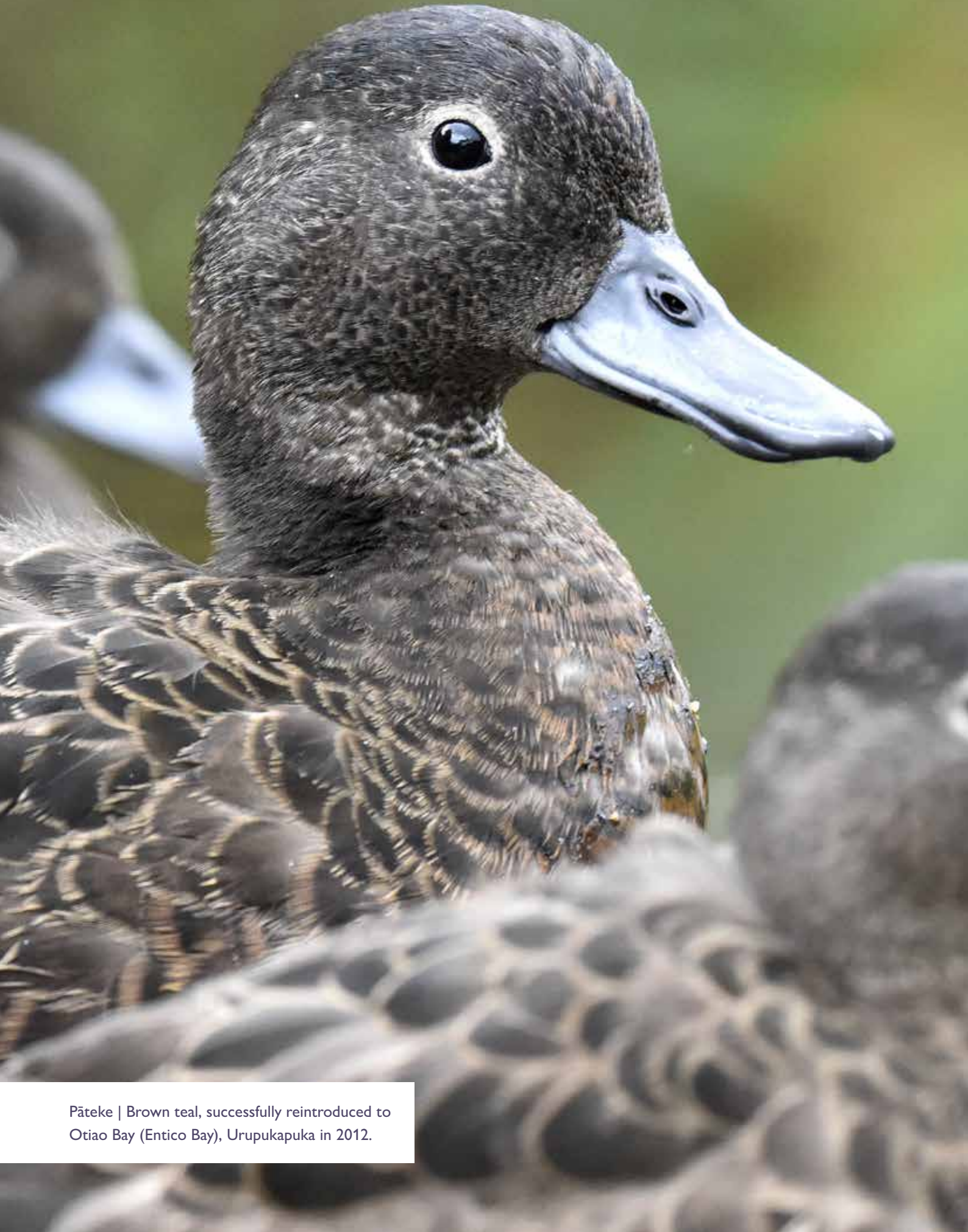


Teaming with wildlife
Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc. Annual Report

Ngā Kaiawhi o Ngā Kaitiaki o Ipipiri

For the year ended 30 June 2024



Pāteke | Brown teal, successfully reintroduced to Otiao Bay (Entico Bay), Urupukapuka in 2012.

