

Urban Ark - Manawa Taiao

Impact Report

April 2025 - March 2026



Photo credit: Brendon Doran

Urban Ark – Manawa Taiao partners with communities across the Waitematā, Albert-Eden, and Puketāpapa Local Board areas of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland to protect and restore nature in the city.

We empower people to take conservation action.

Our team provides pest control and ecological restoration expertise, resources, and training; leads programmes and volunteer events in public reserves and on private land; and connects people with nature, place, and each other.

Together with iwi, community groups, schools, and Auckland Council, we are reducing pest species, strengthening habitat, and creating the conditions for native wildlife to thrive in urban Tāmaki Makaurau.

This impact report covers the April 2025 – March 2026 year. It describes the work in our three strategic priority areas:

- Support an integrated network of community groups
- Support biodiversity work in areas of high ecological value and public space
- Engage with the community to increase involvement and awareness

A case study for each priority provides examples of our work in the community.



Priority 1:

Support an integrated network of community groups

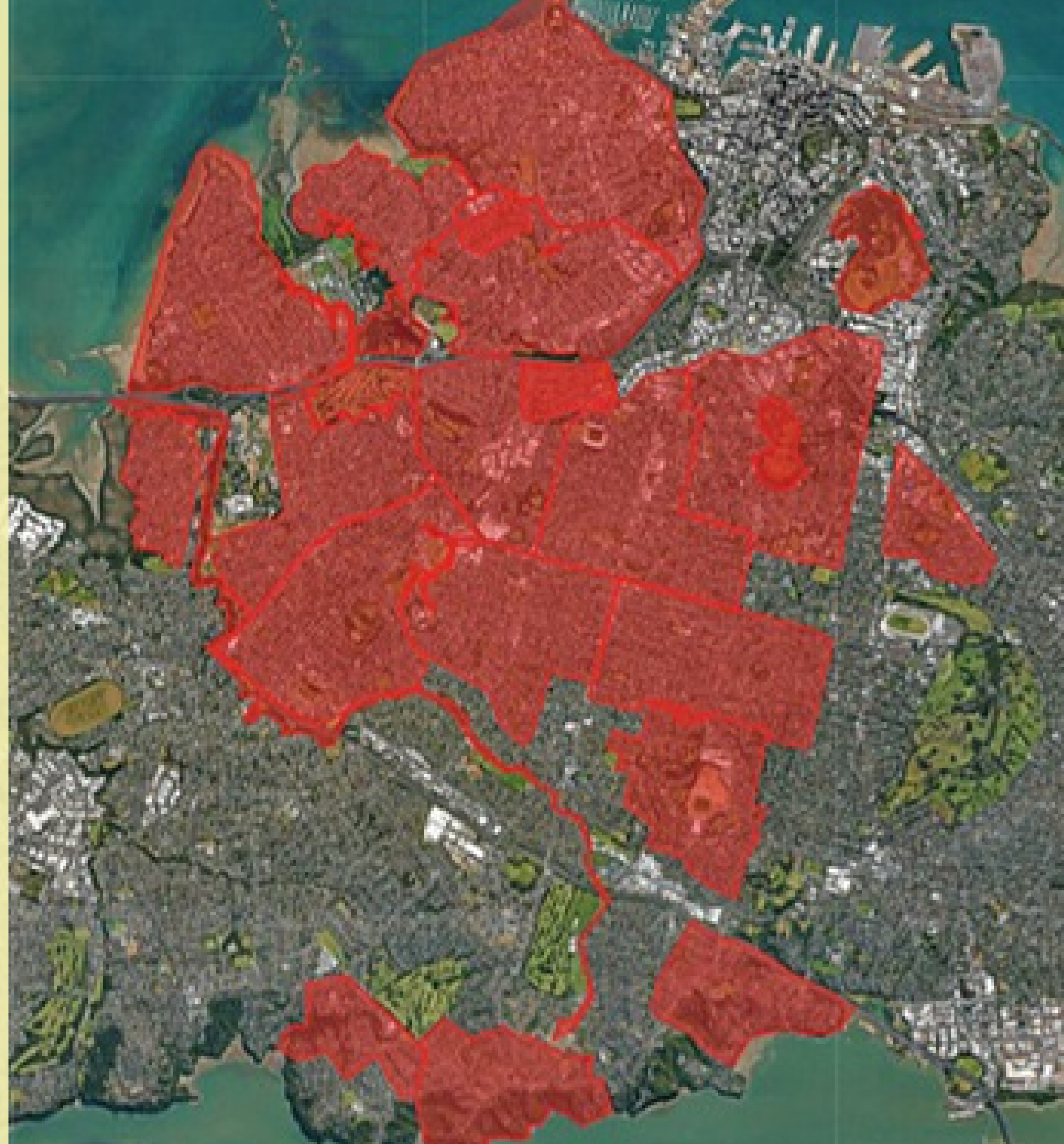
Urban Ark – Manawa Taiao supports community groups to run effective backyard and reserve projects focused on predator trapping, weeding, and native planting.

