

July 2018

TAIRUA: HEALTHY CATCHMENT, HEALTHY HARBOUR

PŪAHA ORA, RIU WAI ORA



TĒNĀ KOUTOU!

It's hard to believe another year has gone by and in that time there has certainly been a lot of great catchment work carried out by various agencies and community groups. Our newsletters have taken a bit of a hiatus due to staff changes, but our work on the ground has continued in the Tairua catchment.

The Graham's Creek Flood Scheme was officially opened in August 2016, and there's been ongoing work with landowners to enhance biodiversity values; we've increased restoration works by adding to our predator control programme, mangroves have been removed, and a lot has been done to the Tairua River.

Fortunately, the flood events that wreaked havoc around the peninsula in the last 18 months largely missed Tairua. Phew!

Please take the time to read about some of our many activities which contribute to the implementation of your harbour and catchment plan. If you have any questions or comments, please get in touch with a member of the team. Our contact details are on the back page.

Ngā mihi

Hauraki Coromandel Integrated Catchment Management team

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Graham's Creek Flood Scheme
- Monitoring the environment
- The passing of a couple of local legends
- Biosecurity news
- Diving for pests
- Maritime Safety News

TAIRUA HARBOUR AND CATCHMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Seven years have passed since the Tairua Harbour and Catchment Management Plan was written. The plan sets the direction and priorities of our works programme, therefore is integral in everything we do.

It's great to see the things that started as an idea over a map during community discussions while developing the plan are now becoming a reality, e.g. the walkway from Pauanui to Hikuai by Hikuai Development Trust, saltwater paspalum control and mangrove management works.

To refresh yourself with the plans, see waikatoregion.govt.nz/hcmp.

1. A RESTORATION PLAN

Over the next month we'll be rolling out a 'harbour scale' ecological restoration plan targeting threatened habitats around the Tairua Harbour. This is exciting as it will build on historic and existing restoration works, while also mapping a way forward for new works with the potential to include more predator control, pest plant control and restoration planting. While rewarding, this work requires many hands to keep it going and to ensure success. We're already talking to key community groups about opportunities for their involvement. Keen to get involved yourself? Please call catchment management officer Rob Corkill.

2. FEATHERED FRIENDS FLOURISHING

We've had some exciting results from a study of wetland birds carried out last October. Eight acoustic recorders were set up to detect cryptic wetland bird species in the Oturu Wetland. We were looking specifically for signs of threatened bird species, and during the study our recorders

detected critically endangered Australasian bitterns. Nationally at risk North Island fernbird and banded rail were also recorded in reasonable numbers.

Hearing banded rail at most locations within the Oturu saltmarsh was especially heartening. While this work cannot determine the outcome of breeding attempts, the acoustic data did record numerous social purr and trill calls. This indicates that there is a good breeding population within the recently commissioned predator control network area.

3. PREDATOR CONTROL UPDATE

A council predator control programme, focused on protecting threatened avifauna such as banded rail, Australasian bittern and New Zealand fernbird, is ongoing at Graham's Creek, Pepe Inlet and Oturu Wetland. Trap lines were established in September 2015 and have resulted in 474 target species trapped to date. Traps and bait stations have also been set up in the Hikuai Cabbage Tree Forest.

4. FLOOD AND RIVER WORKS

While the Graham's Creek Flood Scheme stood up to the test of the severe weather events, other rivers and streams did not fare as well.

At one point during the flood event in March last year, the Tairua River had more cubic metres of water flowing in it than the Waikato River. As a result, erosion protection works completed in February 2017 were destroyed at one site. This work was immediately reinstated post flood.

Fortunately, large scale river improvement works undertaken in collaboration with the NZ Transport Agency in February 2016 on the Tairua River immediately upstream of a bridge on the Kopu-Hikuai Road were



Gravel/vegetation island split the Tairua River resulting in significant erosion.

unaffected by the March/April 2017 flood events. Planned follow up works were completed in November.

A successful summer river works season preceded the March/April floods. River maintenance and improvements were done on the Tramway Gully Stream and Tairua River at a number of locations to remove blockages and undertake erosion protection. Erosion protection works were undertaken on Graham's Stream in the mid-catchment, attempting to minimise sediment entering the flood scheme. The works were successful and we hope the effects will be positive.

GRAHAM'S CREEK FLOOD SCHEME

The Graham's Creek Flood Scheme was officially opened on 27 August 2016 and has already been put to the test – with much success! The first time was during floods in the region a month after the opening, followed by more floods in March and April 2017, with smaller weather events in recent times.

