



Spring Newsletter 2025 Number 87

Kia ora tātou,

Some of the work undertaken over the past three months:

- Responded to a range of information and support requests from WBF members and public
- Organisation and facilitation of Mountains to Sea, Forum day, Waingaroa, Raglan, 26th of November 2025

Restoring Biodiversity together – From Mountains to Sea

The “Restoring Biodiversity Together – From Mountains to Sea” day, took place on November 26th, in Whaingaroa, Raglan. The day commenced with Angeline Greensill and Taruke Thompson, joining as Kaitikai and Tangata te Whenua of their respective parts of the rohe, to deliver a warm welcoming and Whakatau to all the attendees. Of which there was a great turnout, with 62 of us packed into the Union Church hall, to hear about the opportunities and challenges for 4 projects, on the journey to improve biodiversity outcomes. All at different scales and locations, in and around Karioi Maunga and surrounds. The projects included Te Whakaoranga o Karioi, Whāingaroa Weedbusters, Te Rekereke Taiao Trust - Rare to Here Project and the Toreparu Hūrepo Wetland Restoration and Coast Care Whaingaroa. Click on the links below to see slides from 3 of the four projects;

[Te Whakaoranga o Karioi](#)

[Whāingaroa Weedbusters](#)

[Te Rekereke Taiao Trust - Rare to Here Project](#)

After taking in all the korero and ensuing questions. We all enjoyed a tasty lunch provided by local caterers, Ace and Jane, who also double as Karioi project volunteers. Proceeding lunch, about the half the attendees



braved the midday heat and black sand at our first field trip location - Wainamu Beach (above). Angeline Greensill (Tainui Awhiro) and Stacey Hill (Coastcare Waikato) showed us part of the coastal fore and back dune restoration they have been undertaking for many years now. They explained the history of the work undertaken in this extremely dynamic landscape, which included many learnings and continued improvement of their process. Aside from all the planting and other interventions. One of the major breakthroughs improving dune formation, has been to simply make sure the restoration areas are untouched by feet, tyres and hooves.

Next stop was just around the corner at Ngrunui Beach. The Karioi project has been working hard here to protect nesting sites of both Oi (Grey-faced Petrel) and Kororā (Little Blue Penguin), from predators and people. Kristel van Houte and Georgia Cummings expressed that the past breeding season for the Oi, had been challenging, with a number of chicks falling victim to ferrets, as well as dogs. Even though this is disappointing, using trail camera's has meant that at least the causes of death are not a mystery and therefore learning and adaptations can take place. Even more so though, the scale of predator control undertaken by the project over the Maunga, means that all indigenous flora and fauna are still benefitting, and in many cases, are flourishing from all the mahi being undertaken a landscape scale.



Georgia and Kistel from Whakaroa O Karioi Project educating us on Blue Penguin and Oi conservation work, Ngarunui Beach, Raglan

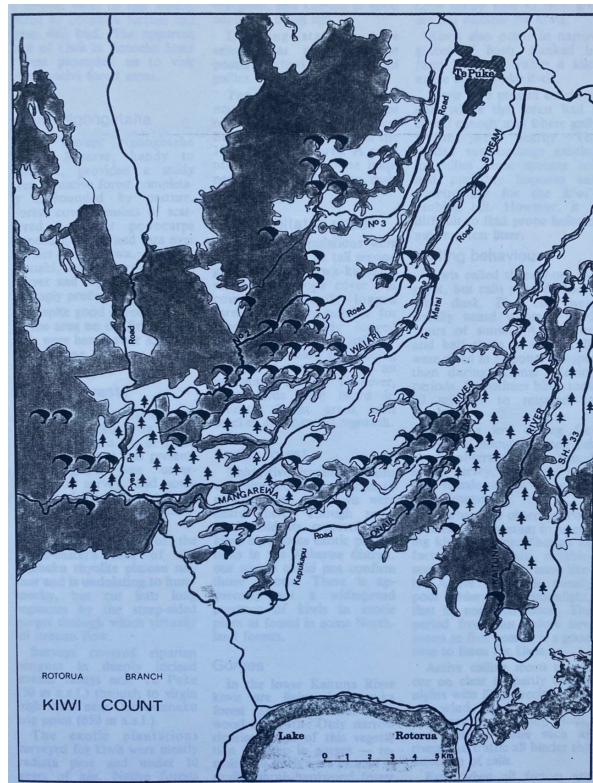
Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku - Restoring kiwi Populations in the Kaimai Mamaku

Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust and Save the Kiwi are working on an Eastern Brown Kiwi Strategy to support the return of a healthy population of kiwi in the Kaimai Mamaku.

Part of this involves looking at historical data to identify where kiwi once thrived and where they are now.

This picture shows the 79 locations where kiwi were heard in 1983. A stark difference to the very few remaining birds we now know of, just 43 years later.

