



Photo by Jo Roberts - Foxton Beach Jan 2024

Pāpāngai Te Wharangi Manawatū Estuary Newsletter - November 2024

Kia ora / greetings

It is with great pleasure that we bring you our first community newsletter from the Manawatū Estuary Management Team. The Estuary is a special place for many of us and we are working hard to enhance it for our mutual benefit and enjoyment.

There is a long history of the area, which is referred to by its full name Pāpāngai Te Wharangi Manawatū Estuary.

There are a wide range of native and precious plants, birds, fungi, and animals that are found in our little part of the world and some of them are barely seen anywhere else at all.



Our community has been working hard for many years to offer safe places for our migratory birds that travel to and from Korea, Russia, Alaska, and other parts of the world.

We are people that live in this community and are working together to protect and enhance this special place. You may have seen some of us in the dunes around the estuary pulling weeds or planting. You may have seen us at the viewing platform on Sunset Parade welcoming the birds back for summer. We are checking traps, monitoring bird numbers, discovering plant species, and making plans for the future.

We have seen a gradual decline in bird numbers for a number of decades and we are looking to halt the decline and help ensure our local environment is again a safe space where these birds can find food and safety while they prepare for the journey to other parts of Aotearoa or across the world.



Traps available with free hire from Wildlife Foxton Trust at the Beach (refundable bond needed)

Rats, stoats, and ferrets are a threat to birds, and we are building our network of traps around the estuary and within the urban community. Over the coming months and years, we will be expanding our trap network and working with the community to host traps and record the catch data.

Local History

The history of the [Pāpāngaio Te Wharangi](#) Manawatū Estuary predates all of us. For some of us our connections with this place go back generations, for others we have only recently discovered this gem.

The river mouth and the estuary are places that evolve relatively quickly and continuously. There are many stories of the bird, plant, and animal life that used to be found here in abundance.

We have seen a lot of pressure on our environment from people, animals, and everything that flows down the river.

In July 2005 the Manawatū Estuary was declared a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention.

In 2006 the Manawatū Estuary Management Team (MEMT), comprising representatives from local Iwi, Department of Conservation, Horizons Regional Council, Horowhenua District Council, the Manawatū Estuary Trust, and others in the community, was established to coordinate efforts to protect and enhance the site and the nature which depends on it.

Who Are We

We are embarking on the next stage of our journey as we prepare a new Manawatū Estuary Management Plan with strong Iwi and community input alongside the various government agencies.

We include:

- Local hapū and Iwi within the area.
- Manawatū Estuary Trust, Wildlife Foxton Trust, Forest and Bird Horowhenua and Manawatū, NZ Four Wheel Drive Association, Save Our River Trust, and local community residents.
- Department of Conservation, Horizons Regional Council, Horowhenua District Council, and Te Awahou Foxton Community Board.



Mahinga Kai / Food Basket

The Manawatū Awa and tributaries are an important ecosystem and are considered as a Pātaka Kai a.k.a. Supermarket for many of our whānau, hapū and community that provides both food and an abundance of other resources from this environment and associated areas.

A rich variety of fish (ngaika) and shellfish (moana kai), natural resources used as food (kai) and medicine (rongoa) as well as for traditional arts like flax/harakeke and Pingao for weaving.

It's important that we continue to maintain and enhance all within the Manawatū Estuary and tributaries for future generations and be good Kaitiaki or Guardians of our Taiao/Environment.



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