



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Kia ora

As our kiwi and other taonga species begin nesting for the season it's time to get those predator traps working super well. Catching that stoat or weasel now before they breed could make the difference. Take a look at our website if you want to refresh your knowledge of getting the best value out of your trapping time and maybe invest in an auto trap. Bring on the warm weather of Spring and let's get stuck into another great year of helping kiwi to survive and thrive in the Brynderwyns.

You may have seen the maps of confirmed kiwi presence in newspaper stories and on social media. How exciting to see how far they are now spreading. Look out residents in Langs, Waipu and Kaiwaka- kiwi are coming your way. Are you ready? Find out how to look after kiwi in our backyard on our website.

In this jam packed newsletter, we give a big shout out to the achievements of many people working so hard on predator trapping, pest plant control and healthy waterways in our community. Here are some of the biggies:

- 37 groups now involved in trapping, up from 26 last year, growing our effective frontline against mustelids, possum and rats
- Over 4,500 animal and bird pests were removed through trapping, that's nearly 90 pests a week!
- Another 6,000 hectares of active stewardship land were added, taking the total to 10,000ha.

- Nearly 250 mustelid traps were added to the network bringing the total across the HVA to over 2,000, that's 1 mustelid trap every 12 hectares, not far from the gold standard of 1/10
- 8 schools have participated in our conservation programmes which include 4 kete of resources for teachers
- 5 more skill building workshops were held, including the first one for women getting into predator control
- 10 Mojo dinners for volunteers held at the Mangawhai Club with guest speakers were a resounding success, with numbers growing each month
- Monitoring results show that the number of kiwi, tui, bellbird, tomtit, piwakawaka and other taonga species are increasing year on year especially where intensive predator and dog control is in place
- Growing 7,000 native plants in our community nursery that have gone out to riparian planting and wetlands in Bream Bay to benefit water quality and habitat

We also give a quick glimpse into our priorities for the coming year which include:

- Tackling pesky and highly invasive moth plant, Taiwan Cherry and Climbing Asparagus
- Supporting community weed action groups and SWAT teams to gain momentum
- Close the gaps in predator control around known kiwi habitat to further grow kiwi numbers and provide sanctuary for future translocation of more kiwi
- Encourage more ecological corridors, riparian buffers, wetlands and revegetation to reduce erosion, sediment and lift biodiversity

Thanks to everyone out there making a difference. If you or a friend would like to be more involved in our conservation work, we'd love to have you join the crew and operations team.

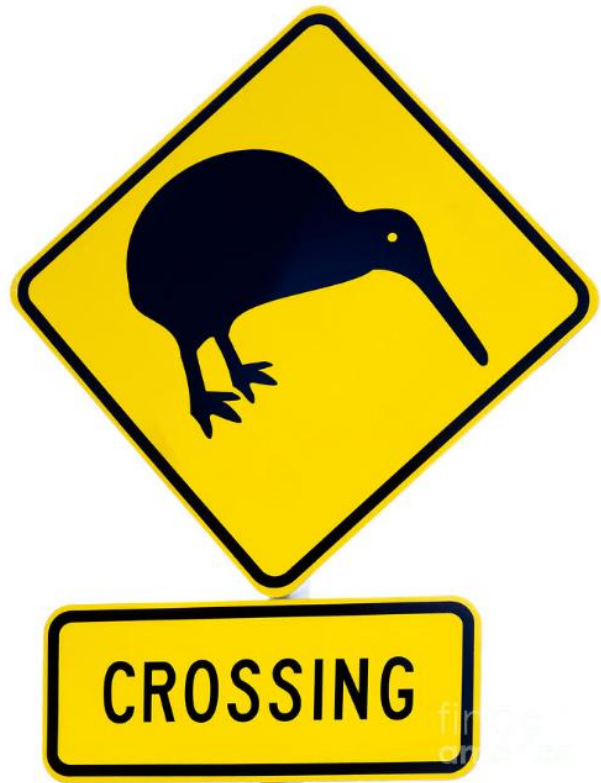
We can find an enjoyable role for you.

