

ROTOROA

An Island of Restoration

ROTOROA ISLAND TRUST VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

About our programme

The Rotoroa Island Trust has an established volunteer programme where people can undertake a range of work to assist our island managers and contribute to the running of the island. Tasks include biosecurity (weed and animal pest management), track, road, and grounds maintenance, and visitor experience. Our volunteers are highly valued and are an essential part of our island team.

We provide individual volunteer opportunities year-round and encourage people to become regular volunteers, committing to at least one day a month. This allows you to build a good understanding of the tasks you undertake, grow your knowledge of the island, and get to know our regular volunteer team.

We also offer opportunities for groups (including corporates), as we have tasks such as track clearing, grounds maintenance, and beach clean-ups that are best suited to teams. These provide a real sense of collective achievement at the end of the day. Since we have only two permanent staff on the island and are very busy over summer, group opportunities are limited to between 1 March and 30 September.

If you would like to be involved, please see the detailed role descriptions below and decide which one (or more) you'd like to participate in. Thanks to Explore Group, ferry fares to and from Rotoroa are covered if you become a regular volunteer. Explore Group also provides a 50% discount for eligible volunteer groups.

How does the process work?

If your application is accepted, we will invite you to visit the island to assess whether the work suits your interests and capabilities. Your first visit will coincide with a regular volunteer shift, allowing you to be assessed for skills and interest while experiencing how our programme works. If we collectively agree to proceed, we ask for a regular commitment, as we invest time and resources into our volunteers.

On your next visit, you will be formally inducted into the island's operations, including essential competencies such as health and safety, working alone or in a group, driving on the island, and the specific tasks you will undertake.

The Trust covers accommodation for volunteers staying one night or more (you supply your own food and sleeping bag and must leave the accommodation tidy and clean). Ideally, volunteers stay for a weekend or a few consecutive days (subject to availability), but day trips are also welcome. However, as ferry fares are covered and we invest in our programme, we ask volunteers to commit to a minimum number of hours per visit:

- Weekdays: **2.5 hours**
- Weekends: **5 hours**, including a half-hour lunch break

This aligns with ferry arrival and departure times and ensures a meaningful experience for everyone.

For roles involving the handling of money or sensitive tasks, we may conduct a police check. You will need to complete an authorization form and will receive a copy of the results.

Training and Safety

Full training is provided to ensure you work safely and efficiently. You will generally work alongside another person until both you and the Trust are confident in your ability to work independently.

A strong commitment to health and safety is essential for anyone working on the island. This protects our people, the island, and the Trust while ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience. Volunteers must be physically fit and able to work safely alone or in a group.

You will need to book volunteer days in advance so we can plan accordingly. Upon arrival, you must meet the Duty Ranger and sign into our safety tailgate sheet. This ensures the Duty Ranger knows your location on the island and allows us to communicate any safety risks.

Rotoroa is an alcohol- and drug-free workplace. If staying overnight, moderate alcohol consumption is permitted. As Rotoroa is owned by the Salvation Army and was previously an alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility, we ask that all visitors respect this heritage.

Role Descriptions

Track and Road Maintenance

Rotoroa has a network of tracks and roads used for walking and maintenance vehicle access. This role involves maintaining and improving existing tracks and roads and occasionally developing new walking tracks. Some minor construction work may be required, and volunteers may operate vehicles and equipment as needed. Full training is provided.

Biosecurity / Rat Pack Rotoroa

Rotoroa is "predator-free," requiring constant vigilance. Volunteers help maintain a network of traps and monitoring stations on a regular schedule. We also run a weed control programme targeting invasive species, including:

- Pampas grass
- Wilding exotic tree species (e.g., pines, phoenix palm, wattle)
- Moth plant
- Boneseed
- Woolly nightshade

Training includes pest identification, plant species recognition, and the safe use of pesticides and herbicides.

Visitor Experience

Rotoroa welcomes public visitors year-round, offering panoramic views, great swimming beaches, and native wildlife. Visitors arrive via ferry or private boat, with ferry services operating daily during summer.

Volunteers assist our Island Rangers with:

- Maintaining and servicing visitor facilities
- Greeting ferry and private boat visitors
- Delivering biosecurity and conservation messages
- Assisting with public events
- Running the kiosk (selling soft drinks, ice creams, T-shirts, books, etc.)
- Leading guided walks

This role is most in demand between October and March.

Guided Walk Guides

We offer guided walks along a preset route with a written guide to help volunteers provide visitors with an overview of the island's history and management. Each walk requires a minimum of four and a maximum of 15 participants per guide.

Guides should have experience or a strong interest in conservation, good communication skills, and the ability to manage groups safely on walks.

Grounds Maintenance / Garden Guardians

Maintaining Rotoroa's landscape is a significant task. The island includes large open grass areas for visitors and wildlife such as takahē, weka, and kiwi. Additionally, 50 hectares have been planted to expand coastal forest.

Tasks include:

- Mowing
- Pruning trees and mulching pōhutukawa groves
- Maintaining and weeding garden areas around houses and buildings

Wayfinding

To ensure visitors can navigate the island safely, we maintain a network of signs. Volunteers help by:

- Cleaning signage
- Clearing vegetation to keep signs visible
- Ensuring signs are securely placed

Other Work

We appreciate flexibility, as occasional tasks arise that fall outside the listed roles. Our volunteers are often the first people we turn to for extra hands when needed.