

Year 6 Report

Mid North

JULY 2024

High Value Area



6

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Cover: One of the 20 pāteke released at The Landing, Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula in March 2024. This event saw the release of the 3000th pāteke released by the Pāteke Recovery Group.

Executive Summary

Mid North - Bay of Islands

This is the sixth-year report for the NRC Mid North High Value Area (HVA) covering key activities and achievements from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024.

The vision of the Mid North HVA is to connect pest control groups across the Mid North area to create a large-scale pest control network in Northland.

To achieve this the Steering Group has identified eight main goals (page 5) to support existing groups and communities, identify gaps in the landscape and coordinate activities for animal and plant pest control.

These goals have been addressed in a practical way through five key objectives (pages 9 & 10) which focus community action on trapping pests, expanding work into identified gaps, coordinating effective toxin use to support the trapping effort, protecting existing kiwi populations while creating wildlife corridors and tackling pest plants within the area.

Collation of trap data for the 2023 year shows a total of 58,794 pests were removed from the Mid North area of over 40,000 hectares of pest control area.

Bernie Buhler from NRC Partnerships team helps to GPS a trap on the Opuia Cycleway. Teamwork between community groups, Kiwi Coast and NRC underpins the success of the HVA.



Background of the HVA

The Mid-North High Value Area (MNHVA) partnership with the Northland Regional Council (NRC) began in October 2018, building on a history of pest control and conservation projects in the area. These efforts date back to the late 1990s with the establishment of Waimate North Landcare Trust, one of the oldest landcare trusts in Aotearoa and the NZ Kiwi Foundation. In 2015, Kiwi Coast helped bring together various landcare groups across the Mid North in what was then known as the Mid North Alliance. This successful alliance paved the way for the establishment of the MNHVA partnership with the NRC, now in its sixth year of operation.

The MNHVA is a collaborative network of hapū and community-led conservation projects that work together to restore biodiversity over an area of more than 40,000ha. The area extends from the north of the Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula, south to Kawakawa, and west towards the upper Hokianga Harbour. The primary goal of the HVA is to connect landcare groups and projects to create a landscape scale pest control area.

The vision of the Mid North High Value is to:

‘Link the biodiversity strongholds of Puketi Forest with the Bay of Islands, to provide a safe habitat where native wildlife can survive and thrive in the Mid North.’

The MNHVA is run by a Steering Group which meets biannually and provides an important platform of support to both well established landcare groups, and new community conservation initiatives, from small scale backyard trapping to groups of neighbours carrying out large scale pest control.

The goal is to see the creation of New Zealand’s first kiwi corridor as identified by the Kiwi Coast project. MNHVA feeds into the strategic goals of Kiwi Coast and is part of the ‘second focus area’ identified in the Kiwi Coast Strategic Plan (2017). Kiwi Coast supports the MNHVA by running trapper training days, community engagement events, facilitating access to traps, follow up training and trapping mentoring, and advice around the safe use of toxins, and how to trap safely in kiwi areas.

This report summarises the results and achievements from across the HVA during the sixth year of operation from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Goals

To achieve its vision the MNHVA will:

- Work together as communities and kaitiaki to restore the native flora and fauna between Purerua and Puketi, Opuā and Kawakawa and west to Kaikohe.
- Fill the remaining gaps to create a predator trapping network that will significantly reduce predators and assist native biodiversity to thrive.
- Coordinate animal and plant pest operations for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
- Protect the scattered high density kiwi populations and ensure their genetic viability by enabling safe dispersal.
- Carry out monitoring to inform decision making and track progress towards goals.
- Secure funds and resources to ensure all existing community-led conservation projects in the area continue to operate successfully.
- Motivate and empower further landowners to actively participate in environmental stewardship/kaitiakitanga by holding joint community events and skill building workshops.
- Link in and coordinate with the Kiwi Coast and enable the creation of New Zealand's first kiwi corridor.



Grace Cadogan checks an AT220. These traps have helped to fill gaps in trap networks.