2050 Whāinga 2050 Goal

The ancient dawn chorus is restored

Mihi

Te Maunga ko Rākaumangamanga o te whare tapu o Ngāpuhi

Te Moana ko Ipipiri o Tokerau

Te Hapū ko Ngāti Kuta me Patukeha

Te Iwi ko Ngāpuhi

Te marae ko Te Rāwhiti

The sacred mountain is Rākaumangamanga of the sacred house of Ngāpuhi

The ocean is Ipipiri o Tokerau

The sub tribes are Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha

The tribe is Ngāpuhi

The marae is Te Rāwhiti

Tō mātou moemoeā Our vision

The islands of Ipipiri are an archipelago of sanctuaries, alive with the dawn chorus, where both people and Aotearoa New Zealand's unique wildlife prosper in harmony.

On the cover: Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the first reintroduction of Toutouwai | North Island robin to Ipipiri.

What we do:



Pest Control & Biosecurity

Protecting the wildlife safe haven by stopping non-native predators and weeds from getting to the pest-free islands.



Forest Regeneration

Restoring native habitat so that the islands flourish.



Restoring Taonga Wildlife

Returning vulnerable native wildlife.



Inspiring Learning

Providing future generations of kiwis with inspiring learning.

Pānui mai i ngā Heamana Message from the Co-Chairs

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha.
 Anei te pūrongo o ngā tiamana.

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Once again, the end of the financial year is always a good time for reflection and a time to look forward. Incredibly the Guardians of the Bay of Islands was established twenty-one years ago, and for the last thirteen years Richard Robbins has been at the helm. Sadly, this year sees us farewelling Richard as our General Manager as he embarks on new life adventures.

We celebrate the remarkable efforts of Richard, a driving force behind Project Island Song. Richard's unwavering dedication to conservation and his leadership has helped transform the landscapes of the Bay of Islands, forever.

Through Project Island Song, Richard has not only helped restore native habitats but also inspired countless individuals to join the cause of environmental stewardship. His passion for preserving biodiversity and protecting our natural heritage has left a considerable mark on our community and future generations to come. Richard's tireless commitment to this cause serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that each of us has the power to make a difference.

On behalf of all those whose lives he has impacted, we extend our deepest gratitude for his contributions to our planet. Thank you, Richard, for your vision, your dedication, and your unwavering commitment to creating a brighter, more sustainable future for us all. We are immensely grateful for everything you have done and will continue to do.

This year we welcome Laura Rumsey, our former Engagement Manager, to the role of General Manager. Laura joined the Project Island Song team in 2020 and has had a diverse role - from enabling communities to actively participate in Project Island Song, to managing our education programme. We welcome Laura to her new role and look forward to working with her.

We also welcome Carola Guerresi as Administrator and Kirstie MacDiarmid as our new Education & Volunteer Lead/

Coordinator. Shelley Arlidge retired as our Administrator but fortunately for us she became a committee member and now the Committee Secretary. Thank you, Shelley.

We'd like to acknowledge our skipper, Tim Grant, who sadly and unexpectedly passed away this year. Our thoughts go out to Tim's whānau, friends and colleagues. He is missed by everyone who knew him.

This year also saw committee members step down, Hetty Van Hale, Nadia Lehmann and Tom Lindesay. We're grateful to all for their commitment and dedication, in particular we'd like to highlight Tom's planting knowledge and his continued support of the planting programme.

Long-time committee member Andrea Sim also needs a thank you. We appreciate her ability to reflect on our course and steer the waka in the right direction. Mary Moore's treasurer abilities don't go unnoticed either.

Another big thank you to Darren Markin for allowing us to use his wonderful photos both on our updated and improved website and our annual calendar. To all our volunteers who work behind the scenes - thank you. Without your support our Project wouldn't be as successful as it is.

Looking ahead we are prepared and confident that the Project Island Song team has the capacity to rise to any challenge we might have to face. Our vision remains strong and clear. We look forward to welcoming new committee members at the AGM.

Thank you all.

Nō reira, e ngā kaitiaki, e mihi kau ana ki a koutou mō tō koutou kaha ki te tiaki i ngā taonga o tātou.

Noho ora mai,

Barb Elboz (Co-chair) and William Fuller (Co-chair)
 Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc.



Kōtare | Sacred kingfisher on Moturua.

Karere mai i te Kaiwhakahaere Matua Message from the GM

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It is with great pride that I introduce the Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc. annual report for the year ending 30 June 2024. The past year has resulted in significant outcomes for the Guardians, and it has been an extremely successful 12 months. We have effectively delivered our ecological restoration, education, and fundraising activities. During this reporting period we have focused on our future as we take on new responsibilities. Productivity has undoubtedly been enhanced during the inaugural year of Mārara, the first dedicated Project Island Song workboat.

