



Community Awareness Survey

2022 and 2024

Introduction

This survey was completed *kānohi ki te kānohi*, to survey community awareness of the Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project (KMRP), the Jobs For Nature (JFN) programme, the Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust (MKMT), and the conservation threats in the Kaimai Mamaku project area.

The intention of the survey was to gauge the success of MKMT's engagement programme in heightening community awareness of the KMRP, sub-projects and MKMT's work. The 2024 survey repeated the questions and method of the 2022 survey to provide a direct comparison and demonstrate whether an uplift in community awareness has occurred as a result of project and MKMT operations.

MKMT's results are compared with the Predator Free Trust's survey, also undertaken in 2022 and 2024 to provide context for the outcomes.

Approach

In 2022, MKMT and the KMRP had been operational for only a few months (handover ceremony in June 2022) and publicity about JFN had been relatively limited beyond the initial media coverage. The 2022 survey was to provide a baseline measure of community awareness. In 2022, the surveys were undertaken in: Tauranga, Rotorua, Katikati, Matamata.

In 2024, MKMT and the sub-projects have been operational for approximately 3 years with an integrated communications programme across multiple platforms and continuously increasing measures of reach and engagement. The 2024 survey was intended to provide a gauge of community awareness outside our engaged audience. In 2024, the surveys were undertaken in Tauranga, Rotorua, Katikati, Matamata, Te Aroha, Wairere Falls, and Te Puke.

In both years, the survey process was two staff wearing MKMT branded uniform standing in public locations requesting participation in a short survey. The method for the Predator Free Trust survey is provided in their report.

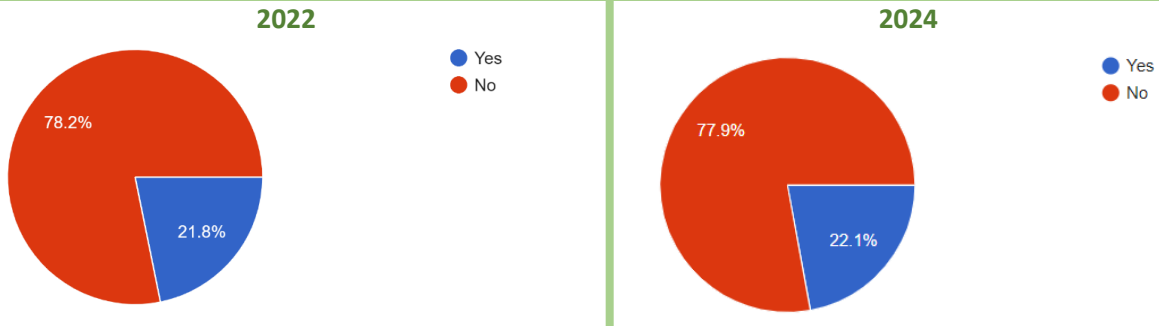
Results

In 2022, the total number of respondents was 55; in 2024 the total number of respondents was 104.

In 2022, the proportion of respondents living within or close to the Kaimai Mamaku project area was 76%, compared with 89% in the 2024 survey. In both surveys the respondents had a normal distribution across the age ranges from under 18 to 65+.

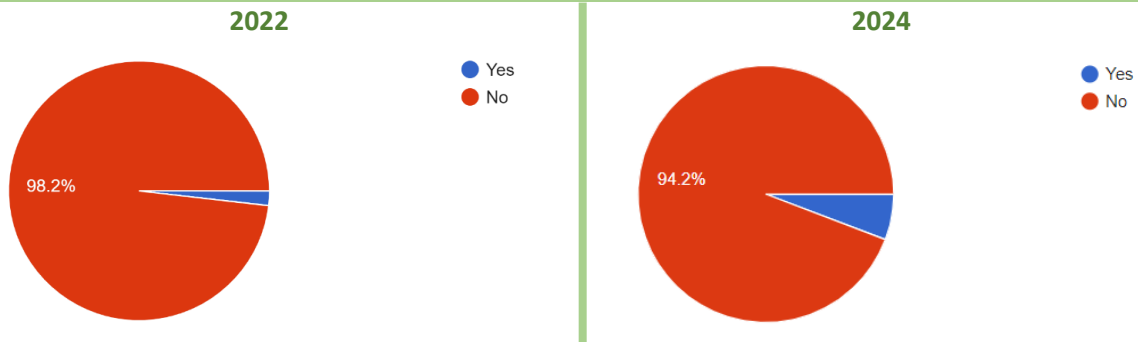
The respondent profile for the Predator Free Trust survey is described in their report. The total number of respondents was 1,259 of which 158 were from the Waikato/Bay of Plenty region.

Have you heard of Jobs For Nature?



Despite twice as many people being surveyed from a very similar demographic, and after almost 3 years of national funding by Jobs For Nature, local conservation projects, and a recent flurry of media on Jobs For Nature funding ending, there has been little increase in the local community awareness of the programme.

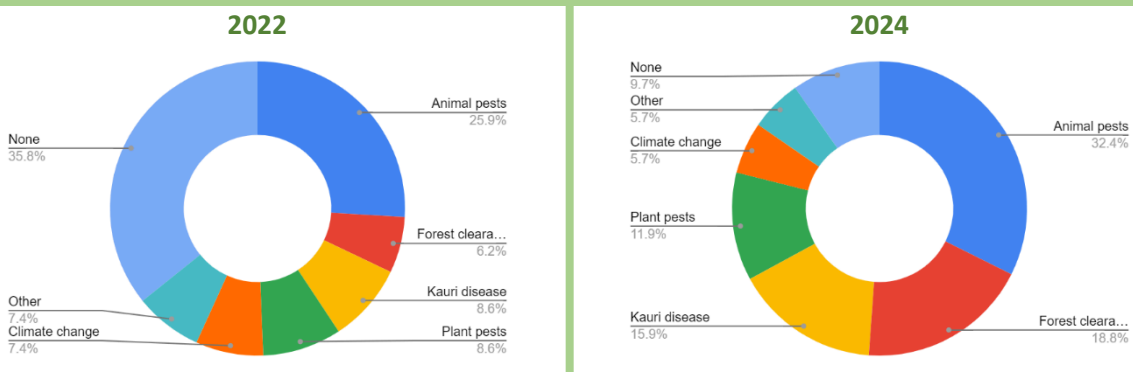
Have you heard of the Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project?



Awareness of the KMRP has increased from 1.8% to 5.8% over the three years of operations. Although total numbers are low, this does represent a notable increase in local community awareness of the project operations and mirrors the increase in reach and engagement with both the MKMT newsletter and social media channels.

The Predator Free Trust survey found that awareness of local Predator Free groups increased from 7% to 9% over the three years. Of those aware respondents, 54% read about the local group online, indicating the importance of social media as a key mechanism for community engagement.

Awareness of conservation issues in the Kaimai Mamaku

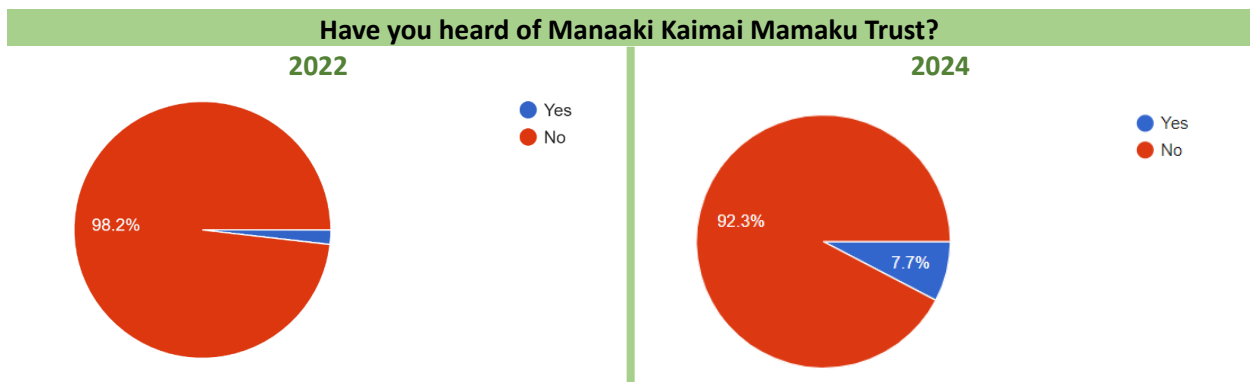


The response to this question shows the most dramatic change of all the questions and reflects the notably stronger community awareness of conservation issues in recent years. While respondents might not know the names of the programmes and operations delivering the mahi, they are significantly more aware of a greater range of conservation issues in the Kaimai Mamaku. The proportion of people reporting no awareness of conservation issues dropped by 36.2%, the number of issues reported increased, and the level of detail included in the issues reported also increased.

Similarly, the Predator Free Trust survey found that the proportion of respondents who didn't know the goal of the Predator Free 2050 movement dropped from 21% to 15%. The proportion of respondents who understand the fundamental goals and a wider range of goals of the Predator Free 2050 movement increased. This is a very similar pattern to the MKMT survey. This is a clear and strong indicator of the paradigm shift in community concern for conservation issues, particularly pest control, and represents a powerful signal for MKMT and similar organisations to continue their work underpinned by social licence.

The Predator Free Trust survey also asked respondents to list the benefits of becoming predator free. Of the nine key benefits listed, the results for seven benefits in 2024 were very similar to (within 5%) of the 2022 results. There was an increase of 6% in respondents (43%) who believe there will be a stronger connection between people and the environment. There was an increase of 9% in respondents (39%) who believe the Predator Free movement will contribute to a stronger primary sector. This supports the anecdotal evidence that the community is increasingly aware of the connection between a healthy environment and the wellbeing of people and our economy.

Interestingly, only 20% of Predator Free survey respondents have confidence that the goal of Predator Free 2050 can be achieved. The reasons for the lack of confidence are the perceived size of the predator population and difficulty in achieving eradication and insufficient people, money and resources supporting and driving the work. Given the huge increase in money, people, resources and pests removed over the last three years, this result may be a perverse outcome of increased communication and engagement on the predator free movement. This highlights the importance of careful messaging focused on positive outcomes to avoid community hopelessness and increase the sense of meaningful and worthwhile contribution. However, respondents had a clear understanding that more resources, investment, people, engagement and advice are needed to achieve the Predator Free 2050 goal. Drivers for participating in conservation remain native birds and future generations being able to enjoy native species.



Awareness of MKMT has increased from 1.8% to 7.7% over the three years of operations. While the total numbers are low, this nevertheless represents a notable increase of 5.9% in local community awareness of MKMT. This result mirrors the increase in reach and engagement with both the newsletter and social media content driven by the Trust. We are also noticing more active engagement through positive comments on our posts.

For comparison, the increase in people aware of the Predator Free 2050 movement increased 4%, from 35% to 39%, over the same timeframe. This result was statistically significant. Interestingly, the Waikato/Bay of Plenty region had lower awareness at 30%.

In the 2022 survey, 60% of respondents agreed to sign up to our newsletter. In the 2024 survey, a similar proportion of respondents agreed to sign up indicating an interest in learning more about the kaupapa.

The Predator Free survey found that while DOC remains the organisation most commonly considered to be responsible for leading the Predator Free 2050 movement (53%), respondents considered 10 different organisations had responsibility and 30% of respondents were unsure who is responsible. This result reflects the fluid and sometimes confused state of communicated and actual leadership and operational activity in the conservation sector at the moment. Jobs For Nature has contributed to the establishment of non-agency project entities delivering conservation operations, non-agency and iwi organisations are showing leadership in conservation, and collaborative projects are innovating with shared leadership models. DOC itself is undergoing

systems change towards a model of enabling others, rather than maintaining internal structures for operational delivery. Fundamentally, the survey result indicates community awareness of responsibility across many organisations, and Government agencies are no longer considered to be solely responsible for the delivery of conservation movements like Predator Free 2050. If we were to conduct the survey again, a question to determine if respondents are aware of MKMT's role would be useful along with a question asking which organisations are considered to be responsible locally for conservation activities.

Conclusion

The survey results mirror the findings of the Kantar Better Futures 2023 survey showing that the proportion of New Zealanders concerned about sustainability and environmental issues continues to increase. Our survey shows that local awareness of local conservation issues is growing in breadth and depth. Anecdotally, we are aware that local community awareness is low outside our engaged audience and this is reflected in the results.

The results also show that our communications and engagement strategy is resulting in increased local awareness of MKMT and the KMRP, relative to the static level of awareness of the national JFN programme. Our results are similar to those of the Predator Free Trust survey, which provides insights into the overwhelm that the community can feel if conservation issues are not communicated positively with a focus on celebrating wins and highlighting benefits for native species.

We can conclude from this that our engagement methods are effective alongside the growing community awareness of conservation issues and we can be confident in continuing and refining our communications strategy.