

MEASURING SUCCESS WITH KIWI

Community groups involved with Northland's Kiwi Coast project have used monitoring techniques as an effective way to gauge the success of their work.

Snapshot

- Applied Citizen Science
- Kiwi Coast
- Delivered initially through a partnership between NZ Landcare Trust and WWF-NZ as part of the Reconnecting Northland initiative.
- Community-led biodiversity restoration
- Northland
- www.kiwicoast.org.nz

Kiwi Coast

The vision of the Kiwi Coast project is to have a thriving population of wild kiwi, safely roaming throughout Northland, nurtured and cared for by Northlanders. It is a community-led collaborative initiative linking conservation projects, iwi and hapu, landowners, farmers, forest management companies, government agencies and schools in the shared vision of increasing kiwi numbers, creating safe ecological corridors and improving the general biodiversity values of Northland.

The Kiwi Coast operates at a landscape scale, and has continued to expand over the last four years. It now links projects over 291km from Mangawhai at the southern limit of the Northland region to the Aupouri Peninsula in the Far North. As of June 2017, 94 entities have linked into the Kiwi Coast, 71 of which are community driven landcare groups. Collectively, these groups and projects carried out pest control over 130,701ha.

Matakohe-Limestone Island Ranger Bernie Buhler with Bernie the kiwi at Tutukaka Kiwi Release, 2015. Photo: Kiwi Coast: Malcolm Pullman



Kiwi Coast objectives

- To enable and engage Northlanders in caring for their kiwi.
- To provide education, mentoring and support for kiwi recovery.
- To celebrate the presence of Northland brown kiwi in Northland as a taonga.
- To increase kiwi numbers through predator reduction and good dog control.
- To facilitate the safe movement of kiwi throughout the Kiwi Coast.
- To encourage kaitiakitanga / stewardship to protect and nurture kiwi for future generations.

Monitoring and measuring

The work carried out by the communities associated with Kiwi Coast is underpinned by robust scientific monitoring and rigorous data recording - which includes kiwi call counting and measuring numbers of animal pests removed. Not only does this valuable information assist with project management decisions but it also provides an evidence based record which demonstrates the true value of this work to the wider community, and improves opportunities to attract further funding and other support.

Bird call count

Kiwi are vocal at night, which presents an excellent opportunity to determine their distribution and population density by listening for their distinctive calls. The Kiwi Coast has developed a 'Kiwi Monitoring Plan' based on best practice kiwi monitoring protocols developed by the Department of Conservation. The monitoring is achieved through a combination of community listening events and the use of automated Kiwi Listening Devices.

The kiwi are most vocal during their breeding season, which occurs in autumn, so this is the best time to listen. The annual Kiwi Call Count Survey is carried out at this time of year, as is the more comprehensive Kiwi Listening Blitz, which takes place every five years.

Results demonstrate that populations of kiwi within the range of the Kiwi Coast project are stable or increasing, which is a reversal of the national trend where according to the Kwis for Kiwi Trust, kiwi populations are in decline. This science based approach confirms the project is successfully moving towards it's goal of establishing a thriving population of kiwi in Northland.

Monitoring pest control

At a practical level the Kiwi Coast focuses on predator control. The removal of introduced predators helps ensure kiwi not only survive, but thrive. As part of its monitoring program each year the Kiwi Coast collates trap catch data from all the community projects involved. Data collated recently showed that in 2016 alone, a total of 56,629 animal pests were trapped - that's over 1000 pests removed every week.

Collectively, pest control was carried out over 131,242ha, reducing predators that threaten kiwi survival and destroy native forests. From 2013 – 2016, 169,731 animal pests were caught in traps by groups and projects involved in the Kiwi Coast. Ideally, over time the actual numbers of pests being removed will decrease as their population levels drop and the number of hectares receiving pest control increases.

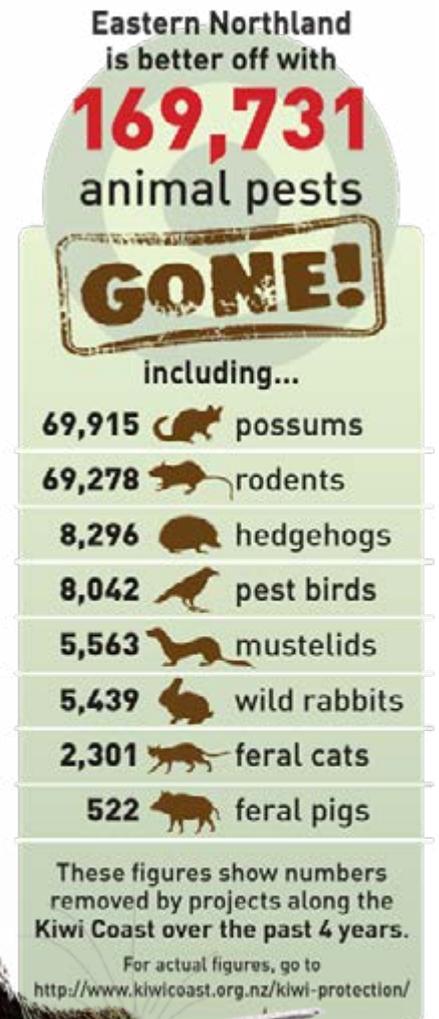
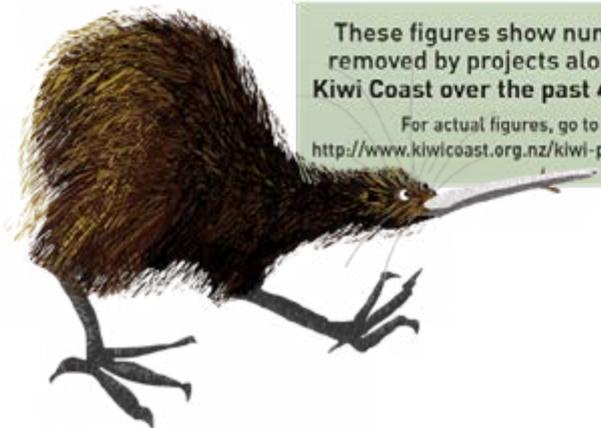


Illustration: Heather Hunt



Further information

Kiwi Coast website
www.kiwicoast.org.nz

Contact: Ngaire Tyson
ngaire@kiwicoast.org.nz



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