

## LIVING ON RAOUL ISLAND

It takes a special person to cope with living on an island as isolated as Raoul. He or she must be able to carry out a wide range of practical tasks – from weed pulling to track maintenance, fixing buildings to baking bread.

Each year DOC sends staff to live for 12 months on the otherwise uninhabited island and carry out conservation work. DOC also sends up to 9 volunteers to join them over the summer or winter period for up to 6 months.

Raoul Island is part of the Kermadec Group which is New Zealand's most remote and most northern territory. The Kermadecs also include Macauley Island and 15 other small islands. They are all nature reserves and

entry is by permit only. The area is actively volcanic and earthquakes are a regular fact of life. The sea surrounding the Kermadecs is a marine reserve – no taking of marine life is allowed.

All of the islands are covered with natural vegetation and because of their isolation, many rare and unusual species have developed there. Unfortunately some plants introduced by humans, such as Brazilian Buttercup, Mysore Thorn, black passionfruit and purple guava pose a significant threat to much of what makes these islands unique. Marine life includes corals, giant limpets, huge black spotted groper and other subtropical species.



## THE BENEFITS

The Raoul volunteer programme provides the opportunity to experience a remote offshore island and explore an unusual subtropical ecosystem which few people would otherwise be able to visit. This volunteer programme makes a significant contribution to the work of removing alien plants to restore the unique native plant communities to a self-sustaining state.



## THE CHALLENGES

There are many challenges to living and working on Raoul. The terrain is very steep and rugged. The duties are often repetitive and exhausting. Once there, you are there for the full term of the volunteer stint. Mail is sometimes dropped by passing RNZ Air Force planes or private boats. While 2 staff are trained to pre-hospital level, medical assistance is available only as advice over satellite phone or email, and the fastest emergency air rescue is at least 24 hours away. There is also the added difficulty of living and working among such a small group, although visiting boats may provide some extra company for a day or two.

Raoul volunteers must be adaptable, cautiously adventurous, content to amuse themselves and also happy to work in a small team, easy to live with, and have an interest in the natural environment and conservation. Applicants will need to be physically fit and agile, experienced at moving on steep ground and moving through bush without a track. Climbing skills and practical experience in maintaining buildings and facilities are an advantage.



## VOLUNTEERS TASKS

Weed Control involves systematic searching of the bush, to map, record and remove 14 species of weeds. You will get to know the bush intimately. Most control is by hand-pulling but herbicides are used from time to time, and Madeira vine tubers are dug out. Weeding occupies 4 days a week.

Maintenance of buildings and facilities (water supply system, roads and tracks) occupies 1 day a week.

The household runs like a flatting situation – cooking and cleaning are shared by everyone.

The trip will not be all work, people will have an opportunity to get out and explore the island. There is a lot to see and do for those who enjoy exploring the land and snorkelling in the marine reserve.

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Your passage to and from Raoul will be on a chartered vessel. There are two volunteer stints annually. Departures are around March/April/May with a return of August/September/October for the first trip and departure in October and return in March/April/May for the second trip. The trip dates are flexible due to transport availability.

We provide food, accommodation and transport from the port of departure (Auckland), to Raoul and back to the port of entry (generally Auckland).



## HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be in letter or CV form and provide

- Your contact details (including email if possible)
- the skills you can offer and your work history including any relevant qualifications, e.g. chainsaw, ropes
- your previous experiences of living in isolation and working in a small team,
- your previous remote tramping (hiking) and/or climbing experience
- other experiences which may be relevant to the Raoul programme
- your reasons for wanting to work on Raoul
- your level of fitness, any health issues
- a character description
- the names and contact details of two referees, at least one being a work colleague
- any limitations on the dates you are available.

Any DOC staff applying must also provide a note signed by their manager indicating approval to take this leave.

For more information please phone the Warkworth Area Office of the Department of Conservation  
+64 (9) 425 7812.

Applications can be emailed, mailed, or faxed:

Email: [aucklandvolunteer@doc.govt.nz](mailto:aucklandvolunteer@doc.govt.nz)

Fax: +64 (9) 425 7813.

Mail : Department of Conservation  
PO Box 474,  
Warkworth  
New Zealand

## SELECTION PROCESS

Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by telephone and their referees will be contacted by telephone.

New Zealand Government

# Raoul Island Volunteer Programme



2010/11

Dates not yet confirmed  
Applications accepted year round



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*