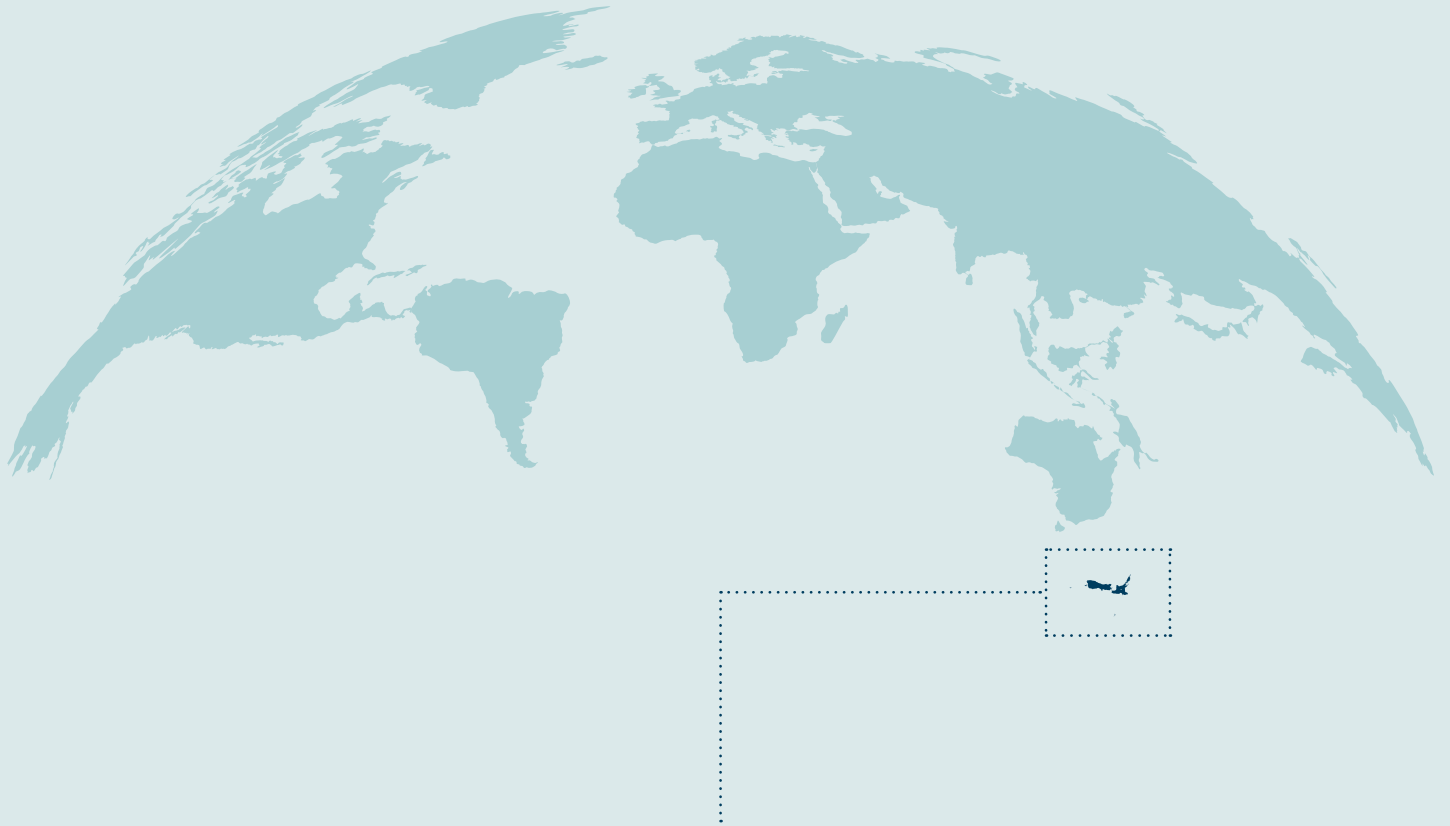


Restoring three globally significant island groups in Aotearoa New Zealand through the Island-Ocean Connection Challenge





Cover: Rakiura (Stewart Island). *Photo: Bradley Shields*
Inside cover: Aerial view of Maukahuka (Auckland Island). *Photo: Finlay Cox*

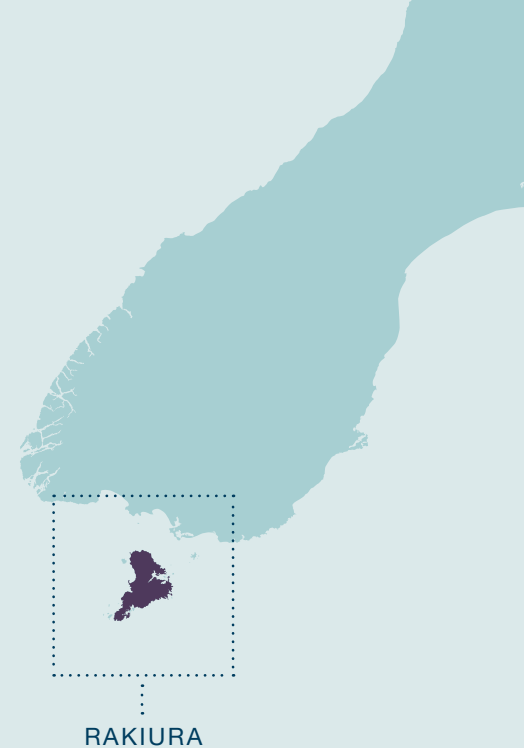


Aotearoa New Zealand has joined the international Island-Ocean Connection Challenge, which aims to restore at least 40 globally significant island-ocean ecosystems around the world by 2030.

Moriori and Māori groups, community trusts, and the New Zealand Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai have partnered with global conservation charities to raise \$137 million to rewild some of New Zealand's largest islands so they become safe havens for native wildlife found nowhere else on Earth.

We have an ambitious plan to restore, rewild and protect three island-ocean ecosystems in the southern Pacific Ocean:

- Maukahuka (Auckland Island)
- Rakiura (Stewart Island)
- Chatham Islands, including Rēkohu/Wharekauri (Chatham Island) and Rangihau/Rangiauria (Pitt Island)





RĒKOHU / WHAREKAURI AND
RANGIHAUTE / RANGIAURIA

Each of these ecosystems is unique. For millions of years, they evolved separately from the rest of the world, giving rise to plants and animals found only here. Once they are gone from these islands, they are gone from everywhere.

These special islands need our help. Rewilding efforts will include removing harmful introduced predators, protecting threatened wildlife and restoring degraded island ecosystems.

With your support, Maukahuka will once again be covered in fields of chest-high flowering megaherbs, the Chatham Islands will be home to thriving colonies of diverse seabirds like Chatham Island tāiko and albatrosses, and Rakiura will become a refuge for kākāpō. Restoring these islands will also have global impacts by protecting against climate

change, saving unique plants and animals from extinction, and supporting indigenous Moriori and Māori people to restore their ancestral lands.

This is groundbreaking island conservation. These will be the largest and most challenging island restoration projects our country has ever attempted and a step change in achieving our nationwide Predator Free 2050 goal. They will help us unlock new methods and grow the toolbox for future island restoration projects at home and around the world.

By joining New Zealand's pledge to restore the natural biodiversity of these three unique island groups in the southern Pacific Ocean, you will help protect endangered species, restore natural habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.



Donate today and leave an island legacy with a
global impact: nznaturefund.org/iocc

Maukahuka Pest Free Auckland Island

Preventing extinctions and saving entire ecosystems



Located in the subantarctic, about 465 km (290 miles) south of Aotearoa New Zealand, Maukahuka (Auckland Island) is a stronghold of remarkable plants and animals. As a nature reserve and World Heritage site, this island is home to some of the world's rarest animals, like the toroa/Gibson's albatross, tētē kākāriki/Auckland Island teal and Auckland Island rail. In the biting cold surrounding oceans, tohorā/southern right whales, pakake/New Zealand sea lions and hoiho/yellow-eyed penguins thrive in the protection of a marine reserve. The island has exceptionally high seabird diversity and is a migration hub for seabird species that roam the globe.

The island supports more than 500 species of native plants and animals, over 100 of which are not found anywhere else in the world. The wild landscape is dominated by formidable cliffs carved by pounding seas, windswept coastal rātā forests, alpine tussock, peat fields and unique megaherbs. This landscape is of great cultural and spiritual significance for Māori, with a long history of Polynesian voyages to the islands.



Sadly, we are rapidly losing these precious plants and animals. Over the last 200 years, populations of introduced pigs, feral cats and mice have inflicted severe harm. As a result, large swathes of forest have disturbed soils and stunted understories. Iconic carpets of megaherbs have been reduced to individual plants in the few places that are inaccessible to pigs. Now, 25 native bird species can no longer breed on the island, with smaller vulnerable populations surviving on small islands nearby. Without deliberate action, plants, animals and ocean health will continue to decline.

About the project

Set to be one of the largest pest eradication projects in history, the aspiration for Maukahuka is groundbreaking in scale and complexity. The project will take 8 years to restore 46,000 ha (114,000 acres) of precious subantarctic island. This will secure a thriving island ecosystem for centuries to come and improve the resilience of the surrounding southern Pacific Ocean to the effects of climate change.

It is the final step in more than 30 years of investment, research, innovation and restoration of the New Zealand subantarctic region. The legacy will be enduring, with little ongoing cost or intervention needed.

Scientists have already seen the results of rewilding methods on islands like nearby Enderby Island:

“On Enderby, after the cattle were removed about 30 years ago, there are now megaherbs up to chest height in there, a really diverse flora. On Auckland Island, it’s completely bare. It’s a graphic example of the rapid recovery you can expect once those pests are removed.”

STEPHEN HORN
Lead Scientist for the project

Once funding is secured, restoration experts are poised and ready to begin, with innovative technologies and detailed action plans at the ready.



Donate today to support this project:
nznaturefund.org/projects/auckland-island



Sir Tipene O'Regan. Photo: Max Tiweka

Community voice

“These southern lands shaped us and our culture, so the species that belong to them are part of our identity, and our relationship with them became one of the hinges of our culture. That’s why they’re so important to us. Our names for those species, the names of the places where they occur, and the heritage imbued in them, became central elements in our cultural identity.”

SIR TIPENE O'REGAN ONZ

New Zealand Ngāi Tahu kaumātua (elder/leader),
Educator, Historian, Businessman and Academic

Project Founding Parties



Te Rūnanga o NGĀI TAHU



Te Runaka o Awarua



Predator Free Rakiura

Restoring a natural haven – Rakiura, mauri ora!



Rakiura, ‘the land of glowing skies’, is Aotearoa New Zealand’s third-largest island. Rakiura lies about 30 km (19 miles) south of the mainland, in icy ocean waters under the glimmering Southern Lights.

More than 85% of the island is preserved in a national park that is renowned for its large swathes of native forest and abundance of unique native species. Tokoeka/brown kiwi outnumber humans on the island and are active day and night, often being found stumbling across walking tracks or through the small town of Oban. Hoiho/yellow-eyed penguins, the world’s rarest penguins, waddle along the windswept beaches.

Rakiura is also a potential future safe haven for a diverse range of distinctive wildlife. For example, the island was once the last bastion for the famous kākāpō, the world’s only flightless parrot. In 1977, scientists thought fewer than 20 kākāpō remained and were delighted to discover a surviving population on Rakiura. This discovery brought new hope of saving the species from the brink of extinction.



Rakiura is no longer safe for species like kākāpō that evolved in isolation and in the absence of mammals for 80 million years. Today, introduced rats, feral cats, hedgehogs and possums cover the island. These predators eat bird eggs and chicks, as well as the fruits, leaves and seeds the birds rely on, leading to a steepening decline of native species populations. Introduced browsers such as deer and possums have degraded vast forests, and scientists are now warning of a potential collapse of the whole forest ecosystem.

But there is hope. Māori conservationists and scientists are working hard to rewild the habitat on the island. The Predator Free Rakiura project, alongside the community of 400 residents, aims to completely remove the harmful predators that threaten native wildlife here.

The last remaining kākāpō were evacuated from Rakiura decades ago for their survival. After over 40 years of breeding, around 250 kākāpō now live on nearby islands that are free from destructive introduced predators. As the kākāpō population recovers, finding suitable new habitats is the team's most pressing challenge. They see a return to Rakiura as one of the best solutions to secure the species' future.

Donate today to secure a safe haven for kākāpō and to support Māori conservationists and scientists to rewild Rakiura.

About the project

The Predator Free Rakiura project envisions a future where ecosystems and the community thrive and benefit from each other. Since 2014, Ngāi Tahu, the Department of Conservation and other government agencies, businesses, organisations, and community representatives have been working together to realise this vision. They are working to rewild the island by removing rats, possums, feral cats and hedgehogs from Rakiura and its surrounding islands, as these predators eat or compete with wildlife and damage the forest.

With support from generous donors, the project is now planning the first stage of operational work, which involves trialling tools and techniques to understand what is required to scale eradication across the island – beginning the process to rewild Rakiura as a safe haven for threatened birds like kākāpō.



Donate today to support this project:
nznaturefund.org/projects/rakiura

Community voice

“Rakiura is an island that has a history of inter-relationships that give people – both Iwi (Māori tribe), and Pākēhā (European New Zealanders) – a sense of heritage and identity. Ngāi Tahu being the Iwi (local tribe), and Tangata Whenua, (local people), culturally, spiritually, hold a Whakapapa (genealogical ancestry) connection to the island of Rakiura. Ngāi Tahu implement their rangatiratanga (sovereignty) to Rakiura, by expressing their commitment as Kaitiaki (guardians) of Rakiura. By way of genetically enhancing the taiao (environment), we can restore the island’s mauri (spiritual life force) as far back as possible to its original natural state.”



Tane Davis. Photo: Te Puka Rakiura Trust

TANE DAVIS

Predator Free Rakiura Engagement and Advisory Group Member

Project Founding Parties



Predator Free Chathams

Restoring nature's gifts – for now and for the future

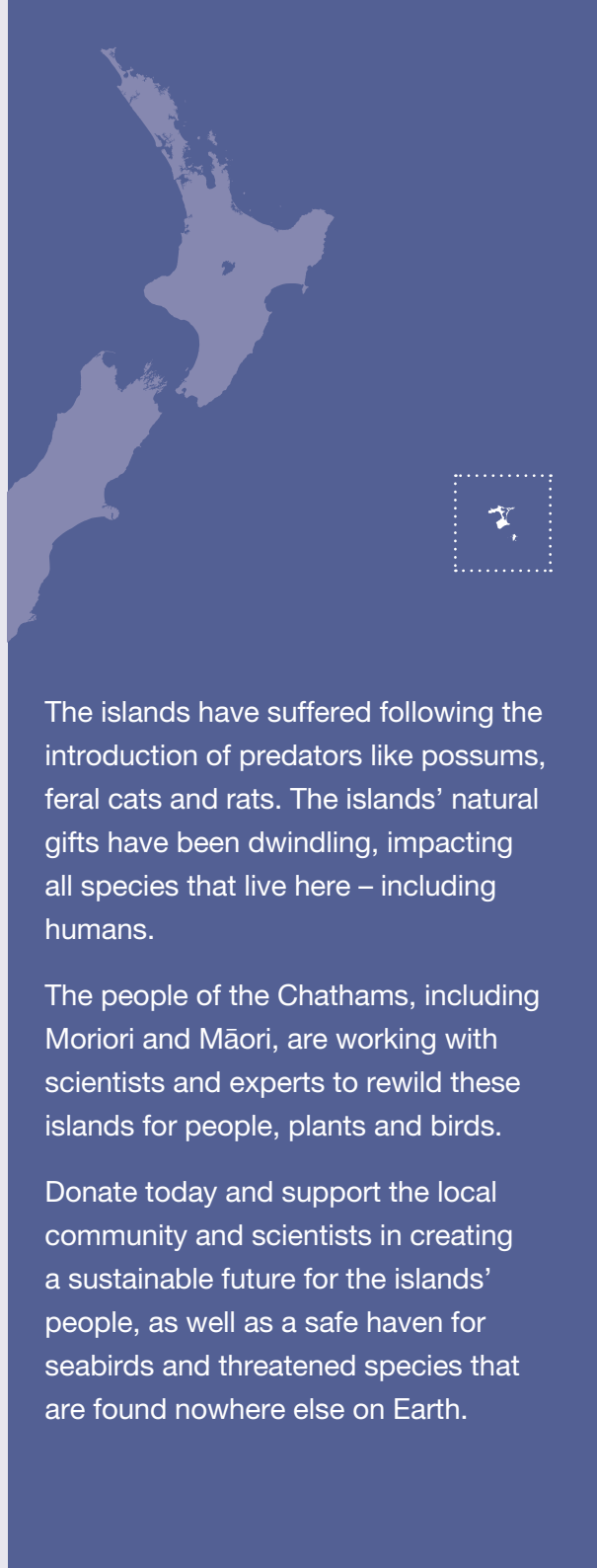


Toroa/northern Buller's mollymawk adult and chick on the Chatham Islands. Photo: Tui De Roy

The far-flung Chatham Islands lie about 800 km (500 miles) to the east of Aotearoa New Zealand. These islands are a critical hub for migrating albatrosses and a stronghold for 326 of New Zealand's endangered species. A community of around 700 people, including indigenous Moriori and Māori, call these islands home.

Around 3 million years ago, the Chatham archipelago lifted from the ocean floor, leading to the evolution of isolated and unique wildlife. Some of these precious species – like the hopo/toroa/Chatham Island albatross, Chatham Island tāiko and karure/kakaruia/black robin – are found nowhere else in the world.

Together, these islands are one of the world's most diverse seabird breeding sites. Productive oceans also support thick kelp forests, colonies of sea lions and seals, and a spectrum of fish and shellfish that provide food for albatrosses and other seabirds. This rich seabird-driven system helps the islands' plants and animals thrive.



The islands have suffered following the introduction of predators like possums, feral cats and rats. The islands' natural gifts have been dwindling, impacting all species that live here – including humans.

The people of the Chathams, including Moriori and Māori, are working with scientists and experts to rewild these islands for people, plants and birds.

Donate today and support the local community and scientists in creating a sustainable future for the islands' people, as well as a safe haven for seabirds and threatened species that are found nowhere else on Earth.

About the project

Predator Free Chathams is a community-driven conservation programme to help restore the Chatham Islands' natural gifts for now and for the future.

The first project is focused on removing three key introduced predators from the main island, Rēkohu/Wharekauri (Chatham Island): possums, rats and feral cats. This will be carried out in phases, with biosecurity controls to prevent predators from reinvading. At the same time, the community will work to create safe new habitats by planting native trees and fencing protected areas so that native birds can be reintroduced to areas where they once thrived.

Work will also continue on the second inhabited island, Rangihaute/Rangiauria (Pitt Island), to eliminate feral cats and ensure the survival of critically threatened species. This will be supported by planting native trees and restoring habitat.

The Chatham Islands Landscape Restoration Trust is leading this work in collaboration with Moriori, Māori, the community, and other local and national groups. Much of the land is privately owned, with supportive landowners eager for the resources to realise this long-term vision. The programme has secured some government and grant funding, and initial steps to rewild the islands are ramping up.



Donate today to support this project:
nznaturefund.org/projects/chatham-islands



Tom Lanauze and his grandson on the Chatham Islands. *Photo: The Post/Stuff*

Community voice

“Some of our birds, for instance, are found nowhere else in the world. You can only see them here, so tourism will be another spin-off from our efforts.”

TOM LANAUZE
Mori elder, Trustee of
Hokotehi Mori Trust,
Trustee of Mori Imi
Settlement Trust

Project Founding Parties





Founding Parties



Supporting Parties





Toroa/Chatham Island mollymawks at the summit of Tcharako/Tarakoikola (The Pyramid), Chatham Islands. The entire population only breeds here. *Photo: David Boyle*