No flooding from adjacent Graham's Creek property owners was reported during those wet and wild events, and the effectiveness of the scheme has been praised by them and other community members.

Maintenance of the stopbanks will continue, including cleaning debris and vegetation from the weed screen and fences and looking after the native plants. Some overhanging riparian vegetation downstream of the flood gate has also been removed to prevent possible collapse of the stream bank.

River management is ongoing and further works will be planned in the Tairua catchment for the 2018/19 summer. We hold resource consents authorising in-stream works allowing obstruction removal, gravel management and erosion protection. If you are aware of river issues, please contact your local river management officer, James Ferrier-Kerr.

5. MANGROVES

About 17.81 hectares of mangroves have been removed from the Tairua Harbour, with the last stages of removal at Tairua Cemetery and Oturu Wetland due to be completed this year.

Seedling removal has been carried out by volunteers, but some of the areas are tricky to access so we've been asked to provide contracted support.

We would like to acknowledge the Tairua-Pauanui Community Board for providing a couple of seedling supervisors to help get the seedling removal days up and running again, and with great success.

To find out how you can help, please contact community board members Warwick or Brent via Thames Coromandel District Council, ph 07 868 0200.

Channel maintenance and an all-weather access track along the top of the stopbank was completed in May last year. More recently, a safety grill was installed after we became aware that people were accessing the site. It's a timely reminder that this land is privately owned and people should only be accessing it with the owner's permission.



Scheme in flood, 22 September 2016.



Channel infill in October 2016.

MONITORING THE ENVIRONMENT COROMANDEL STREAMS INVESTIGATION

In January and February 2015, we investigated the water quality at several stream mouths throughout the Coromandel Peninsula and found that some are particularly susceptible to excess nutrients and faecal bacteria washed from the surrounding land, particularly 24-48 hours after heavy rainfall.

A follow-up study was carried out by our scientists in January and February last year to identify the source of contamination and whether it was human or ruminant animal derived. We also investigated how the concentration and source of contamination might change during dry and wet weather and during spring and neap tides.

The focus of the follow-up study was on four catchments: Stewart Stream (Opito), Kuaotunu Stream, Taputapuatea Stream (Whitianga) and Pepe Stream (Tairua).

The findings from this investigation have been published and help us to better understand the range and source of contamination at these locations following different weather and tide events. In turn, this is helping us to develop targeted investigations and responses to coastal water quality issues throughout the Waikato region. It may also inform the development of catchment management initiatives if there are opportunities to reduce contamination into these streams.

The full report can be found at: waikatoregion.govt.nz/tr201725.

RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING

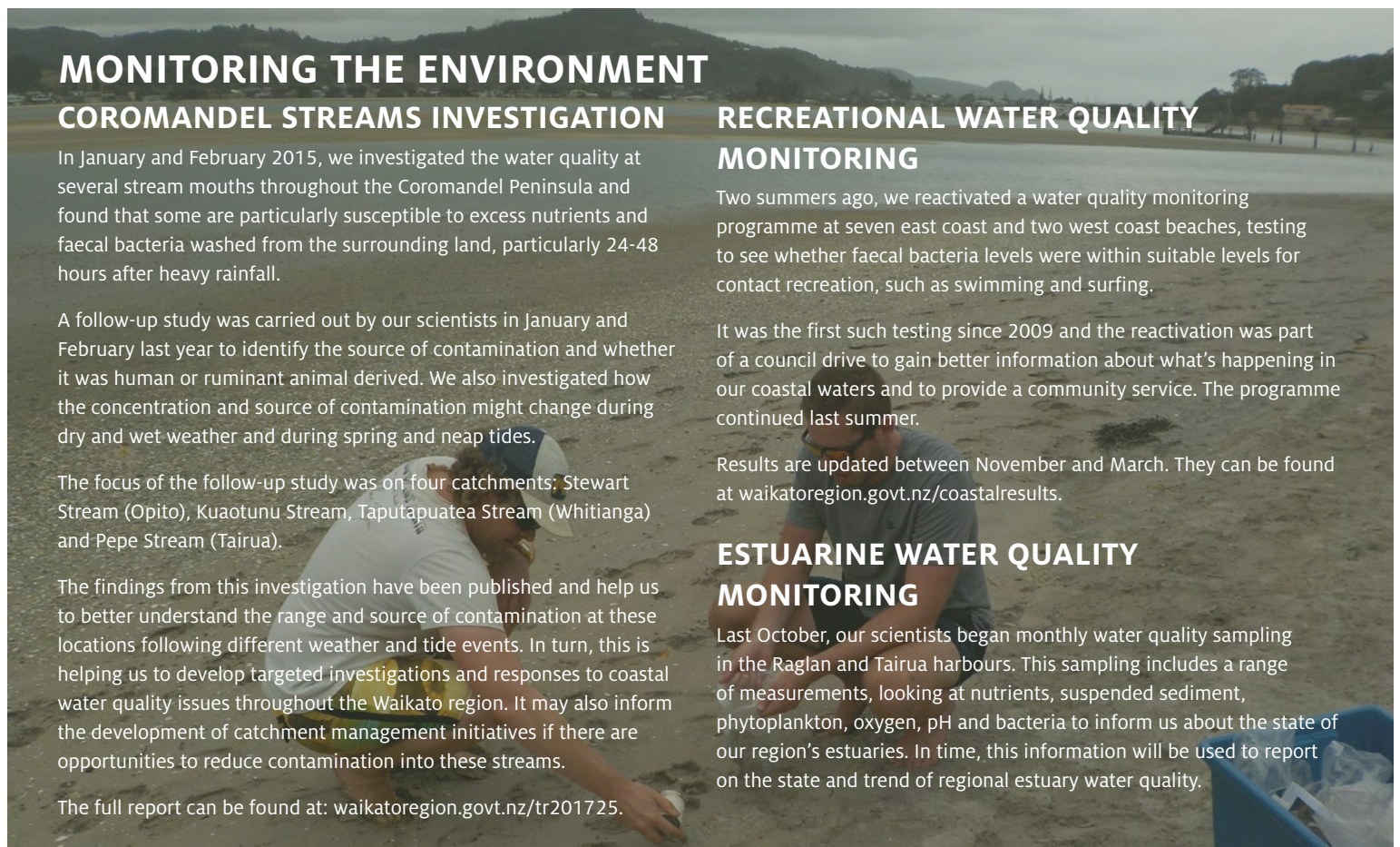
Two summers ago, we reactivated a water quality monitoring programme at seven east coast and two west coast beaches, testing to see whether faecal bacteria levels were within suitable levels for contact recreation, such as swimming and surfing.

