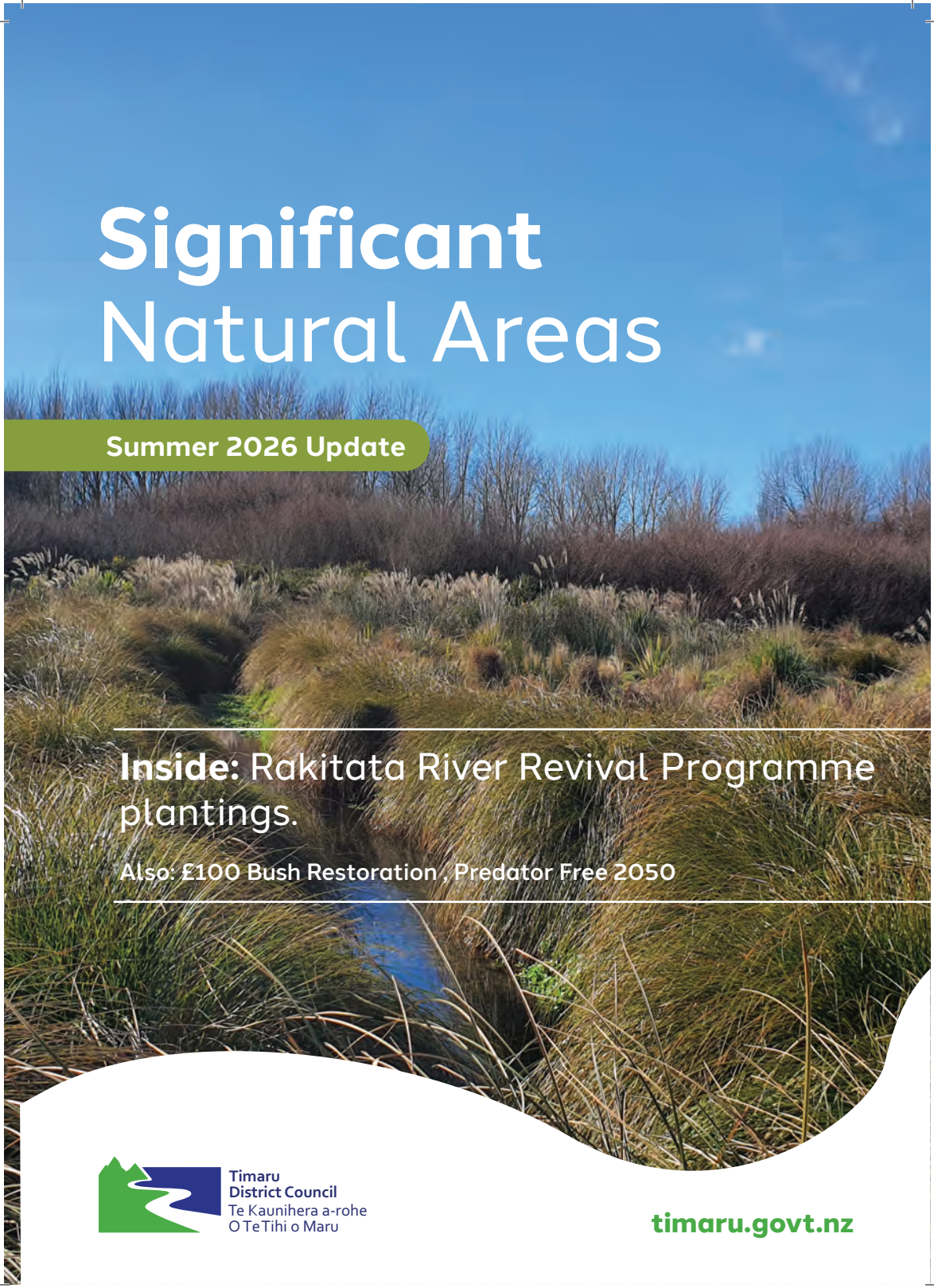
Significant Natural Areas

Summer 2026 Update



Inside: Rakitata River Revival Programme plantings.

Also: £100 Bush Restoration , Predator Free 2050

Timaru District Council
Te Kaunihera a-rohe O Te Tihi o Maru

timaru.govt.nz

HE WAKA EKE NOA

We are all in this together

Welcome to this update on Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) in the Timaru District.