Kia pai to ra

Ann & Peter and the PCT operations team

COVE ROAD

In early winter three kiwi were seen walking at night on Cove Road. 2 close to the Robert Hastie sign and another on Cove Road towards The Sanctuary and Bream Tail Farm entrances. Kiwi have been seen on Cove Road at night before, but this is a rarity. It does however reflect the increased numbers and spreading out of kiwi in the area as a result of the intense predator control across the ranges to remove mustelids, rats, feral cats and possums to numbers where birds such as kiwi can have successful breeding periods with eggs and chicks spared from predation.



It is the time of year when trappers in kiwi areas are upping the ante on their work, to protect as many wild-bred chicks as possible. 95% of kiwi chicks that hatch in areas that aren't under active predator control will die before they reach breeding age so now is the time to get rid of as many stoats and ferrets as possible.

KIWI SPREADING IN THE BRYNDERWYNS

In the coming weeks we will be releasing an updated annual kiwi survey report which by using maps will show the spread of kiwi in the area and relationship to intense predator control. Deb Searchfield, a former bird keeper at Auckland Zoo, plays a key role in the conservation of the Northland brown kiwi through her work with the Piroa Conservation Trust (PCT). Deb's journey from zookeeper to kiwi conservationist began after moving to Bream Tail. Initially seeking advice from PCT on trapping on her own land, Deb quickly became part of PCT's kiwi monitoring project.

“Working with native birds has always been a dream of mine,” Deb shared. “At Auckland Zoo, I loved working with endangered birds and native bats. When I moved here and started hearing kiwi calls on my property, I knew I had to be part of this conservation effort.”

Leading the kiwi monitoring project, Deb monitors kiwi presence across various areas using kiwi listening devices. “We place listening devices in the bush for seven nights, recording only at night. These devices pick up kiwi calls, which we then analyse using a computer program that creates visual representations of the sounds,” she explained.

Kiwi are referred to as indicator species - if the environment is safe for kiwi to breed and chicks are not predated then all other native birds will also thrive. Kiwi chicks don't call until they are around 2 years old so it's important to know that stopping focused predator control and still hearing kiwi does not mean the environment is safe. Adult birds can defend themselves but unlike their parents' kiwi chicks are predated by feral cats and mustelids.

Rats and possums predate nests of other native birds along with damaging the habitat, so the community plays a crucial role in supporting kiwi and other native bird conservation. Landowners can create safe environments by conducting best practice predator control on their property or joining a community trapping project, being responsible dog owners, and being cautious during night driving. "Kiwi aren't just in native bush," Deb pointed out. "They could be in long grass by a pond or under pampas bush at the edge of a field."

Stay tuned for our kiwi survey which will be released in the coming weeks -in the meantime, if you hear kiwi calls, please get in touch with us at kiwicare@piroaconservation.org.nz. We're always happy to check any reports, even if you're not sure. Reach out to Piroa Conservation Trust if you'd like to join our community conservation efforts on your own property or join a trapping crew. Every action counts towards creating a haven for our incredible birds.

OUR ANNUAL REPORT

Over the past seven years Piroa Conservation Trust (PCT) has emerged from an informal collective of community groups, to become an agile, lean and rapidly developing charitable trust. The Piroa Brynderwyns High Value Area consists of 23,500 hectares and the Bream Bay River catchment of 31,000 hectares. The offshore Hen and Chicken islands (Marotere) are a special source of taonga. Our conservation activity includes communities involved in animal and plant pest control, growing plants in our native nursery, and enhancing our waterways.

At the heart of our work are landowners (farmers, growers, forestry, lifestyle owners,



ANNUAL REPORT
2024

urban and rural dwellers), iwi/hapū, a highly skilled operations team supported by dedicated trustees, and over 250 volunteers working together with other conservation trusts and groups, with backing from local businesses, donors, local and central government and key funders such as Northland Regional Council (NRC).