On 20 June 2024 we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the reintroduction of Toutouwai/North Island robin to Ipipiri (as shown on our front cover), our first wild-to-wild species translocation to the islands. Over the following years the Project Island Song partners have achieved so much. Collectively maintaining seven pest-free islands has been a phenomenal outcome, whilst habitat restoration, the volunteer programme, and the reintroduction of several further endemic species have taken a lot of focus. It has been great to reflect on the scale of change over the years, but this is sometimes difficult to perceive. However, it is often the seemingly insignificant moments that bring all of our hard work into focus; finding numerous banded rail footprints on monitoring tracking cards, looking up at the newly forming canopy of volunteer-planted trees from years past, and finding my first wild wētāpunga poo on the islands!

Whilst there has been a lot to celebrate over the last 12 months, we also experienced great sadness due to the sudden and tragic passing of Tim Grant. Tim was a key member of the Project Island Song skipper team. I will always treasure the time we spent together bringing Mārara up from Tauranga and bringing her into service. Our thoughts are with Tim's whānau and friends at this difficult time. In memory of Tim and his time with the Project, we have shared one of his poems, *Ipipiri*, on the following page.

This will be my last report as General Manager, as after 13 rewarding years with the Guardians I tendered my resignation. In my last fortnight with Project Island Song, it was incredibly satisfying taking part in a Floating Classroom on Moturuua. This experience reinforced with me the impact we can have in our community both now and in the future. This has only been possible due to the fantastic team that have supported me in this role, and I am reassured I am leaving Project Island Song in safe hands, and I look forward to following the progress of the Project into the future. With all of this in mind, I give heartfelt thanks to all our contractors, mana whenua, Guardians committee, volunteers, landowners, partners, members, donors, funders, and to everyone we have engaged with and worked alongside through this truly outstanding year.

Ngā mihi nui,

Richard Robbins

General Manager (to May 2024)





Mahara mō Tim Grant Remembering Tim Grant

Ipipiri

Reality
 no longer an epiphany
 return to near originally
 dawn chorus of island song,
 that lasts all day long
 the team behind the teaming with wildlife
 on every Well-Worn-Womble trail
 flora and fauna proliferation
 manu whenua tangata whenua dedication
 volunteers, monitors,
 philanthropic contributors,
 corporate members
 walk barefoot amongst history
 Ngāti Kuta, Patukeha, Guardians of the Bay
 te mahi tino pai aue
 re-introduction, re-vegetation, rejuvenation
 tangata whenua moko of tupuna
 ancestors of farmers
 descendants of harmers
 importers of kiore, Ship and Norway
 not great company
 then cats, stoats and weasels
 now relief
 12 years, pest free.

Tim Grant

Tō mātou tau ki muri

Our year in review

Conservation dogs guard our taonga

We are now transitioning the islands' pest-management and surveillance work, as well as responsibility and costs, from the Department of Conservation to the Guardians. As a result, from September 2023 we began regular monthly rodent dog checks of the seven pest-free islands.

This vital work ensures that any pest incursions are detected and responded to swiftly. The value of these highly trained dogs and their expert handlers was clearly demonstrated in April 2024 when the scent of a rat was picked up on the islands, triggering an incursion response which led quickly to the trapping of a ship rat on Poroporo.

September 2023 – June 2024:



Rodent
dog checks: **39 days**



Mustelid
dog checks: **7 days**



Plague Skink
dog checks: **5 days**



Cat
dog checks: **6 days**



Argentine Ant
dog checks: **5 days**

This work could not have happened without support from the Conservation Dogs Programme, funders and generous donations from supporters.

You can protect the islands and their wildlife from invasive predators by making a donation.

Either scan the QR code or visit our website:
projectislandsong.co.nz/donate



244

active
volunteers

1760

volunteer
hours gifted

14

years
pest-free

16

business
members

300+

juvenile
wētāpunga
translocated

25

weeding
trips

9

floating
classrooms

28

other education
activities

62

days of
conservation
dog visits

717

trees
planted



Conservation dog handler, Miriam Ritchie, with Will and Ahu, checking for rodents on Moturua.