While Timaru District Council has statutory responsibilities it must meet regarding protecting biodiversity, it does not want to be unnecessarily regulatory.

The team at Council are here to help and welcome the opportunity to engage with landowners and community groups as they venture into biodiversity management. There are several mechanisms available that can assist in this process, and with every situation being slightly different, the best starting point is in most cases a phone call or face-to-face meeting.

At a high-level when assessing some of the options that relate to your specific site some of the following are important things to remember when considering best practice management for protection of these special areas:

Manage plant and animal pests

Conduct appropriate weed and pest control as finances permit. Wallaby are now having a severe impact on native plant remnants, and emerging weeds – especially those producing berries and spread by birds are staring to appear with increased frequency.

Be aware of and manage potentially damaging farm activities

Some farm activities can have an inadvertent negative impact on SNAs. Be aware of activities such as overspray from crop or plant spraying, overspray or runoff from irrigation, inappropriate placement of fertiliser, burn offs or the inappropriate use of farm vehicles or machinery close to or within SNA sites.

Check consenting requirements

Check with Council as to whether your activities require consent before starting.

Seek Financial Aid

Apply to Council for contestable grants to help with protection and management and enquire about rates remissions for SNA areas.

Report Damage

If you have a roadside SNA adjoining your property (indicated by orange markers posts) report damage or missing roadside markers to Council so they can be replaced.

Conversely there are also a number of activities that can have immediate and detrimental effects on SNAs and biodiversity in general and it is important to remember to not:

Clear Indigenous Vegetation

Do not clear significant indigenous vegetation or habitats of indigenous fauna in any way, including burning, spraying with herbicides, or over-planting with exotic species.

Overstocking and the use of livestock for clearance

Avoid stocking rates or practises that could impact negatively on indigenous vegetation. Damage from sustained or overgrazing of SNAs is not always easy to detect on a day to day basis. Photos of bush margins and understory taken at yearly or two yearly intervals are a good way to evaluate if the impact of grazing is being detrimental - e.g if there is a lack of regenerative seedlings establishing in the understory then the long-term viability of the remnant is probably being compromised.

Council appreciates all those contributing to the management of biodiversity within the district and acknowledge that its existence is in many cases a reflection of the stewardship of private landowners over many generations.

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Questions or queries

If you have any questions relating to SNAs, then do not hesitate to contact either Aaron Hakkaart (Planning Manager) and William Halkett (Planning Officer), at the Timaru District Council by phone (03 687 7200), with any queries you may have. They are more than happy to assist you.

Gary Foster who is assisting the Planning Unit on a part time independent basis may also be able to help and can be contacted on 027 431 0637.

£100 Bush Restoration - Orari Gorge Station

Orari Gorge Station is a stronghold for biodiversity within the Timaru District. The station which is owned and managed by the Peacock family is 4500ha in size of which some 700ha is protected by way of designated Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) or QEII Trust covenants.

Of this total some 500ha is fenced for the exclusion of stock allowing natural revegetation and successional processes to occur unhindered by the effects of grazing.

One of these protected areas is SNA3 which is a small remnant of hardwood podocarp forest of just under 1ha located close to the station's shearing shed and yards.

This remnant is known as the '£100 (One Hundred Pound) Bush' so named because the original station owner Charles Tripp announced that anyone removing timber from this piece of bush would be fined £100.

An early photo of the area taken around 1885 shows the £100 Bush area sitting in splendid isolation in a sea of pastureland – the threat of the costly fine obviously worked!

This SNA was surveyed by Mike Harding in 2009 as part of district wide surveys, and in his report he says of this SNA "A remnant of the forest that was present and relatively common here before the arrival of humans 800 years ago.

The larger podocarp trees, kahikatea, totara and matai are hundreds and maybe more than a thousand years old". The same SNA report also states that "The margins and clearings of this forest are dominated by invasive weeds. A number of which are present in places and dominant in the forest understory. The presence and dominance of invasive plant pests is the most critical management issue facing this SNA.

Those plant pests included blackberry, hawthorn, Darwins barberry, plum, elderberry, cotoneaster, cherry laurel, Portuguese laurel and spindle berry all of which have bird dispersed fruits. Grey willow, Himalayan honeysuckle, sycamore, and the extremely vigorous climbing plant Chilean flame creeper are also invasive and are or have been present."