Thanks to funding by the Joint Agency Partnership (BOPRC, WRC, DOC and MKMT), this strategy will identify management methods to support healthy Eastern Brown kiwi populations, reverse the current population decline and hopefully return kiwi to their original habitat.



Waikato Regional Council Supports Waikato Trust Helping at-risk Youth and the Environment

A Waikato-based trust is making a difference in the lives of at-risk young people while also championing environmental initiatives. Kaitiakitanga Charitable Trust (KCT)—established in 2018—works with small groups of young people to increase their self-esteem and social connections and introduce them to environmental knowledge and job prospects.

Members of the Trust work alongside youth teaching building skills to assemble predator trapping boxes as well as foundational skills in conservation and biodiversity. These skills are then utilised in the environmental work undertaken by the Trust in the region, including predator control, species monitoring, pest weed control and native planting.

KCT received a two-year Waikato Regional Council Environmental Initiatives Fund (EIF) grant of \$37,429 covering the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years. The EIF provides grants to projects which directly enhance and/or benefit the environment or provide environmental education. The Trust is utilising its EIF funding contribution to purchase trapping materials for the construction of predator traps and to support the implementation and servicing of traps on farms adjacent to the northern end of Pureora Forest to help provide a buffer of protection for vulnerable native species that call Pureora home.

The Trust has also received previous council funding through the Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund which supports volunteer community groups and individual landowners undertaking ecological restoration through pest animal and plant control. The Trust has three trainers who work with about 40 youth per year. Participants not only learn how to use basic tools and build the traps, but also about the environment, health and safety and tree identification, along with the importance of a work ethic and building personal relationships.

"It may take a week to build a trap, although it's much faster once students have learned the necessary skills and have some practice under their belts," says Kaitiakitanga Charitable Trust Founder Murray Grant.

“For many youth this might be the first time they have used tools or had to measure something. Through our programme they learn practical skills by doing and these skills will remain with them throughout their lives. Just as importantly, the youth learn vital social skills, self-esteem and the value of work.”

Youth hear about the programme partly by word of mouth, such as friends, family and other connections, while others are referred via government agencies or the justice system. “There is a network of people in the community who know what we are doing and believe it is a useful way to help young people and the environment,” says Murray.

Operations supervisor Layton Gardner has been working full-time at the programme for more than two years. Prior to that, he volunteered for eight years, helping with activities like tree planting and pest plant control. Layton says the Trust’s workshop is a non-judgemental space that provides a positive outlet for the youthful energy of participants.

“You see a lot of change in them while they are here,” says Layton. “By the end of the training they become more confident and more familiar with the use of tools. Some are also quite creative and make extra things like chairs for the team to sit on.” “It’s rewarding work and makes you feel good to have helped out in the world,” says Layton.

Percy has been a supervisor on the programme for over a year, teaching trap-building along with topics such as pest control and the value of native trees. “I love it here,” says Percy. “I like to help and inspire the youth that come here.”

The traps the young people build are used in Northern Pureora, between Ōtorohanga and Tokoroa, where hundreds of traps are spread over around 5,500ha of farm land. Murray says the trapping contributes to a healthier biodiversity, with bird life able to flourish with a reduction of introduced predators.

“The Trust is contributing to positive biodiversity outcomes through their work but are also generating significant positive social outcomes by providing youth with knowledge, opportunities and fostering a passion to connect with their heritage and their environment,” says EIF Fund Manager, Kate Pepper.



Team members clean a vehicle following a day’s trapping. Photo: Kaitiakitanga Charitable Trust

Haakarimata Restoration Trust - Successes and Recognition

We have had a great start with funding as the Waikato Regional Council has supported a proposal to their Environmental Initiatives Fund. The project entitled ‘Haakarimata Tomokanga – Starting Together Up The Restoration Path’ will kick off early next year. Like the tomokanga (entranceway) at the beginning of the Haakarimata Stairs walk, this project will mark the beginning of a new chapter for us (and a lot of work ahead!), and will grow our ability to build community connection and train volunteers for the work ahead.

The Haakarimata Tomokanga- We have also gratefully received funding from the ANZ Staff Foundation which will enable us to establish a new trapline near the Rail Trail at the southern end of Haakarimata. This will grow

one of our pest-controlled strongholds in the south, and we'll be looking to build a roster of regular volunteers to keep this line working well. As part of this project, we'll also be tackling some invasive weeds along that trail, and doing some enrichment planting along the trail.

We have also just had great news that Trees That Count will be donating 1500 native trees to our group in the 2026 planting season. Paired with planned contributions from landowners, we expect to be planting up quite a substantial area next winter. It seems a ways off with most of summer ahead, but we're already looking forward to those muddy planting days!

