

5.2 Heritage Conservation

5.2.1 Introduction and Overview

The protection and enhancement of Canterbury's natural and historic resources requires a recognition of their values and the active involvement of landholders. Management activities on the land have a broad range of influences and effects. These are categorised under the following headings:

- Landscape
- Land Ecosystems
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Marine Ecosystems
- Indigenous Species
- Historic Resources
- Animal Pests and Wild Animals
- Plant Pests and Exotic Plants
- Fire

Factors linking these groups include:

- The need for continuity and connectedness across habitats and through ecosystems. This broader context is best accommodated at the level of landscapes, a level that defines bold patterns of use and change. At such a level it becomes possible to comprehend the influences and effects of a particular management action on the landscape as a whole.
- The need to establish priorities for management action in relation to particular places within the landscape. Where is action best directed to maximise the maintenance of indigenous and historic diversity overall?
- The relationship between natural values and human uses.

Establishing priorities is not an easy task. The Department of Conservation is currently developing systems to better prioritise both ecosystem and historic protection work and their relative priorities. A difficulty is the major gaps in knowledge about the natural resources of Canterbury, which can be addressed by:

- further historic and ecological surveys
- a shift in the emphasis from what there is much of and/or a lot known about, such as beech forests and European historic sites, to what there is little of and little known about, for example, invertebrates, reptiles and Māori sites
- the targeting of weed and pest control to viable habitat areas, to protect and sustain indigenous biodiversity rather than simply maximising the removal of weeds and pests as an end in itself

Threats

Animal and plant pests, and fire are the three biggest threats to land ecosystems, indigenous species and landscape values. Animal pests pose direct threats to plants through grazing and trampling, and to indigenous animals through predation or damage to food supplies. Plant pests smother native ecosystems and can also destroy the food supply and breeding habitat of important indigenous species. Fire is a threat to all plants and animals in terrestrial and some freshwater ecosystems, as well as to historic sites and recreational facilities.

As these are major components of the Department's management they will each be treated separately. However, it must be noted that future development of integrated pest management programmes will see these barriers largely disappear, especially where control is to meet specific indigenous biodiversity priorities.

Survey and Monitoring

Survey and monitoring activities are carried out to meet the Department's management and advocacy requirements. They are covered in 5.5.4 (Survey and Monitoring).