The SNA report finishes by saying that "While isolated from other bush on the property it does form an important part of the network of fauna habitat in the area".

Since 2021 Alex Peacock has been regularly spending time in the SNA dealing with pest plants, usually with the assistance of Karen Miles of Atmore Associates, who has been coming on most Mondays for three hours. Together they have clocked up over 500 hours of work within the SNA and their progress is easy to see with large areas formerly covered with weeds now cleared and boasting plantings of natives grown by Alex's son Charlie. Studying for his Duke of Edinburgh Award, Charlie has grown the new plants from duff collected off the floor of this SNA and other bush remnants on the property. (Duff is the leaf litter that collects on the forest floor below the forest canopy and contains seeds of many native species).

Drew Brown and Charlie Peacock at base of a large remnant totara within £100 Bush

£100 Bush Restoration - Orari Gorge Station

Charlie's expertise also extends to building bridges and steps within the SNA to assist with access for maintenance and visitors.

The SNA is located close to the station's shearing shed and Alex says that some old long drop toilets, a mule graveyard, and a naturalised potato patch that lie within have all added interest to the site and reflect the history and previous use of this locality.

The overall objective of the restoration project Alex says is to support the presence and long-term retention of the large podocarps (totara, kahikatea, matai) by restoring a diverse and self-sustaining native understory.

In the earlier stages of the restoration project gaining access through the ferocious blackberry margin was challenging and then dealing with the naturalising pest plant species of which there have been a number. Of these Khasia Berry – *Cotoneaster simonsii,* has been one of the biggest ongoing problems for Alex and Karen.

The extremely vigorous introduced climbing plant Chilean flame creeper – *Tropaeolum speciosum* is problematic and well represented within the SNA – see article later in this newsletter.

A good deal of the weed control within the SNA has been undertaken with hand applied herbicide (XTree basal) painted onto the pest plant stems and it has been found to be the most effective treatment.

This product is like a chemical ringbark and can be used to control weeds without the need to cut them down – it kills them standing.

Karen and Alex undertaking weed control

This is particularly useful for tree weed species such as sycamore, where felling or other treatments are impractical in the bush setting. The product can be applied to weed species growing close to desirable natives without any transfer occurring.

Alex says they found that if they cut down some plants to apply herbicide there was a tendency for some to resprout especially with the sycamore, elderberry, and cotoneaster, so the standing treatment has proved more effective. Himalayan honeysuckle with its very shiny stems however has proved to be an exception to this approach and the rule here is to cut and treat the cut stem surfaces.

£100 Bush Restoration - Orari Gorge Station

Before and after of a section of £100 Bush.

You also need to be aware, Alex says, that clearance of large areas of weeds such as blackberry often means reinvasion with other weed species so is something you need to be mindful of and not clearing too large an area at one time allows for better and effective follow up and maintenance of the cleared areas.

Leaving plant protectors on as long as possible around new planted natives is also advised, as the planted natives are more visible and not accidentally cut down during weed or grass clearance.

The work with clearing pest plants and undertaking revegetation plantings has by and large gone well and their efforts are facilitating an increased level of natural successional revegetation to occur within the SNA. In February of this year an open day at the £100 Bush was well attended by over 50 people.

This has been assisted by the provision of some access tracks within the bush and the placement of steps and small bridges over stream banks and crossings.

Sheep access to the SNA via a broken board in a fence resulted in a good number of the new planted natives being nibbled but these are now recovering. Unfortunately for the sheep 3 died most probably as a result of eating too much toxic plant material.

Possums, rats and mustelids are also found from time to time and trapping for these is undertaken as necessary.

Alex and Susie Peacock in recently cleared and replanted section in 2021

The same area 3 years later in 2024

£100 Bush Restoration - Orari Gorge Station

"Open Day' visitors getting ready to explore the bush.

The bush provides habitat to a range of native bird species such as grey warbler, bellbird, rifleman and kereru, and a Canterbury gecko was observed in the SNA during the recent open day. A weta shelter is also attached to a tree and regularly monitored.

