

PŪKAHA VOLUNTEER ROLES



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Overview of Volunteering at Pūkaha

Volunteering at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre is a rewarding way to be part of Aotearoa's conservation journey. Our volunteers are a vital part of the team—supporting practical, hands-on work that helps restore and protect native species, ecosystems, and the special wairua of this place.

Whether you're working in the forest, maintaining park grounds, assisting with events, or supporting the day-to-day running of the centre, your work contributes directly to our vision: to see nature flourish, together.

Why Volunteer at Pūkaha?

- Gain practical conservation and environmental experience.
- Be part of a friendly and supportive team of like-minded people.
- Develop new skills and knowledge in a unique setting.
- Contribute to the protection of native wildlife and habitats.
- Make a real difference in your local community and environment.

Types of Volunteer Roles

Pūkaha offers a range of volunteering opportunities to suit different interests, skills, and fitness levels:

Forest Restoration Volunteers There is a unique but limited availability to help support our pest control mahi and ecological monitoring in our restoration zones. We welcome help with track maintenance and weeding, allowing you to venture a little further out into the ngāhere.

Conservation Breeding There is also a limited opportunity for local residents to directly support conservation breeding and wildlife care with our very small wildlife team.

Park Maintenance Volunteers – our Conservation Core! Help care for our visitor areas and grounds through gardening, landscaping, painting, and general upkeep. Be part of a like minded social group meeting regularly or enjoy working on your own with supervision

Hosting Volunteers Welcome and assist visitors, help with school groups, or lend a hand during events and holiday programmes. Learn about our wildlife and help teach others! Special Projects or One-Off Volunteering Contribute to larger working bees, corporate volunteering days, or short-term assignments.

Time commitment

Minimum of a half day for one off assistance or for more regular help then a day a month can be very helpful for us, with flexibility based on project needs.

What We Ask of Volunteers

To ensure a safe and positive experience for everyone, all volunteers are expected to:

Represent Pūkaha in a respectful and positive manner.

Follow all health and safety protocols and site guidelines.

Work as part of a team and be open to learning and feedback.

Respect our wildlife, environment, staff, visitors, and each other.

Police Vetting and Safety

As a wildlife centre that hosts schools and whānau groups, the safety of everyone at Pūkaha is a top priority. For this reason:

All volunteers must agree to undergo a Police Vetting Check before beginning volunteer work.

Volunteers must read and agree to our Health and Safety Policy, which outlines safe work practices, hazard awareness, and responsibilities.

Training, support, and supervision are provided to help you feel confident in your role. You'll be working alongside experienced staff and other volunteers who share your passion for conservation

FOREST RESTORATION INFORMATION



PEST CONTROL/ TRAPPING
TRACK MAINTENANCE
WEED CONTROL
MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION



Overview of Forest Restoration Activities for volunteers at Pūkaha

Forest restoration at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre is a hands-on, ongoing effort aimed at protecting and revitalising native bush and wildlife. The work is grounded in practical conservation tasks that help restore the health and balance of the forest ecosystem.

Pest Control and Trapping One of the most critical activities is predator control. Introduced pests like rats, stoats, ferrets, and possums threaten native birds, insects, and plants. To combat this, Pūkaha maintains an extensive network of DOC200/250s Drats and Flipping timmy traps throughout the reserve. Staff and volunteers regularly check and rebait these traps, record data, and reset them as needed. This ongoing effort helps to keep predator numbers down and allows vulnerable native species, such as Kokako, kiwi and kākā, to survive and thrive.

Track Maintenance and Access To support this predator control network and other restoration work, Pūkaha manages and maintains a wide range of forest tracks. Regular track clearing ensures that trapping lines, bait stations, and monitoring equipment remain accessible in all seasons. Tasks include removing fallen branches, clearing overgrown vegetation, repairing erosion, and marking routes for easy navigation.

Weed Control Invasive plant species can quickly overwhelm native flora and upset the natural balance of the forest. Restoration teams carry out targeted weed control, removing invasive species like blackberry, gorse, and Oldman's beard. This often involves hand-pulling, cutting, or the careful application of herbicide in sensitive areas. Controlling weeds allows native seedlings to establish and grow without competition.

Monitoring and Data Collection Alongside physical restoration work, teams also carry out regular biodiversity monitoring. This includes tracking predator activity, bird counts, Kiwi telemetry, camera trapping, and vegetation surveys, amongst other relevant tasks. The data collected informs future planning and helps measure the success of restoration activities.