Our role is an enabler of community conservation and to connect and engage local landowners and groups, provide know-how and resources and inspire them to contribute to conservation outcomes.

PCT has grown considerably, taking on large new contracts (e.g. Ministry for Primary Industry (MPI) Freshwater project for Bream Bay) through prudent financial management and blending of volunteers, paid roles and contractors.

[Click here to download the report](#)

The PCT trustees and growing operations team have brought exceptional skills to a diverse range of roles. We are relatively unique in Aotearoa in our integrated landscape approach to conservation. Many thanks to Northland Regional Council Councillors and staff for your continued support and guidance, and also to all our volunteers, partners and supporters. Included below are the stories and images that speak to the key highlights and achievements against our annual plan.

ANNUAL CONSERVATION AWARDS

CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL HARD-WORKING VOLUNTEERS

On July 13th the Piroa Conservation Trust (PCT) held its annual awards night to celebrate the work of volunteers and recognise some special individuals across a variety of categories. This year the SUPREME AWARD went to the incredible Susan Steadman.



A number of years ago it became evident that Tara Iti (Fairy Tern) were on the brink of extinction. Susan refused to accept extinction was inevitable. Her commitment has helped to prove that given adequate protection Tara Iti can survive.

Susan also drives PCT's education programme, curriculum development and direction along with leading the in-classroom delivery. This year she has successfully expanded the programme to reach eight schools in the local area.

It is hard to find another individual who dedicates as much of her life to conservation

volunteer work as Susan. It was unanimous that there was not a better person than Susan to receive the supreme award.

This years TRAPPER OF THE YEAR award went to Phil Brimacombe. Over the past six years Phil has devoted many hours to trap checking along the Waipu sandspit during winter months, and also working with a group servicing traps up Cullen Rd. These trap lines are doing a key job of keeping mustelid numbers down and as a result kiwi presence was confirmed in this area two years ago.

WEED WARRIOR OF THE YEAR went to Mangawhai locals Christine & Mike Silvester. They started by eliminating a couple of privet trees on their boundary and ended up by eliminating every privet within one km of their place along with various other invasive plants. They are also founding members of our newly formed weed SWAT team.

NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION AWARD - the Goddard Family. A whitebait spawning site was identified on the Goddard family farm near Waipu. The Goddards made their property available as a demonstration site where pest management has been introduced and over a thousand trees were planted to enhance survival prospects for the whitebait.



NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION AWARD -
Goddard Family



WEED WARRIOR OF THE YEAR
Christine & Mike Silvester.



TRAPPER OF THE YEAR
Phil Brimacombe

The ROOKIE OF THE YEAR went to Steve Pelham. When it comes to bush bashing Steve is a machine. He's been training for years by competing in ultra-endurance events such as 100km Oxfam Walk/run (winning team 2009). Steve is a can-do guy who has immediately become a valuable member of the Waipu Kiwis team.

MYNA TRAPPER OF THE YEAR award went to Lynn Davies. A few years ago Lynn Davies noticed an increase in the number of Myna birds in and around her property. She read that Mynas are territorial and aggressive toward other birds and have been known to remove native species from their nests for their own use. Since then, Lynn has been honing her mynah trapping skills and has reduced numbers by almost 150 in her neighbourhood.

TAMARIKI TRAPPER OF THE YEAR - Louis Clarkin. Louis Clarkin is out there on the trap

lines with his grandmother (sometimes). It's only a matter of time before he catches the bug. In anticipation he got an award certificate with \$20 stapled to the back.

MORE THAN JUST A DRAIN

On July 7, local landowners and volunteers lead a conservation planting effort in Waipu. Piroa Conservation Trust organised a successful community planting day at Patch Jenden's property and with the help of 17 dedicated volunteers, approximately 1,400 plants were put in the ground! The weather cooperated beautifully, making the day even more enjoyable.