Groups and Projects

Aroha Island
Bay Bush Action Trust
Blake Vujcich Pest Control
Blue Gum Lane/Manako Place, Kerikeri
Bulls Rd Mt Pokaka
Candy Farm, Okaihau
Cavalli View Trappers
Cottle Hill Landcare
Craigmore Horticulture Kerikeri
Friends of Rangitane Stream
Friends of Wairoa Stream
Hawkhill Farm
Hupara Landcare Group
JH Dowell Trust (Day Point)
Jonathan Rae Trust (Takou)
Kaleb Stevens Pest Control
Kauri Cliffs
Kerikeri - Puketotara Catchment CPCA
Kerikeri Cubs
Kerikeri Kindergarten
Kerikeri Peninsula Conservation Charitable Trust
Kerikeri Plant & Food Research
Kerikeri River West
Lake Omapere Duck Hunters
Mangaparerua Stream
Manulife - Rakatau
Mataraua Lake Trappers
Matauri Trust
Moturoa Island Private Wildlife Sanctuary
Native Forest Restoration Trust NFRT
- Puketi Mokau
Ngā Ringa Tawhiri o Te Puna Aroha
Ngawha Top Energy Site 1 & 2
NZ Carbon Farms - Kaeo
Okaihau Eco Warriors
Okaihau Farmers & Trappers
Onekura Rd Trappers &
Puketotara DOC Reserve
Opara Kiwi Protection, South Hokianga
Opuā Bike Trail
Orcada Ltd
Oromahoe Trust
Pamu Kapiro Avocado
Pamu Kapiro Station
Pamu Takou Dairy Unit
Pamu-Puketotara Lower Block
Pamu-Puketotara Top Block
Pathways Drive, Kerikeri
Puketi Forest Trust
Puketi HQ Trapping Loops
Pukewhau Bulls Gorge Kerikeri
Pungaere Road Corridor Trappers
Purerua Pest Control Area – **Pest Free Purerua**
Retreat Rd Trappers
Riverstream Drive
Signal Road Trappers, Okaihau
Siteworx Kapiro
South Kerikeri Inlet Landcare
STAMP Kerikeri – **Moth Plant Project**
Summit Mokau

Summit Upokorau
Taronui Pest Control Area – Pest Free Purerua
The Shade House Volunteers Kerikeri
Upper Pungaere Trappers
Utakura Valley Pest Control
Waiare Rd Landcare Group
Waimate North Landcare Trust
Waipapa West & Kapiro Trappers
Wairoa Reserve, Kerikeri
Waitangi Iwi Kiwi & Endowment Forest
Waitangi Treaty Grounds
Whiritoa Stream Trappers

Health & Safety

Kiwi Coast has maintained Sitewise Gold status and worked with contractors to work to an accredited health & safety system.



Waimate North Landcare trialling AT220 traps from the MNHVA trap library. Kiwi Coast provides training around installation and servicing of AT220 traps. Photo: Robin Allpress



Tracking our Achievements

MNHVA progressed all five key objectives in Year 6.

Objective 1. Enable the groups to continue their existing work

Enabling groups to continue their existing work includes providing resources to groups as requested and running workshops and training sessions as needed.

Strong communication with groups across the MNHVA helps identify needs within the wide range of community and hapū led groups. The MNHVA is then able to support groups with a tailored approach by providing traps, lure, toxins, bait stations, herbicide, monitoring tools and safety equipment as requested. Resources are kept in storage and are quickly deployed to groups which request them.

From time-to-time community groups request workshops to help upskill, refresh or train new trappers. These workshops are led by Kiwi Coast, with support from local groups, and enable the groups to continue carrying out their existing work by ensuring adequate training.

Professional predator trappers under contract to NRC are also provided with the budgetary resources necessary to service traps for strategic projects that complement the work of the community groups and landowners.

Objective 2. Fill the gaps to complete a continuous predator control trapping network

The MNHVA trap network continued to expand across the sixth year of operation. Particular focus has been placed on identifying the gaps within the project, and capitalising on interest from the community in areas where gaps exist.

In year six of the HVA Kiwi Coast ran TrapNZ training workshops to help groups map their trap locations and project areas using GPS data. This information helps projects keep track of pest control results, as well as give a greater understanding of the scale of pest control across the HVA. The TrapNZ data is able to be mapped which helps to identify gaps across the network.

The year-on-year increase in groups involved in the MNHVA reflects the increase in community involvement and the map data year on year shows greater connectivity between project boundaries. These two measures show sustained progress towards a continuous predator control trapping network.

Objective 3. Coordinate toxin use for effectiveness

Greater education and training around safe, effective toxin use meant that more community groups were confident in running toxin operations in the past year. Bait stations, toxins and training were supplied to groups as requested, to help expand and maintain bait station networks. Bait stations and biobags were used with cyanide and pindone to help control possums and rats.

Objective 4.
Protect existing kiwi populations and link them together

In year six, groups across the MNHVA continued to protect existing kiwi populations and build kiwi numbers. This work involves predator control to help protect the existing population, as well as increased community awareness about kiwi populations and how to protect them as the kiwi population expands and they begin to move into new territory.

Whilst a lot of progress towards breeding success and protecting the survival of existing kiwi has been achieved, the focus is now shifting towards how to protect them as the kiwi population grows and they begin to move. Community engagement events are helpful in raising awareness around where kiwi populations are found. Greater awareness of where kiwi are, coupled with education around best practice for safe trapping in a kiwi area, as well as engaging with dog owners about the need for good dog control helps to keep kiwi safe.

The translocation of kiwi from Moturoa Island to Opua State Forest in May 2023, also helped in this objective. Kiwi Coast was able to help facilitate 21 kiwi coming back to the mainland after 40 years of successful kiwi protection by Moturoa residents. This project clearly shows what can be achieved when community groups, agencies and hapū cooperate for the benefit of our kiwi and native species. We are stronger when we work together.

Objective 5:
Plant pest control

Weed control materials such as herbicides, gloves and secateurs have been provided as requested to MNHVA groups to enable them to carry out plant pest control work. This year a new group dedicated to eradicating moth plant has been established in Kerikeri, and materials and advice have been provided to help them safely remove and dispose of the moth plant pods. Other weeds which have been targeted this year include *Elaeagnus*, wild ginger, climbing asparagus, woolly nightshade and Taiwan cherry.

Animal Pests

As in previous years, MNHVA projects recorded their trap catch data and submitted their results to Kiwi Coast as part of the annual data collection. This data shows that in the year 2023, a total of 58,794 pests were removed from across the MNHVA.

Animal species controlled through the MNHVA project area include:

- Possums
- Rodents
- Mustelids
- Feral cats
- Feral pigs
- Feral goats
- Magpies
- Myna
- Hedgehogs

In addition to these trap catch results, many of our community projects reported that they used toxins, which means that the number of pests removed from the Mid North will be much higher.

Due to the wide range of community groups within the HVA, some more newly established groups may be recording higher number of pests per hectare removed in a short amount of time, while other larger more established projects such as the Purerua-Mataroa peninsula may be reporting very low numbers of pests, despite many hours of pest control efforts. The increase in catch data year on year reflects the increase in community interest and involvement, alongside the expanding network of groups and traps across the Mid North.



Group spotlight – Waitangi Iwi Kiwi

A highlight this year was to celebrate with Waitangi Iwi Kiwi as they achieved 10 years of pest control in their rohe around Waitangi, including the Waitangi Forest. In November 2023 the group looked out over the Waitangi Forest towards the Bay of Islands, as they reflected on the results achieved to date, challenges overcome and future plans ahead. The group has consistently removed hundreds of animal pests each year, contributing to the now 58,000+ pests removed annually from the wider Mid North area. The members have high hopes for the future, but pointed out the strong need to keep up the momentum or quickly go backwards.

One member expressed that it was the beautiful hearts of people who want to make things better, that made the difference: “Like the woven strains of a kete, we collaborate with neighbouring groups to make us stronger in the battle against invasive pests.”

Despite a decade passing, key members of the project are still just as active and passionate about the project ten years on, which speaks volumes of the team’s personal commitment to the importance of reducing animal pests so taonga species such as kiwi can thrive.

The group is often described as one big whanau working together and collectively formed the Te Puke Ki Waitangi Taonga Kaitiaki Trust to help the project succeed. Dedicated committee members – most of whom have been with the project from the very beginning – have made all the difference. This includes Ngāti Kawa Taituha (Ngāti Kawa – Chair), Bev Sharpe (Secretary), Richard Takimoana (Waitangi National Trust), Albie Apiata (Ngāti Kawa), Claire Ganantchian, Tiffany Holland and Matt Sharpe. Ongoing support has been provided by Andrew Mentor (Kiwi Coast), Neal Geerkins (Northland Forest Managers) with funding over the years from Northland Regional Council and Save the Kiwi Trust.

Waitangi Iwi Kiwi celebrating 10 years of pest control. Photo: Philippa Mentor, November 2023.



Table 1: Detailed Pest Results by Group - Jan - Dec 2023

Group or Project	Possums	Rats	Ferrets	Stoats	Weasels	Feral Cats	Wild Rabbits & Hares	Feral Pigs	Magpie	Myna	Hedgehog	Mice	Other	Totals
Bay Bush Action	11,514	1,431	0	24	0	21	0	6	0	0	35	279	0	13,310
Blake Vujcich Pest Control	11,000	10	0	0	0	35	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,145
Blue Gum Lane/Manako Place, Kerikeri	32	140	0	3	0	0	14	0	1	0	3	74	50	317
Bulls Rd Pokaka	34	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	43	0	158
Candy's Farm	22	41	0	0	1	3	15	0	0	0	8	11	0	101
Craigmore Horticulture Kerikeri	46	259	0	3	7	4	0	0	0	0	8	35	5	367
Friends of Rangitane Stream	24	131	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	38	0	194
Friends of Wairoa Stream	14	203	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	79	1	299
Hawkhill	92	132	0	1	1	0	0	29	0	0	11	4	3	273
Hupara Landcare Group	846	380	0	2	10	30	111	21	0	1	27	17	2	1,447
JH Dowell Trust (Dat Point)	28	19	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	71
Jonathon Rae Trust (Takou)	153	39	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24	1	227
Kaleb Stevens Pest Control	2400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,400
Kauri Cliffs	884	398	0	12	27	33	74	12	70	42	192	34	0	1,778
Kerikeri - Puketotara Catchment CPCA	393	821	0	11	15	39	135	0	52	4	48	437	4	1,959
Kerikeri Cubs	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Kerikeri Peninsula Conservation Charitable Trust	274	2,239	0	25	29	23	391	0	4	133	67	1,437	0	4,622
Kerikeri Plant & Food Research	29	9	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	45

Kerikeri River West	0	64	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	79
Lake Omapere Duck Hunters	142	0	0	6	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	156
Mangaparerua Stream	472	373	0	4	0	7	230	11	0	5	11	133	7	1,253
Manulife - Rakatau	2	9	0	0	4	0	31	0	0	0	4	0	0	50
Mataraua Lake Trappers	4	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	30	0	44
Matauri Trust	271	238	0	29	15	1	5	0	36	1	79	73		748
Moturoa Island	0	83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	83
Native Forest Restoration Trust - Puketi Mokau	222	90	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	319
Ngā Ringa Tawhiri o Te Puna Aroha	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	15
NZ Carbon Farms - Kaeo	269	416	0	13	13	1	0	0	0	0	7	12	2	733
Okaihau Eco Warriors	33	25	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	1	5		72
Okaihau Farmers & Trappers	220	29	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	259
Onekura Rd-Puketotara Trappers	89	232	0	2	0	5	6	0	0	67	12	86	1	500
Opuā Bike Trail	5	111	0	19	4	1	0	0	0	1	6	5	0	152
Orcada Ltd	19	24	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	54
Oromahoe Trust	607	26	0	3	2	16	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	664
Pamu Kapiro Sheep&Beef	1,426	627	0	2	86	27	45	0	0	0	10	0	426	2,649
Pamu Kapiro Avocado	9	2	0	0	1	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Pamu Takou Dairy Unit	10	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		14
Pamu-Puketotara Lower Block	190	121	0	2	15	4	28	10	0	0	9	0	30	409
Pamu-Puketotara Top Block	31	52	0	0	9	0	17	16	0	0	12	0	17	154
Puketi HQ Trapping Loops	258	244	0	0	0	8	5	0	0	2	7	161	0	685

Pukewhau Bulls Gorge Kerikeri	361	398	0	6	9	2	1	0	0	0	8	66	0	851
Pungaere Rd Corridor Trappers	58	101	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	5	1	0	171
Purerua Pest Control Area	41	607	0	13	60	24	0	0	1	0	76	57	240	1,119
Retreat Rd Trappers	22	240	0	10	0	3	19	0	0	0	5	179	27	505
Riverstream Drive	12	21	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
Signal Rd Trappers, Okaihau	234	313	0	2	6	6	5	0	0	0	44	5	2	617
Siteworx Kapiro	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
South Kerikeri Inlet Landcare	207	418	0	8	7	4	18	0	0	3	16	167	0	848
Summit Mokau	379	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	379
Summit Upokorau	124	159	0	9	34	4	1	26	0	0	25	0	1	383
Taronui Pest Control Area	191	125	0	0	13	9	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	342
The Shade House Volunteers Kerikeri	8	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	21
Top Energy Ngawha	6	94	0	43	48	5	5	17	2	5	18	0	0	253
Upper Pungaere Trappers	203	154	0	2	0	6	2	0	0	0	6	3	0	376
Utakura Trappers	73	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	77
Waiare Road Landcare	408	325	0	2	1	8	18	31	4	0	6	81	0	884
Waimate North Landcare Trust	1,660	803	0	15	17	41	29	0	0	0	214	29	2	2,810
Waipapa West & Kapiro Trappers	69	164	0	0	2	3	29	0	2	4	1	79	0	353
Waitangi Iwi Kiwi & Endowment Forest	69	168	0	20	36	9	5	0	0	0	42	1	2	352
Waitangi Treaty Grounds	76	464	0	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	551
Whiritoa Stream Trappers	17	20	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38
Totals	36,288	13,700	0	319	498	414	1,363	179	172	270	1,048	3,717	826	58,794

Plant Pests

This year further support went to community groups who wanted to target problem plants inside the HVA.

These pest plants include:

- Woolly nightshade
- Elaeagnus
- Climbing asparagus
- Taiwan cherry
- Wild ginger
- Moth plant



The STAMP team tackling Moth Plant on Taranaki Island, Kerikeri, May 2024. Photo: Anna Hewlett

Woolly Nightshade (Tobacco Weed) control, Taranaki Island, May 2024. Photo: Anna Hewlett



Pest Free Purerua- Mataroa Peninsula

The Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula in the Bay of Islands sits inside the MNHVA area and is home to the "Pest Free Purerua" project, now in its fifth year of operation. The project covers an area of over 7,600ha and is home to around 25% of Northland's kiwi population. The project is unique inside the MNHVA in that it is funded by Jobs for Nature via Save the Kiwi. The project also receives significant support from Ngāti Torehina, Ngāti Rēhia, private landowners, Pamu Landcorp, Plant & Food Research, Summit Forests, Bay of Islands International Academy, Department of Conservation, Save the Kiwi Trust, and Northland Regional Council. The project has achieved very significant results, which is a testament to the team work, and support from a range of stakeholders.

The Purerua-Mataroa peninsula has a history of pest control dating back decades, however the establishment of the Predator Free (PF2050) project in 2020 provided a significant boost to pest control efforts, and helped the area move from the goal of suppressing pests to elimination of pests. The peninsula is supported by a buffer zone at Taronui near the start of the peninsula and a larger protection zone provided by the MNHVA.

In 2023, 1411 pests were trapped on the peninsula through a variety of methods (Table 2). The main traps used include DOC 200s for stoats, SA2s for possums, and T-Rex and SnapE traps for rats.

Following the 2023 pāteke (brown teal) release, in which the pāteke suffered from feral cat predation, particular resources and focus was put towards feral cat control in 2023/24. This involved intense monitoring with cameras, servicing of traps, and hundreds of hours spent in the field at night hunting using thermal scopes.

After months of intense efforts, a second pāteke release took place at The Landing in March 2024. This included the 3000th pāteke released by the Pāteke Recovery Group. Post-release monitoring has tracked the pāteke dispersal from the original release site, and others have been observed showing signs of nesting.

Table 2: Purerua and Taronui Trap Catch Results for the Pest Free Purerua-Mataroa Project, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Purerua & Taronui	2021	2022	2023
Possums	315	290	231
Rats	666	617	727
Stoats	24	15	13
Weasels	42	34	73
Feral Cats	45	28	33
Hedgehogs	219	203	80
Mice	12	33	57
Goats	-	200	197
Other	-	14	-
Total	1,323	1,434	1,411

Next page: Pāteke being released at The Landing, 2024.



Education and Engagement

In 2023 Kiwi Coast ran two wāhine trapping workshops in and around the MNHVA. These workshops attracted a range of interested wāhine, some who were new to trapping, and some who were already trapping but needed guidance. These workshops focused on education around the different types of pests and how to identify them, including how to differentiate between weasels and stoats, and what types of traps are available. A range of traps were on display at the workshops, and all participants had the chance to practise setting and unsetting the traps safely.

These workshops were well attended and gave wāhine the chance to ask questions in a safe environment, get feedback on their trapping, and to network with other like-minded wāhine. One wāhine mentioned to Kiwi Coast that she found the workshop empowering and that she felt better prepared to undertake trapping on her property.

Kiwi Coast was also active in communities in and around the MNHVA at shows, community events and schools in 2023 and 2024. The Bay of Islands P & I show in November was well attended and provided a great chance to engage with the community. Over 1,000 people passed through the Kiwi Coast stand. This event helped the MNHVA connect with landowners who are carrying out pest control in kiwi areas, and needed advice about how to set traps safely around kiwi. Others were interested in the wide range of traps on display, in particular the AT220. Many visitors practised setting SA traps, whilst others took part in the rat box building workshop. These events help to build connections, trust and confidence in the trapping community and help build awareness about predator control in the MNHVA.



Lesley Baigent explains different methods for trapping possums at a women's trapping workshop in Puketotara, November 2023.



Mandy Harris demonstrates how to set a Timms trap off the ground at a women's trapping day in Mangamuka, August 2023.



Bay of Islands Academy prize giving for Rat Squad students, December 2023.



Bay of Islands International Academy students at the prize giving for Rat Squad students.

Kiwi Rehabilitation Facility

In 2023, Kiwi Coast and Puketōtara Landcare worked together to construct a purpose built Kiwi Rehabilitation Centre in the Bay of Islands. With a permitted maximum of 14 kiwi, the rehabilitation of kiwi from Far North and Mid North aims to reduce stress on birds from travel or delay in treatment.

The facility, Te Korowai Atawhai o Puketōtara (The Caring Cloak of Puketōtara), was officially opened with a blessing from local hapū Te Whiu as kukupa, piwakawaka and miromiro flew overhead and visitors gathered to celebrate the occasion.

So far we have looked after Splash who fell into a swimming pool and survived, and Swampy and Sassy who have both recovered from emaciation and been released into Opua Forest.



Left: Kiwi Coast Crew preparing the Kiwi Rehab Centre for opening. Photo: Dean Wright

Below: Kiwi Rehabilitation Centre blessing and opening with Kiwi Coast, Te Whiu and Puketōtara Landcare, February 2024. Photo: Philippa Mentor



Moturoa Kiwi Translocation

A true collaboration between Save the Kiwi, Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council, Ngāti Torehina, Ngāti Rāhiri, Ngāti Kawa, Bay Bush Action, Moturoa Island Residents and Kiwi Coast was successful in bringing together a kiwi health survey (February 2024), followed by a translocation of 21 kiwi from Moturoa to Opua Forest in May 2024. This shows the benefit of cooperation and shared resources to accomplish this kaupapa.

21 Kiwi from Moturoa Island ready for transfer to the mainland and release into Opua Forest. This translocation was a huge milestone and was made possible by a great team effort. May 2024.



Traps and Equipment

Traps and bait stations were kept in stock in 2023/2024 which allowed the quick deployment to groups who requested resources. A new addition to the MNHVA this year has been the AT220 trap library. The high cost of these traps can be a barrier for some landowners, however they can deliver excellent results in areas where there are high possum numbers and can help with an initial pest knock-down. With the concept of a library system, landowners can borrow the trap for a few months at a time, and return it for servicing and loaning to a new area. This helps keep the traps fresh and active and maximise their use. Some landowners have also commented that after trialling an AT220, they are happy to purchase their own, after seeing the results.



Kiwi Coast making rat trap boxes with visitors at the Bay of Islands show, November 2023.

Total traps deployed in Year 6

DOC 200 doubles boxes	129
DOC 200 singles boxes	16
DOC 250 boxes	17
Doc 200 traps	308
Doc 250traps	17
AT220 Auto traps (<i>Trap Library</i>)	27
Rat traps (Victors, Snapp E, T-Rex)	470
Rat trap boxes	364
Live Capture Cat/Possum traps	10
Flipping Timms	15
Standard Timms	8
SA2 Cat/Possum	411
SA 3 possum	56
SA 5 possum	2
Trapinator possum traps	13
Philproof bait station	53
Romark bait station	55
Enviromate bait station	55
Pied Piper bait station	6
Bio Bags x 1000	4.2
Blue Smooth 1kg	17
Blue smooth 10kg	12
Kiwi Nest boxes	8
Ramps	85
Myna bird traps (<i>Trap Library</i>)	2
Pig Traps (<i>Trap Library</i>)	5

Species Monitoring

Kiwi

Many of our larger and more established community groups participate in the annual Kiwi Call Count Survey, either with human listening, or with the Kiwi Listening Device (KLD). Before the survey begins, training and support is provided to groups to help ensure correct identification of female/male calls, and support using the kiwi listening app. Kiwi call results for the sixth year are collated and submitted to the Northland Brown Kiwi Call Count Monitoring Report, prepared by DOC.

Pāteke

Each year Kiwi Coast works with community groups and specialist staff at DOC and NorthTec to assist with the Annual Northland Pāteke Flock Counts and to investigate new pāteke sites.

For the second year, 20 pāteke were released on the Purerua-Mataroa peninsula. Initial monitoring shows that the birds have dispersed and have begun signs of pairing and nesting.

Bittern

In year six, Kiwi Coast carried out bittern monitoring at sites across the HVA. In addition to confirmed sightings across the Purerua-Mataroa peninsula, and at wetlands near Kawakawa, bittern were confirmed in Utakura Valley in the upper reaches of the Hokianga Harbour.



Grace Cadogan releasing a pāteke at The Landing, March 2024.



Stephen Kearney installing an acoustic device in a wetland to monitor for bittern presence/absence, October 2023.



Bittern at Mill Road Kawakawa. Photo: Steve Wright

Spoonbill

This year we were able to assist Forest & Bird, Northland Branch with their Royal Spoonbill count through our group contacts. Derek Tearne and David & Diana Mules were able to venture along the Hokianga Harbour and count Spoonbill feeding or roosting on the appointed day.

The Far North is very important in having such high numbers of spoonbill over winter.

Our total was 1292. The highest numbers are in Awanui Harbour, Houhora and Parengarenga but we had counts in Taipa, Mangonui, Whangaroa, Kerikeri and Waitangi and also in the Hokianga.

