

Collingwood Area School joins mussel restoration field team in Golden Bay-Mohua.

Four students and one teacher, Pip Brake, from Collingwood Area School in Golden Bay-Mohua recently joined the University of Auckland mussel restoration field team to help monitor intertidal mussels.

These mussels were deployed by Clearwater Mussels in July 2024 as part of our ongoing work to understand and test methods for shellfish restoration in Golden Bay-Mohua, with its high wave action and dynamic seabed. Two intertidal sites at Onekaka were seeded with mussels and have been monitored over the past year to track their survival and establishment.

With the help of the Collingwood Area School students, the team found clear patterns. Some plots showed strong mussel establishment, while others had dislodgement and burial issues following the major storm events in February this year.

The plots that remained after one year had a few things in common, they had low levels of juvenile mussel recruitment to the rocks from the onset of the experiment, and they had a high density of surrounding rocks.

These results are encouraging and highlight specific environmental conditions that can help support restored mussel survival and establishment. This knowledge will help guide future restoration work in Golden Bay-Mohua and other areas with higher hydrodynamic forces.

Partnering with the Collingwood Area School was a great opportunity for the students to gain hands-on experience in marine restoration science, and to act as kaitiaki for their community.

Please feel free to get in touch with any questions or if you'd like to get involved;

Emilee Benjamin: emilee.benjamin@auckland.ac.nz;

Ashtyn Smith: ashtynjane@gmail.com