An installed bat monitor has confirmed the presence of long tailed bat – pekapeka, long tailed bat in the area, although Alex is not sure that they are breeding within this SNA even though some of the older podocarps have good cavities for nesting.

When asked where to from here for the SNA Alex said she was hopeful that the work being undertaken would result in a situation where the SNA again became self-sustainable and any ongoing weed control within the area could be effectively managed by casual hand pulling.

Alex says that it is her hope that the site will be visited by other groups keen to see and hear about the project. Groups interested in visiting the £100 Bush should contact Alex Peacock by email at alex@orarigorge.co.nz

Pest File

A Colourful Threat – Chilean Flame Creeper – *Tropaeolum speciosum*

A great many of the plant pests now threatening our native ecosystems are exotic garden escapees.

Chilean Flame Creeper, introduced into New Zealand as a garden ornamental, is a good example of this. The plant is a climbing perennial often high into the canopy of native bush. It grows from a thick rootstock with long slender stems and curling tendrils. The leaves are a dull soft green and have five distinct leaflets. The flowers are a bright scarlet red and bloom between November and April. The flowers are followed in the December to March period by thin fleshy deep blue seed capsules. Sought after as a food source, these seeds are spread far and wide by birds.

The plant grows into the canopy of the supporting native bush, often forming dense layers where it alters the light levels and can prevent the establishment of lower canopy native species.

It is moderately long lived and can tolerate warm to cold temperatures, salt, wind, many soil types and damp to dry conditions.

It became naturalised (able to support self-sustaining populations) in New Zealand in 1958 and is most commonly seen in forest and shrubland ecotypes.

It is extremely hard to kill and best success is achieved by finding where the plant trunk is at ground level, then cutting and stump treating this with appropriate herbicide. Some retreatments are often necessary as rootstocks and stems do re-sprout from time to time.

Young plants can be hand pulled and removed from site for appropriate disposal. Trying to pull established vines from native bush canopy is not easy to achieve as the stems break very readily.

The plant is listed in the National Pest Plant Accord of 2020 meaning it cannot be sold, and it is also named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand (2024) by Dept of Conservation.

Overall this is a very pretty climbing plant – pretty darn awful! Every attempt should be made to eliminate it if observed.

Further information on this plant and other pest plant species can be found on the 'Weedbusters' website:

www.weedbusters.org.nz

Rakitata River Revival Programme

The Rangitata is one of the South Island's iconic braided river systems.

Long a source of food, resources and travel routes the river holds huge cultural and spiritual significance for Māori.

Rakitata is the preferred name for the river as it recognises local Kai Tahu (Ngāi Tahu) dialect which replaces 'ng' with 'k' – so, for example, 'taonga' becomes 'taoka'.

Over time the health of the river system has declined with losses in water quality and biodiversity from human initiated pressures such as encroachment, land use changes, water abstraction, invasive plants and animals, pollution and the effects of climate change.

The 'Rakitata River Revival Project' initiated by Te Rūnaka o Arowhenua, with input from a range of agencies and groups, seeks to restore the "Mauri – the essential life force of the waterway' to ensure that the whole braided river system is maintained, habitat loss and functionality are addressed, and that the cultural and spiritual values are restored and enhanced.

In 2019 a steering group was formed to oversee the project with representatives coming together in a non-statutory alliance that committed each agency to meet the vision for the river of improved cultural, economic, environmental and social outcomes.

In 2021 the catchment received two 'Jobs for Nature' initiatives through central government post-covid works.

- An $8.7 million dollar project focused on the lower Rakitata, managed by Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua.
- A $7.3 million project focused on the upper Rakitata, managed by the Upper Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group (URGLCG).

Additionally, the project also benefitted from

- Funding for pest and weed control by Tuitū Te Whenua Land information New Zealand (LINZ) as part of its biosecurity and Jobs For Nature programme.
- One Billon Trees project financial commitment to the development of the nursery infrastructure at Arowhenua.

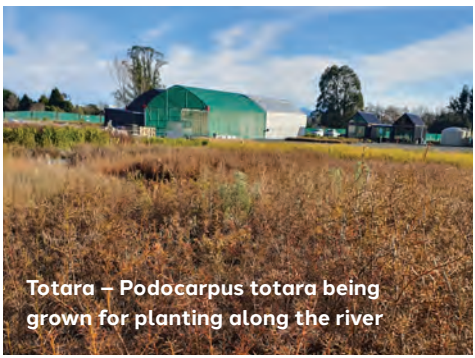
On the lower river this funding has enabled significant progress on riverside fencing, wetland restorations, pest trapping and planting natives, including establishing a native plant nursery at Arowhenua.

