



MOUNTAINS TO SEA  
CONSERVATION TRUST



# WAIMĀRAMA WĀNANGA PROCEEDINGS | 2024





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## Acknowledgements

Big acknowledgements to the hau kāinga of Waimārama for their welcome and sharing their beautiful space and taiao with us.

Sustainable Hawkes Bay - for hosting Mountains to Sea and the amazing mahi put into planning and use of vehicles.

Hapī for keeping us well fed, Peak House for the social evening, Hinetemoa Marae & Waimārama School for the use of their facilities and to Whaea T for keeping the good vibes going.

Photography and videography by Lorna Doogan. Additional media by Nicky T and Briar Inwood.

This Wai Connection training was made possible through funding from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE).



*Ministry for the*  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*

## Introduction

Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT)/ Ngā maunga ki te moana, was created in 2002 as a vehicle and guiding entity to enable a team of extremely motivated individuals to effectively communicate marine and freshwater science to NZ communities, involve them in experiencing those environments first-hand and in taking action for it, believing that the end result will be an improved environment. All via the programmes; Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) and Whitebait Connection (WBC).

The aim of this wānanga was to provide training opportunities in freshwater monitoring for Wai Connectors & Coordinators, local hapū, and conservation groups. There was a focus on Community Based Freshwater Monitoring (CBFM), the National Īnanga Spawning Programme (NĪSP), how to run a Whitebait Connection school programme, and a facilitation course run by Facilitate Aotearoa.

The full gallery of images can be found here [mountainstosea.org.nz/post](https://mountainstosea.org.nz/post)  
A video of the wānanga can be found here <https://youtu.be/ObshRwWresl>





## Mountains to Sea and Wai Connection

'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is a Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) community catchment group engagement and support project, funded largely by the Ministry for the Environment's essential freshwater fund and delivered through a range of partners or provider organisations nationally.

To learn more about Mountains to Sea please visit [www.mountaintosea.org.nz/about-us](http://www.mountaintosea.org.nz/about-us)

For more information about Wai Connection - including resources please visit <https://www.waiconnection.nz/>

## Sustainable Hawkes Bay – Sam Paterson

Sustainable Hawkes Bay is our provider organisation for Mountains to Sea programmes and the Wai Connection project in the Hawkes Bay region.

Sam Paterson, Partnerships Manager at Sustainable Hawkes Bay provided an overview of their organisation and the mahi that they do alongside the Wai Connection project.



You can find out more about their organisation on their website [here](#).  
Or check out their Facebook page [here](#).

## Hau kāinga

Our wānanga started off with a warm welcome from the hau kāinga who whakapapa to the hapū of Ngāti Kurukuru, Ngāti Whakaiti, Ngāti Urakiterangi and Ngāti Hikatoa.

The hau kāinga are part of the Waingōngoro Awa Restoration Project described in more detail below.

We acknowledge the hau kāinga from Waimārama for sharing their space, stories and taiao with us.



## Waingōngoro Awa Restoration Project

**Sharon Walker**

Watch her presentation [here](#)

Sharon discussed the significance of the Waingōngoro Awa in Waimārama to the local community and the project's focus on a 22-hectare wetland within the area. She emphasised the importance of reconnecting people to the environment and the awa,

highlighting the partnership with local marae. Touching on the incorporation of eDNA and other scientific methods into the project.

A large-scale erosion control project involving planting and fencing off areas was carried out with partnership funding. The project faced challenges due to limited funding, but efforts have been made to secure more funding. Riparian planting was done in a significant area leading to a main waterway. The project also involves collaboration with the local marae and focuses on increasing the hydrology of a wetland. They are currently in the third year of the four-year project, over 40,000 trees have been planted, seven kilometers of fencing installed, and work has begun on planting one of the two pā sites within the project. Additionally, work has been done on smaller wetlands, and a kura program is in place to raise awareness about water conservation.

## Introduction

*Led by Nicholas Naysmith - NĪSP National Manager*

The day was an overview of the National Īnanga Spawning Programme. It included detailed information on the lifecycle of this whitebait species, barriers to their spawning success, and the challenges they face in finding suitable spawning habitat (changes in land use, man-made barriers, and a largely unregulated fishery). We reviewed the processes for finding the 'love zone', assessing spawning habitats, installation of artificial spawning habitats, counting eggs, and the process of restoration planting of riparian margins and spawning sites to improve spawning success. Nic encourages an open forum that provides trainees with the opportunity to ask questions, and prompts broad discussions on Īnanga conservation.



**Previously recorded presentation links below**

[Link to presentation powerpoint](#)

[Recorded Presentation](#)





## Field Trip

The day included a walk down through the sand dunes to the Waingōngoro Awa mouth for hands-on learning about īnanga spawning.

