



# *The Call of the Kōkako*

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE: Years 4 - 8



Maria Gill  
2011

# *The Call of the Kōkako*

Have you heard the haunting song of the kokako?

Come on a fascinating journey with Maria Gill and discover how New Zealand's biggest songbirds are being saved ... and why they are so special.

Meet courageous Geordie Murman – kokako rescuer and forest-saving champion – and witness how the kokako inspired so many people to work together to achieve an incredible result for native bird conservation.

Heather Arnold's beautiful and life-like illustrations complete a captivating book on one of our rarest, most musical birds.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maria Gill writes children's books full-time in Matakana on a lifestyle property. She specialises in writing about New Zealand's wildlife and ways we can care for it. Maria was inspired to write the book while researching kiwi in Rotorua for *Operation Nest Egg*. One of the people she interviewed – Carmel Richardson – a kiwi and kokako expert, challenged her to write a book on the kokako too. Maria and illustrator Heather Arnold also collaborated on *Rangitoto* a non-fiction book that was shortlisted for the New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards. Maria is a trained Primary teacher and has a graduate diploma in journalism studies. [www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz)



## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Heather Arnold is a multi-talented illustrator, graphic designer, animator and web designer. Her first book *Draw New Zealand Birds* won the Elsie Locke LIANZA award for non-fiction in 2008. Heather also illustrated *Rangitoto*, which was shortlisted for the New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards. Heather has graphic design and digital media diplomas and has been illustrating for over 25 years. Her artwork has also adorned two series of stamps. See Heather's portfolio on [www.heatherarnold.co.nz](http://www.heatherarnold.co.nz)

# The *Teaching* Resource

## Written Language

- When looking for a suitable kokako legend the author found several she could have used. Write your own kokako legend, which says why the kokako has a beautiful voice.
- Write email questions for Geordie Murman – the main character of the story.
- Write and draw your own Nature Journal. *See template 1.*
- Summarise *The Grey Ghosts of Matabina* story. What was the main idea and its supporting ideas? *See template 8.*



## Oral Language

- Dramatise the kokako legend and put it on YouTube.
- Read aloud the Reader's Theatre play of the kokako legend and perform in front of class. *See template 2.*
- Interview someone who works or volunteers for kokako. Be sure to use open questions.



## Visual Language

- Label the bird's body parts – *see template 3.*
- Draw a flowchart of how to capture a kokako. *See template 5.*
- Sketch a kokako – using Heather's instructions – *See template 4.*
- Draw a Venn diagram comparing a kokako with a kiwi – *see template 6*
- Design your own bookmark promoting the book.



## Field Trip

Go to a sanctuary that has kokako and see them in their habitat. Afterwards write a recount about the visit. Have a class discussion about how you could help make a difference to this endangered bird. You could raise money to donate to a charity that cares for kokako; or do something such as help clean a bush that has kokako in it; or prepare education material such as pamphlets and hold an education evening for the community; or put articles in your school newsletter.

# The *Teaching* Resource

## Reading

- Investigate other books that Maria Gill ([www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz)) and Heather Arnold ([www.heatherarnold.co.nz](http://www.heatherarnold.co.nz)) have written/illustrated. Write a book review on one of those books.
- Start a word bank for some of the key words in the kokako book.



Answer these comprehension questions:

1. Name the birds in the wattle family in New Zealand.
2. Name some foods that kokako eat. Hint: you'll find pictures of the food right at the beginning of the book.
3. Identify what are kokako predators and when they were introduced into New Zealand.
4. Find a person who has played a key role in helping the kokako and describe what they do.
5. Why have the South Island kokako been so difficult to find and what has happened as a consequence?
6. What unusual thing happened on Kapiti Island?

## Social Studies

Understand how places influence people and people influence places, Level 2

- Read the story of how Geordie Murman saved 10 kokako and in the process saved not only that native forest but was a catalyst for saving all native forests throughout New Zealand. How was Geordie influenced by what he saw at the Matahina Forest and how did he bring about change? Fill in the Question Wheel to answer the above question – *template 7*.

Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources, Level 3

- The Kaharoa Kokako group changed how their forest was used and what they could do for it to enable kokako population to grow. Imagine what their plan was and write a poster for them to educate the public.

Understand that events have causes and effects, Level 4

- The introduction of animals such as possums, rats and stoats had an effect on the wildlife population. Use a KWL chart to investigate how it affected the kokako population. *See template 9*.

# MY *NATURE* JOURNAL

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION:

WEATHER:

HABITAT:

PLANTS YOU CAN SEE:

ANIMALS YOU CAN SEE

*(write or sketch)*

NOTES ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN SEE:

*(Include sketches, maps and photographs)*



# Maori Myth – Maui and the birds

CAST: Maui Tieke Hihi Piitoittoi Kokako  
Narrator 1 and 2

Narrator 1 Deep in the native New Zealand forest Maui walks home.

MAUI Wrestling with the sun is thirsty work.

Narrator 2 Maui looks up at the four birds following him.

MAUI Now that I've slowed the sun down so you'll have longer days, perhaps one of you birds could do something for me?

Narrator 1 The birds flew closer around his head to listen.

MAUI Could one of you bring me some water?

Narrator 2 None of the birds answered.

Maui Tieke, can you fetch me water? I'm so thirsty.

Narrator 1 Tieke flew off ignoring his request.

Maui Come back here, you scoundrel.

Narrator 2 Maui caught Tieke with his hot hand and flung him into the water.

Narrator 1 To this day, Tieke has a brown mark across his back.

Maui Hihi, can you fetch me water? I'm so thirsty.

Hihi No, I will not. Get it yourself.

Narrator 2 Maui grabbed Hihi and threw her into the fire.

Narrator 1 It singed some of her feathers and still today, she has yellow tips on her wings.

Piitoittoi I'll fetch you some water.

Narrator 2 Piitoittoi flew to the river. She hovered above the water, dipping her head in just enough to fill her beak.

Narrator 1 She flew back to Maui and trickled the precious water, drip by drip, into Maui's mouth.

Maui Thank you, Piitoittoi. You shall have snowy white breast feathers for all to remember your kindness.

Narrator 2 However, Maui was still thirsty.

Maui *(Maui smacks his lips.)* Kokako, can you fetch me water? I'm still thirsty."

Kokako Whatever you wish, Maui.

Narrator 1 Kokako bobbed his head and flew to the river.

Narrator 2 He stood on the muddy bank and filled his ears with water.

Narrator 1 He flew back to Maui and dripped the water, droplet by droplet, into Maui's mouth.

Maui Thank you, kokako. For your kindness I shall pull your legs long so all can remember your kindness.

Narrator 1 Maui continued on his journey home now that he had quenched his thirst.

Narrator 2 Kokako followed him jumping and gliding like a monkey on his long and slender legs.

Ends



# Label the Kōkako



Thanks to Mirog Pordam, Dr Elen Gill - Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira. Illustrations © Heather Arnold 2014.  
Original Photographs: ©Buzo © Patake Houti (Baird) at the Kōkako Centre ©Buzo ©Hester © Sil on Footstap, Kōkako on book cover © Hester



## The Call of the Kōkako

Discover how the grey ghosts of New Zealand's native forest are being saved.

Available at all good book stores!

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www.marigill.co.nz  
www.hetherington.co.nz



# Draw New Zealand Birds

A step-by-step guide



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## North Island Kōkako

The Kōkako is one of New Zealand's most ancient birds. It is the last species of the wattle family to live on the mainland. Its relatives include the Huia, which died out 100 years ago, and the Saddleback which survives only on predator-free islands.

The North Island Kōkako is larger than a tui in size, with denim coloured feathers, a black strip across its eyes, and striking blue wattles hang beside its beak. It is considered endangered with only 780 pairs left.

The South Island Kōkako is slightly smaller than the North Island Kōkako, with dusky grey feathers, and orange wattles. The South Island Kōkako was declared extinct in 2007.

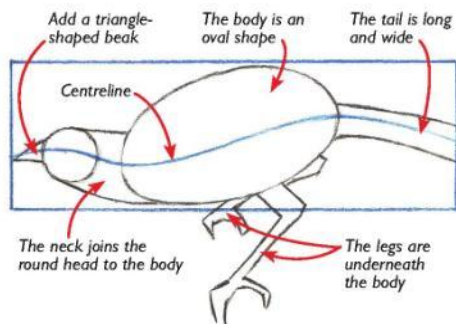
If you hear the haunting melodic call of the Kōkako – it is a sign you are in a healthy forest.

by Maria Gill

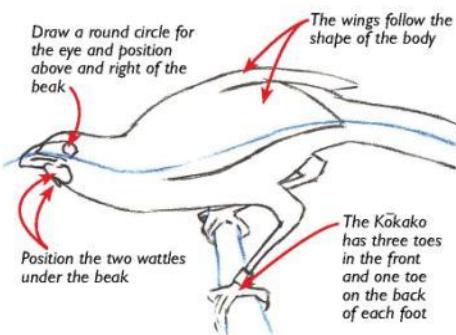


Photo: Pukaha Mount Bruce

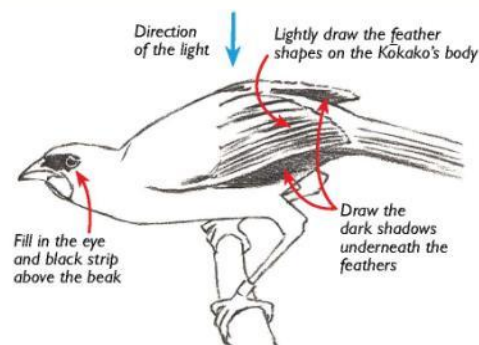
**Step 1** Study the shape of the Kōkako and see how the body fits within a rectangle.



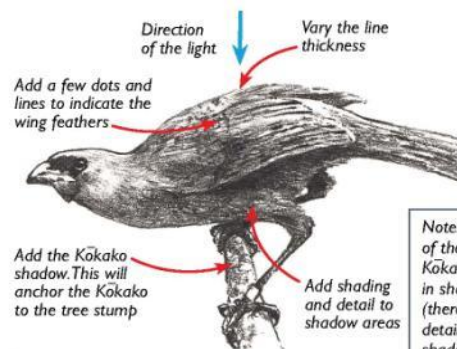
**Step 2** Find the centreline. Draw a round circle for the head and an oval for the body. Join with the short neck. Use guidelines to position the feet. The left foot is in front of the right.



**Step 3** Refine the shape of the Kōkako's body and feet, and add the wings. The neck has a gentle curve to join the head to the body; the curve follows through to the tail.



**Step 4** Lightly draw the feather detail and shadow lines on the Kōkako's body. Draw in the dark shadows under the feathers, and around the eye. Note the direction of the sunlight.



**Step 5** Add shading to the Kōkako. Leave the light areas white. Vary the tone (drawn with the side of the pencil) and detail (point of pencil). Draw the lines in the same direction as the feathers. Finally, add some detail on the tree stump using the side and point of the pencil.

**Note:** most of the Kōkako is in shadow (there is detail in the shadows). The highlight is on the top of the head and back.

*Draw lightly at first to establish the shapes. Check that the shapes, size, proportions and position are correct. The blue lines are guidelines and can be rubbed out later.*

Draw New Zealand Bird's Website [www.drawandpaint.co.nz](http://www.drawandpaint.co.nz)

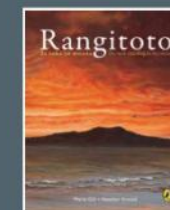
© Heather Arnold 2011. Photograph © Pukaha Mount Bruce

**Heather Arnold:** [www.heatherarnold.co.nz](http://www.heatherarnold.co.nz) **Maria Gill:** [www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz) **Book Publishers:** Draw New Zealand Birds & Rangitoto: [www.penguin.co.nz](http://www.penguin.co.nz) The Call of the Kōkako: [www.newhollandpublishers.co.nz](http://www.newhollandpublishers.co.nz)

To find out more about New Zealand's birds and how to draw them, check out these books:



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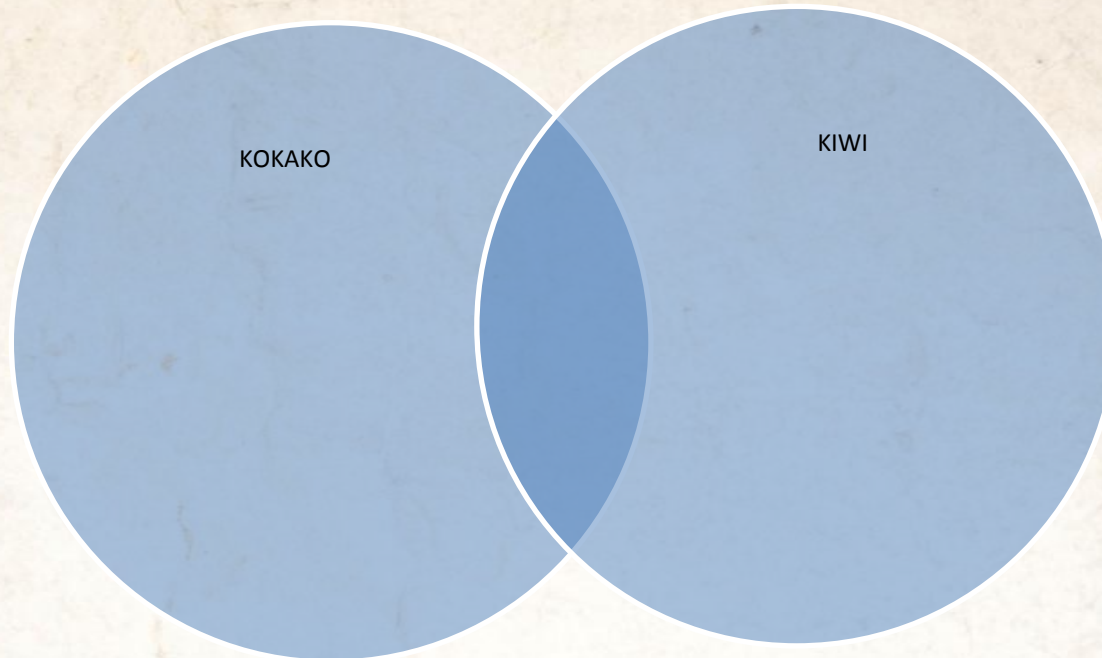
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# How to *catch a Kokako* Flow Chart

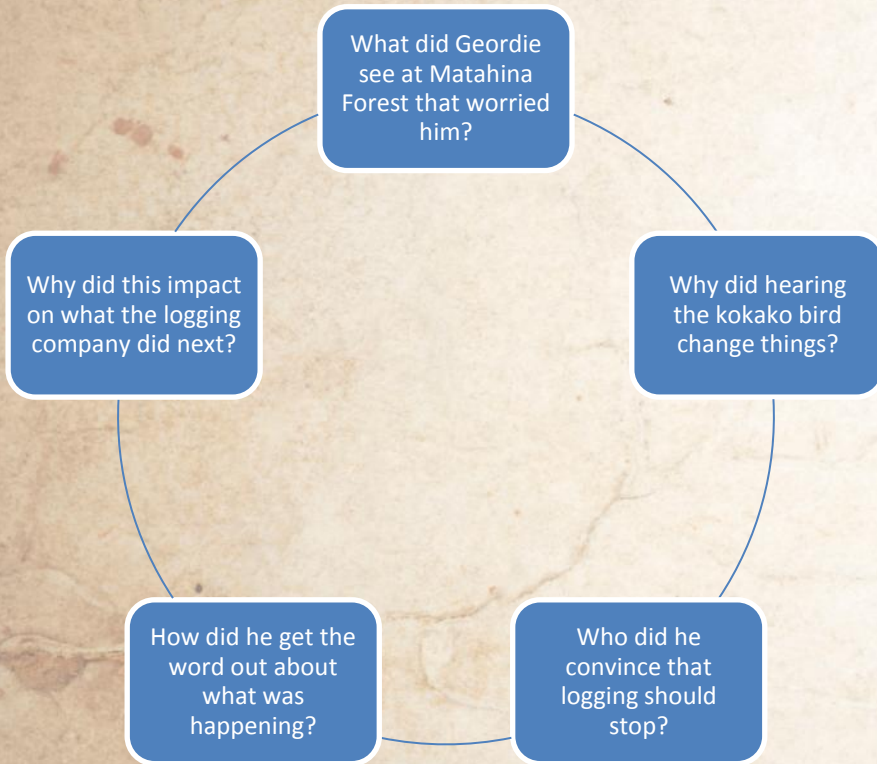


## VENN DIAGRAM





# 'W' QUESTIONS



MAIN IDEA:

---

SUPPORTING IDEAS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

# KWL CHART

What you <b>k</b> now about kokako predators.	<b>W</b> hat you want to find out about kokako predators.	What you <b>L</b> earnt about kokako predators and what is being done about them.