Such an ambitious undertaking required significant planning and preparation between the participating groups and agencies, as well as the cooperation and support of landowners along the entire length of the river.

The implementation of the lower awa projects began in 2021 and has largely been guided by Te Runanga o Arowhenua, Dept of Conservation, and Environment Canterbury.

A nursery was setup by Te Runanga o Arowhenua to collect seed from local sources and grow plants for the project. Arowhenua Native Nursery & Restoration, contractors, Dept of Conservation and key farmers in the lower catchment including Kirikiri Farm, Rangitata Dairies Ltd, and Rangitata Island Dairy Partnership, undertook the on ground work of weed control, planting, trapping and aftercare. Significant involvement of fencing

Nursery at Arowhenua setup to supply plants for the project.



Totara – Podocarpus totara being grown for planting along the river

contractors and Environment Canterbury staff were pivotal to the success of the project.

Embracing the mountains to the sea concept, for implementation purposes the project has been divided into two main activity areas. 1. Lower Rakitata, from the river mouth upstream to the Arundel Bridge. 2. Upper Rakitata, from the Arundel Bridge upstream to the Havelock / Clyde rivers confluence.

This approach recognises the distinct geographical and climatic changes that occur along the river's length, it allows for existing landowners and groups involved with rivercare activities, to share experiences and expertise at various locations.

Work on the lower catchment between the river mouth and Arundel Bridge has been focused predominantly on the berms along the true right hand side of the main Rakitata River stream and many of the spring fed streams that occur within the lower south branch of the river, which feed water into the system and provide habitat on a year-round basis. These south branch sources sit in what is now predominantly highly developed dairy farming land use.

A significant amount of land within the south branch remains crown land and is leased to adjoining owners for farming activities. The south branch of the river however continues to hold significant cultural values for Te Runanga o Arowhenua.

Work around the mouth and south Rangitata

Huts location has involved the removal of a lot of brush weeds and willow trees – mainly grey and crack willow although a mixture of other willow species is also present. Much of the willow removal (here and elsewhere in the catchment) has involved cutting and physical removal of the stems and canopies of the trees while leaving the root base plates intact to prevent excessive ground disturbance and erosion. These cut stumps were treated to prevent regrowth.

This has taken some work to achieve but has left sites with much improved access, better ongoing conditions for newly planted stock, a more 'open natural feel' typical of that which would have existed in earlier times. Restoration of access alongside the waterways recognise the traditional routes used by Māori. Follow-up work on the willows involves regrowth control both by ground means and the use of a spraying drone.

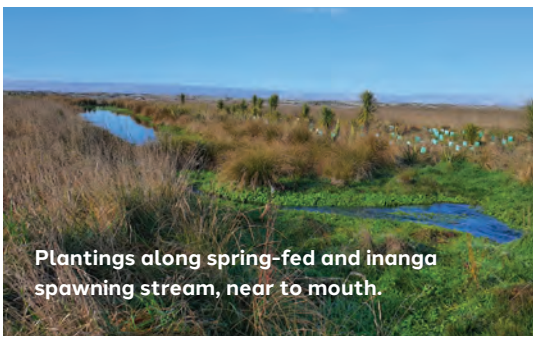
Planting along the top of the river terrace immediately upstream of the huts reserve, has eliminated what had been an ongoing problematical fly tipping activity, resulting in improved ecological outcomes.

Significant work has also been undertaken to restore flow and vegetative cover along a spring feed stream at this lower river location which is a key inanga (whitebait) spawning site and of significant cultural value.

Large areas of lower river berm have been cleared of brush weeds and have been resown with grasses to minimise the opportunity for weed reinfestation and promote inanga spawning. Prior to replanting taking place spot treatment is undertaken to control grasses and new plants are installed within staked plant protectors to eliminate browse by hares and rabbits.