Rare East Asian-Australasian Flyway Visitors

Whimbrel and Red Knot

Two rare international visitors caught the eye of Pest Free Purerua.

Thanks to keen bird experts and ornithologists from Birds.NZ, they were quickly identified as international migratory species that are becoming increasingly rare – a whimbrel and a pair of red knot or huahou.

Whimbrel are large shorebirds which migrate to New Zealand from Arctic breeding grounds in small numbers. It is estimated that just 70 whimbrel touch down in New Zealand each year and worldwide their numbers are thought to be declining.

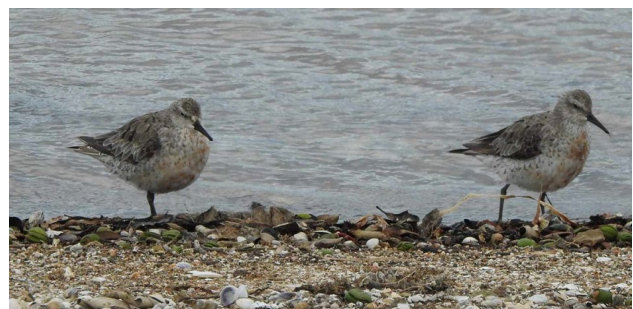
Red Knot migrate from the Arctic (Russia and Siberia) each summer and travel down to Australia and New Zealand. In the 1990s it wasn't uncommon for 60,000 red knots to arrive in New Zealand around September, but that number has dropped dramatically.



Spoonbill in the Hokianga Harbour. Photo: Diana Mules



A Whimbrel visiting the Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula. Photo: Mike Cadogan



Red knot / Huahou on the Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula. Photo: Mike Cadogan

Their biggest threat is predation and loss of habitat, especially loss of roosting sites in China due to intensive land reclamation. It is a true privilege to have these rare birds visit the peninsula. Thanks to dedicated pest control work with Ngāti Torehina, local communities, businesses and farmers, pest numbers have plummeted making the peninsula an attractive and safe landing-pad for these international migratory birds. Clearing out the pests to make way for the return of such species is what it's all about!

Mid North Steering Group

The Mid North Steering Group meets twice yearly and provides a platform of support for the many community groups present in the HVA. The in-person meetings allow the chance for groups to brainstorm, plan, problem-solve and share ideas around any issues they may have, as well as provide support and suggestions around health and safety, funding, contractors, toxin use, community engagement, using TrapNZ, and keeping motivation strong within groups.

The MNHVA Steering Group would like to thank the Northland Regional Council, Save the Kiwi and Kiwi Coast for the ongoing support. This support enables the hundreds of volunteers, iwi, hapū, businesses, farmers, and corporations to carry out the fantastic work that they do. We particularly appreciate the support of Ngāti Torehina, Ngāti Rēhia and Ngāti Kawa for their guidance and leadership with pest control initiatives and kiwi translocations on Purerua-Mataroa, Taronui and the wide rohe of Pēwhairangi.

Acknowledgements:



Summary

The progress towards our five objectives of the MNHVA has once again shown the strength and dedication of the Mid North community towards protecting te taiao. Whilst the HVA provides a platform of support, it is the community that has shown resolve and commitment towards working to increase biodiversity, protect our taonga species, reduce weeds, talk to neighbours, and check and reset traps week in, week out.

As projects grow, as new projects begin and as older projects come up against hurdles, the support from the MNHVA ensures that these groups receive tailored support to help them continue their work. For some groups, this may be access to traps, for others it may involve health and safety guidance. We continue to work strongly with the community, trial new techniques, and connect with kaitiaki who lead the HVA towards success.

We acknowledge that strong working relationships with Northland Regional Council and Department of Conservation staff, Save the Kiwi, companies, schools, hapū and iwi, landcare groups, volunteers and contractors are the way to collectively care for the environment, flora and fauna within it.



Kiwi Coast team shares a moment with one of the pāteke released at The Landing in March 2024.



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