



Conservation Volunteers New Zealand

Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ) is a not-for-profit organisation that's all about inspiring environmental change by connecting people with nature.

Through CVNZ's project-based volunteering programmes, people can get involved in a wide range of projects that care for the environment and protect some of Aotearoa's most vulnerable wildlife.

Projects are run across the country and include volunteering opportunities like planting native trees, building walking tracks and fencing waterways. They also support specialised species programmes that run wildlife surveys and species release activities.

From the very beginning, CVNZ volunteers have been putting in the hard yards. Since 2006, they've planted over one million trees, collected around 56,000 kgs of rubbish, raised about half a million seedlings and weeded hundreds of hectares of land. Working with local communities, businesses and government

agencies, the organisation has a proud history of collaboration and partnerships. One of these partnerships is the Conservation Work Skills programme (CWS), a joint effort with the Ministry of Social Development.

The programme gives unemployed people first-hand experience in the conservation sector. Participants gain industry standards skills, including chainsaw use and herbicide handling, working in plant nurseries and on various restoration projects.

The CWS programme is in its third year running and has had great success. Since its inception, 70% - 80% of graduates have gone on to paid employment and tens of thousands of trees have been planted by CWS participants around the country.

For the CVNZ team, it's not about delivering just another training course. It's about "giving people the opportunity to fulfil their potential in a sustainable way – and using nature as a way to engage."



Tuna Migration and Lifecycle

The Tuna Kuwharuwharu or Longfin Eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) is a creature of legend for both Māori and Pākehā, and aspects of their complex life cycle are still a mystery. We do know some things about their lifecycles, but scientists and researchers are still working to learn more.

To breed, longfin eels swim for thousands of kilometres across the Pacific Ocean. Before making the transition from their freshwater home in Aotearoa to the salt water of the ocean, they undergo a remarkable physical transformation. Their head shrinks and changes shape, flattening and becoming bullet shaped, and the top part of their body darkens to help them camouflage against the water. Meanwhile, their eyes increase to twice their normal size so they can see into the depths of the ocean. This transformation helps them to survive their journey.




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Resource: Tuna For Tamariki

The Wild Futures programme is another government partnership that sees CVNZ teaming up with the Department of Conservation. In this project, wildlife experts work alongside volunteers to provide protection for six threatened species: the kākā, kōkako, kororā (little blue penguin), tāiko (Westland petrel), tuna (longfin eel) and the pepeketua (Hochstetter's frog).

The project created a range of educational resources about the tuna, whose status is at risk and declining. These resources aim to engage and inspire young children, groups, clubs and schools to learn about the tuna, which has long been considered an important taonga (treasure) by Māori.

"Aotearoa has one of the highest rates of species loss in the world, so we aim to bring resources and volunteers together to make a real difference to a place, or a species" says Aaron Jaggar, General Manager of CVNZ.

"While there have been major strides over the last decade, there's still a huge amount of work to be done to prevent the irreversible loss of some of Aotearoa's most iconic wildlife, and this is where the mahi and passion of volunteers are so important."

To learn more about CVNZ (CC25569), search them out on the **Charities Register on Charities Services' website**. To get involved in one of their projects, check out **their website** or social media (**Facebook** and **Instagram**). You don't need to be a wildlife expert to volunteer, you just need a reasonable level of health and fitness, and the desire to get outdoors to look after Papatūānuku.