Kiwi Coast Northland
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2 September 2025

FNDC District Planning Hearing 15B

INTRODUCTION

My name is Andrew Mentor and I am speaking on behalf of Vision Kerikeri, Kapiro Conservation Trust and Kiwi Coast.

I work as the Mid-North Coordinator for Kiwi Coast Trust and as the Project Manager of Pest Free Purerua, in conjunction with Save the Kiwi, DOC Predator Free 2050 and Northland Regional Council.

I have been in the Kiwi Coast role for 8 years as a Pest Control Manager and Kiwi Practitioner helping to coordinate and resource now 73 community groups in the Mid-North including hapu, iwi, volunteer and professional trappers, companies, schools, organisations and land managers.

I have a Bachelor of Food Technology from Massey University, Diploma of Water Treatment and Certificate of Environmental Management.

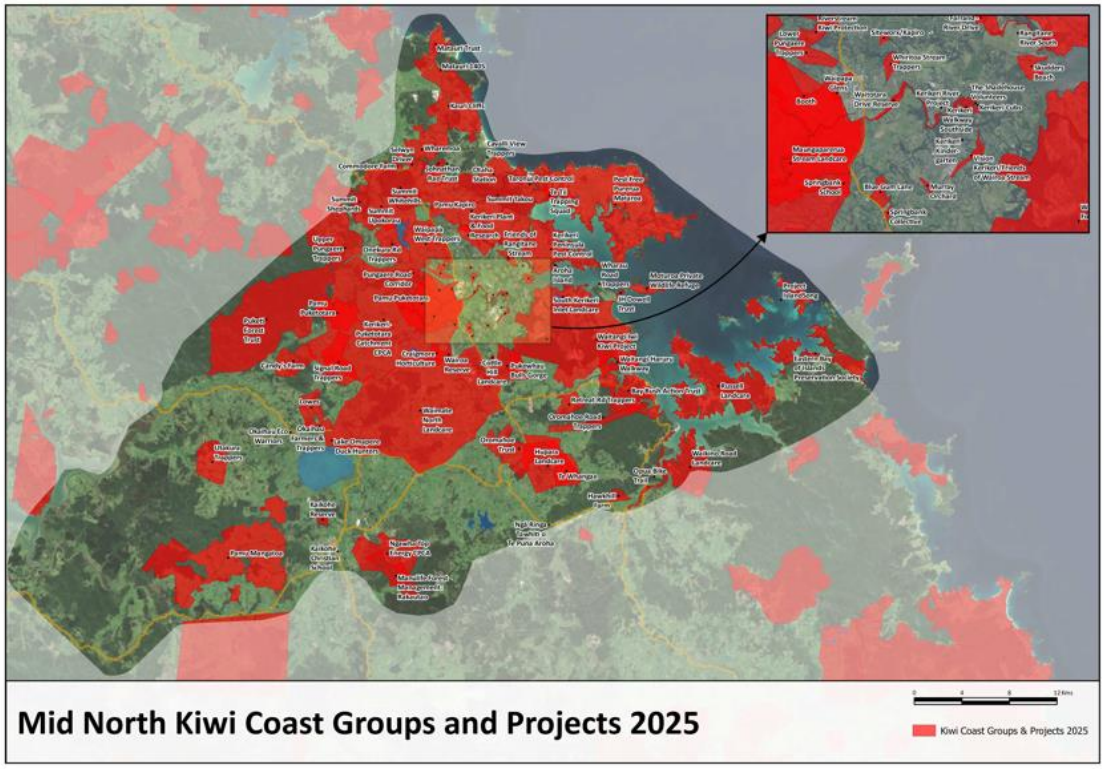
PREVIOUS HEARING

At the previous District Plan Hearing 4, August 2024, I highlighted the enormous effort being carried out by landcare and community groups, iwi, hapu, schools, companies and other organisations, here in the Mid-North, over 70 groups, removing over 40,000 pests per year, over 70,000ha.

