

## Establishing a study colony of pakahā/fluttering shearwaters on Kokomohua/Long Island

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Translocation of seabirds can help future-proof species by establishing new colonies in suitable, similar habitat. However, seabirds experience strong site fidelity to their natal colony and so during translocations, most of the monitoring of these birds occurs at the translocated site to ensure translocated birds return to breed. Four translocations of pakahā/fluttering shearwaters from Kokomohua/Long Island have occurred since 1991. There has been minimal monitoring of pakahā on Kokomohua/Long Island except for a three-year monitoring project from 2007-2010 where 100 artificial burrows were constructed and monitored. In 2022, an additional 59 artificial study burrows were installed to aid in translocation efforts. Despite this, no consistent annual monitoring has been established on Kokomohua/Long Island and therefore the likelihood of translocated birds returning to their natal colony is currently unknown. The establishment of the artificial nest boxes provides an opportunity to determine if any translocated birds do return as well as establishing a long-term demographic study on pakahā breeding on the island.

The Kokomohua/Long Island breeding colony is located on steep and fragile terrain. Significant slips have impacted this already fragile study site, and Birds New Zealand Marlborough are establishing a longitudinal study to assess its long-term viability for future translocations of pakahā. With continued financial support from Birds New Zealand, Marlborough Branch members will be able to set up and establish a robust monitoring program. Annual monitoring on the artificial burrows will allow occupancy, breeding status, and adult and juvenile survival data to be collected. With the Kokomohua/Long Island colony likely to be used as a source for future translocations of pakahā, it is imperative that the population is monitored. This project will also have a training focus allowing Birds New Zealand youth members and iwi to gain valuable seabird banding and monitoring experience, and thereby create opportunities to transfer these skills to other projects across New Zealand.



*Figure 1 Birds New Zealand Marlborough members assessing burrow occupancy of pakahā/fluttering shearwaters on Kokomohua/Long Island. Photo Credit: WMIL*