

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

SPONSORED BY

**13,000 hectares +430 land owners
+10 years of blood, sweat & tears
Total = MEG 2011**



10 YEARS BATTLING FOR BIODIVERSITY RESTORING TREASURED NATIVE HABITAT

At the end of our 10th year Moehau Environment Group (MEG) is in excellent shape. We have done more pest control than ever before in the northern peninsula giving us a sense of solid sustainable progress and MEG's goodwill and profile in the community is at an all time high.

After 9 years the MEG Summer Programme is taking a break. Our hard working volunteers will have a little more time to relax this summer and the programme will be back next year to show off Coromandel's natural treasures. It's Koro the kiwi's first summer here so Koro will be out and about exploring over the holiday period at events & camping grounds, entertaining and raising awareness and funds. Koro the kiwi is very friendly and loves to have fun so make sure you stop, say g'day and have a photo with the BIG bird!

The big news for the new 1000ha Coromandel Area School (CAS) Kiwi Project is that the trap lines are in and the World Wild Life Fund (WWF) have awarded a \$1,500 grant to the project.



Koro the Kiwi – All smiles at the Paua Festival, Tangiaro Kiwi Retreat, Port Charles on Labour Weekend.



Look out for MEG's new kiwi info board at James reserve Coro Town.

Sadly MEG recently lost the use of the building at Waikawau Bay that has been our home base for the last few years so a lot of work was needed to relocate the workshop and find accommodation for volunteers. On a positive note we received an award for 10 years of valuable contributions to the environment at the Hamilton Enviro Centre's Christmas function. And for the second year in a row MEG are finalists for the Loader Cup, NZ's premier conservation award. This is a direct reflection of the hard work of many volunteers and MEG members and the wonderful support land owners and the public give MEG year in year out. We look forward to your support in the coming years as we continue the task of leaving Coromandel's natural environment in a better state for the next generation of kiwi & kiwis.

Cheers - Jonty Ratherford,

MEG Coordinator, mobile: 021 410040, jonty@meg.org.nz

www.meg.org.nz



A RIGHT 'TO DO'.



Global volunteers learn vegetation monitoring at Waikawau Bay

I read in a recent 'Time' magazine that Mark Twain arrived at the not unreasonable but never popular conclusion that "mankind was not made for any useful purpose, for the reason that he hasn't served any; that he was most likely not even made intentionally; and that his working his way up out of the oyster bed to his present position was probably a matter of surprise and regret to the Creator". There are a million instances to back this claim in my opinion, but some relevant to our own little corner of the world come to mind.

Gilbert White- (The Natural History of Selborne, 1700's), had peasants in his neighbourhood out scouring for rare birds which were to be shot so he could describe them and have them stuffed. This attitude became prevalent in New Zealand in the 1800's and Europe's museums are filled with 100's of New Zealand birds many of which are now extinct as a result. Reischek (late 1800's) is reputed to have shot the last huia in New Zealand with full knowledge that they were the last. The list of this type of behaviour goes on right into the present day driven by economics, greed, and ignorance or otherwise.

The removal of our forests, drainage of wetlands, and damage to our estuaries and harbours beggars belief. It's as if there is absolutely no awareness nor value placed of what constitutes our once rich biodiversity, nor any desire to know. You seldom see much made of the fact that New Zealand is the largest land mass on the planet without native land mammals (except the bat), nor that it was the last large land mass settled by humans. It is only in very recent times that there has been any move to remedy some of the "errors" of the past and in some cases one wonders if it isn't too late.

Case in point is the impact on our estuaries and harbours in the Coromandel. Land clearance has in filled all the harbours and radically changed the dynamics. Rich silt and warmer shallower waters are now providing perfect growing conditions for a variety of plants. Mangroves (which incidentally are a native) are on a massive increase.

Spartina and *Paspalum vaginatum*, two introduced grass species, are spreading through our estuary peripheries and reducing fish and bird habitats (and incidentally now contributing to an increase in flooding to low lying pasturelands. These are but two of several hundred plants which should never have been introduced into New Zealand in the first place. Both were seen as plants which could reclaim wastelands" to provide increased flatlands for farming. Yes, estuaries, parts of our harbours, wetland, and swamps were seen as wastelands. The economics of bright ideas turns into the bankruptcy of the future.

Our own recent studies of *Paspalum vaginatum* in the estuary at Waikawau Bay are nearing completion after nearly two years investigation. The *Paspalum* is increasing at a general average rate of about quarter to half a metre a year. Some areas it is well over a metre a year. Given current trends this estuary will be gone as we know it in about 50 years. With it go the cockle beds, crabs, fern birds, banded rail, bittern, mullet and kahawai and all the myriad other creatures which are part of the lifecycle and dynamics of a seawater/freshwater system. Fish in the bay will decline, with the lack of suitable foods.