The plants used were grown from ecosourced seeds by volunteers at the Waipū Water Community Nursery.

Local farmers and landowners interested in riparian planting can benefit from the nursery's output, as the goal is to see these plants thriving in their natural habitat. The chosen planting site is located on the edge of the estuary, in front of the Waipū Wildlife Refuge Reserve.

This estuary is one of the main tributaries of the Waipū River and has been lacking riparian cover, which is key for maintaining healthy ecosystems. A few

years ago, the estuary was affected by a red algae bloom, highlighting the need for conservation.

Established riparian plants provide shade, helping to keep the water temperature down, and offer cover, which improves both water quality and biodiversity. Overhanging native vegetation creates a suitable environment for fish to lay eggs and provides more food for taonga species residing in or visiting the Refuge Reserve. The Reserve is one of the few breeding sites for the New Zealand fairy tern (tara iti), our most endangered coastal bird. The refuge also welcomes long-haul migrants, including the bar-tailed godwits from Alaska. By planting natives along the estuary, we aim to improve water quality, increase fish populations, and support bird biodiversity.

Landowner Patch Jenden, who did an excellent job preparing the site for planting, is excited to see the native plants grow and enhance the impressive landscape. This demonstration site aims to inspire other landowners along the estuary to undertake similar conservation efforts. “As a landowner, I’m aware that planting native species along my riverbank contributes to enhanced biodiversity and improved water quality,” Patch said during the planting day. Next steps will involve ongoing care and maintenance to ensure the plants thrive in their new home.

If you’re interested in enhancing your patch of paradise and local awa by starting native riparian planting, reach out to Catchment Coordinator, Graham Matthews, at catchmentgroups@piroaconservation.org.nz. Piroa Conservation Trust collaborates with interested landowners to facilitate planting on their properties and work together with catchment groups in Bream Bay to enhance waterways, and create habitat for native birds, insects and fish species.

NEW MANGAWHAI YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Borne out of frequent requests from local teens wanting to get involved in conservation, The Piroa Conservation Trust, Shorebirds Trust and Tara iti golf club have joined forces to launch Mangawhai’s very own ‘Rangatahi

Conservation' programme.

The programme, which launched in July, is designed to build knowledge and experience around ecology and conservation in our local area.

With the help of volunteers, the aim is to grow this into a full year programme in 2025, able to support a larger group of teenagers.

Each session starts with a bit of learning, followed by putting those learnings into practice. Attendees learn about the fundamentals of conservation; predator control, biodiversity monitoring, and restoration, with each session focusing on a new ecosystem like forests, coasts, or freshwater.



At the end of each session one of the attendees writes up a short story so the local community can hear first hand their experience and key learnings. To start things off we are delighted to share the story written by Joseph Knight as follows, and we hope you look forward to these stories in the coming months.

“By 9am on Thursday 18 of July 2024 everyone in the group of six had arrived at the carpark of Tara Iti Golf Club (there were a few people away sick). This is our first day of the Youth Conservation Program. It was meant to be on Wednesday, but it was postponed to Thursday because of the weather, luckily it was because Thursday was sunny and warm.

We started with a lesson inside the Golf Club. Alex (the person running the Youth Conservation Program) showed us a slideshow about conservation in New Zealand. We discussed some interesting facts about New Zealand wildlife as well.

After the lesson we went out onto the big sand dunes. On the way up we saw lots of pig tracks leading from the wetlands to the sand dunes which was not good to see. When we got to the top of the sand dune we sat at the top and listened to Alex tell us about a wildfire that had come across this area, apparently there used to be bush where the dunes now are, after the bush was destroyed by the fire the sand dunes were able to form, the ash and charcoal can still be seen if you look at some of the eroding banks by the sand dune.



On the way back we looked at some middens and the black line in the bank created by the fire. I was also looking out for native plant species on the dunes on the way back. Some of the species I found are as follows...

