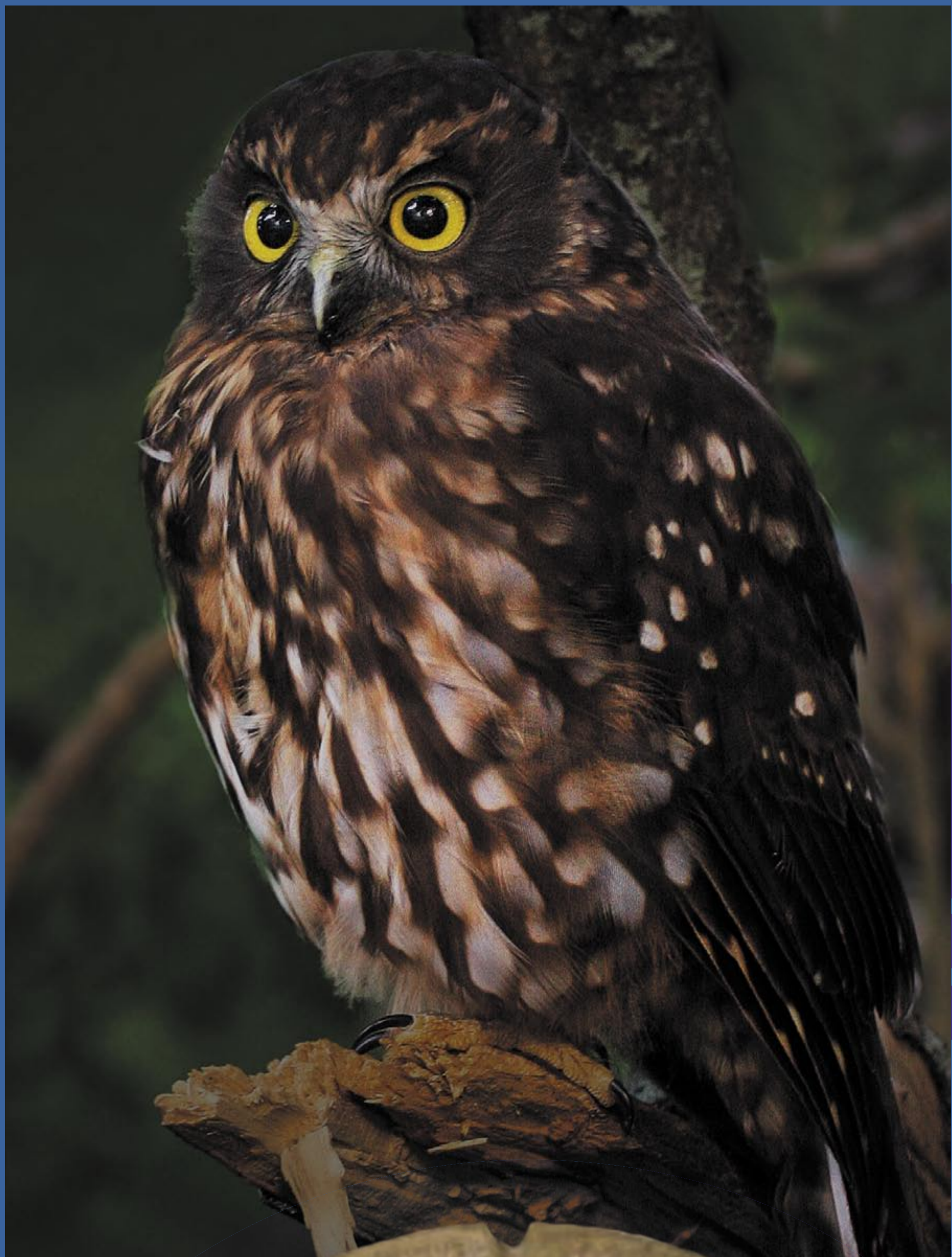


The story of Ruru



Ruru is the night traveller who flies on silent wings - its piercing yellow eyes see all, but it is seldom seen. Its night cry sounds a warning across the dark forest.

Ruru (morepork) is the wise owl - guardian - 'kaitiaki'. It protects, warns, advises every creature under the forest canopy. The spirit of Ruru - long recognised by the Maori people - warns of danger and death.

That spirit - that warning - has now been captured in a campaign to reduce death and injury on a highway that passes through Ruru's domain. State Highway 5 winds its way through the forest-clad Mamaku Range, linking the steaming playground of Rotorua with the productive pastures of the Waikato.

On billboards, newspapers and postcards Ruru sounds a warning to drivers to beware! This highway is unforgiving to drivers who don't concentrate - to those who don't show it enough respect. Corners are challenging, grades are steep, weather conditions can change rapidly. Ruru's cry echoes: "Take care. Danger and death are knocking at the door."



Ruru. The Bone Carving by Brian Flintoff.

Support and guidance from the Maori community has been the greatest influence on Brian's carving. Therefore he considers having works in their rightful home at Marae to be the most satisfying acknowledgement possible.

His attitude to carving bone is inspired by that of traditional artists, who strove for excellence in order to please the spirit world. Their understanding that harmony is the balance of spiritual and physical has enriched both his life and his carving.

An absorbing interest in the art of the West Coast Canadian Indian people led him to research animal forms in Maori Art. This remains a focus through which he can express his personal love of, and concern for, nature.

protect
warn
advise