

Fish Passage Remediation Project

▶ What is the Fish Passage Remediation Project?

The project aims to retrofit fish ladders, baffles, spat rope and ramps to culverts, to remove in-stream barriers to restore fish passage and increase the sustainability of indigenous fish populations.

Barriers to fish passage are identified through surveys, with the majority of remediation being done within the roading network.



▶ Mussel rope can be installed to help climbing species make their way up into and on through culverts. (Photo: ATS Environmental)

The project has a target of restoring fish passage by remediating 250 barriers in streams and tributaries across the region by mid-2025.

Identifying the right spots for fish passages, and prioritising installation points, including linking passages, are important initial aspects of the work.

Native fish species supported through the work include kanakana, ōkopu, īnanga, common bully, redfin bully, bluegill bully, torrentfish, banded kokopu, kōaro, and longfin eel and shortfin eel.

Solutions will be tailored to each individual barrier taking into account the native species, stream connections, ecosystem health, and impacts of exotic species.

▶ How is the project funded?

Environment Southland was awarded \$385,000 from the Government's Jobs for Nature - Mahi mō te Taiao programme in 2020 to identify, prioritise and remediate fish barriers in Southland's rivers and streams. On top of Government funding, Environment Southland will contribute \$115,000 from existing biodiversity budgets over five years to the project.

▶ Who is involved?

Environment Southland is working with the Southland District Council to understand where its structures are. Private landowners are also encouraged to participate and get their crossings surveyed to determine whether they are barriers or not.

Fish passage is mandatory under the new freshwater regulations. The council is working closely with Te Ao Marama Incorporated to align both iwi and council priority areas, and is also working closely with landowners and catchment groups within the programme.

▶ How can I help?

Private landowners are encouraged to participate and get their crossings surveyed to determine whether they are barriers or not. To get your crossings surveyed or if you have any questions go to www.es.govt.nz/jobs-for-nature/fish-passage-project