

# LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

A SERIES OF LOCAL CASES



## City of Waitakere, New Zealand Citizens engage in conserving native species

**SUMMARY:** Waitakere's biodiversity has undergone considerable modification particularly during the past 160 years. Now the City of Waitakere is encouraging the public to take part in actions aimed at bringing back native species and restoring existing ecosystems, such as streams. Waitakere also intensively involves the local Maori population in biodiversity management and decision making through structures like the Te Taumata Runanga Standing Committee to the Waitakere City Council.

### Biodiversity & biodiversity management in the City of Waitakere

#### Waitakere involves the public

Waitakere is a coastal town close to the New Zealand business capital Auckland, thus being under heavy development pressure of its coastline and mountain ranges. Involving the public is a mechanism for reaching its conservation and sustainability goals. Waitakere's public are encouraged to participate in biodiversity management and decision-making. Examples are public participation are public consultations on management plans for public reserves and volunteer groups. Project examples of community involvement in biodiversity management



Ark in the Park volunteers releasing stitchbirds from an offshore island into a predator-free area of Waitakere City. Stitchbirds disappeared from the mainland of New Zealand 120 years ago.

are Ark in the Park, a community restoration project, and the Twin Streams Project which aims at efficient storm water management and which also restores stream biodiversity.

#### Ark in the Park

Ark in the Park is a community restoration project for volunteers led by the Waitakere Branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Society and supported by the Auckland Regional Council (ARC). The goal is intensive pest control in a 2,000-hectare area of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. This area will provide a 'mainland island' where native species absent from the area for more than 120 years can be safely returned to

re-establish themselves. A precondition for the return of native species is the control of pests, such as rats, brush-tailed possum, stoats, weasels, ferrets as well as introduced wasps. The Ark in the Park project started in October 2003. ARC supplies bait for pest control (for over 1,800 bait stations), staff expertise and training workshops for the band of volunteers.

#### Project Twin Streams

Project Twin Streams is an innovative partnership between the City Council's Ecowater (who provide stormwater, waste water and supply services) and the public, and is supported by the Auckland Regional Council. The vision for Project Twin Streams is "Working together for healthy streams and strong communities: creating a sustainable future", with the main objective of achieving better storm water management with the effect of improving water quality, helping to restore the natural environment in Waitakere's suburbs and working with other parts of the Council to create alternative and more sustainable lifestyles. Working with community organisation, almost 2,000 volunteers and 15 schools, the project aims to bring economic, social and cultural benefits to the communities within its catchment area. It also incorporates restoration of stream biodiversity.

## Te Taumata Runanga gives a voice to the Maori community

Te Taumata Runanga presents a unique model of a relationship between Maori and Local Government, and is the primary voice of Maori issues to Waitakere City Council. The Te Taumata Runanga consists of 12 members and has the status of a Standing Committee of the Council. Its role is to ensure that Maori values are considered in the Council's decision making, to facilitate communication between the local Maori communities and to provide the Council with a structure through which input into the Council's decisions with cultural significance to Maori people is ensured.

### Online Ecowater Education

The Waitakere City Council website provides Ecowater Education as service to inhabitants: educational video clips and photos for identification of native freshwater fish and invertebrates found in Waitakere streams.

Focus on Bugs video is a well used teaching resource for schools. Nga Kaitiaki o te Mauri (Guardians of the Life Force) video educates young people about the importance of healthy streams.

For more info on this project, contact:  
[EnviroEd@waitakere.govt.nz](mailto:EnviroEd@waitakere.govt.nz)

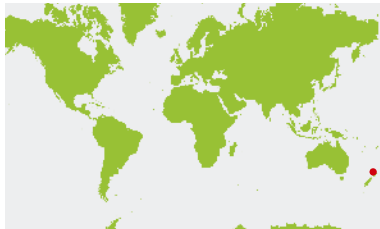
### Involvement in international initiatives

The City of Waitakere, one of the leading eco cities in New Zealand, is an ICLEI member and participates in ICLEI's Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Project. LAB aims to facilitate understanding and communication among decision-makers, citizens and other stakeholders regarding urban biodiversity issues and the need for local action on the ground.



Chair of Te Taumata Runanga signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mayor of Waitakere

## City contacts & profile



Community planting to link the Waitakere Ranges, Auckland region's touchstone with nature, to the urban area of Waitakere City.

**WAITAKERE** has a population of over 195,000 and covers an area of 36,700 hectares. Approximately one third of Waitakere City is urban, one third rural and one third wilderness area. More than 40% of the City's land area includes parkland and the Waitakere Ranges. Its climate provides suitable conditions for a very wide range of plants. Short, mild winters, extend the growing season and lead to high growth rates. This allows many introduced species to naturalise and become pest species; out-growing and displacing native species.

**Name:** Carol Bergquist

**Department:** Strategy

**E-mail:** [carol.bergquist@waitakere.govt.nz](mailto:carol.bergquist@waitakere.govt.nz)

**Website:** [www.waitakere.govt.nz](http://www.waitakere.govt.nz)

**LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY** is a global urban biodiversity initiative of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in cooperation with IUCN. This pilot project of 21 cities around the globe focuses on the key roles that local governments play in conserving the world's biodiversity and retaining the relationship between people and nature. See: [www.iclei.org/lab](http://www.iclei.org/lab); [lab@iclei.org](mailto:lab@iclei.org)

**COUNTDOWN 2010** is a powerful network of more than 600 partners working together towards the 2010 biodiversity target. Each partner commits additional efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The secretariat – hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – facilitates and encourages action, promotes the importance of the 2010 biodiversity target and assesses progress towards 2010. See: [www.countdown2010.org](http://www.countdown2010.org)

**CITIES & BIODIVERSITY** is an initiative of local governments and UN agencies to increase awareness on the relevant role of cities and towns for conserving and managing biodiversity. See: [www.iclei.org/biodiversity](http://www.iclei.org/biodiversity)

**THE "CITIES & BIODIVERSITY CASE SERIES"** is started in 2008 on the occasion of the UN CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) 9 in Bonn/Germany in May 2008. Funding is provided by UNEP, with co-funding from ICLEI, IUCN and the City of Bonn. The case descriptions are compiled by the "Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB)" project team in the ICLEI Africa Secretariat and ICLEI's International Training Centre.

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