

14 *Indigenous Species*

Explanation

The Department administers a range of legislation which protects indigenous species:

- Conservation Act 1987
- Wildlife Act 1953 (Under this Act there is a general presumption that native animals are absolutely protected throughout New Zealand. However there are some exceptions, which are listed in the schedules to the Act.)
- Wildlife Regulations 1955
- Native Plants Protection Act 1934 (Problems with the definitions mean that native plants are effectively only protected within areas managed for conservation and not on private land.)
- Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989
- Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983
- Whitebait Fishing Regulations 1991
- Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992
- Marine Reserves Act 1971 and Marine Reserves Regulations 1993
- Wild Animal Control Act 1977
- Wildlife (Farming of Unprotected Wildlife) Regulations 1985
- Reserves Act 1977

This legislation provides for the protection of most indigenous species: all bats, frogs, most birds and reptiles and some larger invertebrates, the habitats of freshwater fish and marine mammals. Most invertebrates, plants, and marine species, excluding marine mammals, however, are not protected unless they occur on land or in coastal waters managed by the Department. Elsewhere the Department has only an advocacy responsibility for the protection of indigenous species not protected by the legislation and for the habitats of all indigenous species.

In administering the Conservation Act, the Department is required to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. These principles also apply to the conservation of indigenous species.

The Department's long-term goal for its indigenous species work is to restore the indigenous biodiversity of species in the Conservancy. The first priority for management is therefore protection of ecosystems to prevent population decline. Threatened species whose population size is already small and declining, may need more active management to prevent further decline or extinction. Decisions about which species are to be actively managed are guided by a nationally co-ordinated species ranking system for determining priorities for action. National priorities are based on species distinctiveness, status, threats, vulnerability and human value attached to

them. (Refer “Setting Priorities for the Conservation of New Zealand’s Threatened Plants and Animals, Department of Conservation 1994.) Active management of species can involve habitat protection and management, predator control, captive breeding, species relocations and manipulative techniques such as supplementary feeding.

The Department is developing national recovery plans for priority threatened species which direct management, research effort and resources for them. Approved recovery plans for species in the Conservancy include those for takahe, kiwi, North Island kokako, tuatara and Whitaker’s skink. Draft plans include stitchbird, shoreplover, subantarctic teal, bats, *Muehlenbeckia astonii*.

To achieve the conservation of indigenous species, and ecosystems the Department works with several organisations. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for conservation and management of fish species that are commercially harvested. The NZ Fish and Game Council (in consultation with the Department) is responsible for the management of the sports fishery and game birds, which include some indigenous species. Regional and local authorities are responsible for the sustainable management of the water, air and land habitat of species. Organisations and private individuals contribute by breeding or propagating species or by expanding the knowledge of species, ecology and distribution, as do tangata whenua and those who are owners and managers of the species habitats. The groups interested in indigenous species and their habitats also include public and private research organisations.

14.1 TERRESTRIAL BIRDS, PLANTS, REPTILES AND INVERTEBRATES

Wellington Conservancy

While not a major centre of species endemism, the Conservancy has the distinction of having a North Island assemblage of species with a South Island component, reflecting earlier land links with the South Island at a time when the conservancy area was separated from the main part of the North Island by the Manawatu Strait – a seaway in about the position of the present Manawatu Gorge. Some of the ancestors of species that evolved into montane species in the South Island persist in the Conservancy, as do other species once more widely distributed. Many species are now extinct in the Conservancy, if not elsewhere in New Zealand, and 403 animals and plants in the Conservancy have been identified as threatened [*refer Appendix 1: Priorities for Indigenous Species in Wellington Conservancy*].

Kapiti and Mana Islands are of international significance for the survival of nationally threatened plants and animals. Somes, Ward and Mokopuna Islands are rodent-free islands in Wellington Harbour. They support regionally important populations of birds and reptiles, and Somes Island, in particular, has potential as a habitat for threatened plants and animals.

The conservation of species and habitats in the wild is not of itself sufficient to prevent extinctions and maintain biodiversity. The Conservancy plays a major role in the captive breeding and research of threatened birds at the National Wildlife Centre. Other institutions or breeders within the Conservancy also contribute to the research and captive breeding of threatened animals (bats, birds, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates) and the propagation of threatened plants.