These practical, boots-on-the-ground tasks are the backbone of Pūkaha's forest restoration work. Carried out year-round by a combination of staff, volunteers, and partners, they form a vital part of protecting and regenerating Aotearoa's unique forest ecosystems. Note that vacancies are very limited and generally available to NZ Residents only

HOSTING INFORMATION



WELCOMING VISITORS
WILDLIFE ADVOCACY
SHARE YOUR PASSION
EDUCATING AND ENRICHING LIVES

Hosting Volunteer Overview

Purpose of the Role Hosting volunteers help create a warm and welcoming experience for visitors, supporters, and groups at Pūkaha. They provide friendly customer service, help orient visitors, and assist with events or gatherings. This role is about being the first smile people see and helping them feel part of the Pūkaha whānau.

Key Tasks

- Greet visitors, volunteers, and guests on arrival.
- Provide basic information about Pūkaha, facilities, and activities.
- Assist with serving tea, coffee, or light refreshments when required.
- Help with the set-up and pack-down of events, open days, or volunteer gatherings.
- Support staff by ensuring guests feel welcome and comfortable.
- Share knowledge of Pūkaha's vision and mahi with visitors.

Skills and Qualities

- Friendly, approachable, and confident speaking with people.
- Good communication and listening skills.
- Reliable, punctual, and able to work as part of a team.
- Willingness to learn about Pūkaha and share this knowledge.
- Comfortable in a busy, people-focused environment.

Time Commitment

- Flexible, depending on events and hosting needs.
- Usually 2–4 hours per shift, or as agreed.

What You'll Gain

- A huge learning experience about our wildlife and what makes them special
- Experience in hosting, customer service, and community engagement.
- The chance to meet a wide range of people and be part of a welcoming team.
- Satisfaction in helping others enjoy their experience at Pūkaha.
- An opportunity to contribute to Pūkaha's conservation and education mission.

CAPTIVE BREEDING INFORMATION



WILDLIFE HUSBANDRY
CLEANING AND FEEDING
ENRICHMENTS
WILDLIFE MONITORING

Overview – Captive Volunteering at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre

Captive volunteering at Pūkaha is an opportunity to directly support conservation breeding and wildlife care. While restoration teams work within the ngahere, captive volunteers contribute to the breeding and husbandry of threatened native species in aviaries and behind-the-scenes facilities. These efforts are central to Pūkaha's kaupapa of restoring Aotearoa's native bird populations. Note that because of strict compliance with Department of Conservation permits and policy, we are unable to offer handling of native animals except special circumstances and under supervision. Volunteering with our Conservation Breeding team is currently limited to NZ Residents only

Key Volunteer Activities

- **Feed Preparation & Nutritional Support**

Volunteers assist with preparing and delivering specialized diets to breeding birds and chicks—including species such as kiwi, kākā, pāteke, whio, and shore plover. This crucial support ensures healthy development and successful breeding outcomes.

- **Aviary Cleaning & Sanitation**

Maintaining hygienic breeding environments is essential. Volunteers help clean nesting boxes, refresh substrates and leaf litter, sanitize feeding areas, and uphold strict biosecurity protocols.

- **Behaviour Observation & Record-Keeping**

Volunteers monitor behaviours such as courtship, feeding, and nesting, keeping accurate records to aid staff in managing and evaluating breeding programmes.

- **Habitat Enhancement & Enclosure Maintenance**

Volunteers contribute to improving breeding spaces by planting native vegetation, maintaining naturalistic elements, and supporting predator-proofing measures in and around aviaries.

Species-Specific Breeding Programmes

Volunteering supports various nationally significant programmes, including:

- **Shore Plover (Tūturuatu):** Hand-rearing first clutches and supporting release to island sanctuaries with ~7 breeding pairs on-site.
- **Whio (Blue Duck):** Hand- and parent-rearing before fast-water training and release.
- **Kākā (Bush Parrot):** Housing breeding and foster pairs from which offspring are translocated to other sanctuaries.
- **Kiwi:** Participating in Operation Nest Egg—rearing kiwi until they reach ~1200 g before release.
- **Pāteke (Brown Teal):** Assisting with breeding in aviaries, with ducklings transferred to partners for release.
- **Kākāriki (Parakeets):** Supporting breeding of multiple species, including the critically endangered orange-fronted parakeet.
- **Kōkako:** Historically a key species in Pūkaha's programmes, with the last release in 2011.

Why Captive Volunteering Matters

- **Direct Conservation Impact:** Volunteers help nurture endangered species from chick to release-ready stages—making a tangible difference in their recovery.
- **Skill Development:** Gain practical experience in feeding protocols, aviary maintenance, behavioural observation, and biosecurity practices under mentorship.
- **Mission-Critical Support:** Your efforts underpin critical breeding outcomes that support Pūkaha's broader strategy for species restoration and biodiversity protection.