The species composition of plantings in lower mouth and spawning stream area are predominantly composed of flax / *Phormium tenax*, shore ribbonwood / *Plagianthus divaricatus*, pukio / *Carex virgata*, purei / *Carex secta*, cabbage tree / *Cordyline australis*, wiwi / *Fincinia nodosa*, oioi – *Apodasmia similis*, and toetoe / *Austroderia richardii*.

Areas near the mouth cleared of willows and brushweeds, resown with grasses then planted into.



Plantings along spring-fed and inanga spawning stream, near to mouth.

Pockets of natural remnant and regenerating natives occur at many locations within the river bermlands.

In berm areas, adjacent to the huts and the spawning stream and between the planted areas and mainstream river, a buffer of uncleared brush weed has been left to provide some cushion and protection. Some natural regeneration of native species is also occurring within the buffer.

Alongside spring fed streams, emanating within farmland in the lower south branch of the river, significant willow and pest plant removal has been undertaken and extensive fencing for stock exclusion completed. These areas have been replanted with appropriate native species previously mentioned but supplemented with additional species such as mingimngi / *Coprosma propinqua*, and *Coprosma virescens*, koromiko / *Veronica salicifolia*, kohuhu / *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, tarata / *Pittosporum eugenioides*, manuka / *Leptospermum scoparium* and kanuka / *Kunzea ericoides*.

The carex species used in the stream-side revegetation plantings overgrow the water helping to keep it cool and reducing the growth of exotic plant species such as Monkey Musk / *Erythranthe guttata* within the waterways. This reduces and eliminates the need for expensive and invasive drain cleaning and vastly improves instream habitat for a range of eel, fish, and aquatic invertebrates.

While most plantings alongside the fenced spring-fed streams in the Rakitata Revival project are composed of a mix of native species (the ideal scenario for the project), wetland restoration and biodiversity specialist and DOC river ranger Brad Edwards believes that the use of purei / Carex secta alone does, in many instances, offer a low cost but effective means of improving instream water quality and habitats while reducing steam maintenance costs in all areas of the Canterbury Plains, where these improved outcomes are sought.

Mixed native streamside plantings

Fenced and planted spring fed waterways using Carex secta alone

Trays of salmon eggs at the McKinnon's Creek hatchery

A key spring-fed waterway in the lower south branch is McKinnon's Creek / Ōtakitane, long known as a spawning stream and home to what is now a volunteer operated fish hatchery for Pacific (chinook) salmon.

Each year around 200,000 salmon are grown for release back into the river system to boost reducing numbers of the species. This salmon story is another of significant cultural importance to Te Runanga o Arowhenua who have entered into an agreement with the Winnemem Wintu First Nation people of Mt Shasta, in North America, from where the first salmon released into the Rakitata River system for recreational fishing were initially sourced. It is hoped that the agreement between the two parties will ultimately result in salmon being able to be taken from the Rakitata and returned to their natural waterways in North America where numbers have significantly reduced due to various pressures.

Plantings on McKinnon's Creek above the hatchery

The entire length of McKinnon Creek has been fenced and cleared of most willows and pest plants then replanted with native species. In one location an area of willow swamp has been retained and this has been underplanted with a mix of Carex and some 5000 kahikatea trees - *Dacrycarpus dacrydoides* with the aim of establishing a kahikatea forest at this location.

In a similar undertaking a bermside area of approx. 5ha downstream of the Arundel bridge has been planted with totara – *Podocarpus totara* to replicate the significant occurrence of totara that was once common across much of the upper Canterbury plains.

Arowhenua Native Nursery & Restoration kaimahi rangers releasing plantings at McKinnon's/ Ōtakitane

ECan native revegetation plantings in Rakitata River bermlands

At many locations along the true right bank mainstream bermlands there are significant numbers of remnant and revegetating natives that occur but are not always obvious amongst the willows, poplars and brushweeds that form the predominant vegetation here. As part of the Revival programme pocket plantings of appropriate native species have been undertaken and are maintained in a multitude of clearings from the mouth to the Arundel bridge. The plan is that overtime these will provide seed source to encourage an increased rate of natural revegetation which will support a wide range of bird, lizard and invertebrate species that live within the bermlands.

Alongside this work there has also been a significant number of plantings undertaken by Environment Canterbury in a project led by Greg Stanley, looking to establish native plantings beneath existing willows and poplar protection plantings, that are also aimed to supplement seed production of natives, to encourage habitat improvement.

