

Worksheet 8: Project Takahē (1980)

DVD - Natural History of NZ Ltd ©2006

<https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/project-takahe-1981>

This DVD is over 30 years old and since it was filmed there have been a number of changes in the management of the takahē. However, it is still useful in helping us appreciate and gain an understanding of the ecological niche of the takahē, including its habitat and adaptations, and early observations of the circumstances affecting the distribution of the birds.

As you watch this DVD, make brief notes but concentrate on watching the bird in its natural habitat.

By the end of this programme you should be able to answer the following:

1. Describe the habitat of the takahē. Where and in what physical conditions does it live?

2. Describe the appearance of the takahē. What are some of its distinctive features? How might these be adaptations for survival?

3. Watch the takahē feeding. How do they manage the grasses/tussock? Which parts are they feeding on? What structural adaptations do they have to assist them? Describe the takahē's feeding behaviour in summer, in winter. How do severe winters restrict the birds' ability to feed? What other resources do they use?

4. The DVD shows the takahē nesting and attempting to rear their chick. What factors determine whether this is successful or not?

5. How do the researchers locate the birds? What does this tell you about the behaviour of the birds in terms of communication? What else have you learnt about pair behaviour and territories of takahē? How does this behaviour aid survival?

6. Think about some of the reasons suggested in this DVD for the takahē's decline in numbers. What ideas can you add to these, based on current research which you have read?

7. Having seen the takahē in their natural environment, what characteristic of this species can you identify that would make them susceptible to:

- Deer as herbivore competitors

- Ground-based mammalian predators such as stoats

- Aerial/avian predators

- Severe variations in climate

Additional notes of interest:
