

# Life – biodiversity and pests

Northland is a biodiversity hotspot, both on land and in the water. From our iconic kauri and kiwi to the many rare native plants and animals that live here, this region is a stronghold for native life.

Stopping the spread of invasive pests is an integral part of maintaining and enhancing our native flora and fauna.

Our role at the Northland Regional Council is working with communities to protect and enhance Northland's living heritage.

## Pressures on biodiversity and from pests

Forest clearance and the draining of wetlands have been the major causes of biodiversity decline over time.

Changing land management practices have reduced these pressures on land but wetlands, other freshwater habitats and our marine environment continue to be at risk from the impacts of land use intensification. These include sediment and nutrients from land runoff.

The impact of introduced plant and animal species is a key reason for continued biodiversity decline in Northland, both on land and in the water.

Another issue affecting our marine life in particular is direct discharges of contaminants from wastewater plants, stormwater systems and industrial sites.

## State of our biodiversity and pests

Nearly half of New Zealand's 2500 native plant species are found in Northland. However, the number of threatened plant species in Northland is growing – there were 179 in 2004 and 241 in 2009.



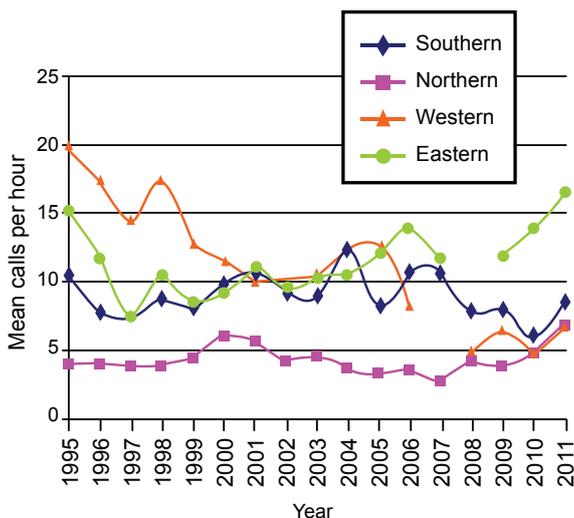
## At a glance

- Northland's coastal waters contain mainland New Zealand's highest diversity of fish and invertebrates.
- About 26% of Northland's original forest cover is still standing, and 5.5% of our original freshwater wetlands remain.
- The number of threatened plant species in Northland is growing – there were 179 in 2004 and 241 in 2009.
- Thirty-nine community pest control plans have been developed targeting multiple pest species.



Our native animal species also remain under threat. Of the 293 found in Northland (on land and in our freshwater), 69 are acutely threatened, 33 are chronically threatened and 191 are at risk.

Community groups are involved in active management of kiwi populations at about 34 sites in Northland. Kiwi call count rates (and presumably kiwi numbers) trended upwards for the 2011 kiwi listening period.



Kiwi call numbers in four survey areas, 1995-2011

About 14% of Northland's land has some sort of legal protection. Most of this is administered by the Department of Conservation.

The Regional Pest Management Strategy 2012-15 has identified the pests of most concern to Northland and sets out how we plan to deal with them, in partnership with communities. Included in the strategy are 100 terrestrial plant pests, 35 terrestrial animal pests, 17 freshwater plants, 12 freshwater animals and 11 marine pests.

### What is the Northland Regional Council doing?

We do a range of work together with other organisations and communities to reduce the impacts of pests. Thirty-nine community pest control plans have been developed targeting

multiple pest species. These plans involve more than 830 people and 38,000 hectares of land.

Targeted freshwater weed surveillance is carried out in up to 19 lakes during annual ecological assessments. We have also mapped key indigenous marine vegetation in the Bay of Islands, Kaipara and Whāngārei harbours.

We have several species-led programmes, including Manchurian wild rice. Monitoring of Manchurian wild rice sites that have been under active control for three or more years shows a marked improvement.

In 2009, the regional council started the Top Wetlands project. More than 900 of Northland's wetlands have since been added to a database and 304 of the region's most precious wetlands were ranked and prioritised for management.

We also promote public awareness of pests and biodiversity, are involved in biocontrol work and help fund community pest initiatives via our Environment Fund.

### What you can do

- Don't move introduced plants and animals around the environment. Many weeds started life as garden plants.
- Get involved in a community pest control group, or start one up – contact us on **0800 002 004** to find out more.
- Prevent the spread of marine pests by regularly checking and antifouling your boat.
- Find out more about the pest plants and animals in your back yard – visit

[www.nrc.govt.nz/nasties](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/nasties)

