



# Project Mahitahi

## PROJECT MAHITAHİ NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2024

### ***What is Project Mahitahi?***

Project Mahitahi is a collaborative project to restore the ecological health of the Maitai/Mahitahi River catchment. The vision is that the Mauri (or life force) of the Mahitahi is restored - ki uta ki tai - so that native plants and wildlife can thrive, and the community is inspired to enjoy and protect it. Find out more on our [website](#).

### ***How are we tracking against our targets?***

Funding for Project Mahitahi continues through to June 2025 under the Ministry for the Environment's Jobs for Nature programme. This 5-year grant employs a team of conservation rangers, achieving over 24 hectares of weed control and planting 125,000 native plants over 15 hectares. These targets have already been met, but weed management is an ongoing challenge and work continues to maintain the large areas of planting to support the new plants to thrive.

Outcome	Target	Achieved
Weed Control (hectares)	24 ha	24.45 ha
Animal Pest Control	24 ha	100 ha
Native plants planted	125,000	137,478
Ecosystem restoration planting (ha)	15.3	19.26

### ***Crack-willow control continues***

The Kūmānu team have been systematically working to control Crack Willow on the riverbanks of the Maitai from the dam all the way down to the confluence with Sharlands Creek. Crack Willow breaks easily and fragments collect inside bends of waterways where they resprout and cause obstructions. Crack Willow was a major source of debris in the August 2022 weather event.



*Kūmānu controlling Crack Willow along the Maitai (Photos: Kūmānu Environmental)*

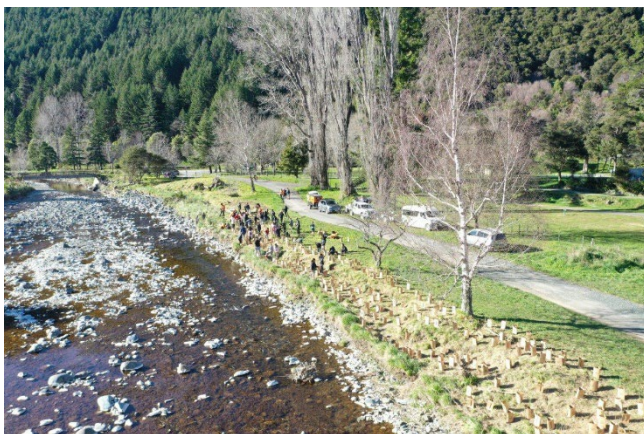
More than 15,000 trees were planted last winter in areas where Crack Willow had been removed.

### ***Riparian (riverside) Planting***

Many of the project's planting areas showed great resilience in the flood event, and thousands of additional natives were planted as part of the recovery work. Now, native plantings are beginning to form a contiguous corridor alongside the river, which has a number of biodiversity benefits, as described in the Maitai Ecological Restoration Plan:

*Continuous riparian margins can increase habitat connectivity along the river corridor, increase the habitat quality of the freshwater environment by providing overhead shading and refugia for native fauna, and once they become established will provide seed sources which can facilitate natural dispersal of native species. In addition to the habitat values riparian vegetation can provide resilience against stream bank erosion, as well as filtering surface runoff.*

*Extract from [Maitai Ecological Restoration Plan](#)*



*Matariki Planting with Enviroschools (Photo: Te Uru Rakau)*



*Planting at Shakespeare Walk (Photo: Victory School)*

You are welcome to visit some of the new plantings, such as at the Mahitahi Wetland, where Friends of the Maitai also have flourishing plantings they look after, as well as last year's plantings at the Kahikatea and Manatu Reserves, either side of the Sharlands Creek confluence, and the Global Forest area, planted by FuturEcology with help from Nelson Tasman Multicultural. Many of the trees planted in 2023 were kindly funded by Te Uru Rākau | NZ Forest Service, as part of their One Billion Trees programme, and Trees That Count.



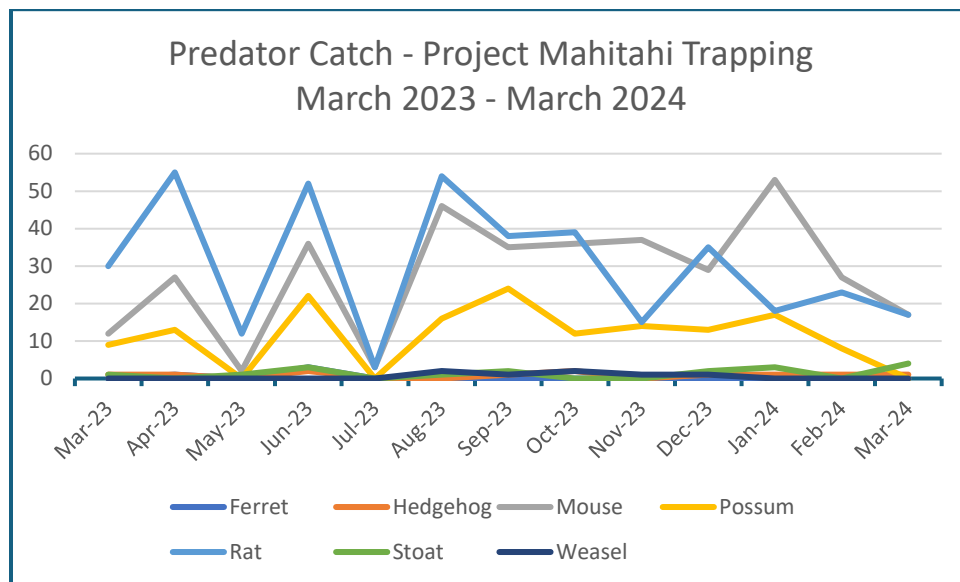
Manatu Reserve (planted 2023)



Sunday Hole Riparian Planting

### **Pest Trapping**

Nearly 1,000 predator pests have been caught across three trapping projects in the Maitai and Brook valleys over the past 12 months. Mice and rats accounted for 80% of those, possums were a further 16%, and ferrets, stoats, weasels and hedgehogs made up the remainder.



Introduced animal pests pose a threat to New Zealand’s native fauna and flora. Rats, mustelids (stoats, weasels and ferrets), feral cats, and possums are all effective predators of native bird species. Trapping networks are effective at reducing pest numbers, and community volunteers can play a vital role in the success of trapping projects or in trapping on their own properties. If you’re interested in supporting the pest control effort, find more information on our [website](#).

### **Coming up**

The focus for the coming months will be on the maintenance of existing planting sites, ongoing weed control, including of Crack Willow, and some additional planting in winter. The Kūmānu team are constantly monitoring for re-emergence of climbing asparagus, barberry, broom and old man’s beard, amongst other invasive weed species. Get more information about pest species in the region on Council’s [Biosecurity Pest Management](#) webpages, or via our [Pest Patrol](#).

### **Information about Project Mahitahi**

If you have any questions about the Project, or know of others who may wish to join our mailing list, please visit our [website](#) or contact: [project.mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:project.mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz)



*2023 Community Planting with FuturEcology and Nelson Tasman Multicultural (Photo: Nelson Tasman Multicultural)*



*Project Mahitahi featured in Te Ramaroa, Nelson Light Festival 2023 (Photos: Vicki Smith)*