It was the first such testing since 2009 and the reactivation was part of a council drive to gain better information about what's happening in our coastal waters and to provide a community service. The programme continued last summer.

Results are updated between November and March. They can be found at waikatoregion.govt.nz/coastalresults.

ESTUARINE WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Last October, our scientists began monthly water quality sampling in the Raglan and Tairua harbours. This sampling includes a range of measurements, looking at nutrients, suspended sediment, phytoplankton, oxygen, pH and bacteria to inform us about the state of our region's estuaries. In time, this information will be used to report on the state and trend of regional estuary water quality.



THE PASSING OF A COUPLE OF LOCAL LEGENDS

Last year saw the loss of a couple of local legends who the regional council had worked closely with for more than a decade. Both these men leave a void in conservation efforts in our communities – but, boy, what a legacy they leave for us all to continue.

Derek Boyd (Boydie) had an incredible passion for killing critters that threatened our indigenous flora and fauna and was a driving force behind the predator control work around the Graham's Creek wetland. Derek was a staunch advocate for his community and readily shared his experiences in regards to flood and other local issues with our team.

Arthur Hind's work and determination in conservation contributed to the return of kererū, kiwi and kākā locally. Arthur represented the Coromandel on the Dairy Board, was a regional councillor and served as chair of the Waikato Conservation Board.

Those connected to them through their endeavours are richer for knowing them.

Thank you Arthur and Derek for all you shared, for your love of this whenua and for proving such an inspiration.

BIOSECURITY NEWS

EYE OUT FOR MYRTLE RUST

Myrtle rust has just been found for the first time in the Coromandel Peninsula, on a pōhutukawa in Colville. The Ministry for Primary Industries needs your help to keep an eye out for this disease.

Myrtle rust spores are microscopic and can easily spread across large distances by wind. Its symptoms are harder to detect over winter, but when spring arrives you may start to notice it.

The fungal disease affects plants in the myrtle family, including iconic native plants pōhutukawa, mānuka, rātā, kānuka, swamp maire and ramarama, as well as commercially-grown species such as feijoa, eucalyptus and guava.

Symptoms to look out for on myrtle plants are:

- bright yellow powdery eruptions appearing on the underside of the leaf (young infection)
- bright yellow powdery eruptions on both sides of the leaf (mature infection)
- brown/grey rust pustules (older spores) on older lesions.

Think you've seen the symptoms of myrtle rust? Don't touch it! Call the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline immediately on: 0800 80 99 66.



TAONGA TREES UNDER THREAT

Kauri dieback is a soil-borne organism which is threatening the wellbeing of this mighty native tree.

