



The Nature
Conservancy 

Aotearoa New Zealand

LEVERAGING SCIENCE AND
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE TO PROTECT
NATURAL RESOURCES AT SCALE

*Our vision for Aotearoa New Zealand
is present in this Māori whakataukī
(proverb):*

Toitū te marae a Tāne-mahuta,

Toitū te marae a Tangaroa,

Toitū te tangata

*(If the land is well and the sea is well,
the people will thrive)*

How We Make A Difference

Since 2018, TNC in Aotearoa NZ has worked across land, ocean and freshwater. TNC works with the government, iwi, private industry and other environmental NGOs.

2030 GOALS:

- ◆ Reduce carbon emissions
- ◆ Help build climate resilience
- ◆ Conserve our oceans and freshwater
- ◆ Promote healthy land
- ◆ Support local leaders



OUR BASE: IMPACT AT SCALE AND TRANSFORMATIVE COLLABORATION

1 KOTAHITANGA MŌ TE TAI AO ALLIANCE

Collaboration to protect and restore over 3 million hectares

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT; “collective action for our nature”) implements landscape-scale conservation projects with wider social, cultural and economic outcomes across Te Taihū and Kawatiri/Buller in the northern part of the South Island. Working to protect over 3 million hectares of land, freshwater and sea, KMTT includes the New Zealand Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment and Fisheries New Zealand alongside nine iwi (Māori tribal units) and five local councils. Projects aligned with KMTT’s strategy and vision include catchment and wetland restoration from the coasts and sounds to the mountain tops, building habitat corridors and weed and pest-free halos across the landscape, and restoring the coastal and marine ecosystems. In 2023, KMTT was featured on BBC Earth’s Our Frozen Planet.

2 BLUE CARBON

Restoring coastal wetlands through carbon credits

Aotearoa NZ has lost over 90 percent of its wetlands, including in coastal areas. Coastal wetlands such as mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrass meadows are now being recognised as potential carbon sinks, with added benefits for habitat restoration and biodiversity. TNC Aotearoa New Zealand is part of TNC’s Global Blue Carbon Programme, creating voluntary carbon and climate resilience credits from restoring these coastal habitats. Carbon credit revenue can, in turn, support future restoration and protection, making conservation sustainable and profitable for local communities. We are collecting data at seven Aotearoa NZ sites to help build the evidence base to bring blue carbon credits to market after 2025. The project will also provide educational resources and contribute to policy research.

3 HAWKE’S BAY: LAND FOR LIFE

Demonstrating profitable, sustainable farming

Land in the Hawke’s Bay agricultural region has experienced extreme stress from current land use as well as Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023, exacerbating hill country erosion and sediment in the region’s waterways, affecting water quality and aquatic life and impacting the economic viability of farming communities. Tree planting on pastoral lands can stabilize soil, capture carbon, provide forestry revenue and support alternative sources of income like honey production and credits for carbon sequestration. This joint project with Hawke’s Bay Regional Council and the Ministry for Primary Industries supports farmers to engage in regenerative agricultural practices that reduce waterway pollution and fight climate change to build a sustainable future.

4 CONSERVATION LEADERS

Building the capacity of the environmental sector

With the help of our partners, TNC NZ is building the capacity of Aotearoa NZ’s conservation and natural resource management leaders to achieve even greater impact. We aim to train up to 180 conservation and natural resource management leaders from across the country in the internationally recognized Conservation Action Planning approach, as well as assisting up to 30 people to become qualified Conservation Coaches. These conservation leaders will be better equipped to deliver landscape-scale projects that achieve impacts at a level that affects whole ecosystems and will empower others to lead similar projects.

5 RESTORING HAURAKI GULF: SHELLFISH RESTORATION

Over 370 tonnes of mussel beds reestablished

Rebuilding the Hauraki Gulf’s mussel beds will boost the marine ecosystem. Shellfish play a key role in cleaning water; supplying food and habitat for fish, crabs and birds; and providing coastal protection against climate-related storm surges and rising seas. In partnership with iwi, University of Auckland and The Mussel Reef Restoration Trust, we have deployed over 370 tonnes of mussels into the gulf, and we are monitoring the survival and health of the restored reefs.

6 PACIFIC ISLANDS COMMUNITY

Women-led conservation in Solomon Islands

Aotearoa NZ is committed to being a good neighbour in the Pacific. Working with our Solomon Islands programme colleagues, we support local women’s collectives in Solomon Islands, alongside the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to establish and operate a community facility centred around the largest rookery of critically endangered hawksbill turtles in the Southern Hemisphere. We will continue to work with TNC’s Pacific Islands programme to identify further opportunities to help those communities protect the land and water on which all life depends.

“Aotearoa New Zealand has unique ecosystems treasured by a highly aware and engaged population. We can achieve a great deal for nature and people by collaborating at a transformative scale with government, iwi and communities. We have the innovative tools and approaches to do this, and are building the movement we need to make it happen. We need your support to help Aotearoa thrive.

— Abbie Reynolds
TNC Aotearoa New Zealand
Country Director



For more information on The Nature Conservancy's Aotearoa New Zealand Program, and how your support can make a real difference, please contact:

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Clockwise from right: A White-faced heron on a West Coast beach. © Lauryn Wachs/TNC; Deploying mussels back into the Hauraki Gulf to restore its reefs. © Shaun Lee; Finding Gecko on the Wakapuaka Whangamoā Project. © Kūmānu Environmental; Kūmānu Environmental staff undertaking Flora Project planting in Nelson 2022. © Hudson Dodd; Setting traps on the environmental sustainability programme. © Whenua Iti

Cover image: The Te Hoiere River catchment in Marlborough is an important project area for the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance. © iStock