



Te Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

Regional Parks Management Plan

Annual Report

2024/2025

Prepared August 2025



1. Introduction

This is the second annual report on progress implementing actions in the Regional Parks Management Plan 2022 (RPMP).

The report summaries the projects / activities either underway, developed or completed during financial year 2024/2025, set out under the six key focus areas identified in the RPMP.

It includes commentary on some of the issues and challenges faced during this period, the key highlights and achievements and success stories.

2. Priority projects for delivery

Our priority projects / work programmes identified for delivery in 2024/2025 were:

- To strengthen our relationships with mana whenua and identify their priorities for involvement in park management
- Deliver the approved capex programme funded in 2024/2025
- Continue the storm recovery work on regional parks
- Begin developing a Recreation Plan for the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park
- Review the commercial operator's framework and implement agreed changes
- Complete a new Fire Response Plan for the regional parks network and park-specific plans
- Complete and implement the strategic operational plan for Shakespear and Tāwharanui open sanctuaries
- Embed the new 5 Year Farming strategy
- Review the NETR funded programme and implement a revised work programme
- Enhance and expand the visitor services provided
- Improve our asset data capture and management of park assets
- Continue to work collaboratively with our key stakeholders and partners to increase the quality of visitor experiences on regional parks
- Improve our communication with key stakeholders and the public on progress implementing the RPMP.

3. Achievements against key focus areas

3.1 Supporting council's commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Auckland Council is committed to strengthening relationships and working in partnership with mana whenua to identify opportunities for greater involvement in park management.

Council acknowledges the importance of the connections with ancestral lands and taonga and supports the expression of Māori identity and culture on regional parks.

Regional Parks staff continue to regularly engage with mana whenua at both an operational and project-based level, to build on existing relationships and explore options to support mana whenua aspirations and outcomes.

Table 1 outlines some of the projects undertaken in conjunction with mana whenua during 2024/2025.

Project / work programme	Progress
Te Kete Rukuruku park naming	Bilingual names and narratives have been completed for five parks: Ambury, Ōmana, Long Bay, Shakespear, Wenderholm. A programme to replace signage will be developed and implemented following formal signoff.
Kauri dieback management	Continue to work with Te Kawerau ā Maki on the operational management of kauri dieback in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park.
Deed of Acknowledgement – Te Kawerau ā Maki	Progress is being made in progressing a Deed of Acknowledgement with Te Kawerau ā Maki under the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008. Public consultation on the principles of the Deed was undertaken in March/April 2025, analysis of the feedback is complete and is being considered by the Policy and Planning Committee in August 2025.
Ngahere programme implementation	Te Uri o Hau and Ngāti Manuhiri are both involved in supporting revegetation planting projects on northern parks. Te Uri o Hau also produces plants from its nursery located at Te Ārai to be used in the ngahere programme. Kaitiaki cultural assessments are undertaken before any work begins to confirm all proposed planting sites are suitable and approved.
Te Motu a Hiaroa / Puketutu Island	Auckland Council, Watercare and Te Motu a Hiaroa Charitable Trust jointly manage the motu. A masterplan has been completed to develop a marae and papakainga, undertake ecological restoration, and in time open the parkland as a cultural park. Council is continuing to work with the Trust to provide public access to the motu.

Park- specific projects involving mana whenua	
Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges	A Hūnua Project Forum, focused on animal pest control was set up in February 2025 to partner with mana whenua on the planned pest management operation. Two hui have been held with the forum to provide updates and discuss opportunities for mana whenua involvement. The pest operation is scheduled to be completed by October 2025.
	Ngā iwi mana whenua o Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui - Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Tamaoho, Ngaati Whanaunga, and Ngāti Tamaterā, were involved in the co-design of the kauri population health monitoring survey undertaken during 2022/2023. The survey report was published in February 2025 and confirmed the Hūnua Ranges remains free from kauri dieback.
Tāwharanui and Shakespear	Ngāti Manuhiri gave a cultural blessing for the translocation of kiwi from Tāwharanui to Mt Tamahunga in February 2025 and supported the Hihi and Tieke releases at Shakespear in May 2025.
Arataki Visitor Centre Waitākere Ranges	A ceremony was held at Arataki Visitor Centre in March 2025 to acknowledge the gifting of Māori names by Te Kawerau ā Maki to the lecture and AV rooms at the centre. Te Hoe Urungi (navigator) is the new name of the lecture room, and Te Hoe Hiwa (the steering paddle) is the new name for the AV room.
Te Rau Pūriri	Staff continue to liaise with Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara on options to improve the protection of the Ridge pā at Te Rau Pūriri.
Waitawa	Staff continue to work in partnership with Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki over options to protect the Mātatai pā site at Waitawa.
Duder	Staff worked with Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki and the Duder family on developing interpretation of the park features that represents mana whenua cultural connections and the early settler's history.



Ceremony for the gifting of names by Te Kawerau ā Maki to rooms at Arataki Visitor Centre.

3.2 Protecting biodiversity

The activities delivered under this focus area include a mix of conservation projects, targeted pest animal and pest plant control programmes, revegetation planting and management of the five open sanctuaries at Tāwharanui, Shakespear, Glenfern on Aotea / Great Barrier Island, Ark in the Park in the Waitākere Ranges and the Kokāko Management Area (KMA) in Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges.

Safeguarding threatening species, ecosystems and natural habitats to protect current and future biodiversity is the key driver for the work delivered in this area. Some of our achievements in this area are outlined below.

3.2.1 Threatened species



Rare Raukawa gecko sighted at a southern park in April 2025 during a monitoring survey.



20 North Island Brown Kiwi were translocated from Tāwharanui to Tamahunga in February 2025.



40 Hihi / Stitchbird were added to the population at Shakespear in May 2025.



30 Tieke / Saddleback were introduced to Shakespear in May 2025 to supplement existing population

3.2.2 **Revegetation planting**

50

Planting days held during the 2024/2025 planting season

150,000

Trees planted across the parks network

57,392

Volunteer hours spent on regional parks



Long Bay planting day, May 2025.

3.2.3 **Ngahere programme delivery**

The focus of the Ngahere programme is to progressively retire 200ha of farmland in regional parks and replant these areas in native species, for the dual purpose of:

- supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems
- reducing emissions and stock numbers by creating indigenous forest that will store carbon.

During 2024/2025 approximately **70 ha** was replanted across Ātiu Creek Regional Park, Te Ārai Regional Park, Pakiri Regional Park, Tāwharanui Regional Park, Shakespear Regional Park and Long Bay Regional Park.

262,000 trees planted during 2024/2025



Mahurangi East, planting near Te Kapa inlet



Tāwharanui, planting on southern paddocks adjacent to existing coastal forest.

3.2.4 Natural Environment Targeted Rate programme

Regional Parks staff deliver the Parks Integrated Site Management programme (PISM) on our parks, funded by the Natural Environment Targeted Rate (NETR).

This programme supports pest plant and animal control, the operation and management of the five sanctuaries and a range of conservation projects that are critically important in protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the parks network.

Some of the projects delivered under this programme include:

- Feral pig control
- Small mammals control (rats, mustelids)
- Rabbit control
- Pest plants
- Threatened species management
- Operational sanctuaries management (trapping, baiting, monitoring, incursions support, etc)

Table 2 below summarises the achievements under each project area.

Project	Achievements
Feral pig projects: Delivered at Te Ārai, Ātiu Creek, Waitākere and Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges.	230 pigs removed from the parks network over the last 12 months. Camera monitoring networks for feral pigs now active in Waitākere and Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges.
Small mammals control: Predator control trap networks were expanded and strengthened at Tāpapakanga, Tawhitokino, Te Muri, Ātiu Creek, Whakanewha, Whātipu and Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges.	115 mustelids, alongside rats and hedgehogs have been trapped in the last 12 months at Ātiu Creek. Wenderholm Regional Park has maintained the level of rats at 10%RTI (Rodent Tracking Index) or lower over the last 12 months. A new pest control network was installed by rangers at Whakatiwai, including bait stations and traps, after the discovery of the Raukawa gecko in the park. The new trap network at Whakanewha has captured over 450 rats in only 6 months of operation. The first kākā chick at Whakanewha fledged this summer (2024) while banded kokopu are being seen regularly in the park's wetland and feeder streams.
Rabbit control: Control and monitoring activities were delivered across 29 sites.	Shakespear Open Sanctuary has maintained its zero-density status, while rabbit densities have been maintained at low levels for most of the other sites. Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary experienced an increase in density in 2024. Additional control measures will be in place in 2025/2026, with the aim to return to low levels and eventually zero density.

Pest plants: 2554ha controlled for pest plants. Programme expanded to include sites at Te Rau Pūriri, Te Ārai dunes and Waharau.	Annual pest plant management at Motukorea / Browns Island has been very successful. The invasive pest plant <i>Rhamnus</i> is now considered to be rare on the island. Targeted pest plant management was implemented at Te Ārai, to protect the threatened plant <i>Centipidia Minima</i>, and Sand coprosma and pingao at 5 Mile Strip, Muriwai and threatened plants <i>Annogramma leptophylla</i> and <i>Euphorbia glauca</i> at Motukorea / Browns Island.
Open Sanctuaries: Protecting threatened species	Shakespear had 7 rat incursions between late December 2024 and mid-March 2025. These issues were resolved by the team to allow translocation of 40 x hihi and 30 x tīeke in May 2024. Tāwharanui had 8 rats, 1 possum, 2 cats and 6 stoats recorded inside the fence over 12 months. Despite incursions, the Tāwharanui Takahe pair raised a chick to maturity this summer. Duvaucel geckos and wētāpunga are also doing well in the Sanctuary, with evidence of breeding. Tāwharanui had a new species confirmed via the sighting of a Pacific Gecko in the Ecology Bush, in June 2025.



Kākā chicks, Whakanewha, February 2025.



Takahe chick, Tāwharanui March 2025

3.3 Adapting to and mitigating climate change

Chapter nine of the RPMP outlines council's response to embedding climate change adaptation and mitigation into our management approach.

Adaptation responses include:

- Sustainable management of park infrastructure in response to coastal hazards, inundation and sea level rise
- Planning to reduce the impact of drought on plants, wildlife and pastoral management
- Being prepared for a higher level of fire risk
- Responding to increased risks from plant and animal pests and pathogens
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mitigation responses include:

- Prioritising forest and ecosystem health to keep existing carbon stores
- Investigating opportunities to utilise new technology to reduce operational emissions
- Setting a pathway for farming operations to reduce emissions.

Table 3 below provides examples of the management actions taken.

Activity	Actions
Managing coastal hazards / tracks	Waitawa • Pāwhetau Track – was pulled back from an eroding coastal edge and the boardwalk repositioned to set it further back. Tāwharanui • Assessment and advice on mitigation actions for coastal erosion and risks to the park road at Jones Bay has been obtained. Monitoring of the situation is continuing. Wenderholm • Recreation space is to be retired to provide a coastal buffer to inundation which will be stabilised by planting. Long Bay • Maintenance work was undertaken on coastal accessways and fencing at Long Bay to protect dunes and ensure safe public access. All parks have ongoing revegetation planting plans in place to stabilise coastal dunes.
Preparing for higher level of fire risk	The Auckland Regional Parks Fire Management Plan was completed in February 2025. 37 park-specific fire plans were prepared by June 2025, for the following parks/sections of parks. West: Anawhata, Arataki, Byers Block (Piha), Cascades, Cornwallis, Glen Esk, Karekare, Lake Wainamu, Muriwai, North Piha, Whatipu, Te Rau Puriri. South: Ambury, Āwhitu, Duder, Waitawa, Hūnua Falls, Motukorea, Mutukaroa, Ōmana, Ōrere Point, Tawhitokino, Tāpapakanga, Waharau, Whakanewha, Whakatiwai.

	North: Te Ārai, Pakiri, Ātiu Creek, Tāwharanui, Scandrett, Mahurangi East, Mahurangi West, Te Muri, Wenderholm, Shakespear, Long Bay.
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by utilising new technology	• Solar panels were installed at Keddle House and Craw Homestead, Waitākere Ranges Regional Park • Completion of the remote automated water tank level monitoring systems across the regional parks network • Trialling the use of electric ATV vehicles on regional parks to explore their suitability.
Setting a pathway for farming operations to reduce emissions	• Retirement of pasture and a consequential reduction in stock numbers is underway, a direct result of the Ngahere revegetation programme. • New sheep genetics were investigated to introduce animals with low methane emissions to the farming herd in the future. They require less stock maintenance and produce premium wool.



Solar panel installed near Keddle House, and solar power equipment at Craw Homestead.

3.3.1 Farming operations

During the 2024/2025 year there has been a continued focus on implementing the 5 year farming strategy, by integrating the farming operation into the regional parks work programme and sharing knowledge and experience through collaborative relationships developed amongst staff directly involved in this activity.

Some of the key initiatives completed this year are:

- All annual farm operational plans were prepared by June 2025
- Farm fertiliser supplier was changed to an Auckland-based company to increase efficiencies
- Shade and Shelter guidelines for stock were completed in February 2025
- The ten-year anniversary of council managing farming operations a Te Muri was celebrated in June 2025
- A shearing demonstration and training day was held at Ambury
- An Industry discussion group was established.

In December 2024, the first of a series of workshops involving council staff and representatives from the wider farming industry began. Two events were held at Ambury in December 2024 and February 2025, featuring expert presentations on topics including industry benchmarking, animal health issues and prevention, future market trends, animal genetics, audits and record keeping and feed management.

These workshops provided an ideal opportunity for Regional Parks farming staff to hear from a range of experts, including Beef and Lamb NZ, PPG Wrightson, Ravensdown Fertiliser, Wilson Hellaby, and Farmstrong, and develop their knowledge and experience of best practice.

The Farming team also had the privilege to visit Hangawera Station near Morrinsville, one of three dry stock farms owned and operated by Tainui Group Holdings. A presentation from the farm manager on the challenges they face regarding dry conditions and summer management was particularly relevant to regional parks, given we experience similar issues.

A collaborative relationship was also established with the NZ Farming Council, after they approached council to register their interest in also taking part in the ongoing industry discussion groups.



3.3.2 Awards

In November 2024, the Farming team won the Champion Hogget and Best Overall award at the Clevedon A&P show. The team was also recognised for sharing their knowledge on best practice animal care and safety and giving a live demonstration at the show.



The farming operation was also recognised for achieving impressive lamb weights during the last lambing season, averaging 19.7kg against the national average is 19.2kg.



Three llamas were introduced at Ambury after a spate of recent dog attacks on sheep. Llamas are known to protect sheep from dogs and other predators, as seen at Ambury, with the llamas circling the mob of sheep when dogs are present.

The Llamas add to the park diversity, showcasing different breeds of animal for educational purposes.

3.4 Adding value to the visitor experience

Regional parks provide a diverse range of recreation opportunities and experiences for visitors. People value the parks for their undeveloped and natural outdoor spaces that allows them to connect to nature and provide for their physical and mental wellbeing.

The provision of visitor services, facilities and information, including our dedicated Ranger service, ensures park users have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Table 4 below outlines some of the work undertaken during 2024/2025.

Activity	Actions
Track upgrades / reopening	Some of the tracks reopened include: • Fairy Falls, Waitākere Ranges • Muriwai: Gannet colony access, Lookout track, Quarry track, part of Edwin Mitchelson track • Lake Wainamu access • Ahu Ahu track (Karekare to Mercer Bay Loop track) • Wairoa - Cossey track, Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges Some of the tracks upgraded: • Hūnua Falls bridge, connecting to the track network • Fisherman’s track, Tāwharanui • Native and Pawhetau tracks, Waitawa • Devolution and Mine tracks, Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges • Glenfern loop track, Glenfern Sanctuary • New stairs installed at Mita Bay track, Mahurangi West • A second track developed to create a loop for walkers on the Whakakaiwhara Pā track, Duder.

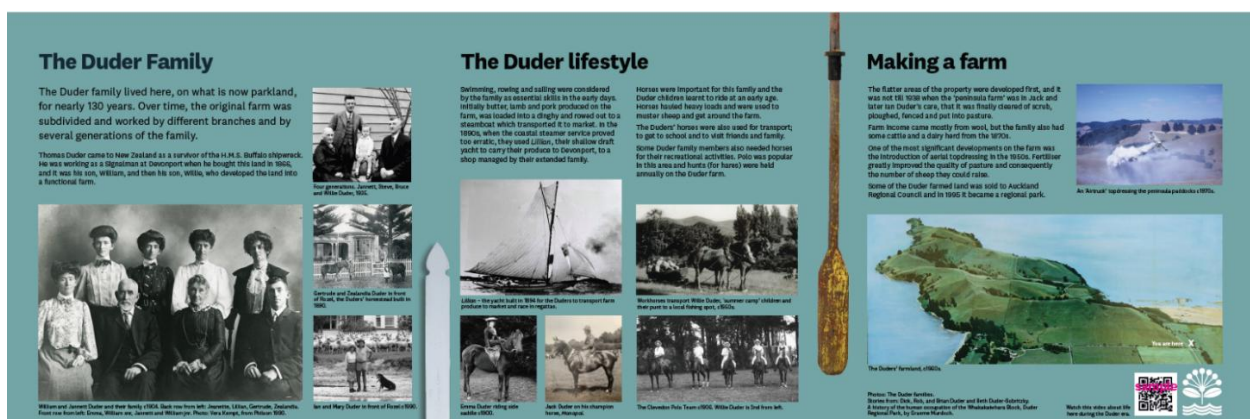


Hūnua Falls bridge replaced in August 2024

Recreational activities	• New, permanent orienteering course installed at Tāpapakanga • Butterfly Sculpture Trail installed at Ambury • Redevelopment of the disc golf course at Waitawa • Cornwallis bookable site BBQs were converted from gas to electric • Improvements made to hang glider launch site at Piha.
Visitor facilities	• Toilets refurbished at Mill Bay, Waitākere Ranges • New shelters installed at the Cliff Top campground, Ōmana • New toilets installed at Motukorea / Browns Island • New notice boards installed at Long Bay; repaired at Whatipu, Cornwallis, and at Karekare and Kitekite Falls carparks.
Accommodation	• Tāwharanui bach and Puhoi Cottage repainted • Te Kuiti and Te Whetuki baches, Duder had new heating installed, shade sails and lounge furniture upgraded • Āwhitu bach carpet replaced.
Interpretation	• Panels depicting the Duder Family story and role in the development of the peninsula farm activities were completed • Original furniture was restored and returned for display at Vine House, Mahurangi East • A panel interpreting traditional place names of landmarks visible from Whatipu beach was completed and a listening post of audio stories installed* • Arataki Visitor Centre foyer was refreshed, with interpretation provided for the pare/carving over the entrance* • Interpretation was developed for Waimaringi Track/ Fairy Falls*, featuring stories of regeneration, fauna, water quality, and partnerships.

*These projects were completed in partnership with Te Kawerau ā Maki

Part of the Duder Family panels is shown below.



3.4.2 Events on regional parks

A wide range of events were held on regional parks during the 2024/2025 year, many of which were delivered by third parties licenced to use the park for these activities. Table 6 below lists examples of events held.

Regional Park	Event	Date
Waitākere Ranges	Sri Chinmoy running event, Arataki	October 2024
Waitākere Ranges	Cornwallis Beach Cleanup, Sustainable Coastlines	November 2024
Tāwharanui	Experiencing Marine Reserves – Snorkel Day	November 2024
Wenderholm	Rodney Coastal Challenge	November 2024
Whakanewha	Waiheke Walking Festival	November 2024
Mahurangi West	Mahurangi Regatta	January 2025
Waitākere Ranges	Karamatura Farm Day	February 2025
Ōmana Duder	Beachlands – Maraetai Trolley Derby Maraetai Half Marathon	February 2025
Waitawa	Auckland Secondary Schools Mountain Bike series	February 2025
Long Bay	Total Sports Coastal Challenge	February 2025
Āwhitu	Awhitu Triathlon	March 2025
Ātiu Creek	Earth Beat Festival	March 2025
Tāwharanui	Tāwharanui Trail event	May 2025
Muriwai	Auckland Secondary Schools Rogaine orienteering event	June 2025

Many of the large-scale running events or festivals attracted between 1000-3000 people.



Southern parks running events, August 2024



Earth Beat Festival, Ātiu Creek, March 2025

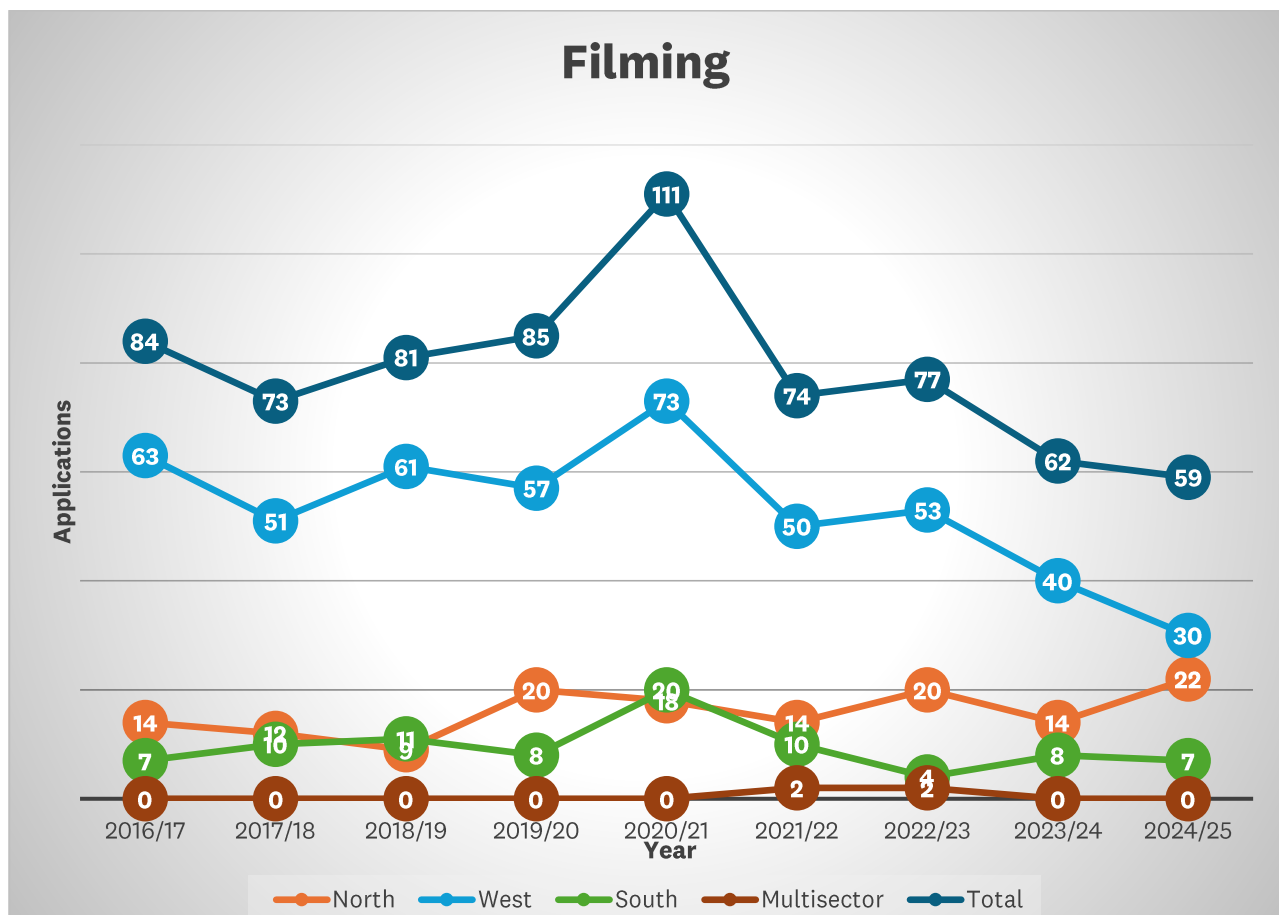


Karamatura Farm Day, February 2025

3.4.3 Filming on parks

Fifty-nine applications for permits to film on regional parks were received in 2024/2025. This is a decrease from the 77 applications made in 2023/2024, and the peak year in 2020/2021 when 111 applications were received.

The decline reflects the impact of the Hollywood film industry strike that occurred between May – September 2023 and a general drop in overseas productions. All the recent applications have been for local productions, such as TV series, advertisements and marketing promotions.



3.4.4 Accommodation use

Staying overnight on regional parks continued to be an extremely popular activity for parks visitors.

During the period January to June 2025 a total of 19,325 bookings were made to stay in campgrounds, baches and overnight parking areas, providing an opportunity for more than 31,000 people to enjoy waking up in natural surroundings of a regional park.

Table 7 below summarises the most popular baches, campgrounds and designated overnight certified self-contained (CSC) car parks, based on booking numbers and occupancy rates over this period.

Campground	No. of bookings
Tāwharanui	3,964
Schischka (Wenderholm)	1,586
Te Haruhi (Shakespear)	1,526
Poukaraka Flats (Whakanewha)	539
Sullivans Bay (Mahurangi West)	482



Schischka campground

Bach / house	No. of bookings
Schischka House (Wenderholm)	55
Te Whetuki (Duder)	47
Moonlight Bach (Scandrett)	46
Coldham Bach (Scandrett)	46
Courtyard House (Ātiu Creek)	40



Moonlight Bach, Scandrett

Overnight car park	No. of bookings
Te Ārai	606
Shakespear	569
Long Bay	407
Wenderholm	462
Mahurangi West	607



Shakespear CSC overnight parking

3.5 Collaborating with others to achieve outcomes

Many people support regional parks by volunteering or belonging to friends, community or recreational groups that have a strong interest in helping manage the parks. Volunteers contribute in many ways, through their involvement in pest plant and animal control, revegetation planting, helping develop and maintain critical park assets and supporting a range of recreational activities.

Regional Parks also works collaboratively with a wide range of partners who help support the operational management and delivery of programmes on the parks network.

Table 5 below outlines some of the work being delivered by our volunteers and partners.

Programme	Description of activity
Arataki Visitor Centre programmes	The visitor centre collaborates with Auckland Libraries, Auckland Zoo and Birdcare Aotearoa on its delivery of programmes for both school holiday sessions and the wider community. Staff are currently working with the Dark Sky Project team to investigate developing workshops to educate the community on the project objectives.
Threatened species protection / pest management	Regional Parks continues to work in partnership with the Department of Conservation to support the protection of Tara Iti (NZ Fairy Tern) at Te Ārai. The department is also a key player in the Hūnua Ranges aerial pest control project.
Wetlands restoration at Tāwharanui	Northern parks staff continue to work with TOSSI (Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc) to support their proposal to restore the wetlands at Anchor Bay, Tāwharanui. In February 2025, TOSSI launched the fundraising phase of the wetland restoration project onsite.
Partner agreements	Regional Parks maintains a series of agreements with a wide range of partners, for example Friends of Regional Parks, Conservation Volunteers NZ, Ark in the Park. We are currently in the process of reviewing and updating several partner agreements.
Education programmes	Regional Parks continues to collaborate with council's Sustainable Schools team to deliver education programmes at Arataki Visitor Centre and Ambury Regional Park.



3.5.1 **Supporting our volunteers**

Volunteers include regular groups of individuals who will turn up every week to do set tasks, school groups who come to learn about nature, corporate groups having a community day out to do planting, local residents with an interest in their park and various specialist groups.

To support our regular volunteers in increasing their skills and capability, Regional Parks provides an induction and series of training modules to ensure they are aware of the health and safety requirements and best practice techniques for undertaking the tasks assigned to them. Training includes demonstrating competency in the use of tools, equipment, machinery and park vehicles

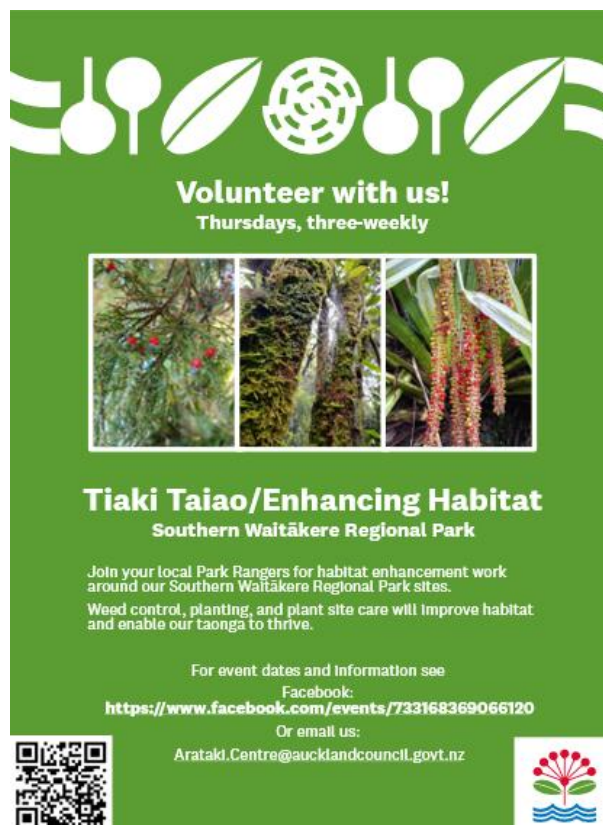
Volunteer groups that come to the park for a day receive a shorter induction and are assigned to a park ranger who supervises the work to be completed.

Volunteer hours

During the 2024 / 2025 year a total of **57,392 volunteer hours** were spent on regional parks.

Growing our volunteers

Next year, we will endeavour to grow our volunteer base, particularly for the southern and western parks. Staff will engage proactively with local community groups to provide opportunities for people to come along to the parks and experience how they can individually support some of the environmental restoration initiatives.



Volunteer with us!
Thursdays, three-weekly

Tiaki Taiao/Enhancing Habitat
Southern Waitākere Regional Park

Join your local Park Rangers for habitat enhancement work around our Southern Waitākere Regional Park sites.
Weed control, planting, and plant site care will improve habitat and enable our taonga to thrive.

For event dates and information see
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/733168369066120>
Or email us:
Arataki.Centre@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



Shakespeare Regional Park lambing programme

The Shakespeare lambing programme is a great example of how the support and commitment from volunteers and the local community can help achieve our outcomes on regional parks.

The strong level of participation from local volunteer teams, particularly young families, who cared for struggling animals during the 2024 winter/spring lambing season, resulted in approximately 30 lambs being successfully raised and returned to the main sheep flock, once they had reached a healthy weight.

A well-organised volunteer structure, comprising of shift workers, a lambing beat team, dedicated lamb leaders and lamb carers, ensured the programme ran smoothly and was highly successful. Comprehensive training and a focus on maintaining strong communication channels (utilising social media and WhatsApp groups) provided ongoing support and was instrumental in empowering the volunteers.



The programme provided a hands-on learning experience in animal husbandry, welfare and best practice. It fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of the park's farming activities amongst urban dwellers and proved to be a valuable educational tool, demonstrating how traditional farming can co-exist with a predator-free open sanctuary environment at Shakespeare.

The programme demonstrated our commitment to engaging with the local community, by involving them in sustainable land management and developing a holistic understanding of natural and agricultural landscapes.

4.0 Delivery of projects

The total capex budget for the 2024/2025 financial year was \$7.1m.

Here are some of the projects completed during this period:

Regional Park	Works completed
Shakespear Tāwharanui	Renew potable and farm water supply infrastructure.
Muriwai	Roadway resurfacing, Jack Butt Lane. Recladding tractor shed at depot.
Glenfern Sanctuary	Fitzroy House roof replaced, new solar panel added, and new vehicle / pedestrian bridge installed.
Duder / Tāpapakanga	Te Whetuki, Te Kuiti and Tāpapakanga baches upgraded.
Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges	Hūnua Falls bridge replaced.
Motukorea / Browns Island	New toilets installed.
Āwhitu	Final section of the wetland boardwalk completed.
Te Rau Pūriri	Resurfacing of farm tracks for safe access.
Arataki Visitor Centre	AV equipment replaced in lecture room
Cascade-Kauri, Waitākere Ranges	Signage renewal and installation.

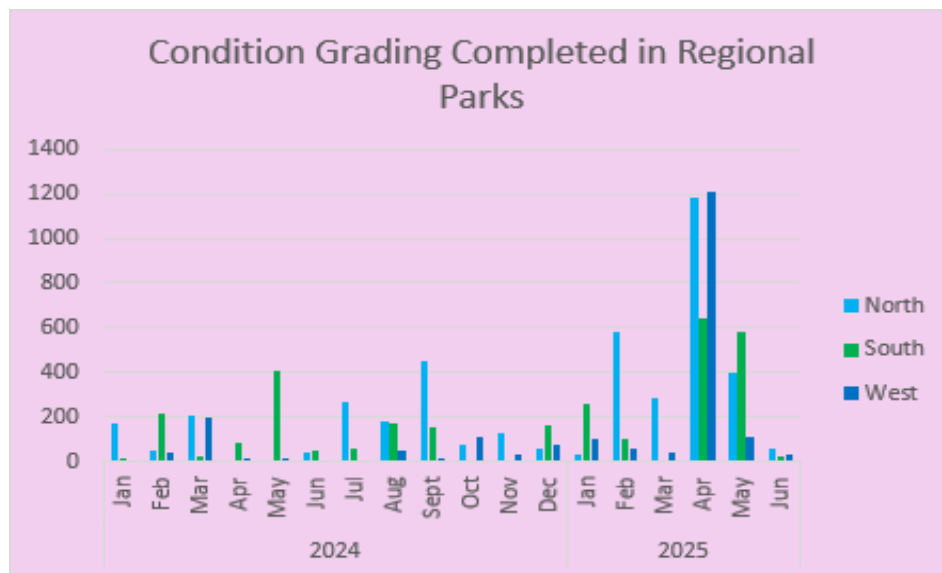


Installation of new toilets on Motukorea / Browns Island

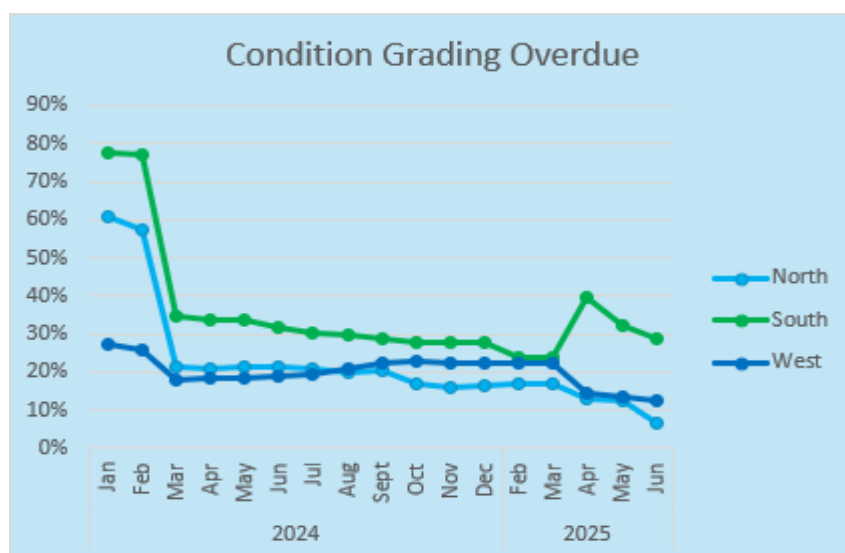
4.1 Asset management

Since 2023, the focus has been on improving the quality of asset data, by progressively completing the outstanding condition grading assessments. This enables staff to ensure our assets are in good condition, maintenance and /or renewal costs are managed effectively, and we continue to provide the required level of service.

Regional Parks has 16,138 assets (as of 30 June 2025). Overall, 85% of all assets have had a condition rating assessment.



Around 15% of the total assets are currently overdue for an assessment. This has significantly reduced from 80% in January 2024, down to around 6-10% in the northern and western parks. The spike in overdue assessments in the south in April 2025 is due to a number of assets falling due for assessment. This will reduce over the next few months as staff complete this work.



Of the 15% still waiting to be assessed, only 1% of these assets have a criticality rating of 4 or 5.

A new approach will be adopted in the coming year to manage condition grading assessments for assets of all criticality grades, to reduce the number of overdue gradings.

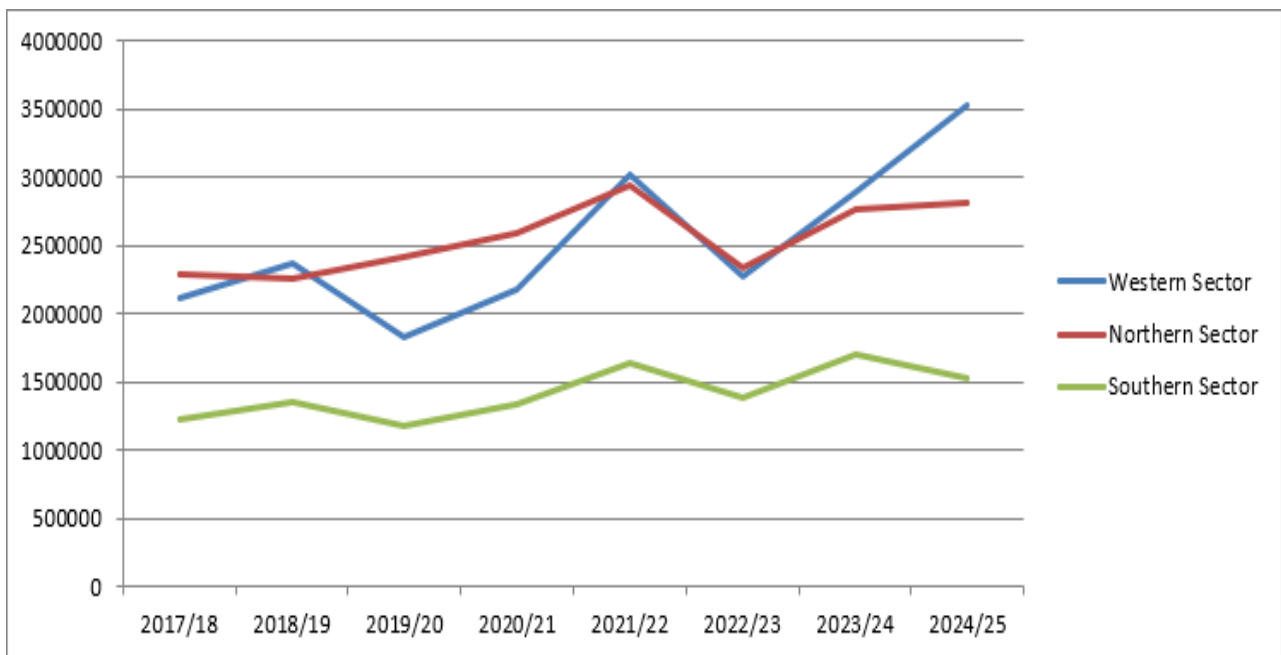
5. Issues and challenges

5.1 Visitor numbers

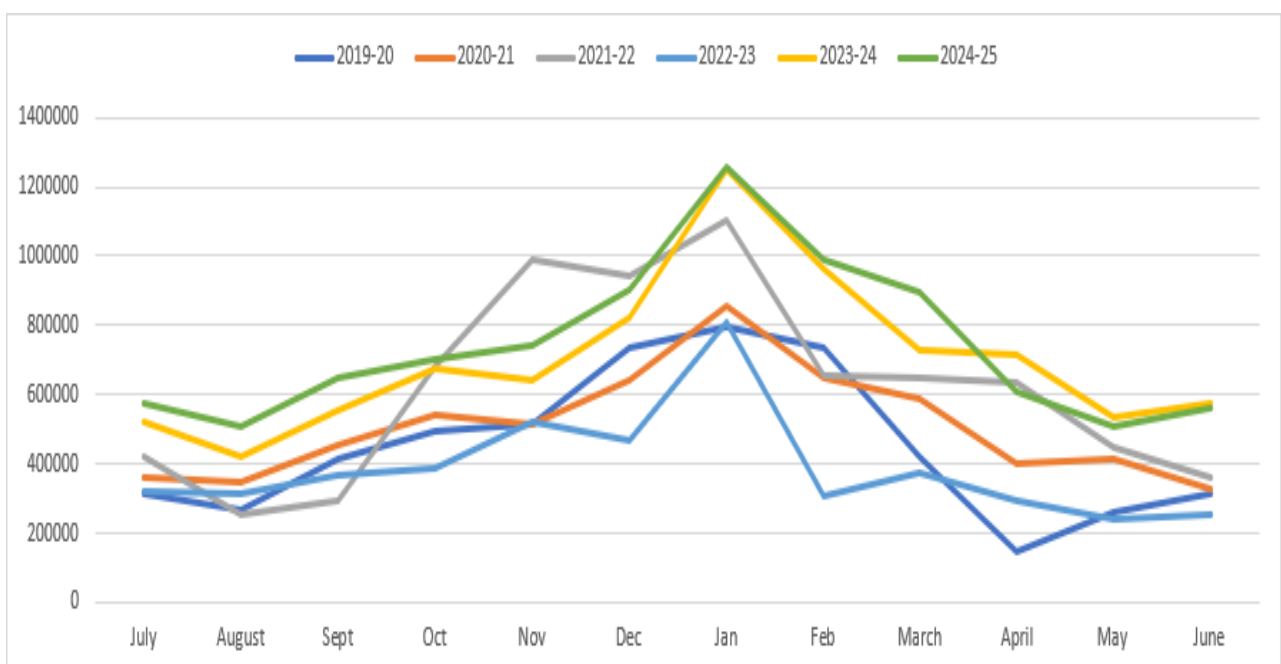
Visitor numbers during the 2023/2024 year peaked at 7,309,965.

During the 2024/2025 year visitor numbers increased by 8.3% overall to **7,971,133**.

There was a variability in the number of visitors across the park network. The northern parks had a 3.7% increase in visitor numbers, while in the southern parks there was a 10.5% decrease. The western parks experienced a significant 23.7% increase in visitors. This is likely to be due to the re-opening tracks in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, which has attracted more people back to this park.



The graph below shows recent trends and the variability of visitor numbers during the year.

