

WAIKANAE ESTUARY CARE GROUP VOLUNTEERS



Meet the team of keen **WAIKANAE ESTUARY CARE GROUP VOLUNTEERS** who energetically provide their mahi and knowledge to further restore and enhance our precious taonga, the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve.

The dedicated **NURSERY TEAM** meets on Thursday mornings at our nursery off Hana Udy Place.

Twenty-four native plant species which are listed in our ecological plan are grown from eco-sourced seeds. These seedlings, nurtured in our shade houses, are pricked out and when larger are potted up into bags ready to harden up outside before being planted during our group volunteer planting days from May to August.

This year we will be planting 3000 more plants to add to the 80,000-plus plants this group has planted since we were established in 2004.

Nursery team sorting plants for planting day.





A Saturday planting on the Waikanae side of the reserve.

Matariki planting in our experimental plot. WMZ 9w



Weeding our plantings are year-round family activities.

The Victoria Uni volunteer student army conservation group worked with us at a weekend planting.





Another dedicated team, **THE WEDNESDAY WEED BUSTERS** meet every week to tackle the stubborn weeds that infest the reserve. Wearing protective clothing and using effective tools they cut and paste these invasive weeds. Blackberry, gorse, Japanese honeysuckle, German ivy and sweet pea vine are among the weeds our team eradicates. Our plantings benefit from their regular weed-releasing efforts.

We welcome the **GROUND TRUTH** team, an outside group of trainees who are learning skills to equip themselves for the workforce.

This willing group has helped us clear pampas grass and gorse. Their heavy-duty power tools and their teamwork make light work of removing these exotic invasive plants.

Together we have been able to make huge inroads into clearing large areas ready for planting.





Keen individual members and groups, our **ADOPT-A-PLOTTERS**, take care of designated previously planted areas. They tend their plants when it suits their schedules. This has proved popular with our neighbours who take ownership of an area close to their sections. The nursery team's expertise is there to help when required and to provide plants for infill planting.

Paraparaumu College students planting their adopt-a-plot along the pathway.

Liaison with **LOCAL SCHOOL GROUPS** is a vital part of sharing the mahi and ownership with our local community. Kenakena, Waikanae and Paraparaumu Beach primary schools have all participated in plantings. We have a close relationship with Paraparaumu College, our nearest secondary school. Their horticultural students and conservation groups regularly participate in seed sowing, plantings, track maintenance and weeding working bees. Growing tomorrow's conservation-minded adults through today's involvement is essential.



The Sears conservation group from Paraparaumu College planting in an adopt-a-plot.



Members were able to support and accompany Paraparaumu College students on their 'Awa' day field trip to study the Waikanae River from the source to the estuary mouth. Results from their observations are added to each year, building comprehensive knowledge of our taonga.



Experienced **PHOTOGRAPHERS** among our membership are detailing the scientific aspect of our scientific reserve. Knowledge is gained as we discover what flora and fauna dwell in our special reserve. The photos, when identified by experts using iNaturalist nz, are posted onto our website for the public to enjoy. Data over the years will show us how the estuary is faring. As the only NZ estuarine ecosystem in a Scientific Reserve, we must explore its possibilities and protect what already exists.



A small crew, **THE BIRDERS**, are dedicated early risers taking time to complete 5-minute bird counts at designated spots, each season, throughout the Reserve, to determine bird numbers and species in the reserve.

This year we have commenced studying our fernbird population with a call playback method determining the population of this rare native species. We hope this will assist in planning future plantings of suitable flora for this species and guide our pest trappers to site their traps for maximum effect.

Regular birdwatchers among our membership post their estuary bird photos on our website for others to enjoy.

Mātātā – fernbird



WECG has a growing membership of 120+ people and is a registered charity. Donations are very much appreciated

and go towards our running costs . 58,000 walkers passed through our reserve tracks for the year to August 2022. Because working with community organisations is one of our strengths, our long-term plans to cater for groups and individuals in an education-based centre have progressed to the consultation stage.