

# Community-led wetland restoration in the Coromandel: a decade of practical action and novel No.8 wire research

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Moehau Environment Group (est. 1999; [www.meg.org.nz](http://www.meg.org.nz)) is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in the sparsely populated Northern Coromandel Peninsula. Key MEG activities include kiwi protection, environmental education, and rat and possum control programmes. This presentation will outline MEG's 10-year restoration and research journey in the Waikawau Bay wetland, a c.75 ha complex encompassing estuarine grading to freshwater habitats. The journey began with the discovery of a small, but resilient population of fernbirds (*Bowdleria punctata*), spotless crane (*Porzana tabuensis*), banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*), pateke (*Anas chlorotis*), and bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*). As a remote and little studied area, the group needed to better understand and adapt restoration and monitoring methods to the environment in order to measure successes or failures as the project evolved. Along with carrying out ecological baseline surveys for flora and fauna, and annual bird surveys, the group has undertaken novel 'Number 8. wire' research. Studies have been carried out to determine the best control methods for the invasive saltwater paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), and to develop methods for baiting and trapping mice to suit the fluctuating water levels in the wetland. Of particular interest is assessing fernbird recruitment throughout the wetland given previous research indicating the effects of mice predation on this species.