

Category: **Student Work**

Project: **Sponsor a Takahē**



What was the challenge?

Beautiful yet critically vulnerable, the takahē is a flightless bird of Aotearoa New Zealand. Having returned from the brink of extinction (twice), the creature is supported by a recovery programme with two objectives: to increase wild populations and to see takahē "treasured as a national icon". To gain both financial support and public awareness, the current uninspiring sponsorship campaign required a new and wider audience, and a shift away from pure logos to pathos.

What was the solution?

The rebranded campaign proposition included multiple touchpoints tailored to reach a younger, urban demographic (who might not traditionally engage in conservation efforts). Media ranged from street posters to collaborations with local skateboard and craft beer businesses. These touchpoints strategically engaged users with simple messaging that endeared the bird's personality and vulnerability to users. Information aimed to be conveyed in small and memorable ways, telling a

story rather than spitting statistics. The campaign also involved a call to action, directing people toward sponsorship. The website continued this narrative, looking backward and forward in history; it offered an interactive illustration of the takahē's come-back story, then invited users to influence its future. Symbolic sponsorship of individual takahē personalised the story, resulting in a sense of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Tote bags were gifted to sponsors and acted as further promotion.

The design aimed to embody the takahē's admirable attributes. These visuals were aided by colloquial and playful language, appealing to Kiwi culture. Inspired by public discourse in digital spaces about takahē, the information was presented conversationally, bouncing between facts and humorous commentary. The narrative presented a bird equally chill and cheeky as it is wondrously resilient – not unlike New Zealanders. This anthropomorphism achieved what numbers alone could not.

What was the effect?

- Conservation information that was accessible in the everyday spaces where people live, play and socialise
- Increased awareness of the bird's state of vulnerability
- Admiration and wonder at the best come-back story of last century
- Sense that the takahē is personally and socially relatable
- Framing of the takahē as a national icon
- Personal and fun sponsorship experience that encouraged sustained interest

Contact:

Hannah Wedlock
Massey University,
Wellington, New Zealand
hannah.wedlock@gmail.com
hannahwedlock.wixsite.com/portfolio

*This project was an assignment for a Narrative Information Design paper which required the conceptualisation but not implementation of a conservation campaign