anywhere from an inland location.

Steve Sawyer of Ecoworks, who is carrying out this project for the Trust, is gaining an international reputation for his successful translocations of rare and endangered species of sea birds, and has recently been advising on projects of this kind in Fiji and Hawai'i.

Our experimental pest-free fence is a significant innovation, being much cheaper to construct and maintain than those traditionally used for this purpose.

It was designed by Steve Sawyer and built by local labour. It performed above expectations, keeping the chicks safe from pests prior to their departure. The Ecoworks team worked with an innovative and experienced fencer, solving construction problems with relative ease, despite the very steep terrain.

As planned, five strong, healthy chicks were translocated to Longbush in early December, where they were regularly fed a special mixture of sardines and other nutrients, measured, banded, and weighed to assess when they were likely to leave the site on their oceanic migration. The birds stayed on site a little longer than expected, and put on a little extra weight, perhaps because the site is relatively exposed and windy.



*Steve, son Con and Graeme - the Ecoworks team on site.*

The first two birds took off just before New Year's Day, on 29 December, with the last three departing over the next couple of days, adding a novel twist to Steve and Graeme's celebrations over Christmas and the New Year.

In the end, the titi chicks stayed on site between 21- 23 days, fledging at rates ranging from 550-705 grams. When they took off, all chicks carried tail-mounted transmitters. They had a distance of 7.27 kms to fly over farmland and the occasional farmhouse before reaching the sea. We believe that they flew south east down a wide shallow valley to Wainui beach, and after extensively searching for signals over a period of days, that they all reached the sea.

Heartfelt thanks to the Ecoworks team – Steve, Robyn, Con, Graeme and Patsy, who in order to keep the first stage in budget, donated considerable amounts of their own time to achieve this fantastic result. This shows the dedication of these remarkable conservationists, especially over Christmas and New Year!

We are deeply grateful to the Biodiversity Fund, the HB and JN Williams Memorial Trusts and the World Wildlife Fund for their vision and generosity in supporting this project, which is arousing international interest.



*Hallelujah! This chick has flown*



*Scrubbing up before handling chicks*





*Preparing dinner*



*Feeding the baby*



*Measuring the chick's wing*



*Back in the burrow*  
 $\Omega$





*No - the chick hasn't crashed in a paddock, or flown to the bright lights of Gisborne city. Off to sea!*



*Is it a fence, or a work of art?*





*A fence in the sky*