Meanwhile the streams in behind back up the silts and never get to flush out properly. Farming as we know it in the area is in for a bit of a shake up as well with increased waterlogged pastures. Not a very positive scenario, and not well thought out in the first place, like many of our environmental actions. Makes one wonder: - exactly what useful purpose was any of the actions taken to provide more "productive lands" in the first place?

It really is time for a little more intergenerational forethought about our actions for the future and a few less actions on a 'whim'.

Wayne Todd



Global volunteers measure the march of saltwater *Paspalum*.

MEGA STATS - THE 1ST 10 YEARS

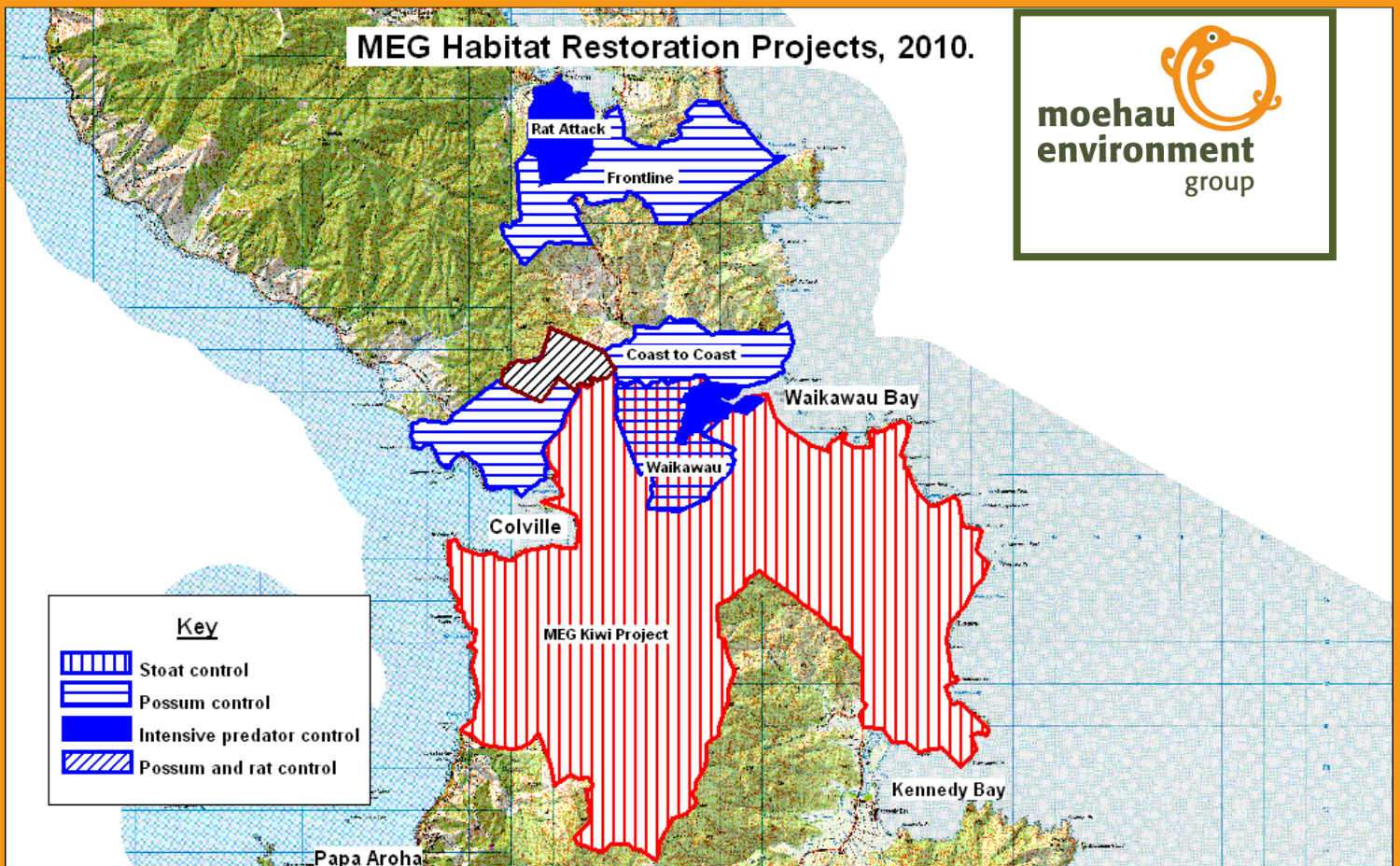
MEGA Stats

- 👤 Landowners assisted with biodiversity enhancement 430+
- 👤 Total area of projects over 13,000ha
- 👤 School and pre-school visits last year 32
- 👤 Volunteer Hours in the last year 1,640+
- 👤 Total rat traps 2850
- 👤 Total stoat traps 970
- 👤 Rat Attack trap checks 150,000+ so far
- 👤 Total traps checked each month 3,700+
- 👤 Workers employed by MEG in the last year 17
- 👤 Total ground covered by stoat trappers 14,400km in 5 years
- 👤 Track cut in the last year 122km
- 👤 MEG kiwi Project 8230 hectares
- 👤 CAS kiwi Project 1000 hectares
- 👤 Coast to coast & front line possum control 3,000+ hectares
- 👤 Over 350 International volunteers hosted