We make it easier to sustain the mahi.

We provide practical training, gear libraries (traps, bait, tools), and simple guides. We coordinate working bees, share best practice, and work with Auckland Council to unlock sites, resources, and permissions.

We connect volunteers with groups.

Through community festivals and events, on social media, and through our newsletter and website we let the community know what's going on and how to get involved.



Annual metrics



21

Predator free community groups supported



42

Reserve, awa, maunga and service groups supported



2082

Active traps in the network (active in the last year)

New in 2025/26



5

New community groups supported



4

New reserve traplines established





PEST FREE
POINT CHEV
KIREAREA KORE TE RANGI MATA RAU

Case Study: Pest Free Point Chevalier

Pt Chevalier is bordered by the Waitematā Harbour and Lower Waitītiko awa and is home to some special habitat. Founded in 2019, Pest Free Pt Chevalier is an active community network of volunteers who protect and enhance local native ecosystems through trapping, weeding and planting.

Pest Free Pt Chevalier has mobilised hundreds of residents to create a coordinated network of backyard traps across the suburb. And dedicated reserve trapping teams protect coastal and stream corridors, including known īnanga spawning habitat.

Each month, the Second Sunday Weeders volunteers run a rotating reserve weeding bee that targets high-priority sites across Pt Chevalier. The team removes invasive species, releases native plants, and follows up to prevent reinfestation. This sustained effort boosts plant survival, and accelerates the transition to healthy, self-sustaining native understory and canopy.

By controlling predators alongside weed suppression and planting, these trapping and reserve crews create safer conditions for birds, lizards, and freshwater species, enhance waterway health, and strengthen ecological connections from backyards to the coast.



Since 2019:



254

Backyard traps



483

**Predators trapped
creating safer habitat
for native species**



6

**Reserves regularly
weeded**



3

Reserve traplines

**The combined backyard
and reserve mahi is lifting
native biodiversity across
Pt Chevalier and building
strong community
connections while caring
for local places.**



How Urban Ark supports Pest Free Pt Chevalier

- Supply traps and trap training
- Pest plant education
- Weeding bees
- Restoration plantings
- Public talks
- Planting planning
- Pest monitoring
- Bird counts
- Guided walks



Priority 2:

Support biodiversity work in areas of high ecological value and public space

Urban Ark is active in the regeneration of native habitat in city parks and reserves and alongside our awa.

We identify needs in this rohe / area, initiate projects and respond to requests from the community, our Local Boards and Auckland Council.

We bring the expertise.

Urban Ark brings experience and know-how in ecological restoration, pest plant and animal control, and in community activation, and we apply this to set up and run projects with community participation.

We can see the impact.

This work protects and restores areas of native forest, providing safer habitat and more abundant food sources for our native fauna. It also connects community with nature and each other.



Annual metrics



29

Weeding bees



13

Plantings



19

Reserves worked in



19

**Reserve traplines
supported**



Case Study:

Maungawhau Ecological Halo

Maungawhau / Mt Eden and its surrounding neighbourhoods act as important stepping-stone habitats between the offshore islands of the Hauraki Gulf and the Waitākere ranges and include areas of critically endangered lava rock forest. This puriri-dominant forest is one of the last few remnants of a unique ecosystem that was once common across Tāmaki Makaurau's lava field.

In 2021 Urban Ark established the Maungawhau Ecological Halo, a buffer zone around the maunga to help protect this precious habitat and enhance the diversity of native bird life.

This complements the long history of work carried out on and around the maunga by Friends of Maungawhau, the Tūpuna Maunga Authority, Auckland Council, and local volunteers and contributes to a common goal to create a healthy ecosystem bursting with native wildlife.

Since establishing the Maungawhau Ecological Halo, Phil Simpson, our Ecological Restoration Advisor and resident plant expert, has become a familiar face in the community advocating for the lava rock forest and nature in this area of the city. The halo covers private and public property and aims to suppress pest animals and plants and increase the planting of natives.



MAUNGAWHAU
ECOLOGICAL HALO

Enhancing native biodiversity
around Mount Eden

Since 2021:



277

Traps set up in reserves or back yards



1,600

Predators trapped creating safer habitat for native species



8

Native species seen in bird counts + evidence of ruru & kākā



43

Events building community connection with the whenua & each other

The Maungawhau Ecological Halo is a blueprint for future halo projects around the maunga of Tāmaki Makaurau.



Photo credit: Malcolm Stapleton

How Urban Ark supports the Maungawhau Ecological Halo

- Established the halo
- Community partnerships
- Established a trap library
- Supply traps & trap training
- Bird counts
- Pest monitoring
- Pest plant education
- Guided rock forest walks
- Public talks
- Restoration plantings
- Weeding bees



Priority 3:

Engage with the community to increase involvement and awareness

Urban Ark – Manawa Taiao grows community involvement by meeting people where they are and making participation simple and rewarding.

We run stalls at festivals and markets, neighbourhood pop-ups, guided walks and speaker events to inspire our community to see the potential and rewards of native species in the city.

We turn interest into hands-on action.

Through citizen-science projects, neighbourhood workshops and events, and school sessions we teach practical skills for trapping, weeding and planting, and enable volunteers to get involved at home or in the community.

We celebrate and acknowledge the mahi.

Our newsletters, social channels, and local media share tips, results, and stories from across the network. By mapping activity and feeding back outcomes, we show people the impact of their mahi, deepening connection to place and growing a visible movement supporting nature in the city.



Annual metrics



37

Promotional events



Monthly newsletters



1,500

Website visits per month



26

School programme events



8

**Schools in the schools
programme**



Case Study: Treasuring Te Waiōrea Education Programme

Education is a fundamental pillar of Urban Ark's drive to improve native biodiversity in our rohe.

Since 2023, Urban Ark has been running free hands-on environmental science programmes in Te Waiōrea / Western Springs Lakeside Park aimed at late Primary, Intermediate, and early Secondary akonga / students.

This programme is supported with funding from the Auckland Council Sustainable Schools team. Our experienced educators combine hands-on learning with a strong focus on environmental science and acknowledgement of mātauranga Māori.

Through a combination of classroom sessions and a practical day of activities in Te Waiōrea, students learn about freshwater monitoring, predator monitoring and control, bird monitoring, terrestrial invertebrates, pest plant ID and control, native plant ID and use in rongoa Māori, and GPS navigation.



Since 2023:



Schools



Park sessions



Students

1,110

Dear Paul thank you for showing us the tube. I learnt how clear the water is. I enjoyed watching the fish. The bait traps were one of my favourites. Rayleen

We are now expanding our education programme into Albert-Eden and Puketāpapa local board areas utilizing school grounds and local reserves.



Our Team

Operations



Paul Whitfield
Operations Manager



Rachel Fanshawe
Development Manager



Phil Simpson
Ecological
Restoration Adviser



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Engagement
Facilitator



Abby Patterson
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Lekshmi Subhash
Community Flood
Resilience



Chris Judd
Educator



Cécile Baranx
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Trustees



Stefan Rüegg
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Siân Buley
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Martino Di Marco
Treasurer



Andrew Barker
Trustee

Thank you to our amazing funders:

