Wildlands

*Wildlands Auckland News*

**Welcome to the April 2026 edition of Wildlands Auckland news.**

**Our Auckland team is highly experienced and able to provide cost-effective and innovative ecological solutions for your projects.**

*As the days are getting shorter, the fauna field season is drawing to a close - but that doesn't mean we'll be slowing down! Autumn is the perfect time to start planning your next project.*

**Te Whau Pathway ready to roll**

The opening of the Te Whau Pathway from Roberts Field to State Highway 16 marks a significant milestone in Auckland's green infrastructure, creating a vital connection for communities, cyclists, and nature lovers. This transformative project enhances access to the Whau River while celebrating the area's ecological and cultural values. Wildlands is immensely proud to have contributed to both the consenting and construction phases, supporting the project from vision to reality. Our team's expertise helped ensure environmental integrity was upheld throughout, resulting in a pathway that balances accessibility with conservation. It stands as a testament to collaborative effort and a shared commitment to sustainable, community-focused development. So go on, jump on your bike or put on your walking shoes and check it out!

Sarah Budd (Auckland Regional Manager) and Sian Gray (Restoration Contract Supervisor) at the opening of Te Whau Pathway.

**Residential development in the Peacocke Structure Plan zone (PC5)**

Wildlands has undertaken numerous bat surveys around the Hamilton area, including for high-density residential developments within the Peacocke Structure Plan zone (PC5). PC5 and other areas around South Hamilton are known to support a high-density long-tailed bat population. Part of the concept design for PC5 has therefore included creating future bat corridors by protecting gullies, establishing flyways, and connecting bat habitats across South Hamilton's ever-growing urban environment. Wildlands has prepared ecological assessments, management plans, planting plans, and Biodiversity Compensation Models for several projects, and has also collaborated with planners, engineers, and landscape architects to deliver focused results in line with PC5 requirements. Our work on these projects has also included surveying aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and conducting targeted surveys of other fauna (fish, birds, and lizards).

A long-tailed bat being handled by one of our highly trained bat specialists.

**When to engage an ecologist**

Engaging an ecologist at the start of any project helps identify environmental constraints early, which can reduce delays, redesign costs, and consenting risks. Early input ensures potential impacts on native species, habitats, and waterways are understood and appropriately managed from the outset. This proactive approach supports compliance with legislation, national standards, and policy statement, and helps streamline the consenting process. It also enables better project design, integrating ecological values rather than retrofitting solutions later. Ultimately, involving an ecologist early leads to more efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible outcomes, benefiting both the project and Aotearoa's unique biodiversity.

Our ecologists in action monitoring a rural wetland.

**Forest and wetland monitoring**

We have just completed another season of forest and wetland monitoring for Auckland Council. We have been involved in this important ecosystem monitoring project for over 14 years, and our highly skilled and passionate ecologists relish the opportunity to work in some of Auckland's most stunning forest and wetland ecosystems. The work involves navigating to and locating permanently marked vegetation plots, identifying, measuring and counting plants, undertaking bird counts and call playback surveys, and more. It's challenging but enjoyable work that our team looks forward to every year.

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REGIONAL OFFICES LOCATED IN:
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# Wildlands

## Wildlands Auckland Staff

### Our Services

Freshwater, terrestrial and marine ecological surveys and assessments
Wetland delineation and assessment
Assessments of ecological effects and solutions for large and small scale projects
Ecological restoration and implementation plans.
Identification of mitigation options.
Geospatial representation and analysis.
Plant, bird, lizard, bat, and terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates surveys, assessment, monitoring and salvage.
Pest animal surveys, and weed impact assessments and management plans.
UAV surveys for quality ecological data.
Threatened plant and fauna management.

### Nick Goldwater – Senior Principal Ecologist

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Nick is an experienced ecologist who has been with Wildlands for over 18 years. Nick is a qualified drone pilot and works across a broad range of areas within terrestrial and aquatic ecology. He has extensive experience carrying out ecological impact assessments and developing effects management packages for large-scale projects, including motorways, windfarms, and quarries. He is experienced in the development of Biodiversity Offset Accounting Models (BOAMs) to ensure effects can be managed to achieve a 'no-net-loss' of ecological values. Nick's range of expertise extends to fauna surveys (fish, lizards, birds), wetland ecology, stream ecological valuations, and vegetation monitoring.

### Sarah Budd – Principal Ecologist, Auckland Regional Manager

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Sarah has worked as an ecological consultant on a diverse range of projects for over 14 years, including undertaking Ecological Impact Assessments for a range of developments such as public pathways, tourist attractions, wastewater treatment plants, quarries, stop bank upgrades, subdivisions, and dwellings, and has experience with ecological monitoring and restoration. Sarah oversees and coordinates the projects undertaken by the Auckland office and is dedicated to ensuring we continue to provide excellent ecological advice to our clients, on time, and on budget.

### Brent Henry – Associate Principal Ecologist, Bat Specialist

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Brent is Wildlands' bat expert and resident Texan. He has managed and led several bat surveys throughout New Zealand, during which he has applied methods and techniques such as ABM deployment and analysis, placement of harp traps (free standing and at roost entrances), handling, banding, radio tracking to locate roost trees, and emergence counts. Brent is a Department of Conservation-certified bat ecologist and is certified for 'High-risk activities – roost felling' and Bat handling competencies. Recently he has provided advice regarding potential effects on bats for a range of large renewable energy projects.

### Blair Balsom – Senior Herpetologist

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Blair has a wealth of experience in herpetofauna survey, salvage, and management. Blair leads the Auckland based herpetology team and has oversight of all lizard salvage work throughout the North Island. This experience includes numerous surveys, salvage, and translocation operations throughout Auckland (including islands in the Hauraki Gulf), Northland, Waikato, Canterbury, and Otago. Blair has led the survey, identification, and translocation of hundreds of indigenous lizards, including copper skink, ornate skink, moko skink, Pacific gecko, elegant gecko, and forest gecko within the Auckland region.

### Nick Ranger – Principal Restoration Ecologist, COO

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Nick has more than 25 years experience in ecological consultancy. His key areas of expertise are project management and client liaison; ecological management and preparation restoration plans; indigenous planting and revegetation, pest plant and pest animal management, and ensuring practical solutions. Nick has a key role in peer reviewing management plans for Wildlands and external clients to ensure they are both ecologically appropriate and practical to implement. Nick led the establishment of the company's Toitū Enviromark diamond certified Environmental Management System.