There have been some personal accomplishments to celebrate as well. Our own Greg Townsend was awarded the Regional award by Volunteering Waikato for his work on Haakarimata and amongst our community. Greg is familiar to most of us, as it's via Greg that most of us became involved in this group! Also Trust Advisor John Gumbley and member Cheri Van Schravendijk-Goodman are each authors of chapters in the recently published *Ō Tātou Roto – Hidden Gems of the Waikato—The History, Ecology and Management of the Waikato Lakes*. Ka pai Greg, John, and Cheri – we're lucky to have such dedicated and knowledgeable folks in our midst!

Community, culture, and history - In her first royal address at Koroneihana, Kuini Nga Wai Hono I Te Po urged people to speak reo, care for the environment, and learn history. This was an inspiring message for us as we pick up the torch of environmental restoration and consider what it could mean for our communities and the generations to come.

Te Ao Maaori emphasises interconnectedness in ways that are reflected in recent ecological studies, and holds a deep respect for relationships between people, nature, and the spiritual world. In this worldview, our rivers and our forests hold memories of the past. The Waikato carries the songs of our ancestors and whispers to all who walk beside it—Maaori, paakehaa, and newcomers alike. Spending time by the river reminds us that we are all connected through the life that flows between land, water, and people. King Taawhiao's lament 'Tooku Awa Koiora' expresses both grief and faith that even after hardship, the river and its people remain alive. In our time, this lament becomes a living philosophy of ecology and unity.

In this spirit, planning is underway for a cultural hiikoi at Haakarimata and The Point, to explore our shared history, and future through storytelling, reflection, and connection. Revisiting our past, and rekindling our connection can help us to forge a path forward that is greater than the sum of its parts, providing a deeper and more meaningful experience for us all. Watch this space for announcements on dates for these events, or direct expressions of interest can be made to info@haakarimata.com.



Building Skills for Conservation: Ōwhango Alive Trapping Workshop with Mark Fredericks

Ōwhango Alive trappers recently came together for a hands-on trapping workshop hosted by our Chairman, Mark Fredericks, as part of our ongoing commitment to protecting our local taonga species and strengthening our predator control efforts across the rohe. The workshop offered an opportunity for both new and experienced trappers to refresh their skills, share knowledge, and learn best-practice techniques for trap placement, maintenance, safety, and humane predator control. Mark, led practical demonstrations, assisted by Dean Wilson, who as a retired electrician, was able to guide the trappers through the intricacies of the AT220 trap, while answering questions, and sharing valuable insights from Mark's years of conservation and trapping experience.

Workshops like these are a vital part of ensuring our trapping network remains effective, safe, and consistent. With predators constantly on the move, staying informed and connected as a team is key to protecting whio, kiwi, and other native wildlife that depend on predator-free habitats to survive. Appreciation goes to Mark for hosting the day and to all our dedicated volunteers who gave up their time to attend, learn, and contribute. The strength of Ōwhango Alive lies in its people, and days like this remind us just how powerful community-led conservation can be.

If you are interested in sponsoring a trap, or getting involved with Ōwhango Alive, we would love to hear from you. Owhangoalive@yahoo.com or call 020 458 3973



Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society - Big Plans for Kiwi In Waikato

A 'Waikato Kiwi Wānanga' was held in Cambridge on 6 Dec to discuss future plans for kiwi translocations across the Waikato region. Discussion was led by Save the Kiwi staff and there were reps from Waipa District Council, Te Nehenehenui and Waitomo marae, Waitomo Catchment Trust, Moira & Ric & Ben Haddrell (soon-to-be kiwi custodians), Otorohanga Kiwihouse and Jane, Mike and Dianne from our Society. Below is a summary of the discussion:

- Adult kiwi can fend off feral cats but not dogs or ferrets.

- Kiwi avoidance training for dogs needs to be carried out regularly – perhaps 2yrly- and is promoted especially for working dogs but house pets will be able to be trained also.
- Western brown kiwi require about 10ha as a territorial area but could be up to 20ha. The use of 1080 poison has had an obviously positive effect on chick survival. Kiwi footprints have been seen above the snowline, and on beaches so they have a wide altitudinal range.
- 5% of kiwi born in the wild will survive and of these 70% are killed by stoats.
- Kiwi can lay 2 eggs at a time and have 2 clutches /yr in pest-free environments. The second egg is laid about 14 days after the first and the male kiwi which does all the incubating can fast track the development of the second egg to a point where it is at the same developmental age as the first formed egg. Incubation takes 80-85 days and hatching takes place between July and February. Hence any translocation activity occurs outside this time frame.
- The kiwi bill is very sensitive and the nostril is very close to the tip. For this reason it is recommended that the plates in the DOC 250 traps be set back a bit further inside the trap so that the beak is not damaged by searching kiwi.
- The birds don't usually call until they are sexually mature at about 2 years of age. Bat detector devices can be set to different wavelengths to detect kiwi calls so we could make double use of our devices.

Site readiness for a translocation: habitat suitability and size, past presence of kiwi, predator control, community support and ability to continue maintenance are all part of the process to translocations to be considered. Ferrets posing a big problem. They need to be actively managed, and incursions acted upon within 24 hours as the ferrets will move on to a new site in short time frames. Save the Kiwi can provide a lot of support.

The organisation employs 20 parttime staff and has a rapid response team. DOC require that any translocation is managed using radio transmitters in the first year but there is no requirement for further follow-up after this although monitoring for survival and breeding over the next 4 years is recommended, using recorders. Monitoring is a good form of publicity as school groups, and the general public can carry it out with no disturbance to the birds. Permit applications for translocations can take up to 2 years.

Moir & Ric Haddrell of Mangatiti will be receiving kiwi in April next year after several years of preparing their farm with intensive predator control. What began as a 470ha sheep and beef farm has now been converted to 400ha of planted manuka which continues their former business of beekeeping. The property is located 10-12km from Waitomo Caves and is bordered on the north and west by DoC conservation land, and on the south side by NZ Carbon Farming. Together the area makes up 2000ha which makes a good territorial size for a kiwi translocation. This is only about 20 kms from Pirongia.



North Island Brown Kiwi

Central Waikato Predator Free Hub - Robert Atkinson's Story: Sarnia Wetland

If you were at Waikato Festival last month, you would have seen the video showcasing Sarnia Wetland, as well as Maryann Eason and Steve Howse talking about their projects.

This 10-year backyard project in Cambridge truly is a hidden gem. It was inspired by taking marginal farmland and reverting it back to native habitat—creating an island of habitat in conjunction with other native areas in the district. Together, these areas contribute to a corridor between larger native bush and wetland areas, for example Pirongia and Maungatautari, or Te Miro and Pukekura.

All up, this project covers 8 hectares of replanted wetland and regenerating forest. To date, 46 bird species have been recorded here. Their favourite native species to arrive has been the tomtit, but they've also had visits from kākā, kārearea, and even two royal spoonbills early on in the wetland development.

The total number of trees planted now surpasses 100,000, with nearly 70 different species, plus over a dozen fern species that have self-established on their own. The project now stretches along approximately 2km of boardwalk track, and Robert also built a viewing tower as one of his lockdown projects.

Robert's advice on restoring a bare paddock back to a wetland

1. Identify whether the area floods and holds water in winter, and determine the level of the water table.
2. Scrape away shallow ponding areas where water sits approximately 0.3–0.5 m deep.
3. Eradicate all unwanted woody weeds at least one season before planting. It's better to delay planting for a year if woody weeds are still appearing.
4. Identify the location of a walkway, even if it's just an unplanted strip. If it goes through wet areas, consider a boardwalk to keep feet dry and avoid damaging plant roots. Walkways also provide recreational access and assist with weed and pest control and monitoring.
5. Identify different zones and choose the right plants for each habitat (wet, dry, seasonal). Decide whether you will include areas of open water or ephemeral/seasonal wet areas that dry out in summer.
6. Calculate the required number of plants 6–8 months in advance to secure the species and quality you want. Aim for at least 15 different species for each zone (wet, dry, seasonal) to help create biodiversity and resilience. Some species can be planted across multiple habitats. Using pioneer species in drier areas should include a good mix of flowering and fruiting plants to encourage birds and insects.
7. Prior to planting, decide whether to blanket spray the whole area or spot spray planting locations only. This helps with digging and establishment. Staking trees and shrubs can help keep plants above weeds in the first few years and make them easier to find for weed release. While this adds cost, it reduces plant loss. Tree guards are another option, particularly if rabbits or hares are present.



Kids Greening Taupō - How we got Involved in Freshwater Biosecurity

The move into freshwater biosecurity education came from an experience that our lead coordinator, Rachel, had at the start of the year. She was a parent helper at her children's school camp, where 62 local children swam for two days at Lake Karapiro, and then came back to Taupō on Friday afternoon before a large kids triathlon in the weekend. This led to a realisation that there needed to be education for local students about invasive clams, and as the local environmental educators, we thought that we had better step up.

We consulted with Biosecurity New Zealand, Waikato Regional Council, and Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board to become part of the Check Clean Dry network and help to spread the messaging about invasive clams. With their support we created a presentation and free online teacher/student resources about invasive clams and how to prevent their spread to Taupō. We made it a goal to visit every school in the Taupō/Tūrangi area before the end of the year. We are excited to have achieved our goal of getting the message to every school in the district, getting even further than planned- to schools in Reporoa, Kuratau, and Mangakino. Waikato Regional Council have used our resources to run sessions, and when clams were found in Taranaki we shared our resources with the council and environmental educators there too. Educators from Otago Regional Council also contacted us and we shared our resources with them too.