This ECan work has been undertaken on a number of rivers within the South Canterbury area.

While a great deal of the project work has been around fencing, weed control, and revegetation plantings, a significant animal pest control programme is also operating. The programme is in place to both protect wildlife values within the redeveloped areas but to also reduce predator numbers within the river system as a whole - to protect the very significant range of bird species that live and breed within the braided river systems.

The river encompasses typical river habitats for river bird species including backwaters, seeps, shallow and major channels, active shingle bars and flats, and river terraces. Indigenous river bird species that have been recorded on the river include wrybill, banded dotterel, black fronted dotterel, black billed gull, red billed gull, South Island pied oyster catcher, black fronted tern, Caspian tern, white fronted tern, white-winged black tern, and eastern bar-tailed godwit. Other native species include pied

Some of the over 1,500 traps in the lower reaches of the river.

stilt, little shag, grey duck, New Zealand pipit, New Zealand shoveler, paradise duck, southern-black backed gull and welcome swallow.

The river and associated berm lands also provide habitat for various lizard species and the berm forests offer suitable feeding and roosting habitat for pekapeka / long tailed bat which is known to be from the Peel Forest area.

In the lower river area, from Arundel bridge to the mouth, over 2,000 traps have been installed and are checked / cleared by Arowhenua on a regular basis. To date recorded data shows a total of 4,825 hedgehogs, 2,911 rats, 1,306 mustelids (stoats, ferrets, weasels), 51 possums and 608 other pest animals have been trapped and eliminated.

A significant number of traps are also set and maintained in the upper Rakitata River.

Currently a workforce of 21.3 fulltime people are employed by Arowhenua Native Nursery & Restoration in field work related to the Rakitata River Revival Project revival project and at the Arowhenua nursery.

In total some 7.8km of fencing, and 157,550 natives have been established as part of the project in the lower river area from the Arundel Bridge to the sea. In the last month 1,578 predator traps have been serviced within the same area.

To what extent this work will be able to continue into the future is largely dependent on funding as Arowhenua are moving their work to a commercial model with local support from landholders and agencies being essential.

This article has focused on the work being undertaken in the lower river area and next edition we will review the work undertaken within the upper Rakitata River – Arundel Bridge to the mountains, which is being undertaken by the Upper Rangitata River Landcare Group in conjunction with DOC, Te Runanga o Arowhenua and other agencies.

Predator Free 2050: South Canterbury's Local Fight for Nature

When the government announced the goal of a Predator Free New Zealand by 2050, many thought it was impossible. It felt like one of those "big hairy audacious goals" – bold, inspiring, but wildly unrealistic.

The strategy was underfunded, the scope limited, and it wasn't even tied into a fully integrated ecological plan. Yet, despite its flaws, the idea struck a chord with us Kiwis.

Big goals have a way of doing that. They push us beyond what seems achievable alone, forcing us to collaborate, innovate, and adapt. Predator Free 2050 has become less about politics and more about people: ordinary New Zealanders, from all walks of life, uniting to defend our native wildlife from introduced invaders.

Tim Exton, Ange and Chris Konings launch the 'Predator Free Timaru' programme

We are using every tool available and our kiwi ingenuity to get the job done.

"The only advantage our native species have is us. It's our job to make sure they win."

Why People Join the Fight

Motivations differ, but the movement is growing. Some are driven by heartbreak at seeing species vanish in their lifetime. Others want Tūī and Korimako (Bellbird) etc back in their backyards, or hope to see local native bush flourish again. For some, it is about the economic benefits that come from reducing pests or conservation and eco-tourism opportunities. Think of the benefits a thriving population of our native and endangered species bring to the region. Bats ranging from Geraldine, Temuka, Pleasant Point and Timaru.

A vibrant Scenic reserve, Botanical Gardens and other public spaces, including our backyards.

Predator control itself has become both a science and a community cause. High-tech traps now use artificial intelligence, while the humble rat and mouse traps remain just as important. Across the country, and here in South Canterbury, volunteers check trap lines, rebait, and record data week after week.

It's gritty, patient work, but it's winning hearts and minds like never before.