In the whole of Northland there were 259 groups that removed 136,000 pests in the 2024 year. The number of groups is now 272 covering 285,000 ha, or 22.8% of Northland.

There is no doubt that the community as a whole is committed to environmental enhancement through pest control and associated activities. Going further, we need to ensure maximum protection for fragmented and fragile ecosystems, such as remnant native flora, streams and wetlands, near shore habitat and the species which live within them.

The importance of responsible pet ownership together with best practice predator control have shown how indigenous flora and fauna can survive and thrive, if they are given the chance.



PURERUA PENINSULA

Purerua Peninsula is a particular case where we are concerned about protection of indigenous biodiversity in the District and is an example of an area highly sensitive to change.

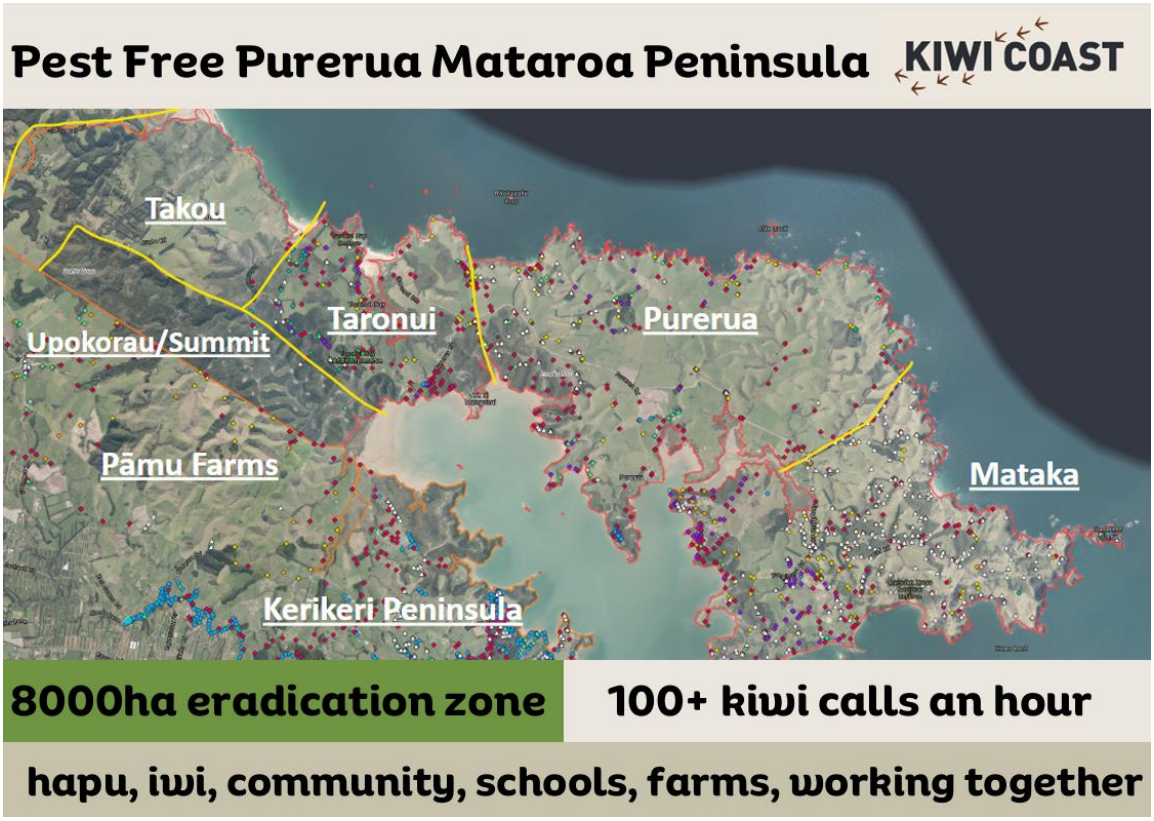
The local community recognises the important responsibility that comes with caring for up to 3,000 kiwi on a such a special place as the Purerua Peninsula in Northland. The Pest Free Purerua Project acknowledges the whole community for their ongoing support of the work to eradicate pests and predators, and then defend the peninsula from re-invasion.

The Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula in the Bay of Islands sits inside the NRC Mid-North High Value Area (MNHVA), as identified by the Northland Regional Council and is where the "Pest Free Purerua" project is active, now in its sixth year of operation. The project covers an area of over 10,000ha and is home to around 25% of Northland's kiwi population. The aim is to remove possums, mustelids, feral cats, feral goats and rats from the entire peninsula. Possums and feral goats have so far been completely removed and we have switched to a monitor and defend mode.

By way of comparison, the possum-free Otago Peninsula Project is 9,500 ha and has been operating for 17 years.

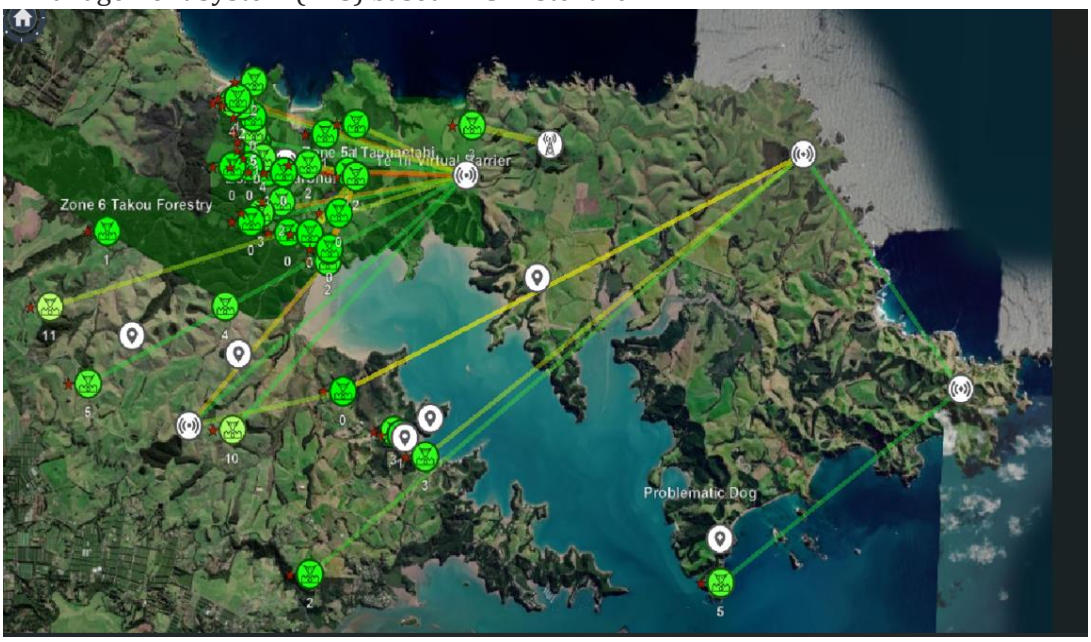
The Pest Free Purerua project has received support from NRC, Kiwi Coast, Jobs for Nature via Save the Kiwi and PF2050. The project partners with Ngāti Torehina, Ngāti Rehia, private landowners, (including Mataka Station and The Landing), Pāmu Landcorp, Plant & Food Research, Summit Forests, Bay of Islands International Academy and the Department of Conservation.

The Purerua-Mataroa Peninsula has a history of pest control dating back several decades; however, the establishment of the Predator Free (PF2050) project in 2020 has provided a significant boost to pest control efforts, helping the area move from the goal of suppressing pests to the elimination of pests. The peninsula (4,595ha) is supported by a buffer zone at Taronui-Tapuaetahi (939ha) near the start of the peninsula and a large suppression zone (4582ha) provided by Pamu Kapiro and Summit/Takou Forests, giving a total area of 10,116ha.