Ā tātou pūtea

Our finances

FY23/24 is the first financial year operating Mārara, with the Guardians' stepping up their direct involvement in delivering, promoting, and leading biosecurity pest surveillance and monitoring activity in and around Ipipiri. The financial environment continues to be tight and grant funding extremely competitive. This year total funds received are behind FY23/24 budget expectation of \$584,000 due to a change in the timing of funding from the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust. This change is welcomed as receipt of the funding now aligns with delivery of the Education programme and avoids the need to carry forward significant unspent grant funding.

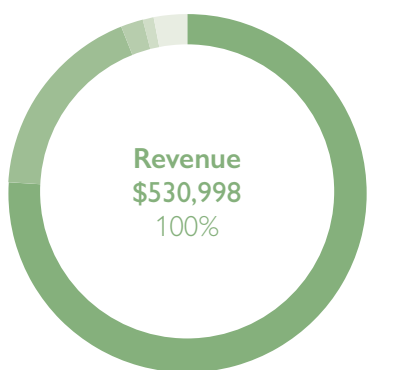
Foundation North has continued their grant support for our operational programme delivery, while NZ Lottery Grants Board (Community and Environment & Heritage), Northland Regional Council, and COGS supported ongoing investment in our kaimahi empowerment, volunteer operations, weeding and pest control programmes. A grant from the Chenery Memorial Trust has enabled us to progress planning for a facility on Urupukapuka Island. Donations were boosted by funds from the George Hansen Estate and a distribution of funds from Aroha Island Charitable Trust, while fundraising received a significant boost from a successful raffle and the annual sale

of calendars. The Guardians continue to receive unbudgeted interest income on both short-term bank investments.

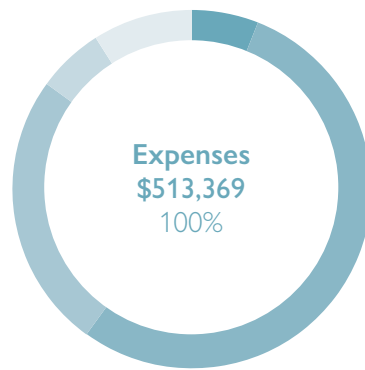
An incredible 96% of the \$344,976 grant funding brought forward from FY22/23 was spent delivering the Education programme, 33%, and pest management/biosecurity, 47%. In addition, 36% of the FY23/24 grants received was also spent, leaving a total of \$146,564 to be carried over into FY24/25 to continue delivery of the educational, volunteering, biosecurity and translocation programmes.

The current year surplus of \$17,630 is reflective of an active year delivering foundation activities of education and weeding as well as introducing pest surveillance/dog work as a core deliverable. This has been ably assisted by continued grant funding, diversification of income streams, and growing corporate/community support through memberships, volunteering, and in-kind donations of materials and services.

The financial position of the Guardians remains steady through combined management of the Operations team and Committee. The joint decision to maintain sufficient Guardians reserves to cover four months' core operating costs is considered prudent, ensuring the continuity of vital pest surveillance work.



Grants	\$403,412	75.9%
Other donations and fundraising	\$100,135	18.9%
Fees and subscriptions from members	\$7,687	1.5%
From providing goods and services	\$6,545	1.2%
Interest income	\$13,218	2.5%



Related to public fundraising	\$31,308	6.1%
Volunteer and employee/mission delivery costs	\$278,715	54.3%
Costs of providing goods & services	\$128,417	25%
Transportation	\$30,675	6%
Other expenses	\$44,254	8.6%

Surplus	\$17,630
Assets	\$550,616
Bank accounts and cash	\$280,856
Other current assets	\$38,984
Property, plant & equipment	\$217,200
Other non-current assets	\$13,576

Liabilities	\$196,492
Unused tagged grants and donations	\$146,564
Other liabilities	\$49,928
Net Assets	\$354,124



Our Kaitiaki Ranger, Shane Maddren, gives a talk to students from the R. Tucker Thompson Youth Voyage on the beach at Otupoho Bay (Homestead Bay), Moturua.

Tō tātou ekenga ki mua hāi

Our future

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It is a privilege to take on the role of General Manager during this transitional time for the organisation. Richard's reflections on his last 13 years with the organisation have captured what a significant impact the Project has had on the Bay of Islands. So many people have come together throughout the years with the common goal of keeping these taonga islands pest-free and thriving. Without these incredible people and their hard mahi the Project would not be where it is.

Over the last year, many of us have been affected by significant cost-of-living increases, and as a charity we have also felt these effects. We will likely continue to see these impacts for the foreseeable future, with funding opportunities becoming increasingly competitive or disappearing.

