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## Submission to Horizons Regional Council Long Term Plan 2024-34

### Contact Details

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### Overview

A submission on behalf of of Environment Network Manawatū's Ruahine Kiwi project linked to funding for biodiversity associated with the Long-Term Plan (LTP)

**Ruahine Kiwi would like the opportunity to speak to this submission.**

### Background

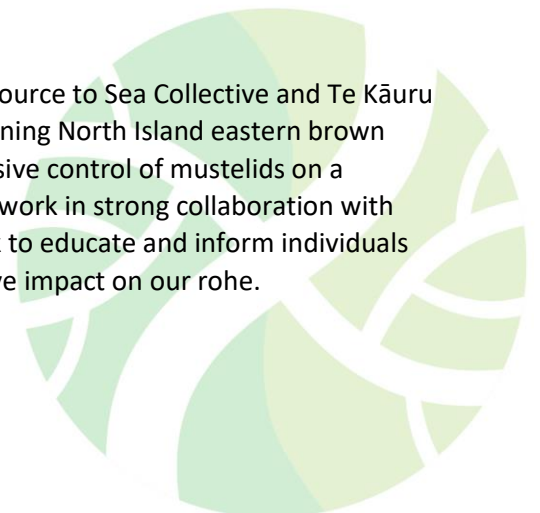
ENM exists to connect and inspire communities for environmental action. We are the environment hub for the Manawatū region providing sector leadership, building capacity and capability, and creating community.

Understanding that all life is part of a thriving, self-sustaining ecosystem our vision is that the ecological and human communities in the Manawatū River catchment are living in harmony.

We work strategically to demonstrate best-practice as a member-led environmental organisation. We promote environmental activities and advocate for positive environmental outcomes. We connect volunteers, support organisational sustainability, provide educational opportunities and seek to increase the stream of funding to the sector. We support and enable our membership through meeting needs, holding space and creating opportunities for increased connections. We celebrate the diverse passions of our 65+ member groups, that include biodiversity protection, freshwater quality, food resilience, waste reduction, sustainable living, alternative energies, climate action and active transport. The network is organised into two collectives: Manawatū Food Action Network and Manawatū River Source to Sea

### About Ruahine Kiwi:

Ruahine Kiwi is a partnership between ENM's Manawatū River Source to Sea Collective and Te Kāuru Eastern Manawatū River Hapū Collective with the vision of returning North Island eastern brown kiwi to the southern Ruahine by 2026. We do this through intensive control of mustelids on a landscape scale, with our trap network covering 23,000ha. We work in strong collaboration with tangata whenua, local farmers and volunteers. We actively seek to educate and inform individuals and diverse groups of our work and how they can make a positive impact on our rohe.



## Submission Context

Ruahine Kiwi is a project of ENM's Manawatū River Source to Sea Collective which is comprised of 27 biodiversity focused groups from who span the Manawatū Catchment. Our network is comprised of groups and organisations who span the Manawatū River Catchment. We consulted with them as part of this submission. This submission is a combination of our understanding of almost three years of predator control work, member group feedback, and our organisational knowledge of 23 years of work in the sector.

## Submission

The proposed LTP states that over \$17m is dedicated to iconic biodiversity projects around our Region. The 'Icon' projects listed are Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge, Kia Wharite in the Ruapehu, Pūkaha Mount Bruce, Bushy Park and Manawatū Estuary.

**We request that Ruahine Kiwi is added as a funded " Icon " Project.**

Within the scope of granting 'icon' status we also request that Horizons:

- Endorse Ruahine Kiwi so that stakeholders know that Horizons is supportive of the project goals and outcomes.
- Match funding raised by the community (up to \$50k/annum).

LTP pre-engagement feedback strongly emphasises the strong desire to restore the environment to what it used to be including planting trees, controlling pests, re-establishing wetlands and protecting waterways. Working with the community was also considered important. Ruahine Kiwi meets these criteria as well as contributing to a healthy environment and thriving people across the rohe, both now and in the future.

The project was established with Jobs for Nature funding which ends June 2024. We have strong, established relationships with 28 farmers who allow us access to their land to gain quicker access to the Ruahines. Indications are that our current trapping statistics will get mustelid numbers low enough to re-introduce kiwi in 2025/26. After re-introduction we need systemic control to maintain a safe habitat for kiwi.

The community are enthused by the prospect of kiwi once again living in their 'backyard'. We have ideal habitat at the interface between bush and farmland and have been working for the last 3 years to get pest numbers down sufficiently to allow kiwi translocation as early as 2026. Cape Sanctuary who will supply our new population is nearing maximum carrying capacity and the kiwi chicks raised there need to be re allocated promptly. Over the next few years 30 to 60 Kiwi are expected to be re-homed each year.

The attached strategic plan for Ruahine Kiwi sets out the pre 2026 goal which is to keep Ruahine Kiwi functioning and reintroduce kiwi. Post 2026 our goal is to move to a landscape scale where projects working within and in the vicinity of the Ruahine Range work together to:

- Focus on habitat regeneration not just mustelid control. Improved forest health will help increase bird numbers and other species in addition to kiwi e.g. whio, native snail, Northern rata and long-tailed bat.
- Link together existing pest control initiatives and work to fill gaps.

- Provide diversity of employment (e.g. trapping and planting), facilitate subcontract work opportunities, open-up additional revenue streams (e.g. possum trapping), operationalise science, promote community action, foster educational projects etc.

We are currently working toward consolidating the project for ongoing success, and have identified the following actions toward our goals, for which we are currently seeking resourcing from multiple potential streams including individuals, businesses, philanthropic bodies, professional fundraisers and councils:

1. Using volunteers to continue trapping and employing a trapping coordinator to oversee this process. This is a bare-minimum initial approach, to enable regular trap checking and data collection essential for releasing kiwi in 2026.
2. Increasing Ruahine Kiwi's capacity for strategic leadership to ensure the project potential to establish and maintain a safe kiwi environment in the long-term. Strategic leadership will ensure that we are:
  - a. Increasingly connecting and collaborating with mana whenua and neighbouring projects toward developing and implementing larger landscape-scale predator control programme.
  - b. Encouraging increased community, business, and council support to enable a strongly run, well supported and sustainable project.
  - c. Consistently identifying potential risks and barriers to success and finding solutions to reduce these.
  - d. Maintaining a capable, reliable team of people working together toward a common goal. Maintaining a reliable team of trappers and volunteers.

Becoming an 'icon' project with financial support from Horizons will give us the status, endorsement and funding to allow us to continue our work into 2026 and beyond.

