

COROMANDEL ZONE

KI UTA
KI TAIHEALTHY
CATCHMENT
HEALTHY
HARBOUR

 Waikato
 REGIONAL COUNCIL
 Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

KIA ORA

Welcome to your first Coromandel-wide newsletter, a shift from our catchment focused newsletters of the past. This newsletter is about what is happening across the Coromandel Zone, an area that extends north from Tararu, on the west coast of the peninsula, and Whiritoa on the east.

We've captured some of the work we do with landowners to help improve our environment. We're in the final stages of developing the last two harbour and catchment plans for the peninsula and encourage you to have your say on how we should manage our coastlines. We also put the spotlight on one of our flood protection schemes and some of the great things our communities have been up to.

In the meantime, if you have a wetland, bush or stream enhancement project in mind, or want to carry out river management or weed control on your property, find out what we can do to help. Your Integrated Catchment Management team is a wealth of information, and we also give financial help for restoration works, soil, and stream management and animal and plant pest control.

Hei konā mai

Coromandel Zone Integrated Catchment Management Team

BEST JOB EVER!

This summer, marine sciences graduate Marie Everth had *"the best summer job ever"*, working with staff from Waikato Regional Council and the Department of Conservation.

Marie, from the Coromandel Peninsula, was the second recipient of the Arthur Hinds Scholarship, set up by both organisations to honour the late Whenuakite farmer who was passionate about conservation.

"I love conservation and being able to give back to my community, so having the chance to see what both these organisations do was really exciting," says Marie, who was based in Whitianga.

Highlights from her three and a half months included helping with the pilot whale stranding in Matarangi, being a track ambassador for the fight against kauri dieback, setting up monitoring sediment plates in Whangapoua Harbour, helping dotterel rangers monitor chicks from the breeding season, checking out the macroinvertebrate communities in streams and cuddling conservation dog Sassy.

"It was very humbling to be a part of the DOC response team for the whale stranding at Matarangi," says Marie.

"The pilot whales had already been refloated by the time another DOC ranger and I arrived so we were given the important jobs of standing by the dead whales to ensure nobody touched them and ensuring everyone was respectful during iwi burial protocol."

Marie says one of the best parts of the job was working in varied beautiful natural environments, from private farmland to marine reserves and islands in the Coromandel Peninsula.

"I got to hang out with lots of cows and saw bottlenose dolphins on our way out to Ohinau and Mahurangi islands."

If you are interested in applying for the scholarship, or know someone who may be, go to waikatoregion.govt.nz/Arthur-hinds-scholarship. Applications open late August-early September.



MANAIA HARBOUR



Waikato Regional Council is in the final stages of developing harbour and catchment management plans for Whitianga/Mercury Bay and Coromandel/Manaia.

The plans are about understanding the current condition of the catchments and identifying and prioritising works we can do with landowners to improve the environmental health and wellbeing of those catchments. The focus is on improving water quality, soil conservation and biodiversity.

The plans are a way for people to share what they want their natural environment to be like in the next 10 to 50 years. Therefore, we have been out and about in Coromandel/Manaia and Whitianga/Mercury Bay talking to iwi, landowners, residents and other like-minded organisations and volunteer groups to understand their concerns about the wellbeing of their catchment and what they would like to see happen.

This engagement has included workshops with rural landowners, environmental groups and stakeholders, drop in sessions at Cooks Beach, Whitianga and Coromandel, two wananga at Manaia Marae and surveys being sent out to all ratepayers. While it sounds like a lot of talking, this engagement is important for inspiring communities to take ownership of the catchments they live in, and work alongside us to improve it.

As part of the process, we worked with Ngati Pukenga, Ngaati Whanaunga and Manaia residents to develop a restoration plan for them to take ownership of the health of the Manaia River.



On the ground catchment inspections for both catchments were also undertaken to understand where work could be prioritised and identify restoration opportunities. These inspections looked out for areas of high erosion, stream bank instability and where stock could access waterways.

All the local knowledge we've gathered and the technical information we have from monitoring, research and scientific studies will be combined for inclusion in the overall plans.

Harbour and catchment plans have already been developed for Whangamatā, Wharekawa (Opoutere), Tairua and Whangapoua, with work there well underway.

The plans for Whitianga/Mercury Bay and Coromandel/Manaia are expected to be completed by June 2020.

To find out more about all our harbour and catchment plans go to waikatoregion.govt.nz/HCMP.

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR OUR COASTS

If you're a long time resident of the Coromandel Peninsula, you may have noticed that some things aren't as they used to be in the coastal marine area.

Perhaps there aren't as much fish as there used to be, more harmful marine life, maybe the coastlines are eroding, is there more sedimentation in the coastal marine area? Are there more people using the coastal resources, more development in this space, or disturbances to the foreshore and seabed?

You may feel quite deeply about certain aspects and have some thoughts about how we should be able to enjoy this natural environment forever.

Waikato Regional Council is reviewing its Regional Coastal Plan from 1995. The plan contains policy and methods to manage the allocation and use of coastal resources from the high tide line out to 12 nautical miles.

Senior project manager Ross Abercrombie says things are a lot different to how they were 25 years ago and that's why the council is going out to communities to ask them what issues they have with the current plan and how things could be done.

"It's very important for everyone to have their say because our coastlines are iconic. We all connect to the coast one way or another, whether it's cultural or spiritual, or the place where we live, work or play."

Drop-in sessions were held in Whangamata and Tairua on 17 March and Whitianga and Coromandel on 18 March for the public to find out more about the plan review and to give their feedback. But there is still plenty of time to have your say at waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-coastal-policy.



The review of the Regional Coastal Plan is part of Healthy Environments – He Taiao Mauriora. Healthy Environments also includes the review of the Waikato Regional Plan and will give effect to the regional policy statements and national directions. More information on the plan review can be found at waikato.region.govt.nz/healthy-environments.

FLOOD PROTECTION

PROTECTING TE PURU



Te Puru after the weather bomb of 2002

Flood protection reduces the likelihood of floods impacting on our communities. It safeguards lives and property, enables use of land, and protects services such as water supply and power.

BUT...

While the past has shown us that we need our flood assets and they provide good value, that's not always easily recognised today. Some people have no idea that flooding was an issue in the past, or even know they are protected by schemes.

THAT'S NOT COOL!



Burning a hole in a flood wall is not smart, but that's what recently happened in Te Puru (and has also happened in the Coromandel). It might just look like a wooden retaining wall, but the engineered structure actually prevents the Te Puru Stream from breaching during a flood event; and that particular section protects the school and houses along the right bank. Damaging flood infrastructure puts a whole community at risk, and it's also expensive to fix. If you see any intentional or unintentional damage to flood walls or other infrastructure, please report it ASAP.

SO, WHY WAS THE TE PURU SCHEME BUILT?

The Peninsula Project is about improving the health of the environment and reducing flood risks on the Coromandel Peninsula. Te Puru was one community identified in the project as having a very high risk to life and property due to flooding. The flood infrastructure was put in after the weather bomb of 2002, when water carrying trees and debris came down the hills and through the campground and into all the homes along the sea. The scheme was completed about 2010.

WHAT'S IN THE SCHEME?

The assets protecting Te Puru are stopbanks and floodwalls. There is a spillway (see the aerial photo) to take flows greater than the design can cope with to protect the integrity of the bridge.

The scheme is designed to handle a 1 per cent annual exceedance probability (AEP) or one in 100 year flood event with 500mm of freeboard. This level of service is only for flooding caused by the river, and does not include various tidal and coastal conditions. It also doesn't take into account climate change, which may mean more frequent and intense weather events and rises in sea level.



The Te Puru scheme from above.

SCHEME REVIEW

A service level review was undertaken in 2018/19. The review showed the scheme could handle a one in 100 year flood event although there was a shortfall in the freeboards towards the lower end of the scheme. This was likely due to the accumulation of aggregates in the lower stream channel near the stream mouth. Excess gravel was therefore removed from the stream mouth in December last year.

Later this year we will resurvey cross-sections of the stream channel to compare the results with previous records. This will help ensure we keep on top of our gravel maintenance programme and ensure we're meeting our promised level of service.

RESIDUAL RISK

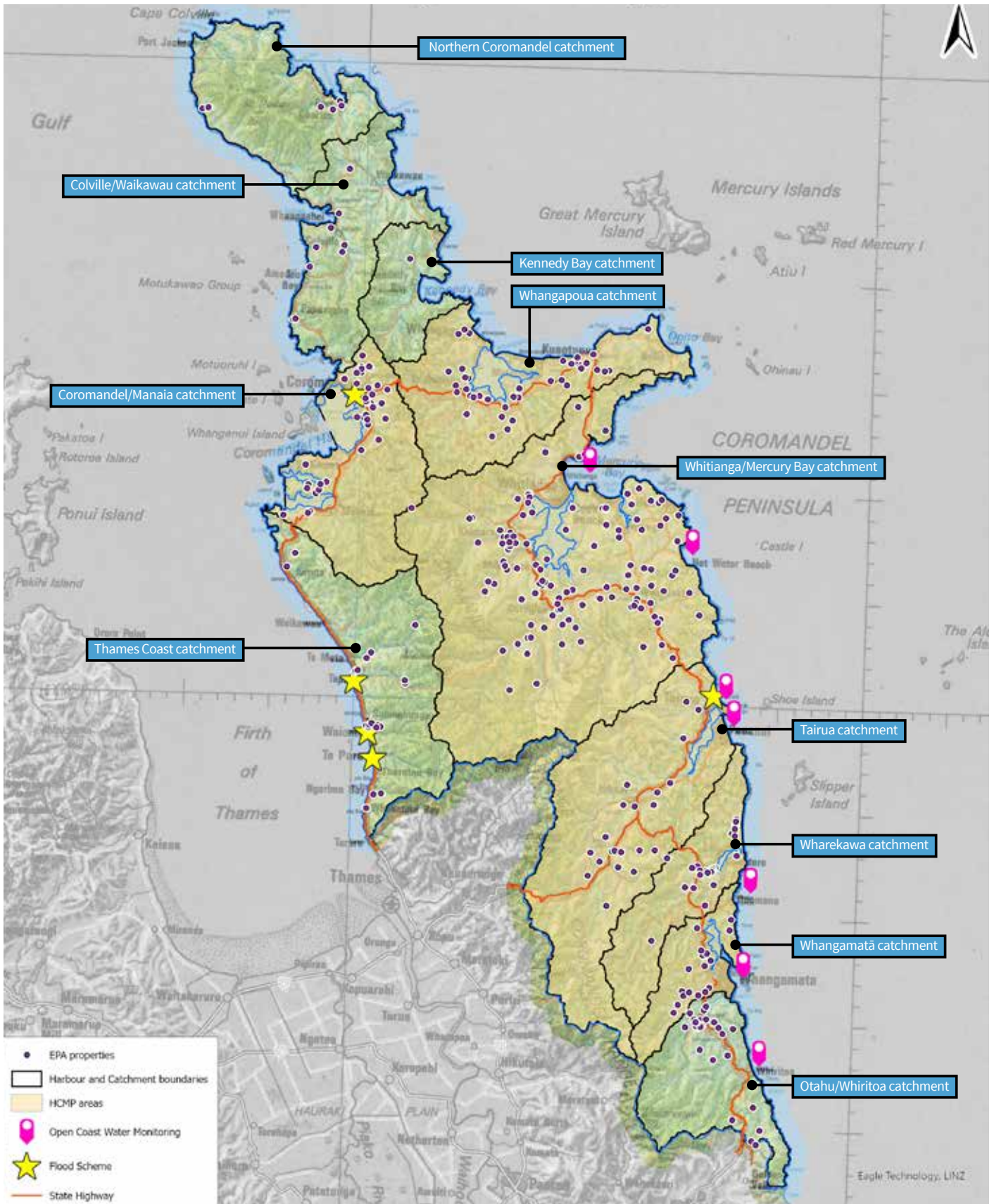
This exists when a flood event is larger than the scheme is designed to handle, from debris within a flow or obstructions within a scheme.

The placing of large obstructions (including walls or buildings) in the stream or associated floodplains may result in wider, higher and faster floodwaters, and add to debris, so if you see anything you're unsure about please let us know.

However, during a greater than 1 per cent AEP, overtopping should occur safely into the spillway.

Find out where our flood protection schemes in the Coromandel Peninsula on pages 4-5.

To find out more about flood protection in the Coromandel area visit waikatoregion.govt.nz/comehighwater.



WHERE'S WHAT?

We have environmental programme agreements (EPAs) with landowners to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality and/or enhance biodiversity values. Each agreement is specific to the issues or objectives of a property, and outline the responsibilities (including financial) of each party.

Since 2004, the regional council has worked with landowners to fence off 327,435 metres of streams and plant 206,829 native trees on 185 properties.

YOUR HARBOUR, YOUR CATCHMENT

The Coromandel Zone is divided into 11 harbour and catchment areas, six of which have harbour and catchment management plans.