MEGA MILESTONES

- 2000 MEG incorporated
- 2001 1st projects in full swing
- 2002 Pest Free Zone proposed
MEG's 1st summer programme
- 2003 Pest proof fence proposed
Port Charles Rat Attack trials begin
- 2004 Port Charles Rat Attack fully operational
First release of Pateke at Port Charles
- 2005 BOP Polytechnic Environmental Mgmt students begin fern bird monitoring at Waikawau Bay
- 2006 MEG Kiwi Project fully operational and opened
Pest proof fence stopped – work on alternative coast to coast buffer zone stepped up
- 2008 Pateke (native brown teal) status officially changed from “in decline” to “in recovery”!
- 2009 Toutouwai (North Island Robin) reintroduced to the Moehau area
Survey finds that the Moehau area kiwi population has doubled in 10 years while most of the country has kiwi populations declining by about 30% over the same period
- 2010 CAS kiwi project launched in Coromandel Town
3,000+ hectare Coast to Coast Possum Buffer south of Moehau infrastructure completed

MEG Habitat Restoration Projects, 2010.



megevents

REAL KIWI FAMILY FUN DAY AT i-SITE IN COROMANDEL TOWN JANUARY 6TH Koro the kiwi invites all the family to have some fun and learn about kiwi conservation at the Coromandel Town i-site from 11am till 2pm on Thursday the 6th of January. There will be face painting, kiwi stories and a colouring in competition for the kids. Plus interesting displays about how kiwi in NZ's largest predator controlled kiwi habitat are looked after in the northern Coromandel.

FREE KIWI AVOIDANCE DOG TRAINING JANUARY 7TH

- 🐾 **Colville** 9:30am-11:30am at The White Star Station on the main road 1.5klm south of Colville Village.
 - 🐾 **Tuataewa** 1:30pm-3.30pm by the main road 200m south of Rabarts Rd.
- Please Call 021 410040 to book your dog.

MEG MEMBERSHIP – SUBS ARE DUE and cheep, cheep cheep!

Subscriptions remain at \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$50 for company membership.

Please send subs to Lillian Gamble, 186 Lillis Lane, Coromandel Town or pay direct into BNZ account 020304 0342229 02. If you choose this option please email payment details to info@meg.co.nz

For new memberships please download the form at www.meg.org.nz/pdf/2707_Meg_Brochure_Member.pdf

Donations will, of course, be willingly accepted at any time in person, into MEG's bank account (see above) or at: <https://secure.donate.co.nz/fundraiser.aspx/megorgnz> !

Thank you.

POSSUM TRAP HALF PRICE MEGA DEAL

A new possum trap called the Trapinator has been developed by CMI Springs, the people who make the DOC 200 stoat traps you see around the district. Kelvin at Waiaro Sanctuary, one of the most experienced trappers in the district, had a test run with the Trapinator and was happy enough with the results to order over 30 of them. They are durable and really simple and easy to set even for people who are a bit nervous of traps. MEG are getting them wholesale and selling them at cost for just \$33 each which is about half the normal retail price. A sample is at CSSC at Colville if you want to check them out. Just text or phone 021 410 040 or email info@meg.org.nz if you would like to buy some Trapinators. **Mr Possum says "I won't be back".**



3D CRITTER CARDS ONLY \$12.00



Made from a postcard size piece of balsa these easy to post, easy to assemble models are a quick and quirky gift! We now stock 4 models: the tui, weta, fantail and tuatara. Each one comes flat with an envelope for posting, and full instructions. They are easy to assemble, needing no glue, though small kids might need some help. You won't find them cheep cheeper so order yours NOW!

Contact info@meg.org.nz Also available at the Green Snapper Cafe Colville.

A BIG THANK YOU TO...

- 🐾 BNZ Save the Kiwi for ongoing support of MEG's Kiwi Project.
- 🐾 Fortress Fasteners for hardware to build trap boxes and save kiwi.
- 🐾 Lois & Warren Agnew from Gotcha Traps new corporate members & sponsors for supplying tracking papers.
- 🐾 Steve Norris at Steelcraft Coromandel Town for engineering support.
- 🐾 Print House, for sponsoring the Megaphone. Printed using Forest Stewardship Council certified paper. To find mindful print solutions see: www.phprint.co.nz or call Brett Phillips on 0800 225 125.

JUST
\$25

Real Kiwi
Country
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ORDER TODAY,
phone

021 410 040 or email

info@meg.org.nz

Also available at i-site Coromandel Town and the Colville General Store.



...FSC...
Guide Only