This area is a confirmed īnanga spawning site and provided the perfect opportunity to review the spawning habitat needs of this taonga species.

The team was engaged in hay bale installation, egg counts, and egg i.d. in situ.

We took the opportunity to search the area for eggs, and explained best practice.

We “installed” a set of hay bales, used as artificial spawning habitat, which helps to confirm that an area is suitable for īnanga spawning.

The awa had both adult īnanga and ‘whitebait’ swimming around, confirming presence, which is the first step in īnanga conservation.

The day was action packed and filled with fun activities.

Resources for trainees are listed below.





## Resources

- Learn more about inanga [here](#)
- [Summary of the NĪSP Programme](#)
- [Introduction to NĪSP](#)
- [ID Guide](#)
- [Finding spawning](#)
- [Salt water wedge](#)
- [Habitat assessment](#)
- [Counting eggs](#)
- [Installing haybales](#)
- [Maintaining your site](#)
- [Long term restoration](#)
- [Monitoring pests](#)
- [Plants for restoration](#)



# Whitebait Connection School Programme Delivery

Led by Patricia Hawkins - Whitebait Connection National Coordinator & Nic Naysmith - NĪSP National Manager

Over two days the Whitebait Connection school programme trainees and the kids attending the wānanga participated in a fun and interactive Whitebait Connection training.

The training covered the different stages of delivering a Whitebait Connection school programme. This included class session demonstrations, field trips to the Waingōngoro Awa, game sharing and playing and the sharing of ideas and resources from trainees and trainers.

Links to relevant resources are listed below.





## Resources

[Whitebait Connection Coordinator Handbook](#)

[Whitebait Connection Freshwater Monitoring Handbook](#)

[Whitebait Connection Teacher Handbook - Years 1-4](#)

[Whitebait Connection Teacher Handbook - Years 5-8](#)

[Games for Whitebait Connection Delivery](#)





## CBM – Community Based Monitoring

### Introduction

*Led by Juliet Milne*

[Link to presentation](#)

Introducing Community Based Monitoring. There are many different ways that everyday people can monitor their waterways. Mountains to Sea uses a mixture of biological (living) and non-biological (non-living) indicators to assess and monitor the health of streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands. A key goal is to empower schools and communities to do their own monitoring if they are inspired to do so and ensure that their monitoring plans are tailored to help them answer their specific questions. Like with so many things, there is no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to Community Based Monitoring and it’s really important for coordinators to help groups to tailor their monitoring to fit what their questions and interests are!





## Field Trip

We ventured down to the Waingōngoro Awa, to an area where the council does State of the Environment (SOE) monitoring. Here we put into practise the methods of Rapid Habitat Assessments (RHA) and Macroinvertebrate monitoring. Together these two methods can tell you a lot about the state of the instream environment and how that might be impacted by the instream habitat as well as the surrounding habitat and land use.

We also looked at periphyton and used the bathyscope and SHMAK viewers to examine the periphyton (algae and cyanobacteria) attached to the streambed at this site. Periphyton is good to monitor monthly and during the spring and summer months when things warm up and there is a lack of shade for the streambed coupled with an excess of nutrients in the water, periphyton can reach nuisance levels and upset the balance of the stream and the community of macroinvertebrates.

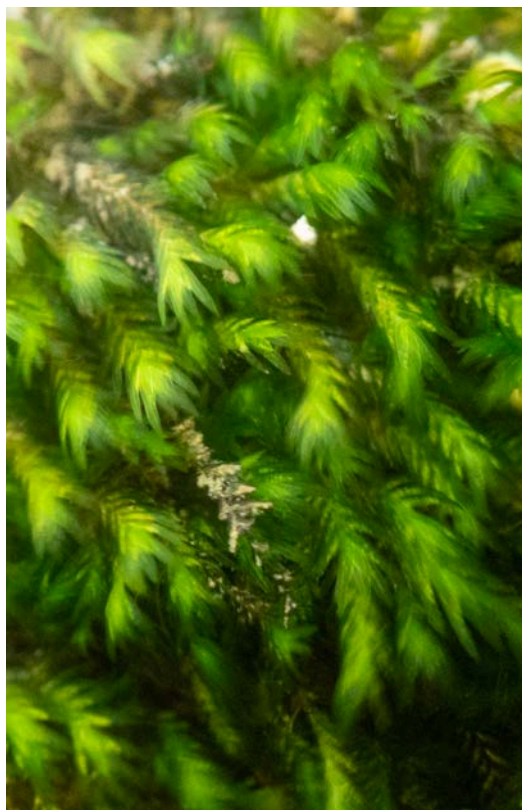
Periphyton is an important part of the stream ecosystem but as with many things - too much of a good thing is not a good thing. It can look ugly, block waterways, smother habitat, cause high and lows in Oxygen throughout a 24-hour period (which is not good for fish and macroinvertebrates). Microcoleus, or 'toxic algae' is a type of periphyton that is good to know how to identify as the toxins in it have killed dogs. It has a musty smell, oily black sheen and should be reported if it reaches nuisance levels especially when it's near a recreational area.





## Resources

- [NIWA SHMAK Tutorial Videos](#)
- [CBM Monitoring and QA Plan template](#)
- [NIWA: A national quality assurance \(QA\) framework for community-based monitoring \(CBM\) - Make your data count.](#)





## Spotlighting

*Led by Nicholas Naysmith*

On Tuesday and Thursday nights the trainees travelled back to the mouth of the Waingōngoro Awa to check out the biodiversity that emerges once the sun sets. Briefings were done and a leader and tail end charlie was assigned.

Excited chatter could be heard down the stream as participants weaved their way up the awa by torch light, short fin tuna peeping out of the soft sediment in the raupo. Dodging spiderwebs and testing the limits of their gumboots. The stars put on a show for us as well as the giant bullies hiding at the stream banks.

## Resources

-  [2024 WBC Spotlighting Event - Organisatio...](#)
-  [2024 WBC Spotlighting Event Check in and ...](#)
-  [2024 WBC Spotlighting Event - walk up regi...](#)
-  [2024 WBC Spotlighting Event - Briefing.pdf](#)





## Facilitation Training

Below is a summary of the facilitation training by Emily Roberts, Wai Connector, Te Kāhui o Taranaki:

To be honest, I had no idea what to expect when I signed up for the three-day catchment group facilitation course. Prior to the Waimārama Mountains to Sea Wānanga, I was experiencing a mild case of FOMO given all the wānanga sessions sounded so valuable and fun. Fortunately, the facilitation course turned out to be a really smart choice.

Given catchment groups are often composed of a wonderfully complex mix of different personalities with divergent aspirations, how is it possible to capture broad viewpoints, make everyone feel part of the journey and progress to focussed, purposeful actions that inspire all? It sounds like an impossible task, right? It turns out not if you are equipped with the right facilitation tools and methods that this course helped us grasp. Our facilitation Jedi masters were Helen, Michelle and Nick from Facilitate Aotearoa. They skillfully demonstrated there's a real art to effective facilitation. There's a process/framework to stick to but within that, there are so many nuances that make the methods much more effective. It was such a treat to witness our three facilitation gurus in action sharing lots of invaluable tips and tricks. To solidify the learning, we each had a go at running a facilitation session applying different methods within made up catchment group scenarios. The role playing was a giggle and a great way to get to know each other and learn from each other's mistakes.

All in all, I can't recommend the course highly enough to those tasked with setting up catchment groups. The skills learnt are also super transferable to many other aspects of collaborative group mahi. I finished the course converted to the art of facilitation, feeling more confident with a new skill set and mind blown by the mastery of our facilitation virtuosos Helen, Michelle and Nick. Mountains to Sea, thank you so much for this incredibly insightful opportunity, we had a hoot.



## Future Wānanga

Ōnuku Wānanga - April 2025. Read more about our wānanga

[mountainstosea.org.nz/wananga](https://mountainstosea.org.nz/wananga)

## Explore other regions

We have active provider organisations across the country. If you are wanting to connect with the team in a particular region- flick them an email.

[mountainstosea.org.nz/team](https://mountainstosea.org.nz/team)

Or check out our planned events here

[mountainstosea.org.nz/events](https://mountainstosea.org.nz/events)





## Evaluations and Feedback

Thank you for your feedback and evaluation of the different components of our wānanga event. This will inform our planning to improve future events.

Key things we have taken onboard for improving future wānanga include providing more time and space for decompression and relaxation and ensuring quality content over quantity to improve time management.

It was evident from your feedback that everyone found the event beneficial and that there were a lot of learnings. Main highlights for the event included the opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga with likeminded people from around the country, the kai, connecting with the hau kāinga and the training provided.

As part of the feedback process we asked you to provide an action you will complete post wānanga with a completion date. Actions ranged from practising facilitation techniques learnt during training, running community spotlighting events and undertaking more professional development and learning associated with Te Ao Māori. We would love to hear your updates on how your actions are going. You will receive an email update one week prior to the due date you gave for your action.

If you have any suggestions, feedback or questions about future wānanga events feel free to contact

Patricia ([patricia@mountainstosea.org.nz](mailto:patricia@mountainstosea.org.nz)) or Lorna ([lorna@mountainstosea.org.nz](mailto:lorna@mountainstosea.org.nz)).

Our next wānanga will be hosted at Ōnuku Marae, Banks Peninsula in April 2025.



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