Pseudognaphalium lanatum (a rareish native herb), Toatoa (*Haloragis erecta* Ssp. *Erecta*) a species that helps with the first stage of forest regeneration, Pingao (*Ficinia spiralis*) a good species for stabilising sand dunes, Knobby Clubrish (*Ficinia nodosa*), Shore Bindweed (*Calystegia soldanella*), Sea Celery (*Apium prostratum* Ssp. *Filiforme*), and Tauhinu (*Ozothamnus leptophyllus*) a cool plant with nice smelling flowers).

A couple of other interesting things we found on the sand dunes were whale bones, two coconuts and a Fish Poison Tree seed (*Barringtonia asiatica*) which must have washed up from overseas.

Once we got back from the sand dunes we did another lesson, this time it was on types of traps for pests in NZ and how to use them.

By the time the second lesson had finished we had just under an hour to do some trapping, the goal was to check and refresh some of the traps in the wetland, as we were checking the traps we came across a female New Zealand Mantis (*Orthodera novaezealandiae*) this species is now pretty rare because of the South African Mantis (*Miomantis caffra*) overtaking it's habitat, not much later after that we came across a small pond from which

a spooked bittern flew away from.

We finished the traps leaving just enough time for us to get back to the carpark by 1pm, unfortunately none of the traps had caught anything.

Going forward we will be doing a session with the Youth Conservation Program on the third Wednesday of each month for the rest of the year.”

RESTORING THE HEART OF CHEVIOT STREET RESERVE

Nestled in the heart of Mangawhai, the Cheviot Street Reserve (accessed from Devon St, Cheviot St and Lincoln St) has become a sanctuary tended by a dedicated group of landowners. Since 2019, their quiet determination has transformed this once-neglected patch of nature. Armed with gloves, spades, and a shared commitment to conservation, they've turned tangled thickets into a thriving ecosystem.



Belinda and Helen, the pioneers of this endeavour, orchestrated the initial assault on invasive species. Armed with backpack sprayers a small group of residents descended upon the reserve with the goal of obliterating the notorious climbing asparagus —the worst culprit that had smothered the land – but careful to avoid the pockets of natural regenerating forest. Patches of Pampas grass and gorse also fell under their efforts. Then began the long slog of on-going hand control and selected spraying to keep the climbing asparagus under control.

The weeds continue to fight back so maintenance continues—a labour of love. Roly, the group leader, along with Brenda, Ian and others, meets every Monday. They swap stories, laugh, and admire their efforts. Roly and the team now know every nook and cranny of Cheviot Street Reserve. One

section of the Reserve (near the Lincoln Road entrance) remains in the clutches of the climbing asparagus. Alongside the continued maintenance of the rest of the Reserve, tackling this hold out is the next objective.

But this isn't just about eradication, it's about witnessing nature reclaim its territory. Birds have returned and now fly among branches with their songs echoing through the reserve.

Each year since 2020 planting working bees have taken place. Volunteers have gathered with a shared passion for restoration. Native trees and shrubs have been generously funded as part of the Billion Trees initiative as well as by Kaipara District Council through the contestable Reserves Contribution Fund with local landowners planting them with care to create something for the future. The plant species have been carefully selected to be appropriate for the coastal site and to provide food for the birds.

