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WHAT'S ON

Join us at:

[www.facebook.com/
CoastCareNorthland](http://www.facebook.com/CoastCareNorthland)

to find out what's on around
Northland over the coming
months or phone the CoastCare

Co-ordinator on

0800 002 004.

Friends of Rarawa Beach

Rarawa beach and its dunes are being slowly transformed through a community-based project aimed at protecting the area and its taonga.

Friends of Rarawa Beach formed six months ago to get locals involved in preserving dotterels, pingao, spinifex, atriplex and other native species.

The project includes regular stoat trapping, growing and planting native plants, and getting local schools involved.

Betsy Young has worked with Ngataki School for 12 years, planting pingao with them on Rarawa's dunes. She is now active in getting Te Kao, Pukenui and Waiharara schools involved too.

"We're trying to build a connection between people and place so the children become caretakers of their local treasures," says Betsy.

Students from the four schools have been involved in planting, pingao seed collection and beach clean-up days. A competition is also underway for students to design artwork about Rarawa's native species, which will be turned into signs to raise community and visitor awareness.

Vicky Rawnsley leads the trapping side of the project and says the beach's dotterel population is under serious threat from invading animals like stoats.

The endangered northern New Zealand dotterel was once common but there are now only around 1700 of the birds left in the country. They are very vulnerable to predation and their nests are easily destroyed by careless feet and vehicles.

"It drove me crazy seeing what was going on down at the beach – the pest populations were phenomenal," says Vicky.

"We've been trapping now for six months so it's early days, but things are looking much more positive for our dotterel."



Long term, Friends of Rarawa Beach has set itself some big goals – planting 20,000 plants by 2015, a 75% improvement in dotterel fledging rates by 2020, replacing weed cover with native plants in the back dune area, and extending the trapping area out to the road.

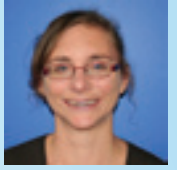
The group is supported by several organisations including Northland Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aūpouri and the Ngati Kuri Trust Board. Native Trees nursery at Ngataki, whose owner Wayne Petera is part of the group, has pledged \$5000 of native plants towards the project.

However, Vicky says that ultimately the preservation of Rarawa Beach's taonga lies in the hands of its community.

"New Zealand is full of amazing places, but we take it for granted that they'll be there for the next generation.

"Rarawa is our beach so we need to take responsibility for it as a community – and it's a great buzz seeing what a difference you can make."

To join the group or find out more, contact Northland Regional Council's CoastCare Co-ordinator, Laura Shaft.



Laura's word FROM THE COASTCARE CO-ORDINATOR

Kia ora and welcome to the summer edition of CoastCare News.

Another busy winter saw lots of dune planting around the region at CoastCare sites including Taipā, Tauranga Bay, Waipapakauri, Tāpeka, Long Beach, Ruakaka and Waipū Cove. It was great to start planting at some new sites, and to continue planting other sites as part of successful on-going projects.

At a number of sites we have been planting back dune species, along with Spinifex and pingao. This helps to form a barrier between the kikuyu and the sand-binders, which helps with weed control, and also brings in natural succession. Even where there is little space it is usually possible to have a strip of back dune planting.

One new planting site this year was Teal Bay, where local residents were very concerned when two metres of the reserve frontage was lost to erosion.



Planting day at Teal Bay.

Rather than put up a rock wall, it was agreed to try dune restoration in Teal Bay. Whāngārei District Council (WDC) obtained resource consents to move sand from the stream mouth and pile it up to form a dune.

The district council also provided 1000 spinifex and 100 pohuehue for the Teal Bay community to plant. There was a great turn-out to the two planting days and residents are keen to maintain the planting to give it the best chance of success.

Coming up in February is the Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand conference, which we are very proud to be hosting in the Far North this year.

The conference will showcase some of the wonderful work being done by Northland CoastCare groups and tap into expertise from around the country – see below for more information.

Our Facebook page is going strong with lots of visitors – check out www.facebook.com/CoastCareNorthland. You don't have to be a Facebook member to view the page, but if you sign up you can add feedback or post your own events and photos.

Wishing you all a happy and safe summer.

Nga mihi nui
Laura
CoastCare Co-ordinator

REGISTER NOW 2012 Dunes Trust conference

The Far North's coastal treasures will hit the spotlight in February when the region hosts the 2012 Dunes Restoration Trust national conference.

The annual conference, which runs from 14 to 17 February 2012 in Taipā, is all about protecting and conserving New Zealand's important dune ecosystems.

Here's what's on offer at this year's conference:

- Learn about the successful work of Far North CoastCare groups
- Take a trip up Te Oneroa-a-Tōhē (Ninety Mile Beach) to Cape Rēinga
- Get up to speed with the latest research in dune ecosystems
- Participate in a range of workshops, from weed identification to pingao weaving.

Places are limited so register now to avoid missing out!



How to register

You can register for the full conference or just one day.

Registration forms and conference information are available from the Dunes Trust website at www.dunestrust.org.nz

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Sand coprosma/ Tātaraheke *Coprosmia acerosa*

- Sand coprosma grows in the back and mid dunes.
- While fairly common on Northland, nationally this plant is in rapid decline and has become very scarce in other more developed regions like Auckland.
- This low-growing shrub is useful in dune restoration projects. It can be planted on the shoreward side of pingao and spinifex, alongside pohuehue (maidenhair vine).
- The plant's pale-blue berries are edible.

**SPOTLIGHT ON
Sand coprosma**

Moving forward on back dunes

Planning is now underway for projects to restore native biodiversity in the back dunes at Ruakaka, Rarawa and Tokerau beaches, as part of a national programme by the Dunes Restoration Trust of New Zealand.

Dune restoration work in New Zealand has traditionally focussed on foredunes, where native sand-binders are planted to reduce erosion and accelerate sand build up.

Back dunes are much more complex, with more species, greater diversity, a range of sub-environments, and serious problems with invasive exotic vegetation, grazing animal pests, and ongoing development.

To help community groups manage the challenges of back dune restoration, the programme will share knowledge, set up demonstration areas and monitoring sites, and provide guidelines for CoastCare groups, iwi, councils and the wider community.

Ruakaka's back dunes



The three-year programme is partially funded by the Ministry for the Environment with support from councils including the Northland Regional Council.

RUAKAKA BACK DUNE PROJECT

A new approach for back dunes in Ruakaka will build on existing restoration work in the area, under a project led by the Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust.

The area, which is north of the surf club, is currently a dense mixture of exotic garden escapees like wattle and South African iceplant, and native species including sand coprosma and pohuehue.

With advice from dune vegetation expert Dr David Bergin and regional council staff, the plan is to set up small plots or "islands" of native plants working with the existing native vegetation and gradually replacing exotic species.

The plots will be established in different zones within the back dune area to see where each native species performs best. Planting intensively in small plots will make monitoring and weed control much easier.

A guided trail is also being considered, so people can learn about and enjoy the unique back dune biodiversity.

"What's in our dunes?" Katipo Spider | *Latrodectus katipo*



HABITAT:

Lives in coastal sand dunes.

DIET:

Usually catches wandering insects like beetles, but also catches moths, flies, and other spiders.

The katipo is New Zealand's only venomous native animal – its name means "night stinger" in Māori. Only the adult females can bite humans as they are much bigger than the males.

Katipo can catch insects much larger than themselves in their web. Once an insect gets tangled, the katipo secures the prey by spinning silk over it. The spider bites its prey to kill it, then stores it in the web ready to eat. The katipo often stores up to six insects at a time.

STATUS:

Threatened with extinction as the katipo's sand dune habitat is damaged and in some places destroyed.

The katipo only lives in New Zealand, but it is related to the Australian redback spider and the American black widow.

In the North Island katipo are found along the west coast from Wellington to North Cape and in patches along the east coast.

Youth Summit 2011

Fifty-five students from throughout Northland gathered recently for the 2011 Northland Regional Council Youth Summit in Whāngārei.

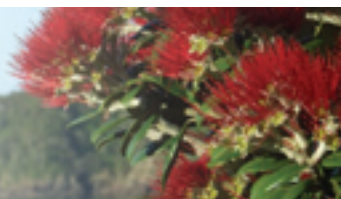
The 16th annual summit saw students discuss coastal environmental issues and what they could do to make a difference.



Northland Regional Council Education Officer Susan Botting says it's encouraging to see Northland students taking an active interest in protecting and preserving their local marine environment.

"The work of these students makes a real contribution to the health of Northland's estuaries, harbours and coastlines. That's important for all Northlanders."

Wishing you a merry Christmas and happy New Year from everyone at the Northland Regional Council.



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FURTHER INFO

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