South Canterbury Steps Up

Closer to home, South Canterbury is making real progress. In Timaru, after two failed attempts, we finally secured Predator Free NZ Trust funding on our third try. That, combined with significant support from Rotary and a few committed locals, allowed us to kick-start trapping efforts around the Scenic Reserve (Centennial Park).

We have begun with the houses that border the Scenic Reserve — a crucial first step. The bigger dream is bold: one day, Centennial Park could be a true sanctuary. Few people realise that parts of the park are already officially designated as "wildlife sanctuary" land. Imagine if that status was fully realised. Our grandchildren would inherit not only a healthier environment but also tourism and education opportunities unique to Timaru.

"Some parcels of Centennial Park are already designated a wildlife sanctuary – what if we made that a reality?"

Growing the Network

Once the Scenic Reserve is surrounded, the plan is to expand outward into suburban housing areas. We will then pick another area to surround: Highfield Golf Course, Gleniti Golf Course, or the wetlands at Saltwater Creek. In fact, work on the award winning Waitarakao Lagoon Catchment Strategy has already begun expanding into the urban landscape beyond the lagoon – thanks ECAN.

Piece by piece, block by block, predator-free zones can link together until they form a larger connected network. These zones become virtual fences but still need monitoring to stop reinfestation occurring. We achieve this by encouraging trappers to join a TrapNZ project and input their data via the web app.

There is a need for more trapping to be occurring in our rural areas, other towns and especially SNAs. Anywhere there is native restoration work there needs to be trapping to protect what is being restored. The birds, bats and geckos all need habitat, food and protection from predator pests.

The growth of the network is also about enhancing the team's abilities. Check out the Eco Centre for upcoming events that focus on training trappers so we can all improve and expand our skills.

This is how impossible goals become possible — through persistence, partnerships, and local action.

A Shared Battle

Introduced predators are tough, adaptive, relentless and often better equipped for survival than our vulnerable natives. The only advantage our skinks, bats, birds, and insects have is us. Together, we can tip the balance.

Predator Free 2050 may have started as a political announcement, but it's the grassroots that are making it real. South Canterbury is proving that even when the goal feels impossible, people will roll up their sleeves and get to work.

We are developing some expertise now in Timaru to add to the expertise already out in our rural areas.

But we can always learn more and improve. That's what we want to achieve in our events. If you're new to this trapping game or have been doing it for years, let's get together and learn something new to give our natives that extra edge in the battle against the invaders.

Because in the end, it's about more than traps and targets. It's about whether the dawn chorus still sings in our children's children's future.

How You Can Help

Predator Free 2050 isn't just a national goal – it's something every South Cantabrian can be part of.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

Join a local trapping group – Whether it's at Centennial Park, Waitarakao Lagoon, Claremont Bush, Talbot Forest, Project Peel, the ORPG or your own backyard, every trap makes a difference. (If there isn't one nearby, start one and we will help you.)

Set a trap at home – Simple rat and mouse traps are still powerful tools. You'll be surprised how effective one household can be.

Volunteer your time – Many local groups need help with checking trap lines, rebaiting, or recording data.

Support with donations – Community projects rely on funding for traps, bait, and monitoring equipment.

Provide your expertise and skills - in building, web design, admin, data management, publicity, and communications.

Learn & share – Talk to friends, neighbours, and schools about the importance of predator control and native wildlife.

Together, we can make South Canterbury a place where the birds return, the bush thrives, and future generations hear a richer dawn chorus.

Tips and techniques for successful trapping

Think like what you're trying to catch. If it's a rat it doesn't like new things, so give it a week to get used to your new trap, bait the trap but don't set it. If the bait goes you know they are interested. Then set your trap.

Learn their behaviour so you know where to place your trap. Rats like the protection that edges give. You seldom see them cross open space. Place your trap beside and in-line with a fence, curb, edge of a building.

Think how the predator hunts. By sight or by smell? What would they expect to find? Try using a lure to create a scent corridor. Make them feel safe and excited about the feed they are about to receive on your trap. Bang! and the rat is gone.

Put together a trapping kit with all the things you might need when you head out to check traps; bait, tools and health and safety stuff.

Always keep your fingers out of the way of the trap zone. Bait first. Set second.

TIMARU
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe
o Te Tihi o Maru

YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
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