In 2014, the disease was detected in the Coromandel Peninsula in Whangapoua and Hukarahi. A comprehensive aerial survey to check for other possible cases was completed last year, and following soil sampling confirmed a new kauri dieback site near Tairua. Our biosecurity team is working with the landowner and close neighbours to prevent the spread of this disease. While the disease is not widespread, there are lots of areas to be kept disease free to protect our kauri.

Our catchment management staff continue to work with landowners to help protect kauri. This has involved activities such as fencing off stands of kauri, while our biosecurity team helps manage feral animals and promote on-farm biosecurity such as good cleaning of machinery.

Meanwhile, the Department of Conservation has been carrying out ground truthing at priority sites on public conservation land.

WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY

It's important we all play our part protecting kauri.


Some simple things you can do when bush walking are:

- making sure you clean your gear before and after going on a track
- keeping to the tracks
- checking with landowners if you're wanting to access private property.

How you can protect kauri on your property:

- Fence stock out of bush areas.
- Ensure contractors clean their gear before coming onto and leaving your property.
- Undertake pest and pig control.
- Keep people out of your bush or off the ground near your kauri.
- The less soil you move on and off your property the better.

 kauridieback.co.nz

 0800 800 401



BIOSECURITY NEWS CONT...

THORN IN OUR SIDE

Evergreen buckthorn was found in Pauanui in January and more than 500 properties have since been surveyed, with control carried out on plants that have been found. It can quickly take over stream and forest margins and disturbed forests, changing the structure of native ecosystems. It is a serious threat to coastal areas as it can form thick stands and interfere with native plant regeneration. It is classified as an eradication pest in our regional rules, which makes it our responsibility to carry out control. Visit our website for identifying features and report sightings to 0800 BIOSEC (0800 246 732).

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/evergreen-buckthorn



DIVING FOR PESTS

Marine pests are species which are not native to New Zealand and are harmful to our natural environment and our aquaculture industries.

Their principle pathway, or means of spread, is via biofouling on vessels. Unfortunately, Auckland is home to many of these marine pests and home to many of the vessels that visit the Coromandel Peninsula over summer.

Last October a vessel was turned away from Whitianga after being found with Mediterranean fanworm on its hull. Another fanworm-infested vessel that arrived in Whangamata for Beach Hop in March was also turned away.

As part of our marine surveillance programme we hire the Bay of Plenty Regional Council dive team to inspect a number of sites around the Coromandel (including marinas, moorings, structures, common anchoring bays) each year. Earlier this year the Tairua Marina was surveyed, and its structures and vessels were found to be free of marine pests. The Tairua moorings were inspected in April and no marine pests were found.

If you have a vessel on a mooring or in a marina, make sure it's cleaned and anti-fouled before heading away.



MARITIME SAFETY NEWS

CROSS LIKE A BOSS

Crossing the Tairua bar is one of the highest risk activities in the Waikato! Having the right attitude and knowing what to do before you cross will help to ensure the safety of everyone on board. Good practices when crossing the bar will set a good example and lead others to cross responsibly and safely, too.

There are two key ways you can 'cross a bar like a boss':

- Go to waikatoregion.govt.nz/barcrossing to watch the Tairua bar crossing video, which talks you through the key steps to making a safe crossing.
- Sign up for one of Tairua-Pauanui Coastguard's fantastic bar crossing awareness days. These include an in-classroom session and a trip across the bar. Email pauanuicoastguard@vodafone.co.nz to register your interest.

MARINEMATE FOR YOUR SMARTPHONE

Heading out, but not sure where the closest boat ramp is, what the local rules are, what time low tide is, or which VHF channel you should tune into! You can have all the important boating information available in the palm of your hand. MarineMate is a FREE smartphone app that gives you access to information to help you navigate safely on our waters. The app is updated regularly to take account of feedback.

**DOWNLOAD YOUR
FREE APP TODAY**



YOUR LOCAL REGIONAL COUNCIL CONTACTS: PHONE 07 866 0172

Rob Corkill
Catchment
management officer

James Ferrier-Kerr
River management
officer

Benson Lockhart
Biosecurity officer
– pest plants

Emily O'Donnell
Harbour and catchment
advisor

Dean Allen
Coromandel zone
manager

Aniwa Tawa
Hauraki Coromandel
catchment team leader

Stephen Wise
Tairua
harbourmaster

HE TAIAO MAURIORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

For more information call
Waikato Regional Council on 0800 800 401
or visit waikatoregion.govt.nz

July 2018 (6031).

Waikato
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato