



Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) Annual report 2021




Mountains To Sea
Conservation Trust
Nga Maunga ki te Moana



whitebait
Connection
Xstream about freshwater life
www.whitebaitconnection.co.nz



Experiencing
Marine Reserves
EMR
emr.org.nz



Celebrating 20 years

Nga mihi

Funding: Tindall Foundation, Foundation North, Bobby Stafford-Bush Foundation, Department of Conservation (DOC) Whangārei, Whangārei District Council, Lotteries Community (Waikato), Lotteries (COGS), Whangarei Harbour Catchment Group, Kaipara District Council, Fonterra, Lion Foundation, Pacific Development and Conservation Trust, Auckland Council and local boards, Wettle Wetsuits and Spearfishing, Far North District Council, Northland Regional Council, Reeve Davies and Associates, Seaweeek

Sponsorship: MTF Finance Whangārei, Million Metres Donors, 2plus, The Choc Fish Co, Fortuna Foundation and Dive Tutukaka!

Partnerships: Dive! Tutukaka, DOC Whangārei, Para Kore ki Tamaki, DOC, Auckland Zoo, SeaLife Trust, Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safari, Northland Community Foundation, Auckland Council and local boards, Forward, Wai Care, National Advisory Group for Freshwater Citizen Science, Henderson Reeves Lawyers, Te Whanau Moana me te Rorohuri hapu, Bennett Associates, Fish Forever and Seaweeek

Regional providers:

EOS Ecology
Ngā mahi Te Taiao
Tasman Bay Guardians
Friends of Te-Whanganui-A Hei Marine Reserve Trust
Mountains to Sea Wellington
Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society



Collaborations: Learning Journeys, EcoQuest, Te Aho Tū Roa, Enviroschools, NRC, Community Waitakere, Patuharakeke Trust Board, Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group (IKHMG), NZ Landcare Trust, Reconnecting Northland, Papa Taiao Earthcare, Mahurangi Action Group, Fonterra, Forest Bridge Trust, NorthTec, Te Henga Connection, Snells Beach Residents and Ratepayers Association, Sustainable Coastlines, Whangateau Harbourcare, NIWA, Whananaki Community Led Development Group, Te Waiariki/Ngati Korora, Far North Surf Rescue, Goat Island Marine Discovery Centre, Ngati Kahu Social Services, NZAEE (New Zealand Association for Environmental Educators), Pacific Coast Kayaks, TriOceans, VOYCE, Ko Waitangi te Awa Trust, Te Mahere Whakauka, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust, Ngati Kuri

Message from our chairperson

Kia ora koutou katoa

Te mea tuatahi...

Firstly, a big heart felt mihi to all of our Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust whanau. Your tireless mahi dedication and effort have not gone UNNOTICED!

Kore te kupu

There are no words that can express the admiration and respect the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust has for you all. From our hearts to yours, thank you thank you thank you. To all our partners and partnerships, we offer the same acknowledgement and thanks.

Naaku te rourou

Naau te rourou

Ka ora ai te taiao

With your basket and my basket the environment will thrive

Peehea nui

How big is big?

This is the crossroad that Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust has reached after 20 years of scrimping, saving, begging, borrowing, laughing, crying and loving for the taiao the environment. From the mountains to the sea and everything in between. Over this time, MTSCT Experiencing Marine Reserves and Whitebait Connection have grown and delivered successful programs, engagements and fulfilled contracts all over te motu, the country. Snorkelling and kayak days, restoration, planting, monitoring, education, citizen science marine advocacy and the list goes on. To the point where we are forced to ask ourselves the question.

Peehea nui

How big is big?

Do we stay the same and operate as a well-oiled, consistent and manageable machine or shoot for the stars? Can we do both?

In the current climate the MTSCT machine has kept going despite an array of new challenges. The goalpost and balance seem to keep moving around environment and funding. One year the majority of funding will be given to our oceans, the next year it will be our rivers, forcing constant change reshuffling and thought processes throughout the organisation. Of all of whom are involved seem to take it in their stride. And one would be foolhardy to suggest that our Poutokomanawa could get away with wearing only one hat. As foundation members Samara Nicholas and Kim Jones have found out, and whom adorn many hats, and very successfully I may add. The intermittent lock-downs over the period have also had an effect on the organisation, it has made us think outside of the box, although I don't think we were ever in a box to begin with. On reflection it has given te taiao the environment a well-earned break, which we must ensure flows on to our people. It is good to step back, reflect and charge our batteries every once in a while.

Hokia ki toou maunga kia urea ai koe
Ki ngaa hou o Taawhirimaatea
Return to your ancestral mountains to be cleansed by the wind of Taawhirimaatea
(Hau is a means of replenishing oneself spiritually, emotionally and mentally.)

One of the things that has come to light, from the sometimes-overwhelming workload involved with MTSCT. Is the fact we need to look not only after the environment but ourselves and others. Sometimes a simple phone call, message or acknowledgement can suffice.

E aha te mea nui o tea ao?
Nga
He tangata
What is the greatest thing?
It is the people

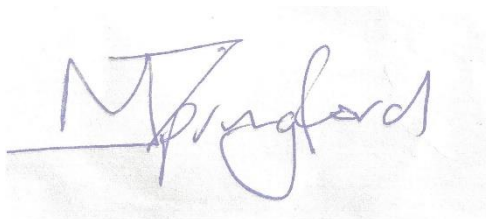
With that in mind, taking the support and love from everyone involved in Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust past and present, supporters and whanau. I think the answer to the question

Peehea nui?
How big is big ?

Is up to us and we can confidently take any path of the crossroad of which we decide, and we hope you will all come along for the ride.

Whakamana te maunga
Whakamana te wai
He maauri o ngaa tangata
Nga mea katoa he pai
If we look after the water from the mountains to the sea.
It will look after us.
It is our life force.

Nga mihi nui kia koutou katoa
Naa



Manuel Springford
Chair of the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust

Governance and Executive Leadership Team

Trustees

Manuel Springford - Te Waha Maori portfolio (Chairperson)
 Jean-Louis Ecochard - Marketing Portfolio (Treasurer)
 Geoff Butturini - Outdoor & H & S portfolio (Secretary)
 Matt Keene - Communications portfolio
 Katrina Goddard - Marine Science and Policy Portfolio
 Eden Hakaraia - Education portfolio
 Hilton Leith - Business portfolio
 Olivier Ball - Science portfolio

Advisor

Vince Kerr - marine science and advocacy

Poutokomanawa - Co-Directors

Samara Nicholas - MNZM, Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) founder and national lead
 Kim Jones - WBC national lead, Drains to Harbour (DTH) and National Inanga Spawning Project (NISP) founder

Honoured patron

The late Dr Roger Grace A [memorial fund](#) has been established and is administered by Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust. Moe mai rā e rangatira ♥



Our programmes and key outcomes in Northland and Auckland 2020-21

Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) has continued to empower communities and take action towards both marine and freshwater conservation. The trust is committed to citizen science as a way of empowering local people to contribute to national science databases in a meaningful way.

Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) - Te Kura Moana



We took 8265 people snorkelling and delivered 32 community guided snorkel and kayak days events across Auckland and Northland. The most popular event was the Maitai Bay Snorkel Day in January in partnership with Te Whānau Moana Me Te Rorohuri hapu with over 200 attendees. EMR has also been working with several Far North Schools to spread the message and gain understanding and support for the rāhui at Maitai Bay. Students and parents from Broadwood Area School, Te Kura O Matihetihe, Herekino School, Oruaiti, Kaingaroa, Waiharara, Pukepoto School and Te Aho Tū Roa had the opportunity to snorkel at Maitai Bay.

Our more unique events this season were the night snorkel at Kai Iwi Lakes and the snorkel day in the tiny Far North estuary Tapotupotu in partnership with Ngāti Kuri. Along with raising awareness about marine conservation, EMR also promotes the importance of keeping safe in the water. We continue to receive [awesome media coverage](#), including a feature on [Te Karere](#)

Whitebait Connection (WBC)

WBC engaged with a total of 6054 people across Northland and Auckland during the 2020-21 season, 4805 of which were students, parents and staff participating in 45 WBC programmes. 1249 people from the community were engaged in planting days, survey work and community engagement events. A total of 239 action projects were undertaken by students, community groups and WBC including the planting of 6365 native plants along waterways, restoration of 100 m of fish passage, identification of 13 new īnanga spawning sites, and 16 records uploaded to the NZ Freshwater Fish Database.

Drains to Harbour (DTH)

For the first time, the Drains To Harbour programme was delivered to three schools in the Far North District. Whitebait Connection was also involved with installing more than 20 littatrap in the Whangārei district as part of a Northland Regional Council Project to monitor and reduce stormwater pollution.

Marine advocacy

MTSCT and EMR continue to work closely with Te Whanau Moana me te Rorohuri to support the Maitai Bay rāhui that was established in late 2017. The rāhui aims to restore marine life, the bays' tapu and mana, and to implement a sustainability plan for future generations.

Vince Kerr, our marine science and advocacy advisor supported the Te Uri o Hikihiki hapu in their appeal case of the Northland Regional Coastal Plan. Te Uri o hikihiki are seeking various marine protection areas in their rohe, including a rāhui tapu (equivalent to no take marine reserve) at Mimiwhangata. Vince was an expert witness in the case presenting the monitoring work history and results which MTSCT has been involved with for two decades.



He Kākano

The He Kākano community native plant nursery in Whangārei continues to produce approximately 10,000 plants annually for riparian restoration projects around the Whangārei Harbour and the Ruakākā catchment. The nursery has also been utilised to host a number of nursery workshops for local schools and community groups.

National Outcomes

Our Mountains to Sea (MTS) programmes have achieved significant national outcomes since 2001. Despite the challenges faced as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the need to constantly adapt our programmes to meet COVID-19 restrictions, we have also achieved some great outcomes in the 2020 - 2021 season. A full breakdown of national outcomes for both the WBC and EMR programmes can be viewed on pages 10-13.

In summary, since 2001 our WBC programme has resulted in 122,470 trees being planted along 52.01km of riparian habitat, with a total programme reach of 107,411 people, and 106 Īnanga spawning habitats identified and adopted. EMR has taken 73,180 people into NZ's marine reserves and over 27,291 people have been engaged in EMR organised marine conservation events. A total of 147,905 people have snorkelled with EMR. The total number of Kiwis engaged in EMR has now reached 207,494 .

Collectively, over 273,256 hours of volunteer time have been contributed to our MTS programmes thanks to the constant support of short and long-term volunteers.

Highlights

This year we celebrated some of our big picture outcomes....

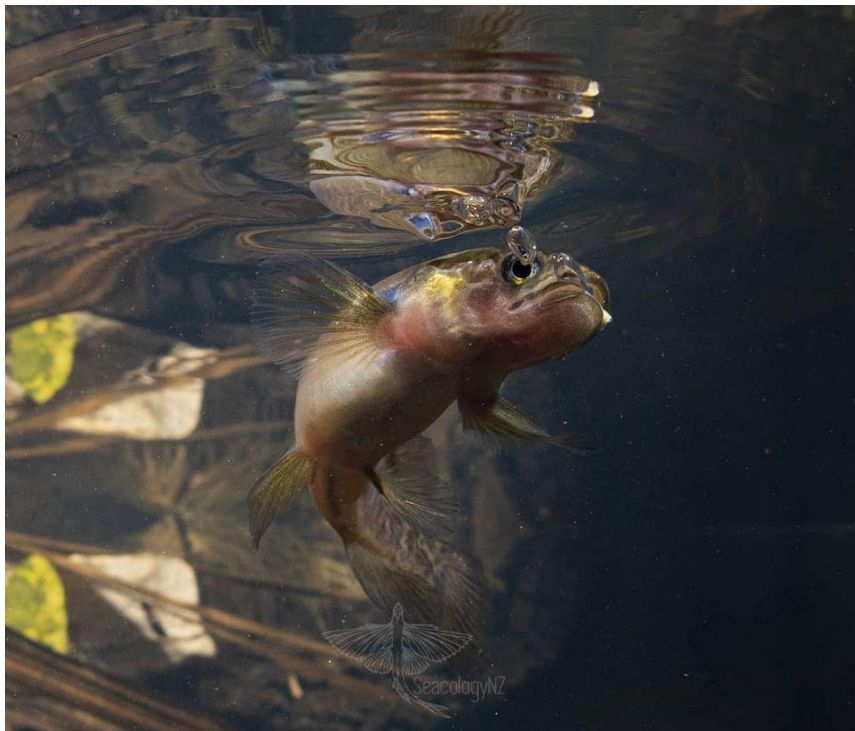
- EMR was named Te Te Tohu Matua-Supreme Award winner at Northland Regional Council's annual 'Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards'. It was a great honour for our Northland team to receive this award. This was out of 47 entries and recognised our long and outstanding contribution to Northland's environment over the last 20 years.



Highlights

- Our [20th annual Poor Knights competition trip](#) took place in May and included students from as far north as Waiharara and as far south as Rakiura - Stewart Island. Since 2002, we have taken representatives from 351 schools, totalling 500 students on this annual trip! Our 20 year celebration was featured in a 3 page spread in [NZ Dive Pacific magazine](#) and we also made a [20 year celebration clip](#).
- Continuation and expansion of our Mountains to Sea programmes in ten different regions including: Northland, Auckland, Tairāwhiti Gisborne, Coromandel, Wellington, Nelson, Tasman, Canterbury, Taranaki and Rakiura.
- Initiation of 'Year One' of the NZWaterCitizens.co.nz project thanks to funding from the DOC Community Fund. 20 trainers from all around Aotearoa have been trained and are working with community groups to achieve robust citizen science based freshwater monitoring and restoration.
- Delivery of a Northland Freshwater Hui in collaboration with NZ Landcare Trust with 26 participants.
- EMR developed a rangatahi mentorship programme for taitamariki/rangatahi who have an affinity for the moana to engage in our kaupapa through mentorship programmes and volunteer development, which is also supporting a career pathway.
- Brooklyn School in the Nelson/Tasman District organised the "Big Dig Day" whereby all 100 students from the school attended a day of planting out the restoring wetland at Stephens Bay. As part of the day they also organised other activities including a wetland walk, beach exploration, penguin learning and mask making and a marine-threats obstacle course.
- Our Wellington team has had another wildly busy, but successful season with a record number of 604 people attending their community snorkel days. Over 1200 students and 280 adults from 26 different schools and community groups participated in marine experiences and community events. Evelyn Williamson from Kapiti Primary School was involved in a marine monitoring project in the Kapiti Island Marine Reserve for their action (more info [here](#)).
- Continuing the development of our National Īnanga Spawning Programme (NISP) by scaling the work up in Northland.
- Inspiring action for the environment - Action projects included removal of invasive seaweed, citizen science fish surveys, shellfish monitoring, wetland restoration, a mufti day and ocean disco fundraiser, presentations to parents, upcycling waste to furniture, murals and marine artwork on a double decker bus.
- We took 15,427 kiwis snorkelling all over NZ during this season.
- Continuation of ramping up our contribution to national databases such as the NZ Freshwater Fish database and NZ Water Citizens and support for community groups and schools to do the same across NZ.

- Continued expansion of our DTH programme into Nelson thanks to funding from Nelson City Council and into the Far North thanks to funding from Far North District Council.
- Tessa from Halfmoon Bay School on Stewart Island took inspiring action by gaining a permit from the Department of Conservation and removed a total of 500kg of Undaria seaweed from the coastline of Rakiura. Students from the school also raised money for local conservation initiatives and projects and wrote a letter to the government to limit fishing and advocate for more marine protection.
- Supporting Patuharakeke kaitiaki with their water quality and biodiversity monitoring projects in their rohe at Takahiwai and working together to achieve community engagement and freshwater improvement outcomes on the Ruakākā River.
- Supporting Ko Waitangi te Awa Trust kaitiaki with their Waitangi Awa river restoration in Waitangi.
- Supporting our new EMR and WBC cadets in their roles in Northland and Auckland.
- WBC programme delivery to 45 schools in Northland and Auckland including the development of a WBC [Video](#) for schools.



Challenges

The biggest challenges the Trust currently faces concern sustaining funding streams in a contestable funding environment, and ensuring infrastructure and processes are in place to support growth and a regional approach. These challenges are not unique to MTSC and with ongoing leadership complemented by the level of community support we are privileged to receive, we will continue to deliver quality programmes.

Student/Community quotes

EMR:

"It would be an honour to tautoko the kaupapa EMR. The opportunity for whanau, hapu, iwi and community to experience authentic learning and the world of Tangaroa first-hand is of immense value. EMR offers the opportunity for rangatahi who have an affinity for the moana to engage in a kaupapa that supports tiakitanga, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, and a career pathway" - Kura J. Heke - Ngā Pouwhirinakitanga Resource Teacher: Learning & Behaviour

"It was the best ever snorkelling experience I ever had – especially that sunfish and the kingfish. The kingfish were rubbing their backs on the sunfish!" - Ben Wigley - Kaingaroa School

"It inspired me to do more beach clean-ups' because there was no rubbish here- and I want the beaches where I swim to look like that. The whole experience was amazing – the colours stood out the most for me. You don't see that anywhere else. We all felt incredibly safe in the water. The EMR programme has had a lasting effect for many of my students - there were so many inspired kids in my class, and they all felt empowered to take actions." - Polly Stewart (teacher)

WBC

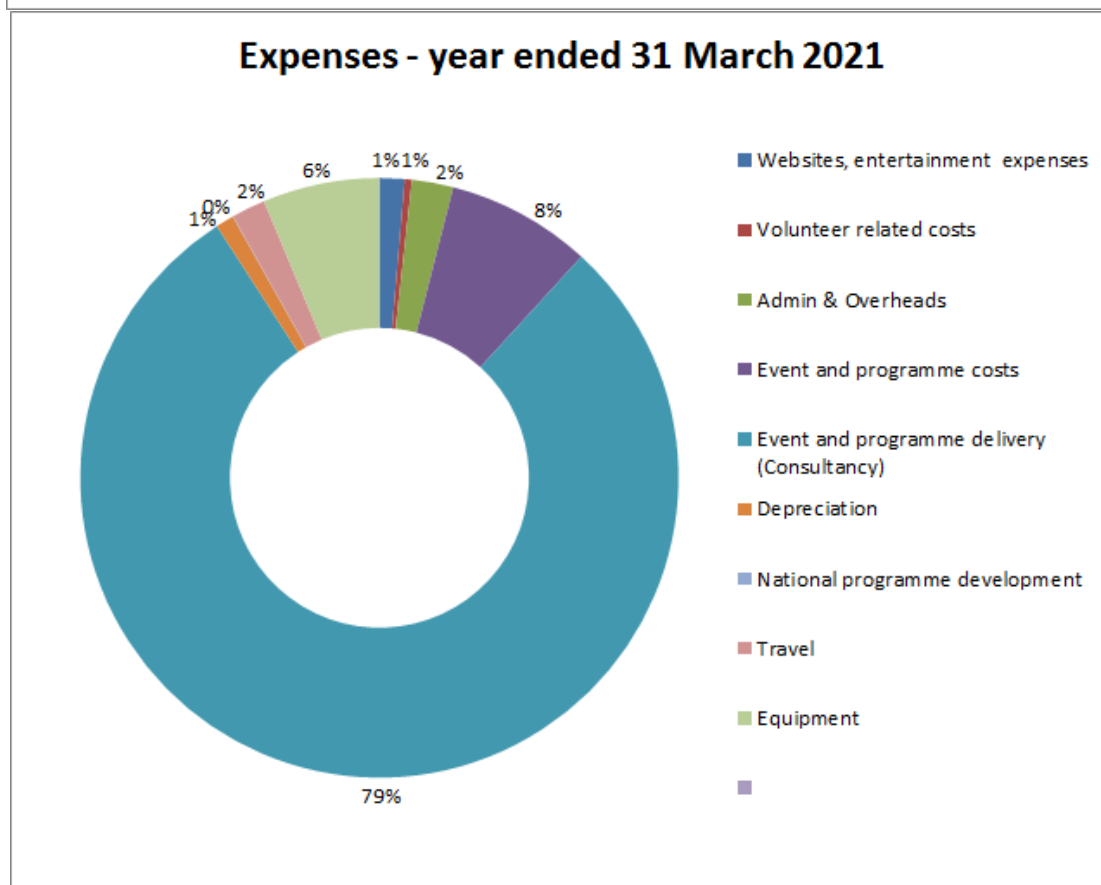
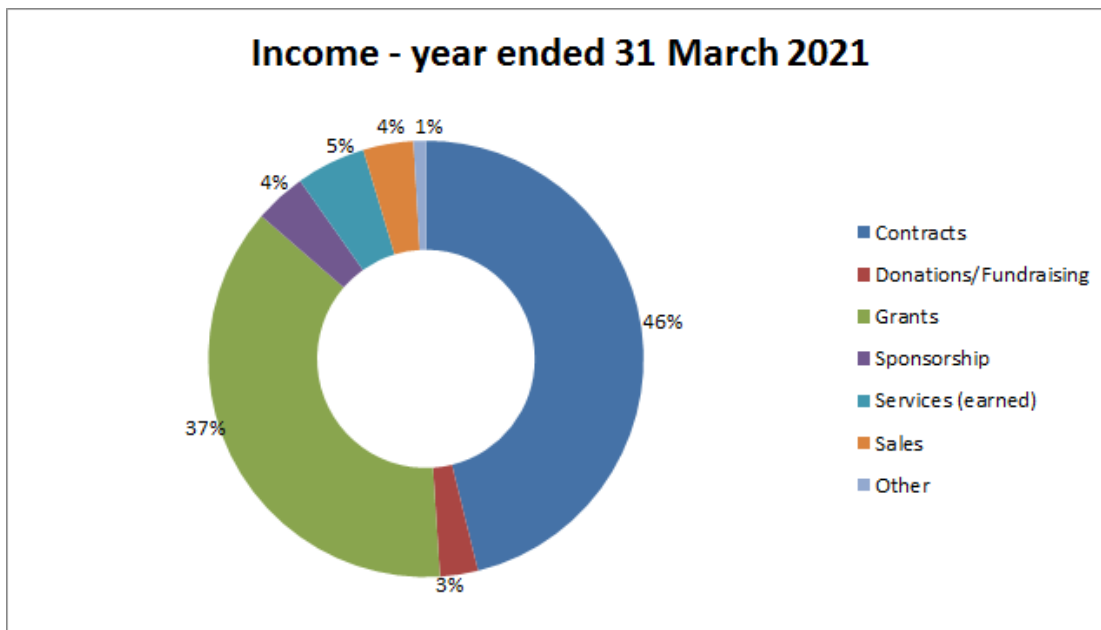
"I think that it is our responsibility to care for the waterways because we are destroying their home. I think this way because on our little journey I saw how much pollution there was coming for our storm drains into our stream." - Titahi Bay North School Students