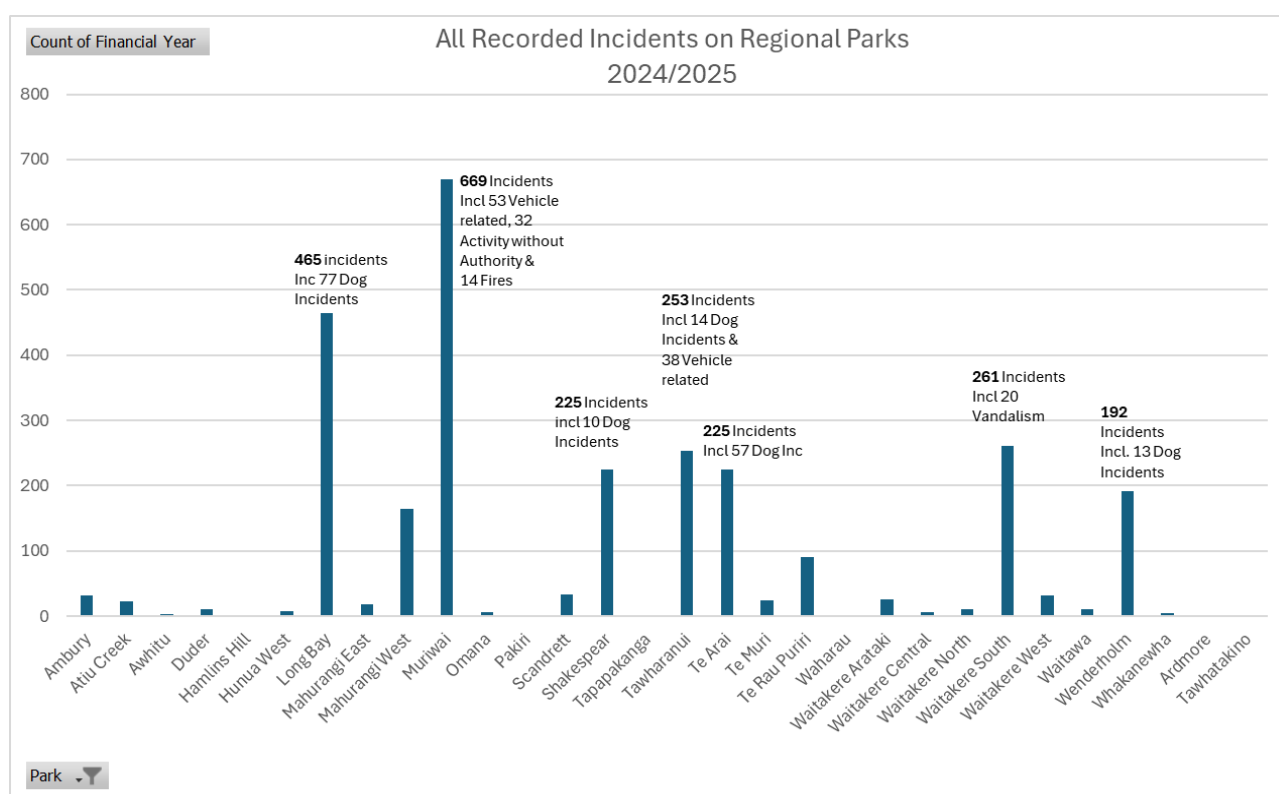


5.2 Incidents

The continuing rise in visitor numbers across the regional parks network brings its own set of challenges. In the peak summer season, traffic congestion and parking issues both leading into and within the most popular parks can have adverse impacts on local communities. It also puts pressure on ageing visitor infrastructure, such as toilets and amenities, which need upgrading or replacement.

Safety incidents on parks range from minor injuries while walking on tracks to more serious incidents. Water safety is a primary concern in some coastal locations accessed through the parks, where repeated drownings have occurred.

Visitors can sometimes get lost in the larger parks, resulting in search and rescue callouts to emergency management agencies that are also supported by rangers.



Note: Vehicle related incidents include driving on the beach, vehicles in unauthorised locations, etc.

Both visitor and park ranger safety can also be adversely affected by aggressive and intimidating behaviour displayed by some park visitors.

Dogs brought into regional parks by visitors remain a perpetual issue. They can have a devastating impact on threatened species, especially in the open sanctuaries, and also be a nuisance to other park users. Rangers continue to work closely with Auckland Council's Animal Management Team to educate the public and enforce dog access rules.

Long Bay and Muriwai, being the most popular beaches, experience the highest number of incidents. Vehicle-related incidents continue to be a major issue at Muriwai, particularly the illegal use of vehicles in unauthorised locations. Dogs remain an ongoing issue at Long Bay and other parks and are likely to be under-reported.

6. Success stories

6.1 Kōkako translocation to Sanctuary Mountain / Maungatautari

In June 2025, the Hūnua Kōkako Recovery Project began a translocation process for up to 20 kōkako to be moved to Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, marking the first time the Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges population will contribute birds to another recovery project.

Once teetering on the brink of local extinction, kōkako have made an extraordinary recovery thanks to over 30 years of commitment from mana whenua, dedicated volunteers, Auckland Council, and the Department of Conservation. From a low point of just a single breeding pair and 23 individuals in 1994, the population now numbers an estimated 259 breeding pairs, as recorded in the 2022 census.

The Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges are now recognised by the National Kōkako Recovery Programme as one of only two mainland habitats to surpass 500 birds and the project is praised for fostering strong genetic diversity. This achievement has only been possible through intensive pest control, including three aerial pest management operations and thousands of volunteer hours maintaining 3,000 bait stations and 700 traps across rugged terrain.

The translocation, supported by Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Tamaoho, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Tamatera and Ngāti Whanaunga, involved a skilled team of Auckland Council staff, volunteers, and contractors netting adult birds, giving the birds a health-check and banding them, before transporting them in specially designed boxes to Maungatautari and ensuring they were released by early afternoon to settle into their new home.



Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, once devoid of kōkako since the 1970s, has become a stronghold for the species after earlier translocations in 2015 and 2016. A 2020 census recorded 101 territorial birds, confirming it as the fastest growing and largest mainland kōkako population established by translocation at the time.

This translocation is significant to the ongoing efforts to protect New Zealand's unique biodiversity. The translocation will help maintain kōkako genetic diversity nationally, laying the groundwork for Maungatautari to one day become a source site for other reintroductions and native corridors like Taia te Taiao, allowing native species to move safely across Waikato landscapes.

An item on the translocation was featured on TVNZ on 18 June 2025.

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/seven-sharp/clips/flying-the-coup>

The kōkako population in Te Ngāherehere o Kohukohunui / Hūnua Ranges is a success story, both locally and nationally, The Spinoff recently included Hūnua kōkako in their list of top 11 projects that prove conservation works.

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/23-01-2025/natures-comeback-tour-11-wins-that-prove-conservation-works>

Park staff involved in this project have felt a deep sense of accomplishment seeing the kōkako population mature and thrive. The opportunity to become a source site for translocations was always a long-term goal for the project. Regional Parks was once gifted birds to strengthen our population, now we have the privilege of paying that generosity forward. It's a full-circle moment that fills us with pride and gratitude.

6.2 Eco Matters Love Your Place – Nikau Award

Arataki Visitor Centre won the Nikau Award category in the Eco Matters Love Your Place Awards in October 2024. The award recognises businesses contributing to improve the environment.



The team were acknowledged for providing an incredible, welcoming atmosphere that enhances the visitor experience for both schools and the public.

6.3 Green Flag Awards

Four regional parks received Green Flag awards from Recreation Aotearoa for the first time in October 2024.

- Ātiu Creek
- Ōmana
- Arataki Visitor Centre
- Hūnua Ranges Regional Park



This award recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces around the world.

7. Financial position

Regional Parks Capital programme

The overall capex funding for the 2024/2025 financial year for planned renewal and development projects was \$7.2 million.

Total capex expenditure within this period was \$5.7 million, resulting in 86% of the planned projects being completed.

NETR budget delivered by Regional Parks

The total NETR budget allocation for Regional Parks in financial year 2024/2025 was \$6,472,739.

Total expenditure within this period was \$5,783,774. Some projects were underspent due to delays in contractor delivery.

The total NETR budget allocation for Regional Parks in 2025/2026 is planned to increase to \$7,373,530, to allow for the delivery of Hūnua pest management project by October 2025.

8. Reporting

A series of quarterly reports were provided to the Parks Committee in October 2024, February 2025 and June 2025.

The Implementation Plan for financial year 2025/2026 outlining the Regional Parks work programme for this period was presented to the Parks Committee in August 2025.

A copy of this Annual Report 2024/2025 and the Regional Parks Implementation Plan 2025/2026 will be provided on council's Regional Parks Management Plan 2022 website for key stakeholders and the public to access.