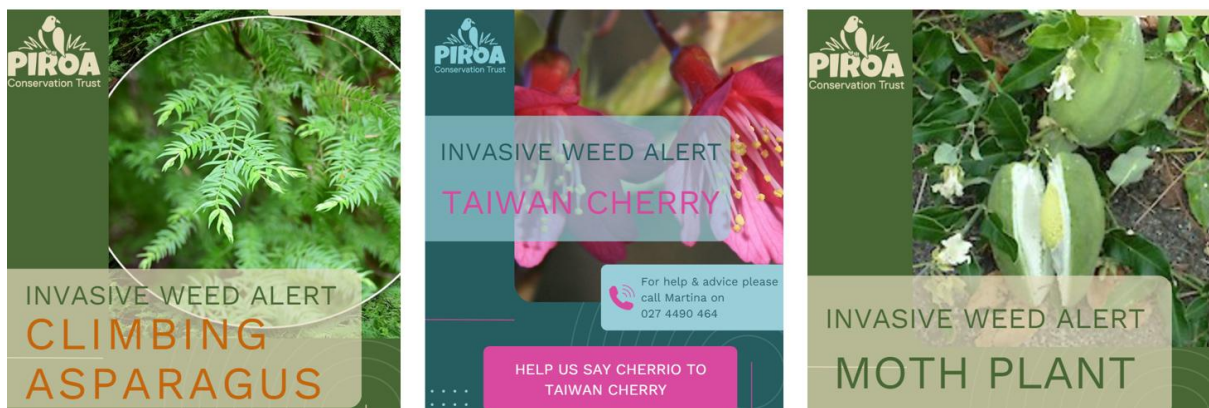
Recently, the cycle repeated and another planting bee buzzed with activity as volunteers, old and new, joined forces. They pulled weeds, dug holes, and planted 130 new native plants. The Cheviot Street Reserve welcomed these fresh additions, expanding its embrace of native flora. Ricky and Jess from Mangawhai Natives, our local nursery, deserve a heartfelt thank you. Their generous plant discounts fuelled this restoration effort. Ricky and Jess—thank you! 🌱

If you feel the pull—the desire to be part of something greater, Cheviot Street Reserve welcomes you. Whether you're a seasoned green thumb or a novice with goodwill in your heart, there's a place for you. Email us and we'll introduce you to Roly and the team. Or, if there is a reserve near you that needs a bit of TLC, talk to us about initiating a similar local weed action group. Together, we'll continue this journey one weed at a time, one native plant at a time. Because in the end, it's not just about the land; it's about the legacy we leave behind and a gift for generations to come. So

come, join us where hope takes root and community flourishes. 🌱

WEED PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

For the next 12 months our team has 3 big weed priorities, but we need your help to identify locations and/or help remove the pesty plants. At present the focus is 🌸 TAIWAN CHERRY 🌸 Why is it a problem? Taiwan cherry invades all types of shrublands, light gaps in the forest, roadsides, gardens & reserves. It has the potential to spread & dominate over native vegetation, displacing it completely & negatively impacting on entire naturally occurring ecosystems. For more information and help please [download our guide here](#)



As we move towards spring and summer, we will intensify our focus on climbing asparagus and moth plant but if you know you already have these pesty plants we also have downloadable guides to help with identification and control measures. [Guides can be found here](#)

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CONSERVATION

As a first of its kind, Piroa Conservation Trust (PCT) hosted a trapping workshop for women at the Mangawhai Club in May. The event was led by three inspiring trappers:

- ✦ Jackie Fanning: Enviro Unit Coordinator at Mangawhai Beach School.
- ✦ Deb Searchfield: Former Auckland Zookeeper, now leading PCT's kiwi care programme.
- ✦ Kathryn Clark: Dedicated volunteer and trapper for the Lang's Beach Scenic Reserve.

This workshop brought together women eager to enhance their predator control skills. We discussed the critical importance of predator control in New Zealand, where our unique bird species face threats from introduced predators.

Key Highlights:

- ✦ Predator identification: Learning about rats, possums, weasels, stoats, ferrets, and hedgehogs.
- ✦ Trap types: How to use DOC 200 mustelid traps, rat traps, and Flipping Timmy/SA2 auto traps.
- ✦ Effective lures: Tips on using peanut butter, rolled oats, apples, oranges, and more.