CONSERVATION CORE INFORMATION



GARDENING
FACILITIES CLEANING
SUPPORT & UPKEEP
HELPING IN EVENTS

Overview of Our Conservation “Core” Volunteer mahi at Pūkaha

Our volunteers and staff focus on creating a welcoming, safe, and clean environment for both visitors and wildlife. While the forest restoration team works deep in the ngahere, a core group of conservation volunteers help keep the public-facing areas of Pūkaha running smoothly and looking their best. This work is vital to maintaining the mana and mauri of the visitor experience.

- **Gardening and Weeding** Volunteers support the upkeep of native gardens, landscaped areas, and public green spaces throughout the centre. Tasks may include weeding garden beds and paths, mulching, pruning, and removing invasive weeds from display areas. These activities help showcase the beauty of native plants, support biodiversity, and ensure that plantings reflect Pūkaha’s conservation kaupapa.
- **Path and Facilities Cleaning** Keeping paths and outdoor visitor areas clean and clear is a core part of the role. Volunteers may assist with sweeping paths, clearing leaves or debris, cleaning signs and railings, and picking up litter. These small but important tasks ensure Pūkaha remains safe and enjoyable for manuhiri (visitors) and reflect the pride we take in the whenua.
- **Facility Support and Upkeep** Volunteers may help with light maintenance tasks around the grounds, such as cleaning benches, checking supplies in visitor areas, or assisting with basic repairs (e.g. loose signage or minor fixes). While technical maintenance is handled by staff, regular volunteer support ensures these tasks are addressed promptly.
- **Supporting Events and Visitor Areas** Park maintenance volunteers may occasionally help prepare outdoor areas for events, including setting up and tidying spaces, placing signage, or helping ensure key areas are clean and accessible. This helps Pūkaha stay ready to host whānau, schools, and international visitors.

These practical, hands-on tasks are essential to the daily operations at Pūkaha. Carried out by staff and volunteers, they help create a clean, inspiring environment for all who visit — while supporting the wider conservation mission of the centre

Volunteer Application

Thank you for enquiring about our volunteer programme. We hope you can join our team to help protect and care of our wildlife in our very special reserve. Pūkaha welcomes volunteers who are keen to get involved in conservation and help protect our native wildlife.

Note that unfortunately we do not have accommodation available on site and there are very limited spaces in some areas where we involve volunteers (Conservation breeding, Forest Restoration).

Short and long-term options are available in a variety of rolls including forest restoration, park maintenance, conservation, and visitor hosting. Our 942-hectare reserve is home to a variety of critically endangered and endangered species such as North Island brown kiwi, kōkako, kākā, and yellow-crowned kākāriki. As well as this, we also house other species in aviaries as part of a breed for release programmes such as pāteke, tīeke, yellow crowned kākāriki, kaka and tūturuatu.

Without out generous volunteers, Pūkaha would be a very different place! If you are interested in volunteering, please read through the separate information that we have provided and complete the following application form. That will provide us with more information about you, your interests, what you would like to gain from your volunteering and what experience you may already have. That way we can find the best match for you and where Pūkaha could really use your mahi!

Personal Information

First name:	Last name:	
Street Address:		
Suburb:	Post Code:	
Home Phone:	Mobile Phone:	
Email:		
Date of Birth:	Male: <input type="checkbox"/>	Female: <input type="checkbox"/>

Volunteer Information

What day/days of the week are you available?						
Monday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Wednesday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Friday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Saturday: <input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday: <input type="checkbox"/>
What date are you available from? Would you prefer daily, weekly, or once a month volunteering or <u>one off</u> projects where we can call on you if you are available?						

How long do you plan on volunteering?	
What role are you interested in volunteering (please tick):	Conservation breeding: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Forest Restoration: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Visitor Hosting: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Conservation Core <input type="checkbox"/>

		Special or One-off Projects <input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any medical conditions/allergies that might impact on your volunteering?		Please explain any medical conditions:
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>	

Please describe your fitness level:	Low	Moderate	High
Are you able to work independently or do you require a support person? Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?			

What experience do you have in the role of interest ticked above? Do you have any relevant qualifications or any practical training certificates?
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What other interests do you have:
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Why do you want to be a volunteer? What would you most like to get from your time at Pūkaha?

How did you hear about us?

Once you have filled out your application, please email to volunteer@pukaha.org.nz with a recent CV attached.

We will be back in touch to let to know whether we have any suitable opportunities available in your area of interest and if we do then we will need to conduct an interview and a Police Check.

Please tick here if you consent to this ☐

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre, we look forward to hearing from you