The project has achieved significant results, which is a testament to the teamwork and support from its stakeholders. Removal of possums to zero, suppression of stoats, clean-up of feral cats and suppression of rats have protected vulnerable species and allowed kiwi numbers to expand. Kiwi call rates consistently exceed 20 calls an hour at most sites with some sites recording over 60 calls, and others up to 100 calls per hour. (A kiwi call rate of 5 or greater is considered high.) This density of kiwi is unrivalled anywhere in New Zealand, therefore this peninsula is considered Nationally Significant. In addition, species seen or heard over the project area include kukupa, Australasian bittern, spotless crake, fernbird, NZ pipit, red knot, whimbrel, kororā, grey-faced petrel, NZ dotterel, pied stilt, oystercatcher, plus gecko (Northland green, Pacific and Woodworthia), flax snail, moko skink.

The pest and predator elimination strategy is greatly aided with new technology, including NZ Autotraps AT520s, in an intensive network with traps connected by an AI enhanced "Yarn-mesh" system. Traps communicate back to relays, then back to a hub which transmits to an Information Management System (IMS) based in Christchurch.



The high kiwi numbers, as well as the biodiversity in general, make this peninsula a truly special area for Te Tai Tokerau, Northland and a Nationally Significant Area for kiwi.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Mataka Station and The Landing, in their own rights, are both active partners in the Pest Free Purerua Project.

Both Mataka and The Landing are proposed in the s42A report as Special Purpose Zones under the new District Plan. Both these developments have environmental objectives, but this is not sufficiently reflected in the *draft* Precinct chapters. In particular, kiwi protection provisions should be added, as outlined in the section below "Issues to Consider".

Our groups would support the proposed approach of applying a SPZ layer, with these additional measures addressed.

USE OF A CONSERVATION OVERLAY FOR ALL OF PURERUA PENINSULA

It is important to recognise that the environmental stewardship offered in the Mataka and The Landing Special Purpose Zones should be considered as appropriate to apply for the whole of the Purerua peninsula. This could be achieved with a bespoke approach to strengthen the peninsula wide conservation and acknowledge that flora and fauna protection go hand-in-hand.

A Purerua Peninsula overlay could be consistent with both the Mataka and The Landing SPZs which would remove discrepancies and include over a wider area:

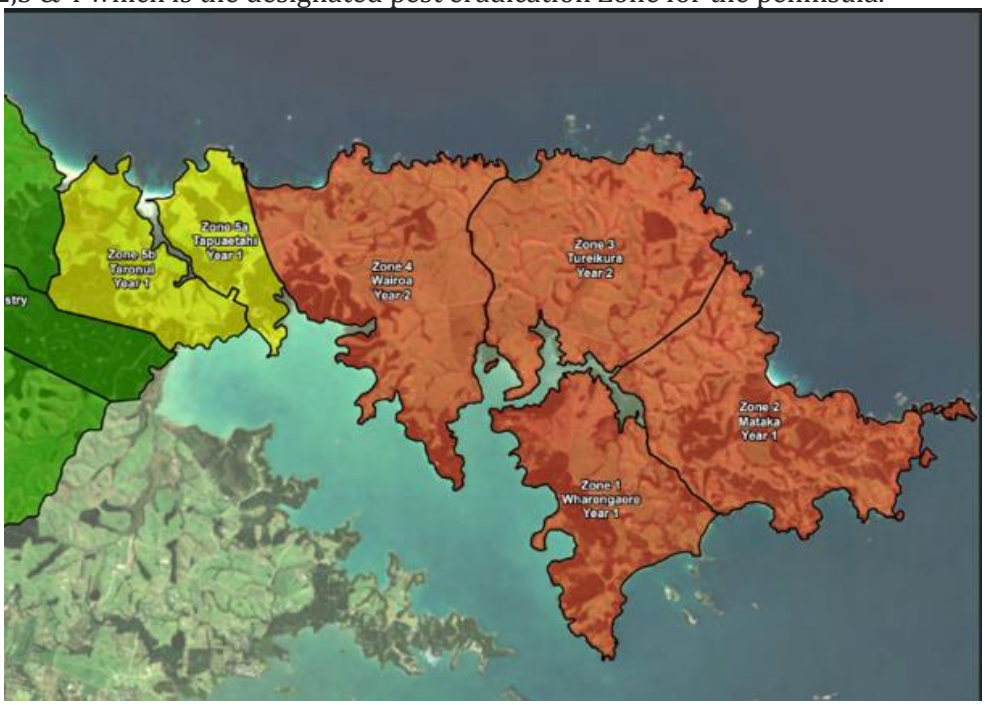
Enhancement and protection of the landscape values and natural connections between habitats.

