



What to expect: Volunteering Frequently Asked Questions

Each year Moehau Environment Group hosts over 50 international volunteers. This guide has been written in order to better prepare you as a volunteer, not only for the work that you will be involved in but the environment you will be living in as well.

We understand that each individual experience will vary somewhat, so cannot guarantee that everything will be the same as described. However, this is a good general outline of what you should expect when volunteering for Moehau Environment Group.

If you live locally (near Colville or Coromandel), we would love to have you volunteer regularly and help a project in your area. We also may have tasks which can be performed from a distance (such as data entry, writing articles, research, help with publishing and creating educational materials and guides etc, help with maintenance & repair of equipment)

Local volunteers may find this guide useful. However, this guide focuses on the information that visitors to the region looking at volunteering for a week or more, may want to know.

If you have any queries you would like to discuss about the information provided here please email info@meg.org.nz



Global Volunteers help plant natives along a stream bank.

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Who is Moehau Environment Group?

Moehau Environment Group is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the Northern Coromandel Peninsula. Our mission is to achieve a standard that would allow the re-introduction and recovery of endangered species. For more information visit www.meg.org.nz

What sort of projects can I volunteer on?

Volunteers hosted by Moehau Environment Group will most likely spend their time working on a mix of projects, if staying over a longer period. The projects in which you will most likely participate are our Port Charles Rat Attack, Kiwi Sanctuary and Waikawau Bay Wetland Project. More info on these is available from our website.



Check out our projects at www.meg.org.nz/projects

What will I be doing?

Field tasks our volunteers are involved in include:

- Pest control (trapping and bait lines)
- Building and maintaining tracks
- Monitoring bird populations
- Building and distributing trap boxes
- Eradicating noxious weeds
- Planting trees and other native plants

International volunteers, hosted by MEG, help with track maintenance

Who can volunteer?

Moehau Environment Group welcomes people with a love of the outdoors and interest in the environment to take part as a volunteer.

Local school children help plant trees in our Childrens forest at Waikawau Bay



Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, and you don't need any prior skills or experience. We have tasks appropriate for a range of fitness levels. However, due to the physical nature of many tasks, a good level of fitness is desirable. You must be aged over 18 if you are an international visitor to New Zealand.



School children from Coromandel help carry in stoat traps

Is it difficult?

You should be in good health, and prepared to take part to the best of your ability. We ask all prospective volunteers to declare any medical conditions, allergies, disabilities or existing injuries that may affect participation. Please be honest with us regarding your level of ability and confidence about working independently.

You should be aware that our projects are usually labour-intensive, and take place in remote, rural areas. Be prepared to participate in all weather conditions. You'll need to bring appropriate clothing for the weather.

All volunteers are provided with training on the project and safety instructions.

Can I volunteer for just a day or a weekend?

Yes, we can be flexible. Working bees are encouraged and can help us a lot. If you are a company or family group on holiday and would like to contribute to our projects, we would love to hear from you. Some volunteers are needed for special tasks which might be one-off.

If you require accommodation while you volunteer comfortable basic accommodation is available. Because we are a volunteer organization, our preference is for volunteers to commit to a minimum of 1 week stay.

To discuss your situation, please email us on info@meg.org.nz

Do I need any special skills?

No, on the job orientation and training will be provided by the Project Leaders you are working with. Your Project Leader will show you how to use all tools and equipment

safely before you start the project. Any essential safety equipment will be provided to you and you will be shown how to use it.

What is expected of me?

You will need to be pro-active in your approach to the work, taking initiative and working independently at times. You should not expect constant supervision. However, there will always be a Project Leader who can advise you of work that needs to be done.

You will be expected to work 5 days per week. The daily schedule will vary; however, you can expect to be working between the hours of 8.30am and 5pm. You need to be ready for the day's activities by the given time with the appropriate gear. You will be



Volunteers off to track cut rodent trap lines at back of wetland

advised on the necessary equipment by your Project Leader. If you are unwell or unable to take part in the program for any reason it is your responsibility to let your Project Leader know as soon as possible.

You are expected to work within the guidelines given by Project Leaders to ensure both your own personal safety and the safety of others. Failure to abide by the program rules and regulations may result in you being asked to leave the program. Also as a volunteer you will be working and living with volunteers or locals from different cultures, background and ages, so it is expected that you show respect to your colleagues at all times.

Volunteers are expected to communicate to Project Leaders any needs that they might have. We also expect you to follow the local laws. If it is found that you have broken local laws you will be required to leave the program immediately.

Will I have free time?

Volunteers have 2 days off per week, usually on the weekend. Some weekend work will take place from time to time and in this case you will have days free during the week. You may use this time to sight-see locally.

