All My Homies Love Native Manu – 95Bfm

27th April 2026 – (Takahikare-raro, NZ Storm Petrel).

1) **Play call –** Liv to source. Maybe record sound off a YouTube video? https://www.youtube.com/shorts/RR_hRUuWzoE Maybe record sound of this video?

2) **Classification** – Endemic, Nationally vulnerable. This is an incredible tale of lost and found. Way way back in 1827 a Dumont d'Urville collected 2 birds on the East Cape of NI. They went to a museum in Paris. One more was collected off banks Peninsula around 1890, then no other specimens were found. Thought to be an extinct species. However, 25 January 2003 a bunch of birdies on a photography boat trip took some photos off Coromandel and snapped an unknown bird. Then in Nov 2003 a bunch of 10-20 of these manu were photographed off Aotea. And on 4th November 2005 a bird flew onto a fishing boat and the fisherman just happened to be an ex-DOC ranger. And he recognized that this was a special manu. The DNA was tested and it matched the 3 museum birds collected way back. It had avoided detection for about 135 years!!!!The ultimate hide and seek champion of the manu world. Researchers took a long time to figure out where the manu was breeding until 2013 when a breeding site was found on Hauturu-o-Toi (Little barrier Island). It was breeding deep in the inaccessible cliff forests of the motu. Shout out to Chris Gaskin and Matt Rayner for solving this mystery.
The manu had survived all this time, with kiore rats and cats present on Huaturu-o-Toi. These predators were eradicated 1981 and 2004 respectively. But the manu nested in areas that the rats and cats could not access. Incredible story of survival.

   Manu also known as the Jesus Bird. Two interpretations on this (1) when hunting food it flutters close to the sea surface and paddles its feet on the surface of the water - like Jesus walking on water. (2) the bird was thought to be extinct but arose from the dead and is starting to thrive.

   Called Storm Petrels because sailers thought they warned of approaching storms. Also thought to be the souls of dead sailors.

3) **Māori relationship to the Takahikare-raro.**
   a. It seems these manu were probably not really known by Māori or assumed to be the same species as the Wilson's Storm Petrel (Tutukaka), which look similar but they are completely different species. They also spend most of their lives at sea and come to land at nightfall during breeding so they are stealth manu flying under the radar.
   b. The name Takahikare is the name for the NZ White-faced Storm Petrel. Raro refers to the north. So Takihikare-raro means storm petrel of the north.

4) **Whakatauki:**
   i. **"Manawa tītī".** *Petrel-hearted.* A number of petrel species are credited with staying aloft at sea for long period and having great

endurance. We can credit this manu with great endurance to survive as a species.

ii. **"Ka mate te marama".** *The moon is dead.* Beautiful whakatauki that talks about when the moon wanes she goes to the life-giving waters of Tāne to bather and then returns, young again and beautiful. It is a metaphor for being optimistic and that while failure occurs, there is always tomorrow. And this manu, the Jesus Bird has risen from the dead and is starting to thrive.

5) **How would you describe the manu Piet? And what do they eat?**
   - **a.** Small petrel – one of the smallest seabirds. 18cm long, 35gms – about the size of a sparrow. Dark brown/black on top side with white rump. Underparts black from throat to breast, white belly with black streaking. When flying their feet protrude well back beyond the tail.
   - **b.** Population unknown – hundreds to maybe a thousand or so.
   - **c.** Strictly nocturnal at breeding sites to avoid predation by larger gulls and skuas.
   - **d.** Outside of breeding season they are pelagic and stay out at sea for most of the year.
   - **e.** Tubenose so can drink seawater.
   - **f.** They feed on crustaceans, plankton and small fish, diving for them from that fluttering surface walking. They have a very good sense of small which helps them track down food.

6) **Breeding**
   - i. Limited info. Breed on Hauturu-o-Toi on steep inaccessible forests. Dig burrows or find crevices, often under kie kie vine, leaf litter or among rocks.
   - ii. Eggs white with cluster pink spots down one end of the egg – gorgeous. Not sure how many eggs but petrels often have only one egg so maybe one.

7) **Importance of Hauturu-o Toi**
   - **a.** Want acknowledge mana whenua for this motu – Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Rehua Ngāti Wai ki Aotea, and Ngāti Wai.
   - **b.** Such an important motu. Was the first Nature Reserve established in NZ, 1895. Unfortunate history of Māori owners being evicted off the island and the island taken into Govt ownership – that is being addressed through Treaty Settlements, but mana whenua only get a smidgeon of what they have lost.
   - **c.** This precious island held the last remaining populations of Wētāpunga (Giant Weta), Hihi (Stitchbird), and 98% of Northern Cook's Petrels (Tītī) breed there. And now it's the only place that the Takahikare-raro breed.

d. I spent 5 days on the motu in 2021 when I worked for Ngāti Manuhiri. Such a spiritual place – the mauri is strong, you can feel it.

8) Threats

a. Hauturu-o-Toi now predator free so that will help build numbers
b. A bit of risk with only one breeding island, but in time they may hopefully expand to other predator free motu in the Hauraki Gulf.
c. Some predation at sea from gulls and skuas, and sharks and seals grab a few because they feed close to the surface and rest on the ocean.
d. Plastic pollution creates hazards and small plastic items are mistaken for food
e. Climate change affects food systems and availability
f. Surviving massive ocean storms, but they have evolved to do this pretty well.

Amazing story survival and celebration for our precious manu.

Song: Crocodiles 'Tears. Love the song – after mourning the lost manu for 135 years the G.O.A.T of hide and seek has revealed itself so we can stop crying.