Encourage and support active management of pests.

Manage pets to avoid risks to indigenous flora and fauna.

The benefit of introducing a spatial layer in the form of a (Nationally Significant Area) overlay is for clarity for plan users that Purerua Peninsula is a significant area of indigenous biodiversity that requires specific measures of protection.

The suggested area for the overlay is represented in RED in the map below. This corresponds to Zones 1,2,3 & 4 which is the designated pest eradication Zone for the peninsula.



In summary, if the aim is to emphasise the significance of all the peninsula for kiwi and wider conservation efforts, the introduction of an overlay would be an effective and efficient way to highlight this to plan users and ensuring that the necessary measures are put in place to protect the existing biodiversity and habitats as best as possible.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Dogs

Most people are aware of recent multiple kiwi deaths caused by dog/s on Purerua. The current Dog Control By-Laws have not been able to satisfactorily address the harm caused to native wildlife, namely kiwi, in a timely and efficient manner. Department of Conservation records show at least 37 kiwi killed by dogs on Purerua/Tapuaetahi from 2015 to 2025.

A bespoke Purerua overlay could lift the profile of native wildlife and highlight the need for responsible dog ownership, cat ownership, protection of flora and fauna, protection and enhancement of ecosystems and natural connections between habitat.

Dogs need to be under control at all times, either contained or on a lead. This would directly improve the statistics on kiwi deaths from dogs. The SPCA recommends "if your dog is outside, they must be confined to your property by safe and secure dog-proof fencing."

Contractors have brought dogs onto building sites and the dogs have been allowed to roam freely. On at least two occasions, that we know of, this has resulted in dead kiwi.
Kiwi nest under light vegetation during the day. The kiwi population on the peninsula is very high and therefore the chance of a dog encountering a kiwi is also very high.
To mitigate this risk, a policy should be added which specifically prohibits dogs being brought to construction sites. This will avoid a situation where dogs come into contact with kiwi or other native species.

Construction, excavation or retaining walls

As an example, with swimming pool excavation, during the period of construction at the end of day, edge protection should be installed to prevent kiwi falling into the excavation where kiwi will be unable to get out or may drown in any water within the site. Retaining walls of excessive height have resulted in dead or injured kiwi at such construction sites. Mitigation measures could be easily implemented.

Swimming pool fencing

Kiwi can fall into swimming pools and drown (Rangitane 2024)
Swimming pools need to have protection so that kiwi will not accidentally fall into the pool.
The gap in the lower section of a pool fence needs to be able to exclude kiwi, including kiwi chicks.

Stock troughs, cattle stops

Kiwi can fall into stock troughs or cattle stops and drown or be unable to escape.
Smart design with correct protections would mitigate this risk.

Pine tree felling, vegetation clearance and woodpile burn-offs

Kiwi can be found nesting in all varieties of habitat. During logging operations or cleanups, kiwi are vulnerable to crushing by logs or vehicles or from subsequent burn-offs. The planned use of kiwi detection dogs prior to these operations will help mitigate kiwi deaths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we support the proposed Special Purpose Zones for Mataka and The Landing and the recommendations in the s42A report with the request that a consistent set of objectives, policies, rules, and standards for both SPZs that provide clear and site specific measures that need to be taken to protect the indigenous biodiversity in these locations.

In addition, it is recommended that the controls applying need to include measures to address the threats to kiwi as set out in the "Issues to Consider" section above.

The hearing panel is urged to recommend to Council that additional protection be extended to the whole peninsula, as a specific overlay, to recognise this peninsula as a nationally significant area for kiwi and the wider biodiversity.

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