FLOOD PROTECTION

We have schemes for the communities of Te Puru, Waiomue-Pohue, Coromandel, Tapu and Graham's Creek (Tairua). They were constructed between 2005 and 2016.

COASTAL WATER MONITORING

During the summer months, we monitor Buffalo Beach, Hot Water Beach, Tairua Beach, Pauanui Beach, Onemana Beach, Whangamatā Beach and Whiritoa Beach for suitability of swimming.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR CATCHMENT?

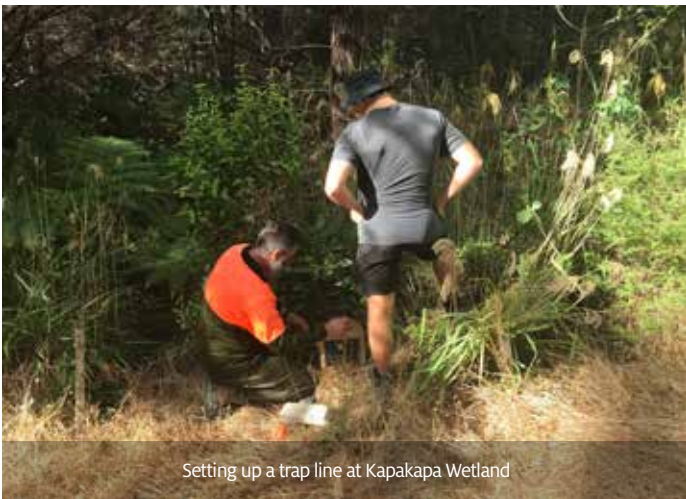
WHAREKAWA

Whangamata Area School, NZ Police and the regional council helped landowner Joe Adams plant 1300 natives along the Wharekawa River on his property. Joe has also fenced off 1.3km of his land along the Kapara Stream, and planted several hundred poplar and willow poles to help with river and hill country soil conservation.



Planting day at Joe's place

A trap line has been put in around Kapakapa Wetland near Opoutere. This project was done in partnership with Rayonier Matariki and Wharekawa Catchment Care Group to protect threatened avifauna in the wetland. Acoustic monitoring in this wetland in the past has detected the endangered Australasian bittern. About 14 DOC 200 traps for rats and mustelids have gone in, to be serviced by the catchment group which has also done native planting in the wetland.



Setting up a trap line at Kapakapa Wetland

Funding from the Hill Country Erosion Fund and Fonterra has enabled the regional council to subsidise up to 70 per cent of the cost of hill country retirement and riparian protection on private landowner property. Landowners have taken advantage of the subsidy and, so far this year, about 6 kilometres of riparian fencing and planting is on track for completion. Usually the council is able to offer a subsidy of up to 35 per cent. The extra funding accelerates work being done in the Coromandel Peninsula for the betterment of its catchments.

SHOUT OUT TO

Tairua Environment Society has been doing a fantastic job servicing Graham's Creek and Pepe Inlet traplines and providing trap catch data to us. We also have a contractor servicing traplines at Oturu wetland and Hikuai Cabbage Tree Forest. More than 1500 rats and mustelids have been killed in Waikato Regional Council traps in the southern Coromandel in four years thanks to these efforts.

WHANGAMATĀ

Fencing and willow control has been completed to protect and restore a wetland on the corner of State Highway 25 and Wentworth Valley Road. The work was done in collaboration with Thames-Coromandel District Council. The wetland links up to a public area, so is a good site to promote the kind of work we do. Stock are now excluded from the wetland, and it will be planted in kahikatea, hopefully this planting season.

Opoutere School helped plant out a native buffer zone around Papa Maire coastal wetland on land that was previously production forest. The plants, paid for by Rayonier Matariki, will help create a screen from activity on neighbouring forestry and provide a safe haven for wetland birds.

WHANGAPOUA



Shorebird eggs and chicks on Whangapoua Harbour's Taranui chenier island had a fighting chance over the summer thanks to predator control being undertaken ahead of the breeding season. Rats and mice were eradicated from the island in August and September last year. After the operation, tracking tunnels showed no presence of the pests. The predator control was part of a two-year restoration plan for the chenier islands in the harbour, where many coastal birds nest and roost. Fifty-two Caspian terns, which are nationally vulnerable, were counted in an aerial photo taken of Taranui Island in November. Weed control will also be part of the restoration plan, to improve the habitat for birds.

We've been working with landowners to turn some 13 hectares paddocks into a wetland with sediment traps at Waitekuri near Whangapoua Harbour. Funds required to get 5000 plants into the ground – a rate of \$26 per metre – has been successfully raised via the Million Metres Streams website. Te Rerenga School put the first 200 plants in the ground on Arbor Day last year, with 200 more put in over Conservation Week. The area will continue to be planted out over the next two planting seasons. The wetland will be a habitat for birds, fish and insects, and act as a buffer against major flood events to prevent sedimentation from getting into the harbour. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this worthwhile project.

SHOUT OUT TO

Mana Manu Trust, a group of 26 landowners who are passionate about improving the conservation and amenity values of Whangapoua, has completed wilding pine control work for which they got regional council funding. The group collectively own about 317 hectares of coastal lowland forest adjacent to the Whangapoua Harbour. More than 4500 pines were removed with the help by contractors Second Nature. Mana Manu has also had funding assistance from the regional council in the past for predator control to help improve birdlife.

Waikato Regional Council has a number of funds for environmental, restoration and conservation projects. Visit waikatoregion.govt.nz/funding-and-grants to see if you or your environmental group is eligible for assistance.

BIODIVERSITY

FARMING NEAR KAURI

Measures to prevent the spread of kauri dieback should be part of biosecurity practices on rural properties. Waikato Regional Council, in collaboration with the Kauri Dieback Programme, is developing a guide for farmers who have kauri on or near their property.

Biosecurity officer Kim Parker says the farming industry already undertake a wide range of biosecurity actions and protecting kauri is an extension of this great work.

Kauri are under threat from a microscopic soil-borne organism called *Phytophthora agathidicida* that causes kauri dieback disease. This organism spreads through the movement of contaminated soil, therefore protecting kauri is best achieved through stopping soil movement.

“The Coromandel has significant areas of healthy trees and they need protecting” says Kim. “The easiest thing to do this is to avoid kauri whenever possible, but if it’s not then it’s really important that all soil is cleaned from any gear, including from footwear, your machinery and even your dogs.”

The guide will have recommended actions for preventing kauri dieback by spreading via people, vehicles and machinery, stock, feral animals, fences, tracks and structures, weed control, pruning/removal of vegetation, restoration and forestry operations. “We’re encouraging all farms which have kauri or are near kauri areas to have a management system in place, not just for themselves but for visitors as well.”

FENCING SUPPORT AVAILABLE.

The councils catchment new works programmes and kauri programmes are offering fencing funding support to landowners with kauri that need to be fenced from cattle. This funding is available to landowners with significant kauri on or near their property. If you think you may qualify, please contact your catchment management officer, phone 07 866 0172.

Look for the guide on kauridieback.co.nz later this year. Other guides on looking after kauri are found at kauridieback.co.nz/how-to-guides



HAIRY AND STINKY

It came later this summer, but large amounts of hairy basket weed again washed upon the shores of the Coromandel Peninsula to cause a huge stink. The red seaweed, *Spyridia filamentosa*, came ashore on Whangapoua Beach with the northeasterlies at the end of February.

Waikato Regional Council coastal and marine team leader Dr Michael Townsend says there have been high levels of decomposing hairy basket on

the eastern shores of the peninsula over the last few years and can understand why its presence is considered a nuisance. “It really stinks, and it’s a huge biomass.”

Michael says because it’s been becoming a regularly occurrence in the Coromandel, the regional council is looking at how to address the phenomenon. “We need to know what circumstances cause a proliferation of the weed and what combination of conditions leads to it washing up on our shores. We’re keen to hear from people spotting large accumulations of it on their local beach, particularly when it first arrives.”

People wanting to report sightings can call the council’s freephone, 0800 800 401.

KIWI AVERSION TRAINING



About 60 dogs were made to dislike kiwi at two kiwi aversion training session in Whitianga and Coromandel last month. Landowner and Waikato Regional Council catchment management advisor Emily O’Donnell, who hosted one of the sessions held by the Department of Conservation, says it’s a requirement of a covenant on her property that her dog is kiwi aversion trained.

“We’ve always had our dogs averted and Lucy, our English pointer, is no different. It’s her natural instinct to hunt, so it’s very important that we get her trained. We’ve seen first-hand the devastation dogs can cause on our kiwi populations.”

The majority of dogs being trained on Emily’s Whitianga bush block property were pig hunting dogs (it’s a requirement of belonging to the hunting club) and there were a number of newcomers.

“There were bach owners with their city dogs, the ‘my dog never gets off the couch’ kind, but funnily enough they were the ones that were most interested in the kiwi decoy,” says Emily.

Avian aversion training helps prevent native birds getting killed or disturbed by dogs. It does not override any dog access restrictions for an area.

For the training, dogs are fitted with electric collars and exposed to dead ground-dwelling native birds and faeces in a controlled situation. While sniffing these, the dog is given a negative reinforcement through a small but surprising electric shock.

Most dogs quickly learn to avoid the birds following this experience, although yearly testing is needed until the dog consistently demonstrates strong avoidance. Last year, eight kiwi were killed by dogs in the Coromandel.

NEED KIWI AVERSION TRAINING FOR YOUR DOG?

Contact the [Kauaeranga Visitor Centre](#) and ask about the next closest session for your area or check the [Facebook page](#) [Kiwi Avoidance Training schedule](#).

WATER QUALITY

PERFECT SWIMMING SEASON

The water quality of beaches in the Coromandel Peninsula this year were mostly exceptional this summer thanks to the drought.

The regional council monitors seven open coast beaches in the peninsula from November to March to assess the suitability for recreation such as swimming and surfing.

The testing at Whitianga, Hot Water Beach, Tairua, Pauanui, Onemana, Whangamata and Whiritoa looks at the faecal indicator bacteria levels in the water.

This year, the results for six of those beaches showed consistently good water quality – the only exception was a single sample taken at Whiritoa Beach on 16 December 2019.

That sample exceeded the national guideline level of 280 Enterococci/100ml by 50 fold. The reason is unknown, but a repeat sample taken later that week showed the levels were back below the guideline and there were no more issues with the water quality at Whiritoa Beach.

The regional council monitors the coastal water quality because everything that happens on the land ends up in the coastal environment from runoff.

“That’s why we always recommend that you don’t swim directly after heavy rainfall,” says coastal and marine scientist Dr Janine Kamke.

Results of the summer monitoring programme are online at waikatoregion.govt.nz/coastal-recreational-water-quality.

IT’S A DIRTY JOB BUT SOMEONE HAS TO DO IT



Installing sediment traps in Wharekawa estuary, 2019.

Estuaries naturally infill but they’re infilling more rapidly as a result of what we get up to on the land – in some estuaries, sediment is now accumulating more than 10 times faster than before human settlement.

Waikato Regional Council is now monitoring five estuaries in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park to ensure sedimentation levels do not exceed the environmental targets of Sea Change, a plan developed by a number of local and central government agencies and mana whenua to improve the health and wellbeing of the gulf.

Waikato Regional Council coastal and marine team scientist Dr Steve Hunt says one of the objectives of Sea Change is that the sedimentation rate be no more than 2mm per year above what the sedimentation rate would have been pre-settlement.

“It’s hoped that will be achieved by 2050.”

Over the summer, the regional council installed 25 sediment plates in Whangapoua’s intertidal sand and mudflats. The council already has sedimentation monitoring sites in Wharekawa, Tairua, Coromandel Harbour and the Firth of Thames.

The plates are buried at a known level below the sediment surface, and the amount of sediment above those plates is measured every year.

“Sedimentation is quite complex and we have quite a bit to understand, like is the sediment coming from elsewhere in the estuary or is it recent run off from the land. There are also physical processes such as tidal currents and waves which move the sediment around.

“We’re trying to understand what’s happening, if sedimentation rates are reducing, and if not then we need to take more corrective actions by changing human activities and land use.”

WAYS WE CAN HELP

Call 07 866 0172 or 0800 800 401 and ask for:

Activity	For assistance with	Who
Catchment management	Restoring a wetland, stream or forest area? Want to reduce erosion, run off and improve water quality? Did you know that there is financial assistance, and we can draw up a programme of works specifically for you?	Catchment management officer
Rivers or flooding	Eroding stream, in-stream blockages? Issues with vegetation choking a waterway? Our river staff can help.	River management officer
Pest plants	Issues with pest plants? Not sure how to control a pesky weed? Just need some advice?	Biosecurity pest plant officer
Navigation safety	Moorings, safety on the water, jet ski registrations, concerns about others behaviour on the water.	Harbourmaster