

Mussel Restoration Project for the Marlborough Sounds – A year in review 2021

Wow - 2021 has been a year full of surprises, but with extensive teamwork the mussel restoration project has had a very successful second full year. Here are some highlights!

January: 20 tonnes of mussels were restored in January across ~ 400 m², testing the benefits of utilizing recycled industry mussel shell put on the seafloor to aid in mussel restoration.



March: The project was on international news! Here is the link if you're interested in watching it: https://youtu.be/ncNqCctRa_o

We undertook spat sampling to look for recruitment around our mussel beds and onto natural surfaces in the Sounds, finding some unique patterns of spat settlement.



April: The restoration project won the marine category award at the Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards.



May: The MFA took students to snorkel the mussel beds and teach them about restoration.



June: 5 tonnes of mussels were restored in June across $\sim 75 \text{ m}^2$, split between the subtidal and the intertidal for our first effort restoring mussels in shallow waters of the Sounds.



July: 30 tonnes of mussels were deployed in July across $\sim 500 \text{ m}^2$, testing the use of subadult mussels for restoration and the ideal density of intertidal subadults.



October: Finished a comprehensive biodiversity assessment on our initial restored mussel plots, here are some of the findings.



Blue Cod
4 x more on
mussel beds



TripleFins
66 x more on
mussel beds



Sea cucumbers
23 x more on
mussel beds



Macroalgae
2 x more on
mussel beds

As always, if you have any questions or comments on this project, please feel free to reach out to Emilee Benjamin via email at egol669@aucklanduni.ac.nz or Trevyn Toone at ttool12@aucklanduni.ac.nz.