

# **Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust**

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report**

**For the year ending 30 June 2026**



The year from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 was our first year of proper operations. Highlights include the launch of our website, and two Southern Alps giant wētā surveys during summer.

Our third Trust meeting is scheduled online on 31 August 2026, 6.30pm

### **Web design**

Having been unable to secure any help with web design from Otago Polytechnic, Danilo learnt how to do it himself. Our website was created in Wordpress + Elementor, and was launched in late August 2025:

<https://wetaconservation.org.nz/>

Evan Moore from Auckland kindly volunteered to help us out as web master starting September 2025.

### **Bibliography of New Zealand Orthoptera**

Our electronic library of New Zealand Orthoptera has grown from 400+ titles as of 30 June 2025 to 800+ titles as of 30 June 2026. All titles are stored on our Google Drive, classified by taxonomy, and catalogued in Zotero.

### **iNaturalist account**

Maddy set up a WCCT account on iNaturalist, to record observations on behalf of people who don't have their own iNaturalist account, and reported their sightings to us.

<https://www.inaturalist.nz/people/wcct>

## Permits and Applications

### *Permits granted*

- Permit to conduct a long-term mark-recapture study on the Nationally Endangered Southern Alps giant wētā *Deinacrida pluvialis* (Authorisation Number: 119798-FAU). Issued on 25 July 2025 and valid until 31 July 2035.
- Permit to collect invertebrates on Three Kings Islands (Authorisation Number: 122390-RES). Issued on 6 October 2025 and valid until 28 February 2031.
- Permit to conduct research and to collect invertebrates on Kermadec Islands (Authorisation Number: 121363-FAU). Issued on 8 October 2025 and valid until 30 September 2036.

## Fieldwork

- Visit to Tawhiti Rahi (Poor Knights Islands) to collect cave wētā. Danilo Hegg and Saskia Wagner (WCCT), Edin Whitehead and Cathy Mitchell (Seabird Trust), and Kanoa Tamihana (iwi monitor appointed by Ngātiwai), 25 to 29 November 2025.

### *Report:*

Hegg D. 2026. A cave wētā collecting trip to Tawhiti Rahi, Poor Knights Islands: 25–29 November 2025. *WCCT Field Report* 2026–4; SDOC-1958532836–61038. Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust, Dunedin, NZ. 23pp.

<https://wetaconservation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/WCCT-2026-04-Tawhiti-Rahi-to-koriro.pdf>

- Southern Alps giant wētā survey in Price Basin, Whitcombe River. Danilo Hegg, Maddy Pye, Emma Gregg, and Kathryn Knightbridge, 14 to 18 February 2026.

### *Report (contains sensitive information):*

Hegg D., Pye M.M., Gregg E. & Knightbridge K. 2026. Survey for the Southern Alps giant wētā *Deinacrida pluvialis*. Price Basin, Whitcombe River, February 2026. *WCCT Field Report* 2026–1; SDOC-1958532836–743. Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust, Dunedin, NZ. 34pp.

- Southern Alps giant wētā survey in the Neale Burn (Fiordland National Park). Danilo Hegg, Lily Duval, Jolyon White, and Mikeely Milligan. 28 February to 4 March 2026.

*Report (contains sensitive information):*

Hegg D., Duval L., White J. & Milligan M. 2026. Survey for the Southern Alps giant wētā *Deinacrida pluvialis* in northern Fiordland, March 2026. *WCCT Field Report 2026–2*; SDOC-1958532836–1051. Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust, Dunedin, NZ. 30pp.

- West Coast bush wētā searches on Denniston Plateau. Danilo Hegg, March – April 2026.

*Report:*

Hegg D. 2026. The West Coast bush wētā *Deinacrida broughi* on Denniston Plateau, Autumn 2026. *WCCT Field Report 2026–3*; SDOC-1958532836–42269. Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust, Dunedin, NZ. 39pp.

- *Macropathus* (cave wētā) collecting trips. Multiple locations near Tauranga, and in South Westland.

## Sponsorship

- Christchurch outdoor gear makers Twin Needle kindly gifted us four sets of “Capsule” 2 bum bags and long radio/GPS pouches to support our Southern Alps giant wētā surveys.

