

CONNECT TO PROTECT

Traveling to meet with communities across the nation, helping them raise awareness, educate and advocate for Bittern.

In 2024 we delivered 105 community events, workshops, hui, school visits and wetland walk-&-talks across 12 regions in New Zealand.

Thank you to all of the communities and donors who helped make this possible!

This year we will continue to help communities raise awareness for Bittern and place emphasis on training educators to deliver our 'Let's learn about Bittern!' children's program in schools and at events.



Protecting and restoring natural wetland habitats so Bittern can thrive and not just survive.

In 2024 we socialised and tested 'the features of an intact Bittern habitat' with community groups for their feedback to continue to grow our collective knowledge.

This information is now available in an assessment guide and score sheet that you can use to assess your wetlands with Bittern in mind and prioritise what action you are going to take.

Our on-land series helps to target steps that we can take in a rural landscape to help Bittern. With guides and simple steps to making drains, waterways, ponds, pools and wetlands bittern friendly!

These guides are found on our website under programs.

NEWSLETTER



PROGRAM UPDATES WHERE THE FUTURE SITS

Monitoring female nesting behaviour & influencing nest success.

This is our 4th program which will be piloted this year at strategic locations around New Zealand.

'Where the future sits' focusses on honing our communities observation skills to record female Bittern behaviour, so we have a record of where females are present, the probability of them having a nest as well as signs of nest success.

This is non-invasive monitoring involving watching from a vantage point over the wetland and ensuring Bittern are not disturbed.

The second part of this program is to provide nesting females with as much support as possible.

Support will vary from site to site and will include aspects like:

- fine tuning your predator control,
- monitoring and controlling pest invasions and disturbances
- ensuring fish or a source of food is abundant and as close to the nest as possible.

We have sent the program out to be reviewed by experts in Bittern Conservation to give us the best possible start!

Email us if you would like to be kept up to date.

email:

lovebittern@gmail.com

website:

www.lovebittern.com

THE GREAT MATUKU-HUREPO MUSTER!

Nationwide synchronised counts of male bittern booming.

It's time to get ready to join the Muster - we're counting on you to help record male Bittern booming at a wetland near you in our second nationwide synchronised count.

This years Muster dates are on or near

5,6,7 Sep | 3,4,5 Oct, | 7,8,9 Nov 2025.

Groups can join us for 1, 2, or 3 nights for 1,2 or 3 months.

We are asking groups to get settled at their listening sites before sunset and to listen for 60-90minutes after sunset. This will help to compensate for the longer twilights in the South Island.

Individuals are encouraged to join a group and each group will have a coordinator looking after their team and project area.

Please register your group on our website or by email to lovebittern@gmail.com - let us know if you need any help!



A male Australasian Bittern.
Image credit: Oscar Thomas Photography

Last year was the first ever nationwide synchronised count!. It was a huge success we had 512 people listen at 462 stations and count 223 individual male bittern booming!

We think we need to double our efforts in wetlands across Aotearoa and need more boots on the ground to help!

PREDATOR CONTROL

Best practice is to draw predators away and not into your wetland.

You can do this by setting up a buffer zone with your first trapline well away from the the wetlands edge and on any natural lines from that to your wetland to help stop predators before they arrive at the wetland.

A trapline around your wetland is then used as your last line of defense and not your first.

DONT PERPETUATE TRACKS INTO YOUR WETLAND

Your tracks create an easy path for predators to follow. During a recent discussion with a thermal camera supplier they commented that for every one pest caught in a trap they see many more walk right on by.

Another tip being put into play by one of our community groups came from Te Korowai o Waiheke project in a Predator Free article (google waiheke last stoat standing). They are trialing using interceptor fences to funnel pests away from the wetland and into their traps!



An interceptor fence in action.
Image credit: TKOW / Predator Free NZ

ACCESS TO FOOD

Create gradual sloped sides into the water so bittern can find the ideal depth to feed.

Bittern need clear, shallow water to be able to stalk or wait and stab their prey. Steep sided banks into deep water can limit their access to hunt.

Creating ramps, even in it is in small sections, into the water is an easy fix to help bittern to access their food as water levels fluctuate.

NEWSLETTER



TIPS & REPORTS RECORDING BITTERN

Our 'Connect to Protect' program promotes recording Bittern when you see or hear them, at any time of the year.

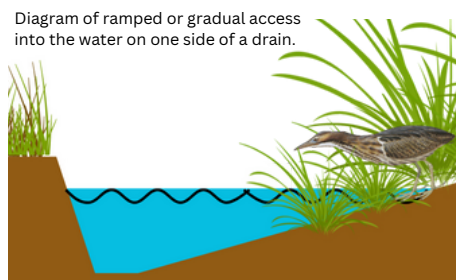
Each year we combine observation records from eBird, iNaturalist, and The Love Bittern website with data in The Conservation Hub app.



This year the records have increased by more than 50% when compared with the same period in 23-24.

This information is used to help us focus our protection for Bittern and habitat restoration.

Diagram of ramped or gradual access into the water on one side of a drain.



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FOOD ABUNDANCE

Get to know what fish are available for Bittern to feed on in your wetland complex and ensure that those species have what they need to be abundant.

Once you have established what food species (fish, eels, frogs) there are for Bittern, check you have enough food and habitat to support them. Make sure that their breeding habitat is connected to your wetland so you have a continual supply of food.

Be strategic in the removal of pest or non-native food species and make sure there is another more desirable species there that Bittern can feed on.



A mature Australasian Bittern with an eel.
Image credit: Mitch De Beer

One community group we visited this year showed us two small streams not far from each other which joined a lake edge. Both streams had all the right attributes clear, shallow water and an abundance of fish... however one had native galaxiid and the other trout. The only difference was that at the mouth of the stream, on the lakes edge one had typha orientalis (raupo or bulrush) and the other didnt. An advisor working with the group commented that the raupo would be stopping the trout from entering the stream where the galaxiidae were because it created a condition where there was lower dissolved oxygen in the water which wasnt favourable for trout.

The Love Bittern Project galvanises community-led action on the ground to help save Australasian bittern | Matuku-hūrepo in their wetland homes across New Zealand.

Thank you for your support!