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## Paradise in the Pacific

• Last Updated 04 Mar 2024

Jo Tranter, artist and photographer, shares how she fell in love with the beauty of Rekohu.

As an artist and photographer, Rekohu embraced me with stunning beauty, rugged coastline, wetlands, native bush, but most of all the wildlife that was in abundance.

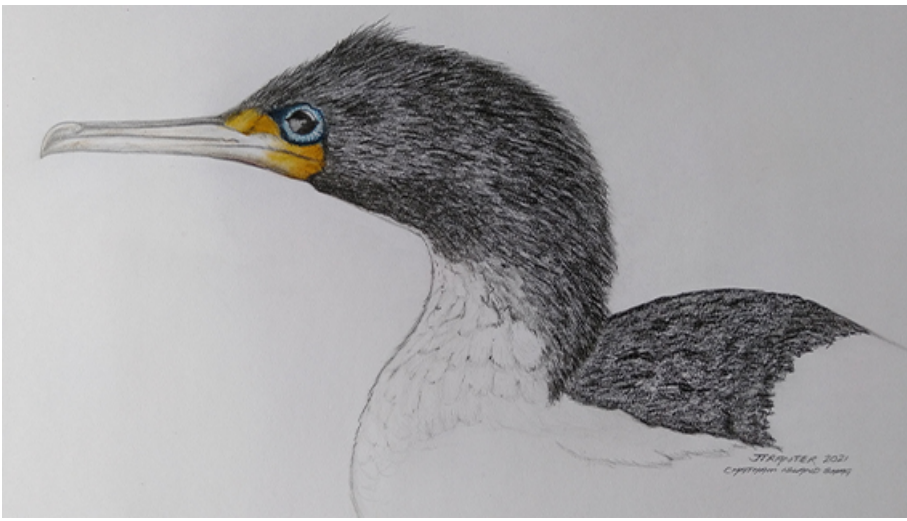
Just the sheer success story of the black robin. A small bird on the brink of extinction to now be numbered around 250, thanks Old Blue.

To be able to capture by camera the Chatham Island shag with its intense naval orange colouring and blue eye was a challenge, but worth getting wet for.

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*Chatham Island shag by Jo Tranter*

The seal colony at Point Munning was my biggest delight. Perched on a rock trying to photograph a seal pup that was playing hide and seek with me, patience paid off. I have since drawn this sleek mammal in two different poses.



*Seal pup by Jo Tranter*

My arrival on the Island was only two weeks after the beaching of the pilot whales on the coastline of Hansen Bay.

This was a moment of sadness and a time to reflect as I watched their decaying bodies once again being reunited with the waters that once surrounded them in life.



*Pilot whales beached at Hansen Bay*

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The black backed gulls nest blending into the landscape of the marshlands. Two eggs still be incubated but one chick trying to make itself inconspicuous but to no avail. All being photographed with the parents above showing their dislike for me being there.

The basalt columns of Ohira Bay that rise above the ground, every angle a photographer's delight.



*Basalt columns at Ohira Bay*

The ruins of the German Moravian missionary settlement at Mission Bay were of huge interest as my German connection went to Ruapuke Island near Rakiura Island many years ago. To experience the intense elements on that windy wet day made me appreciate what these pioneering people sacrificed to spread their word.

The stone cottage that overlooks the peaty flats, built by two German missionaries back in the 1870s was really a step back in time. A pleasure to walk into with the warmth of a fire going, plus Helen's stories and love for the cottage that she calls home.

My perspective of the above fauna and flora as an artist and photographer as I mentioned doesn't take away from the massive history that Rekohu has to offer and that it shared with me.

Steeped in tradition, the journey of the Moriori who came to this Island. Tommy Solomon statue, Kopinga Marae in its tranquil setting. The Museum with its many photos and stories of the past. The dendroglyphs etched on the Kopi trees not to mention the amazing bas relief engravings on the limestone walls of Nunuku caves. History certainly surrounds this Island where ever you go.

One regret, not getting the opportunity to visit Pitt Island, maybe another time.

A special thanks to Vaughan Hill, a person who shared his journey, life and beauty of the island.

Please keep your island unique, untouched, to benefit you all as Islanders on Rekohu. Your home, your land is truly a beautiful piece of paradise in the Pacific.

*- Jo Tranter, Christchurch, New Zealand*



*Jo Tranter at Ohira Bay*

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