<https://wetaconservation.org.nz/2026/03/07/thank-you-twin-needle/>

- Twisted Frequency Festival selected the Nationally Critical Mt Arthur giant wētā (*Deinacrida tibiospina*) as a totem animal. Festival organizers decided to donate the income generated by merchandise sales, just under NZ\$ 2,000, to the Wētā Conservation Charitable Trust.

<https://wetaconservation.org.nz/2026/06/12/a-big-thank-you-to-twisted-frequency-festival/>

## Equipment

The Trust now owns the following equipment for wētā surveys:

Four sets of

- Twin Needle “Capsule 2” bum bags and long radio/GPS pouches
- Garmin radio + GPS Rhino 750
- Notebook, pencils and plastic rulers

Eight Edding 780 gloss paint markers to mark wētā

Forty-five small Trakka tracking tunnels (250mm L x 60mm W x 60mm H) and anchor wires

## Meetings and visits

- **Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP)**, Franz-Josef Glacier, 14 August 2025. Danilo gave a presentation about the Southern Alps giant wētā (*Deinacrida pluvialis*) to the whole ZIP team.
- **DOC Invercargill**, 2 September 2025. Online meeting with Ros Cole and Dani Logan to discuss the practicality of a captive breeding programme for the Foveaux Strait giant wētā (*Deinacrida carinata*).
- **Bathurst Resources**, 14 October 2025. Online meeting with Campbell Robertson and James Marshall to discuss our West Coast bush wētā monitoring project on Denniston Plateau in relation to the proposed Buller Plateaux Continuation Project (Fast Track application).
- **DOC Wellington**, 21 November 2025. Danilo spent the day on site with Will Brocklesby, scanning documents from DOC’s wētā file.
- **Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri**, 1 December 2025. Meeting with Niki Conrad at Te Kao (Far North) to discuss logistics of a trip to Three Kings Islands (DOC Permit 122390-RES).
- **DOC Principal Compliance Officer – Wildlife**, 22 April 2026. Online meeting with Tapua Hori to discuss wētāpunga poaching episode.
- **Manawatū Tramping and Skiing Club**, Palmerston North, 5 May 2026. Emma Gregg gave a talk about our Southern Alps giant wētā surveys.

- **Mount Arthur giant wētā workshop**, 25 May 2026. Online meeting (half-day) chaired by Melissa Griffin (DOC) to discuss urgent management actions for the Mt Arthur giant wētā (*Deinacrida tibiospina*) following concerns raised by Robin and Sandy Toy (Friends of Flora).
- **Ōtorohanga Kiwi House and Butterfly Creek**, 28 and 29 May 2026. Visit of captive rearing facilities for *Deinacrida mahoenui* and *D. heteracantha*.
- **Otago Section New Zealand Alpine Club**, 3 June 2026. Danilo gave a talk + slideshow “130 years of wētā science and conservation in the Southern Alps”.

### Advocacy - other

- Maddy ran a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram, promoting the Waitomo cave wētā (*Pachyrhamma cavernae*) and the Mahoenui giant wētā (*Deinacrida mahoenui*) in the 2026 Bug of the Year competition.
- 9 June 2026: Nomination for the Southern Alps giant wētā (*Deinacrida pluvialis*) submitted to Bug of the Year competition 2027.
- June 2026: Article by Lily Duval on Southern Alps giant wētā surveys published in Forest & Bird Magazine.

#### Citation:

Duval L. 2026. In search of giants. *Forest & Bird Magazine* 400: 24–27.

### Science

#### Published

5 February 2026

Hegg D., Trewick S.A. & Morgan-Richards M. 2026. A new species of tokoriro in the genus *Insulanoplectron* Richards (Orthoptera: Rhaphidophoridae) from Rakiura/Stewart Island. *New Zealand Journal of Zoology* 53(1): e70008. <https://doi.org/10.1002/njz2.70008>

28 April 2026

Pye M.M., Turner S. & Murray T.J. 2026. Potential benefit of predator exclusion fence for the threatened ground wētā *Hemiandrus fabella*. *New Zealand Journal of Zoology* 53(2): e70022. <https://doi.org/10.1002/njz2.70022>

*In preparation*

Are alpine wētā safe from introduced predators? Submitted to New Zealand Journal of Zoology

Katydid from Rangitāhua / Kermadec Islands

The forgotten wētā (*Deinacrida broughi*)