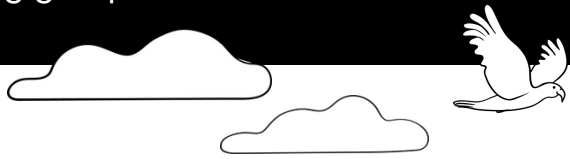


How to engage volunteers

For community trapping groups



1 Have a plan

People are more likely to be interested in joining and staying with a well-organised project with clear goals.

- A strategic plan doesn't need to be long. Define the wildlife you want to protect in your area, the main target predator species, and any successes so far, such as increased bird life.
- An operational plan could include how you plan to distribute traps and where, health and safety information and basic trapping instructions.

2 Find volunteers – Go where people are

Show up in places where potential volunteers are active, either in person or online. Think about audiences you're not reaching yet. If most of your current volunteers are retired, look at ways to attract younger people. Talk about your group, share trapping tips and gather sign-up contact details. Ideas include:

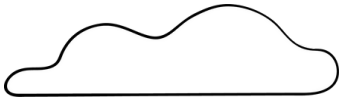
- Groups and activities, eg. tramping/MTB clubs, farming groups, markets
- Local open days and family days, eg. sustainability hubs and school fairs
- Potential collaborators, eg. Menz Sheds, retirement homes, student armies
- Online volunteer boards, eg. Do Good Jobs and SEEK
- Local leaflet drops
- Team up with local businesses to organise sponsored trap giveaways, corporate volunteer days, pub quizzes, etc.
- Conservation Volunteers
- Young Professionals and Young Farmers groups
- Universities, clubs, cafes, breweries and sports clubs

3 Find people's why

People's motivations for joining a group might be very different to yours. Keep this in mind when you're communicating with potential volunteers. Motivations can also change over time – for example, someone might start trapping because they have rats in their compost and then stay in a group because they make friends.

Different motivations may include:

- Wanting to get rid of pests in my backyard, near my compost bin, around my fruit trees
- Spending time outside, general wellbeing, walking the dog, exercise
- Keen to do something social, feel part of the community
- Seeing the change, eg. increased wildlife locally, and keen to be part of something bigger
- Attachment to a particular park, reserve or patch of land



4 Make joining easy

Think about ways to make the experience of joining your group as smooth and friendly as possible.

- Make your group easy to find:
 - Add your group to trap.nz, Facebook and the national map on Predator Free NZ Trust's website
 - Ask local sustainability hubs, other conservation groups, regional councils, etc, to link to your group's Facebook or website
- Use sign-up forms to gather contact details online or at events, and respond quickly
- Use a friendly, positive tone for communications and keep them short and simple
- Have clear, short 'get started' information on your Facebook group, website or in emails to get people started with trapping and answer some of the most common questions
 - Be prepared to be the champion for a while and answer questions
 - Follow up after someone joins and encourage them to keep going
- Consider onboarding a few new volunteers together or a buddy system — this is more efficient and builds stronger connections

5 Keep people engaged

Focus on positives and results. Talk about biodiversity gains, not just the number of catches. People will keep going if it feels like all the hard work is making a difference.

- Social connection is a reason for many people to join and stay involved:
 - Build networking time into sessions, eg. working bees, trap building, BBQs, family days
 - Recruit through current volunteers — people are more likely to stay if their friends do
- Celebrate and give people an opportunity to share achievements, eg. national volunteering week, end-of-season event, trapper of the month awards (can be anything, not just catches) with small prizes sponsored by local businesses
- Try to create a feeling of ownership for everyone involved — eg. having a Facebook group (rather than a page) means all members can post and answer questions
- Not everyone is on Facebook, so try to reach people in other ways — eg. a regular newsletter, sharing success with local media, school visits
- Remove barriers for volunteers, eg. to make catch recording easier, provide trap.nz training or offer to record peoples' catches for them via a form or spreadsheet
- Offer your volunteers specialist talks, practical skills workshops, share tips and videos, etc
- Share the load and play to people's strengths. Not everyone wants to do trapping or planting, so offer other tasks, eg. trap building, helping with social media or funding applications, leaflet drops, baking treats and running events.