To help combat this, we continue to develop alternative funding opportunities which included our first ever raffle, which proved very popular. We are grateful to Eagles Nest for donating such a generous prize to make this possible.

We've also joined forces with other organisations to collaborate and deliver programmes in partnership to achieve collective outcomes for the Bay of Islands. In particular, working with the R. Tucker Thompson Sail Training Trust to deliver elements of our education and volunteer programme through their week-long Youth Voyages, engaging rangatahi in developing lifelong skills, friendship and knowledge about the local environment.

Looking ahead we'd like to continue this and look at opportunities to engage local businesses and organisations in contributing to the islands whether that be financially or through support by other means.

Conservation work is as important as it has ever been. 2024 will see the Project celebrate 15 years of pest-free status, a huge achievement and something to be celebrated. As part of this we will be launching a biosecurity campaign aiming to encourage locals and visitors to get involved in conservation and keep these beautiful islands pest-free when visiting them. You can read more about this on the following page.

We will also be working on an Ecological Restoration Plan for the islands which aims to provide a 20-year framework for our restoration activities. This will build on the success and learnings of the last 15 years and complement the initiatives and mahi that have taken place on the islands as well as the surrounding mainland.

We know that the year ahead isn't going to be easy, but we hope to reinvigorate our volunteer programme and activities that enable these islands to remain a place of enjoyment, respite, solitude and a place we all care for, together.

Ngā mihi nui,

Laura Rumsey
 General Manager (from June 2024)

“
 Conservation work is as important as it has ever been. 2024 will see the Project celebrate 15 years of pest-free status, a huge achievement & something to be celebrated.
 ”



Give your gear the all clear – our biosecurity campaign

Unwanted pests and weeds on the islands can be devastating to wildlife. 2024 sees us celebrating Ipipiri being pest-mammal free for 15 years, and we want to keep it that way.

With the transition of responsibilities for pest-surveillance and management on the islands being transferred from the Department of Conservation to the Guardians, it is vital we share biosecurity messaging with the community to help prevent the risks of incursions. With support from Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) we have developed a biosecurity campaign for the islands to encourage everyone to 'give your gear the all clear'. The campaign will launch in Spring/Summer 2024 and aims to positively share the benefits of us all doing our part to help keep the islands pest-free into the future.

Without support from locals and tourists the islands of Ipipiri are at risk of incursions. Whether you're a landowner, business, local or tourist visiting the islands, there are a few simple steps you can take to help protect our endangered island wildlife from invasive predators and diseases:

- **Clean your shoes:** remove all mud, dirt and seeds from footwear to help prevent Kauri Dieback disease and weed seeds reaching the islands
- **Check your bags:** look for and remove any seeds, ants, skinks and mice
- **Check your boat:** look for signs of rodents, Caulerpa seaweed, seeds, ants and skinks

For more information on the campaign and how to give your gear the all clear we strongly encourage you to visit our website and share this information with your friends and whānau visiting the islands. The more we all do to keep the islands safe, the more the wildlife will flourish.

projectislandsong.co.nz/biosecurity





Our vital weedbusting team clearing a crop of invasive moth plant seed pods on Motuarohia.

Ngā mihi ki ngā Kaitautoko Thanks & acknowledgements

The Guardians of the Bay of Islands/Project Island Song would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank all those involved with the Project to ensure these beautiful pest-free islands are around and thriving for future generations. Acknowledging, in particular, Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha, our dedicated volunteers and members; without your time and dedication this incredible wildlife sanctuary wouldn't exist.

We'd also like to acknowledge our 2023-2024 Business Members:



Donors, funders and in-kind supporters

Without the generous support of donors, funders and in-kind supporters we would not be able to continue the work we do.



If you've seen a pest on the islands, please call
0800 362 468 immediately, and also email us at
pest@projectislandsong.co.nz

Project Island Song is a unique partnership between community group the Guardians of the Bay of Islands, Te Rāwhiti hapū (Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha) and the Department of Conservation.

5 Pitt Street, Russell 0202
P.O. Box 142, Russell 0242

To find out more about our work, volunteer with us, or be part of the project in another way, please visit our website:
projectislandsong.co.nz

Follow the Project Island Song story on social media:

 /project.island.song

 @projectislandsong

 /projectislandsong



Caring for the environment is vitally important to Project Island Song, which is why this document is printed using environmentally friendly, dry toners on responsibly sourced paper.