Hands-on practice: Participants got practical experience setting up traps, and we shared some special trapping tips for:

- Buffer zones: Protecting sensitive areas like forests and coasts.
- Trap maintenance: Check traps every two weeks in summer and monthly in winter.
- Optimal placement: Clear trap entrance from weeds and high grasses for easy predator access.
- Trail cameras: Use them to study predator behaviour.
- Trapper's backpack: Gloves, knife, tongs, dish brush, screwdriver, hammer, water, tissues, and lures.
- Kathryn's special lure recipe was a hit! Mix 4 parts flour, 1 part milk powder, 1 part icing sugar, and 2 spoons of curry powder or cinnamon to attract possums.



Join Our Conservation Effort: Want to start trapping on your land or join a community project? Email predatorfree@piroaconservation.org.nz

ON THE DOWNLOAD

Keen to learn a bit more about the predators you might find in traps in our local area? We have a simple guide to tell you a little about each pest animal along with a supporting guide that tells you about what sort of trap is best for what pest animal.

'What's in my trap' guide and the 'What trap is best' guide [can be downloaded here.](#)



WHAT'S IN YOUR TRAP?

Learn about:

- ▶ Rodents
- ▶ Mustelids
- ▶ Possums
- ▶ Hedgehogs
- ▶ Feral cats



info@piroaconservation.org.nz



WHAT TRAP FOR WHAT PEST?

- ▶ DOC 200
- ▶ FLIPPING TIMMY
- ▶ SA2
- ▶ LIVE CAPTURE
- ▶ RAT TRAPS
- ▶ BAIT STATIONS



info@piroaconservation.org.nz

CALLING FOR POTS!

As Waipū Waters Community Nursery continues to grow eco-sourced seeds, we need more pots to support our expanding nursery. 🌱

Specifically, we're looking for plastic pots in sizes of 1.5/2L or larger.

If you have pots to donate,

Contact Coralie at 027 4320 293



As Waipū Waters Community Nursery continues to grow eco-sourced seeds, we need more pots to support our expanding nursery. Specifically, we're looking for plastic pots in sizes of 1.5/2L or larger. If you have pots, please contact Coralie on 0274320293 to arrange a pickup or drop them to ITM Waipu.

NEED TO CONTACT SOMEONE?

If you want to get in touch about our education programme, volunteering, working groups, projects, news or anyone else in the team you can contact us by emailing info@piroaconservation.org.nz

For more specific topics the following is a direct email address to the specialist leads:

- Deb is the Community Liaison role for all things Kiwi and can be reached on kiwicare@piroaconservation.org.nz
- Deb is also our contact for trapping projects on the south side of the Brynderwyns and can be reached on predatorfree@piroaconservation.org.nz
- Graeme is doing an audit of traps so if any are hanging around unused or needing servicing email him on info@piroaconservation.org.nz
- Martina is our weed coordinator and can be reached on weedaction@piroaconservation.org.nz
- Graham, is the coordinator for our Catchment Groups in Bream Bay and can be reached on catchmentgroups@piroaconservation.org.nz

We also want to welcome to Brent Rice in a volunteer H & S role for PCT. Brent's day job is corporate H & S so we will welcome his eye over the work plans and systems to ensure we are doing best practice to keep everyone safe while trapping, weeding, potting and planting. Brent will be in touch with group leads to find out what's working or could be improved.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

We're always on the lookout for new people to help us in our work.

Newcomers are especially welcome; it's a great way to make new friends and contacts in the community - we'd love to find a role for you.

There's plenty of variety in the work - some work is outdoors in the hills doing trapping and bait lines, some is chipping away at pest plants in local reserves, or it could be using your keyboard skills and experience for the essential communications. We are especially looking for teachers for our programmes in schools, as well as writers, and people with social media, creative marketing, grant funding, event organisation and project delivery coordination talents.

If you would like to volunteer, please fill in a simple form indicating what you would like to be involved in and the right team member will be in contact with you. Are you looking for a volunteering opportunity based in the Mangawhai, Kaiwaka, Langs Beach, Waipu area?

[Click the link if you are keen.](#)

SPONSORS

If you'd like to contribute as a sponsor of our conservation work, please contact Graeme on 021 118 4816.

Click to [Follow us on Facebook](#)



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