Moehau Environment Group activities are situated in a remote wilderness area of New Zealand. It is one hour return drive to Colville (General Store & Cafe), 2 hours return to Coromandel Town (2 general stores, 2 pubs, 3 cafes and restaurants, museum, souvenir/art shops, tourist attractions) and 4 hours return to Thames (supermarket, movies, and restaurants – fast-food options, museum) or Whitianga (supermarket, restaurants, movies & Thermal hot pools).

There are many opportunities for outdoor activities in the Moehau area: beach and bush walking, horse trekking, fishing, shell fish gathering, swimming, kayaking, bird watching, star-gazing and kiwi listening at night.



A typical Coromandel vista: Overlooking the white sands of Waikawau Bay

Your home-stay hosts are not responsible for entertaining you during your time-off. All transportation during your free time will be at your own expense. There are some local tour operators which can collect you for days trips (Kahaia Tours in Colville, Go-Girls, Coromandel Adventure Tours? and Coromandel Discovery).

Will I be working alone or as part of a team?

As a volunteer you may be required to work alone, or as part of a pair or team. The other volunteers you may work with might include travelers, students, or locals who

have lived in the area for years. It is common for us to have only one or two volunteers staying at any one time.

Who are Moehau Environment Groups Project Leaders?

All of Moehau Environment Group's projects are led by a Project Leader. Our Project Leaders are a great source of knowledge and interest in the environment. They are enthusiastic and expert in the practical conservation projects we operate. Above all, they want you to enjoy your experience as you help the New Zealand environment.

All Project leaders are experienced in back country navigation and safety. Program activities will have volunteers working with one or all of the leaders in any given week depending on weather, individuals abilities, fitness levels and of course what needs to be done.



Waikawau Wetland project leader Wayne Todd inspects a rat trap

Where will I be based?

Moehau Environment Group is based north of Colville township, on the eastern side of the Coromandel Peninsula. Volunteers staying over longer periods will likely be based at either Waikawau Bay or Port Charles.



How do I get to the project?

If you have your own transport, a map with detailed instructions will be supplied by our Coordinator, once accommodation has been finalized.

For volunteers without a vehicle, it is your responsibility to get yourself to Coromandel township. There is a regular bus service to Coromandel Town where you will be met by a Moehau Environment Group member. There is a one-off fee of \$200 to cover transport from Coromandel town.

Transport Suggestions into Coromandel Township:

There are a few transport options for getting to your rendezvous with Moehau Environment Group members at Coromandel Township. How you choose to get there will depend on your travel plans, timeframe and finances. Below are some of the most popular options. Note that some options will require prior booking.

Transport Suggestion 1: By Bus

Go-Kiwi Shuttle (Requires Prior Booking)

The 'Go Kiwi Shuttle' departs daily from Auckland International Airport. The Go Kiwi Shuttle will take you to the Thames Information Centre, (where you can catch the Intercity bus to Coromandel Town), or direct to Coromandel Town.

www.go-kiwi.co.nz Bookings are Essential

Phone Toll Free (from in New Zealand): 0800 446549

Email info@go-kiwi.co.nz Fax 07 866 0337 - Office 07 866 0336

Intercity Bus from downtown central Auckland to Coromandel Township

Bus departs early from the Sky Tower bus depot (Central Auckland) arriving at Thames for the connecting bus to Coromandel town Information Centre.

For bookings see: www.intercitycoach.co.nz

Transport Suggestion 2: '360 Discovery' Ferry from Auckland to Coromandel Township

Departs Pier 3 Auckland: Trips vary seasonally. The trip takes 2 hours, stopping en route at Waiheke Island. There is a free shuttle pick up service which transports you to and from the ferry landing into Coromandel Township. www.360discovery.co.nz

All transport bookings can be made through the Coromandel Information Centre on (+647) 866 8598 or email coroinfo@ihug.co.nz.

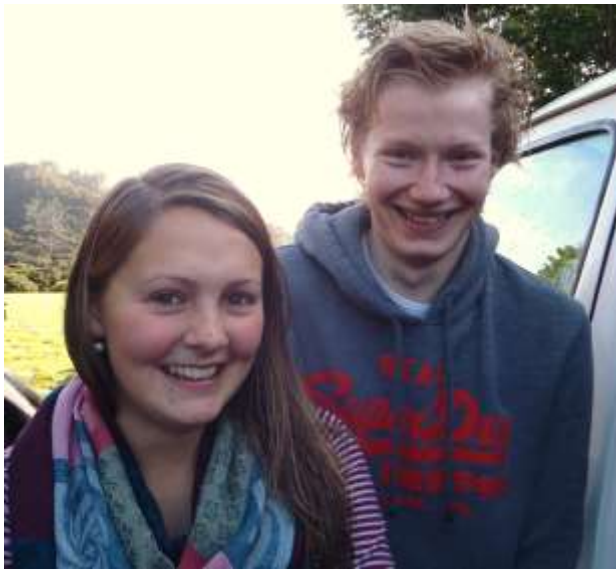
Moehau Environment Group members will provide transport in private vehicles to and from the various projects.

What about food?

For projects which do not include an overnight stay, simply bring your lunch and water bottle with you.

For volunteers being hosted by Moehau Environment Group, all meals and accommodation are provided at a cost of \$300 (including GST) per week.

Three meals a day will be provided. Volunteers will be expected to make their own lunches each day. Volunteers are expected to help with the cooking, cleaning and washing up. Don't worry if you're not a great cook as everyone can do something to help, even if it's just chopping vegetables.



Two international volunteers helping with our Port Charles Rat Attack project

Special dietary needs (like vegetarian or food allergies) will need to be discussed prior to arrival.

What sort of accommodation can I expect?

Comfortable basic accommodation is provided. The exact location will depend on project activities and the number of volunteers at any one time. Eco-friendly accommodation is one of the options (this means solar power, composting toilets, and rain water). We will ask you to adjust your water and power consumption.

If we have groups of volunteers then independent communal accommodation may be arranged. For individuals or pairs a billet/home stay will be provided.

Bedding - sheets and blankets will be supplied by the home stays / billets. However, a sleeping bag and towel should be brought as there may be the opportunity to overnight in a bush hut or tent.

Your living space and workplace with us is smoke-free!

What do I need to wear?

While working you should wear quick-dry, breathable clothing that you don't mind getting dirty (t-shirts, trousers, shorts, jersey). It is important to also have good sturdy hiking boots and socks. A waterproof raincoat with a hood is vital to have with you.

What do I need to bring?

You will need to bring the following:

Essentials:

- Warm clothing
- Warm hat (e.g. wool or fleece)
- Warm gloves
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight/torch (preferably head lamp) with spare batteries
- Day pack and/or hip bag
- Water bottle (at least 1litre)
- Waterproof jacket or raincoat with hood (NOTE: It is important that the coat that you bring has a hood and is water proof (not simply water resistant). A good way to test this is to see if you stay dry when wearing it in the shower: due to the nature of the work, your coat may also get dirty.
- Waterproof pants
- Tramping/hiking shoes/boots with ankle protection (Note: This footwear should be packed at the top of your luggage so it is easily accessible. NZ customs officials may ask to inspect hiking boots/shoes at the airport). Boot Wax if leather shoes.
- Sleeping bag
- Bed roll / camping mat
- Personal toiletries (especially for the females!)
- Insect repellent
- First Aid kit
- High-factor sunscreen (e.g. SPF 30+)

Strongly Recommended:

- Duplicate copies of papers (passport, flight tickets, insurance etc.)
- Thermal underwear: leggings & shirt (e.g. polypropylene)
- Sand shoes/sneakers (suitable for the boat)
- Warm socks or slippers for around the house
- Pills against car sickness (transport on our windy roads)



Volunteers help Lettecia (the MEG Chairperson) listen for Kiwi

Suggested, if useful to you:

- Books to read
- Pocket knife
- Sandals
- Socket/plug adaptor (note: NZ uses 240v not 110v as in the US)
- Travel clock/ alarm
- Camera
- Gaiters
- Wetsuit
- Goggles & Snorkel
- Travel Journal
- Antihistamine for allergies and relief for bites
- Lip balm
- Togs (bathing costume) & towel
- Calamine lotion or aloe vera (for sunburn and bites)

How much does it cost?

For volunteers being hosted by Moehau Environment Group, all meals and accommodation are provided at a cost of \$300 (including GST) per week. There is an additional one-off fee of \$200 to cover transport from Coromandel town. It is expected that you will pay your entire program fee prior to arrival.

Moehau Environment Group is a volunteer organization, and this fee helps cover expenses while you are on the program. Every effort has been made to keep costs low.

How can I stay in touch with family and friends during my stay?

Due to the remote location of the projects, cell phone coverage might not be available at all times. You may be able to use your hosts private landlines but expect to supply your own funds to use it (Prepaid cards with great rates – like the “Kia Ora” card - can be bought from dairys or supermarkets, but must be purchased before arriving at the project). Restricted internet access may also be available with your own computer via Wifi. The closest public internet access is in Coromandel Town.

It's easy to get involved simply:

- Visit www.meg.org.nz
- Contact us on 07 866 5337 or email: info@meg.org.nz