"I feel that I care more because now I know all the cool creatures that live in there and I'd love to see it more so I like the streams to stay healthy for our animals cause it is their home too." - WBC Auckland student

"I feel very excited about all of the knowledge I have since starting this amazing programme. Knowing that all the creatures need help is more exciting for me to try and help in any sort of way i can :)" - Titahi Bay North School student

"A huge thank you from myself and my students to you for organising the water monitoring event last weekend. We all learned a great deal and are looking forward to applying this knowledge to projects in our local area." - WBC Auckland Teacher

Financials



Our full financial statements and auditors report can be downloaded from the charities website by searching Registration Number: CC23406 NZBN Number: 9429043001552

National Overview

2020-2021

9,225



native seedlings
planted

2.4 km



riparian habitat
restored

8979



people reached
by WBC

4575



hours of volunteer
time

14



whitebait spawning
habitats adopted

317



WBC inspired
action projects

2.4



m3 riparian rubbish
removed

66



school programmes
delivered

13



printed media
articles

"This is an amazing learning experience for the students. The facilitators are excellent at working with kids and empowering them to be observant and think like scientists as well as consider the social and cultural aspects of our waterways." - Purua School Principal

"I feel very excited about all of the knowledge i have since starting this amazing programme. Knowing that all the creatures need help is more exciting for me to try and help in any sort of way i can" - Student from Titahi Bay North School

"I learnt that you can establish the health status of a stream, through river and stream tests such as alkaline and phosphorus tests, as well as identifying weeds and animals that live in the water." - Student from Kristin School

WBC National statistics since 2001

122,470



native seedlings
planted

52.01 km



riparian habitat
restored

107,411



people reached
by WBC

91,112



hours of volunteer
time

106



whitebait spawning
habitats adopted

754



WBC inspired
action projects

5714



m3 riparian rubbish
removed

1800



school programmes
delivered

264



printed media
articles

EMR 2020 - 2021 Overview

NATIONAL

9,508



snorkel experiences
for students

25,023



people reached by
EMR

\$245,575



worth of volunteer
hours at living
wage

10,795



hours of volunteer
time

7,453



people experienced a
marine reserve
or rāhui

15,427



people taken
snorkelling

7453



snorkel experiences
for students

13,458



people reached by
EMR

\$157,112



worth of volunteer
hours at living
wage

6,906



hours of volunteer
time

7,453



people experienced a
marine reserve
or rāhui

8,265



people taken
snorkelling

NORTHLAND & AUCKLAND

EMR Statistics since 2001

NATIONAL

102,318



snorkel experiences
for students

207,494



people reached by
EMR

\$4,143,784



worth of volunteer
hours at living
wage

182,144



hours of volunteer
time

82,194



people experienced a
marine reserve
or rāhui

147,905



people taken
snorkelling

60,504



snorkel experiences
for students

127,515



people reached by
EMR

\$2,880,376



worth of volunteer
hours at living
wage

126,610



hours of volunteer
time

53,257



people experienced a
marine reserve
or rāhui

89,463



people taken
snorkelling

NORTHLAND & AUCKLAND

How you can support

Subscribe to our newsletters:

[*Whitebait Connection*](#)
[*Experiencing Marine Reserves*](#)

Volunteer with us - register on our websites
Adopt a school - fund a school programme
Donate \$ to the big picture through our websites

