

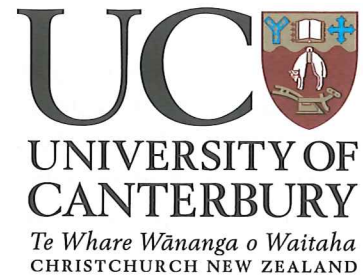
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7 Dec 2015

Liam Stoneley

By e-mail: [fyi-request-3337-22b25a7d@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-3337-22b25a7d@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Liam

**OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 15.62**

I refer to your post on the FYI website which we received on the 20th November in which you requested the following:

*The below questions are in relation to this post on your webpage:  
[https://blogs.canterbury.ac.nz/intercom/...](https://blogs.canterbury.ac.nz/intercom/)*

*a) Please provide any documents in relation to the purchase or hire of Tappe; and*

The correspondence and documents around the securement of Tappe on site at the University date back to November 2013 which covers a 3 year period of records. It would require substantial collation and research in order to prepare all of this information for you. Charges will therefore need to be applied to this request as allowed for under s15 of the OIA, and as determined by the Charging Guidelines for Official Information Act Requests.

According to the Charging Guidelines, staff time is charged by \$38 for the first chargeable half hour, or part thereof, and then \$38 for each additional half hour or part thereof. We estimate this request will require approximately 10 hours of research and collation, based on what you have requested. Could you please advise if you would like to go ahead with this request at a charged rate of \$684.00; the first hour of the estimate is free of charge.

In order to avoid imposing a charge, we are able to summarise some information from a staff member who was involved in the process, and also to provide you with the brochure from the Marlborough Falcon Trust, and the media releases on Tappe.

Discussion took place starting around November 2013 about the viability of the falcon, engagement with the Trust, and around health and safety, ethics, and management and it culminated in securing and sponsoring Tappe.

The University does not own and has not purchased Tappe. Instead we sponsor him via the Marlborough Falcon Trust to support his management and care for the purposes of controlling the local pigeon population. The cost will be a maximum of \$2,000 per month and is subject to the actual flight time of Tappe.

Tappe is an advocacy bird in much the same way as Sirocco the Kakapo is. The Marlborough Falcon Trust is central to his training, welfare and operation on campus. The aspects of appropriate bird welfare, housing, training, DOC approvals, and Health and Safety are the Trust's own responsibility, as a group that exists to rehabilitate damaged birds back into the wild and improve the profile and understanding of the NZ Falcon.

Since the earthquakes, the increase of the pigeon problem across Christchurch and the campus is well documented, and the effectiveness of deterrents on pest control varies hugely. The University looked into the effectiveness of the various options of pigeon pest control, and identified the opportunity to work with the Trust on an alternative.

For further information on Tappe, please read the web story to follow and an information release from the Marlborough Falcon Trust on Tappe's role at the University:

<http://www.comsdev.canterbury.ac.nz/rss/news/?articleId=1794>

b) *Any consultation documents, and letters, that lead to the decision to hire/purchase Tappe; and*

See answer above.

c) *Any other further information in relation to Tappe, and its purchase/hire.*

See answer above.

Owing to the documented issues with the technology used by FYI, further enquiries or requests such as this should be directed to our email account [records@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:records@canterbury.ac.nz) from your email provider to ensure that we receive them in a timely manner.

Yours faithfully



Anita Kerr  
**Senior Information Advisor**



## Frequent falcon flights to prevent problem pigeons

6 November 2015

The University of Canterbury will fly a native

New Zealand falcon (kārearea) above its Ilam campus to naturally deter pest birds, the first time a University has adopted such a tactic.

Marlborough Falcon Trust handlers Vikki Smith and Rob Lawry will begin free-flying a specially bred one-year-old kārearea – as featured on the \$20 banknote – to help reduce UC's pigeon population. Tappe, named for Mount Tapuae-o-Uenuku, was bred by the Trust from injured captive falcons unable to survive in the wild.

UC is taking this positive action to address the problematic presence of large numbers of pigeons in a natural way that also supports a rare native bird species.

Tappe has been trained to complete territorial flights around the campus to scare flocks of pigeons from the University's buildings and away from the campus.

UC students and staff will be treated to regular falcon-flying displays as Tappe patrols his territory. Seeing a kārearea flying regularly at UC will also be an opportunity to raise awareness of the plight of New Zealand falcons.

Kārearea are rare, with only an estimated 6000 birds left. Their habit of sitting on high perches looking for prey makes them difficult to spot in the wild, and there are very few places in New Zealand that display native falcons.

Kārearea are one of New Zealand's most spectacular native birds, extremely fast and agile. Prior to human arrival in New Zealand, almost all of their natural diet was birds. The presence of birds such as kārearea scares potential prey birds and they leave the area.

Kārearea are a natural predator to pigeons. The pigeon's innate predator defence is avoidance and escape. The presence of large flocks of pest birds, such as pigeons leads to problems from their large volumes of droppings. Where pigeon numbers are high, buildings and paths are defaced and deteriorate more rapidly, and the spread of disease increases.

Birds of prey are used around the world for bird control, particularly around airports. These birds are trained to fly to a lure, rather than capture birds. This predator-prey relationship is a completely natural way of discouraging the presence of unwanted birds.

### UC falcon research and conservation

The University of Canterbury has a history of research into kārearea.



Falconer Rob Lawry and kārearea Tappe will help deter UC's pigeon problem.

Communications

Nick Fox obtained his PhD from UC in 1977 with his detailed study of kārearea in Marlborough. In addition to his thesis, Fox wrote a number of papers relating to falcons, including one on the distribution of kārearea and an estimate of numbers of breeding pairs. Fox established the Falcons for Grapes project in 2005. This programme reintroduced falcons to the Wairau Plains of Marlborough.

UC researcher Sara Kross studied many aspects relating to this relocation of falcons, earning her PhD from UC in 2012 as well as publishing a number of scientific articles. She found that the country's only remaining endemic bird of prey is a perfect match for vineyard pest control. Kross is an advisor to the Marlborough Falcon Trust (MFT).

### **Introducing Tappe**

Hatched in an incubator along with his two siblings, Tappe is the chick of two Marlborough falcons. Both Tappe's sibling chicks were released in January 2015. Tappe's father, Napoleon, is blind in one eye and his mother, Sara, has survived a broken tail and damage to her cere (the fleshy skin above the beak). Neither of this breeding pair could survive in the wild. Together, however, they have successfully bred for the past three years that the MFT breeding programme has been operational.

As a chick, Tappe showed early promise and was surprisingly comfortable around humans. At two months old, he began his training as an advocacy falcon to assist with MFT's educational goals. Tappe relocated to Canterbury in September 2015 and commenced training with his handlers, Vikki Smith, a UK-trained falconer, and Rob Lawry, who has a Master's degree in Biochemistry from the University of Canterbury.

### **For further information please contact:**

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## **Marlborough Falcon Trust.**

### **Captive-bred native falcon begins new job at University of Canterbury.**

Marlborough Falcon Trust handler Vikki Smith will begin free flying 1-year-old New Zealand falcon, Tappe, in an attempt to curtail the University of Canterbury's pigeon problem. Should this innovative new pest-control strategy be successful, it will be the first of its kind in New Zealand.

Tappe, named for Mount Tapuae-o-Uenuku has been trained to complete territorial flights around the campus with the intention of scaring off the local pigeons. Renowned for incredibly fast flying with high manoeuvrability on the wing, New Zealand falcon (kārearea) are a natural predator to pigeons, which are an introduced species. University of Canterbury (UC) students will be treated to regular flying displays as Tappe patrols his territory.

Tappe's presence will have a deterrent effect on the pest bird population residing at UC. The pigeon's innate predator defence is avoidance and escape. It is this natural response that the Marlborough Falcon Trust (MFT) is hoping will assist UC to curb this destructive pest.

Tappe is the chick of two Marlborough falcons hatched in an incubator along with his two siblings. Both sibling chicks were released in January 2015. Father, Napoleon is blind in one eye and mother Sara has survived a broken tail and damage to her cere (fleshy skin above the beak). Neither could survive in a wild environment again, together however they have successfully bred for the past 3 years that the MFT breeding programme has been operational.

Tappe showed early promise and was surprisingly comfortable around humans and at 2 months began his training as an advocacy falcon to assist with Marlborough Falcon Trust's educational goals. Tappe relocated to Canterbury in September 2015 and commenced training with his new handler Vikki Smith, a UK-trained falconer.

### **The Marlborough Falcon Trust**

A locally run charitable trust dedicated to the conservation of the New Zealand falcon (kārearea), our last remaining endemic raptor. This special bird is featured on the NZ \$20 note.

In 2009 wild numbers were estimated to be just 6000 individuals when esteemed ornithologist Dr Nick Fox of International Wildlife Recovery established the Falcons for Grapes (FFG) programme on the Wairau Plains. The programme aimed to secure a future for the falcon by successfully integrating the birds with the winegrowing industry that had exploded onto Marlborough's landscape. A symbiotic relationship was sought with the falcons hunting within the pest bird population that is responsible for millions of dollars' worth of damage to crops every year. Wild chicks were re-located to vineyards.

Sadly, many falcon fatalities occurred due to predation, electrocution and human persecution and the programme was eventually halted in August 2011.

At this time the Marlborough Falcon Trust agreed to take over the stewardship of 7 permanently injured falcons and continue to support landowners who had acquired falcons through the FFG programme with expertise and food supplements.



Our single goal of a thriving falcon population is being realised through a number of innovative avenues.

1. Education and Advocacy.

Our aviary manager attends many community events and schools with our trained advocacy falcon Fern, speaking of the small significant changes we all can make to ensure the future of this species while giving New Zealanders the unique opportunity to observe a live falcon in close proximity.

2. Rehabilitation and Release

The MFT has built a reputation that ensures when a member of the public encounters an injured falcon or an abandoned nest with eggs or chicks we are able to collect, hatch, rear or rehabilitate for release

3. Captive Breeding

Utilising our permanently injured falcons we have accomplished 3 successful breeding seasons. 2013 saw 2 chicks released, 2014 saw 6 chicks released and we currently have 3 chicks and 7 eggs at our breeding aviary on Brancott Estate.

We see the partnership between the UC and MFT as a valuable step in the conservation of this iconic species. Peregrine falcons have successfully integrated into modern cities the world over, seeing kārearea in a city environment is an opportunity to raise awareness of the need for conservation of this superb, threatened New Zealand bird.



## **Marlborough Falcon Trust.**

**Captive bred native falcon begins new job at University of Canterbury.**

### **Additional notes**

#### **UoC Reducing pigeon impact by using a natural method of discouraging pigeon presence**

The presence of domestic pigeons in cities leads to problems from their droppings. Defacing and accelerated deterioration of buildings, manure deposited and the spread of diseases occur where pigeon numbers are high. Pigeons are numerous internationally, and introduced to New Zealand. The University of Canterbury, like many building complexes has a maintenance issue caused by the presence of large numbers of pigeons.

Kārearea are one of New Zealand's most spectacular endemic birds, extremely fast and agile. Prior to human arrival in New Zealand, almost all of their natural diet was birds. The presence of raptors scares potential prey birds and they leave the area. Raptors are used around the world for bird control, particularly around airports and refuse disposal sites. The birds are trained to fly to the lure, rather than capture birds. This predator-prey relationship is a completely natural way of discouraging the presence of unwanted birds in a locality.

#### **UoC Visibility of kārearea so students, staff public can see flying – advocacy**

Kārearea are rare, estimated to be about 6000 individuals left. Their habit of sitting on high perches waiting patiently for prey makes them difficult to see in the wild, and there are very few places in New Zealand that falcons are on display. Having kārearea in an urban environment is one way of making people aware of the species and having birds flying, instead of displaying in pens, illustrates the wonderful agility and speed kārearea can attain.

Having kārearea flying regularly at UoC will be an opportunity to raise awareness of the plight of NZ falcons as well as highlighting the reduction of numbers and extinction of other NZ bird species.



### **UoC history of falcon research and conservation Dr Nick Fox PhD, Sara Kross PhD**

The University of Canterbury (UoC) has a long history of research into kārearea, the NZ falcon. A detailed study of kārearea in Marlborough by Nick Fox led to him receiving a PhD from UoC in 1977. In addition to his thesis Nick wrote a number of papers relating to falcons, including one on the distribution of kārearea and an estimate of numbers of breeding pairs.

Nick returned to New Zealand to establish the Falcons for Grapes project in 2005. This programme reintroduced falcons to the Wairau Plains of Marlborough. Sara Kross commenced studying many aspects relating to this relocation of falcons earning her PhD in 2012 as well as publishing a number of scientific articles. Sara remains an advisor to the Marlborough Falcon Trust.

### **MFT Rehabilitation, release where possible and MFT Breeding and release**

Kārearea are injured in the wild, sadly some are shot, others suffered electrocution or other injuries. The Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust takes care of these birds, they are often x-rayed, checked by a vet, then housed in large pens in the MFT while they recuperate. The trust retains birds that cannot safely be released into the wild and where possible for those birds to form mating pairs. Birds that can be released are, a recent success story is a falcon being trained then released is now a resident on Banks Peninsular.

Breeding falcons is difficult but the trust has been successful in having four juveniles released last year, and this season there may be even more from the breeding programme.

Rehabilitation and breeding are very important to aid numbers and understanding of falcons. Advocacy on hazards to falcons remains the most important focus for the trust as education has potential to have a greater impact on falcon numbers than breeding. More New Zealanders knowing about and respecting kārearea as stunning, important members of our fauna will lead to fewer falcons dying unnecessarily.

### **MFT public viewing, flying, permanent display BEHC**

As a threatened species kārearea are held by only a couple of Department of Conservation accredited organisations in New Zealand. As they are also elusive in the wild they are not often seen by the public. The Marlborough Falcon Trust has a display aviary at the Brancott Estate Heritage Centre at 180 Brancott Road Marlborough. In addition to having two falcons permanently housed on the site there is also a flying display that can be booked through the Brancott Estate Heritage Centre.

Wingspan in Rotorua are the only other organisation that has a falcon flying display.

The high speed and amazing agility of kārearea means every audience is stunned by the antics of this amazing species in flight.





### **MFT cost of conservation, sponsorship, donations imperative**

The isolation of New Zealand and specifically the absence of land mammals meant the country was literally a bird paradise before human occupation. The change in the environment with human settlement, particularly the introduction of mammal predators and habitat destruction has resulted in extinction of fifty six bird species and many more threatened and at risk. Conservation of taxa at risk is time consuming, complex and resource intensive. In other words it requires cash!

Building aviaries, release facilities, monitoring, education and research all need financial input. Having facilities where the public can view threatened species is one very important part of the conservation effort, the Marlborough Falcon Trust is proud to have excellent facilities at the Brancott Estate Heritage Centre. In New Zealand sponsorship and donations are critical components of funding conservation efforts.

### **Falcon issues: electrocution, shooting, predators, habitat loss**

Research and practical experience has highlighted issues for falcon survival in the wild. Fortunately there are some practical measures that can reduce danger to kārearea. Falcons like to sit high, viewing the landscape and looking for prey. They sit quietly in trees and also on power poles. Unfortunately for falcons and other birds the cables on power poles particularly on transformers are sometimes not insulated and birds can get electrocuted. This can be easily remedied during maintenance or replacement of the equipment and we have an undertaking by some lines companies to insulate all potentially hazardous cables in the future. As a transformer has a life of thirty years this hazard will vanish in some areas in that time, we would welcome a commitment from around the country.

It is distressing to note that kārearea are still shot whether accidentally or deliberately. Avoiding this is a primary focus of our education programme.

Falcon adults can be very aggressive, particularly when looking after their eggs or chicks and as adults they can look after themselves very well. Unfortunately when chicks they can be killed by predators such as stoats or cats, and eggs are even more vulnerable. There is an increasing awareness of the importance of predator control, including predator proof sanctuaries and 'halo' regions in urban areas near sanctuaries.

Habitat reduction is now less of a factor in falcon survival because the birds are quite widespread and the natural environment in National Parks and reserves, plus some exotic plantations is suitable for falcons.