The indigenous species of the Conservancy have been subjected to the same threats as elsewhere in New Zealand and have become extinct or are threatened because of human-created changes in the environment, particularly habitat degradation or destruction by land clearance and development, water diversion and extraction, liberation of pests, pollution, exploitation and recreation. Introduced animals and plants have significantly affected indigenous species and their habitats by predation, browsing or competition, or through modifying habitats. Other threats to indigenous species include hybridisation, disease and environmental fluctuations.

In the next 10 years the Conservancy will focus its active management and research on high priority indigenous species listed in Appendix 1. Active management and monitoring of takahe, North Island kokako, captive populations of Campbell Island teal and shore plover, Whitaker's skink, brown mudfish, and the plants *Olearia hectori* and Cook's scurvy grass are occurring. The species which will undergo active management will change annually as priorities are reviewed, although changes in priorities are unlikely to be rapid. Threatened indigenous species do not increase their population sizes rapidly, nor do the factors which made them threatened reduce dramatically in a short time.

The Conservancy strategy for indigenous species has three main components: setting of priorities for conservation of species and ecosystems, species and habitat research and management, and heightening public awareness and understanding of indigenous species. This will be reflected in management strategies for threatened plants and animals that will be developed within the CMS period.

Management Issues

Public Awareness

Public attention has focused on the more spectacular species and forest habitats. Threatened non-forest ecosystems, invertebrate species and representative (common-place) ecosystems have not received the same amount of public attention, but form an important part of the Conservancy's natural heritage. The challenge for the Department is to improve its understanding of the ecology, distribution and management needs of these lesser-known species and ecosystems, and raise public awareness of them.

Species and Habitat Research and Management

Research, including survey and monitoring, is essential to understand the distribution, status and trends of ecosystems and threatened species so that resources can be targeted. The Department does not anticipate having adequate resources to carry out the necessary surveying and monitoring, so will consider options for maximising and extending Conservancy resources. The Department's current assessment of the priority species and actions for research in the Conservancy are listed in Appendix 1: Priorities for Indigenous Species in Wellington Conservancy.

The Need to Set Priorities

Many endemic species have become extinct and even more have been reduced in number and range to become threatened with extinction. The management of indigenous species to protect New Zealand's biodiversity by ensuring the survival of threatened species, as well as safeguarding other indigenous species, is a big task.

In assessing priorities for conservation of indigenous species, the Conservancy takes into account the national priority system, the requirements and recommendations of any national species recovery plans, and the species' significance and threats in the Conservancy.
[refer Appendix 1]

The rankings in Appendix 1 indicate the period for management action. The aim is to undertake management action on high ranking species which require management action by 1997 and medium-high species by 2005. Management action by the Conservancy can probably only be undertaken for 33.8% of the species listed in Appendix 1 during the period of the CMS. Table 6 summarises the rankings for high and medium/high species from Appendix 1.

Table 6:
Summary of High and Medium-High Priorities for Indigenous Species (from Appendix 1)

	Mammals	Marine Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Fish	Invertebrates	Plants	TOTAL
High Priority	1	1	12	2	3	6	53	78
Medium/High Priority	1	–	21	5	1	4	25	57
Total species in Appendix 1	2	1	95	22	19	61	203	403

In determining species' significance and threat, the Conservancy takes into account the following factors: species status, vulnerability, distinctiveness, ecological importance, threats, human values, and whether the management action undertaken will benefit the habitat or ecosystem.

Highest priority will be accorded those species with the most urgent conservation problems and those habitats which benefit the ecosystem and a range of species. The highest priority is therefore accorded to threatened species and their habitats, particularly islands essential to their survival.

Objectives

- 1 Prevent the extinction of any indigenous species in the Conservancy and restore and maintain as far as possible the full diversity of indigenous species and communities in the Conservancy.
- 2 Maintain viable breeding populations of indigenous species in their natural habitat, and in particular improve the status of threatened species or taxa. Prevent common-place species from becoming threatened.
- 3 Maintain productive captive populations of selected threatened fauna, in accordance with national recovery programmes [refer Section 5.5, p 40].
- 4 Maintain productive captive populations of selected threatened flora, in accordance with an indigenous plant management strategy for the Conservancy.
- 5 Improve the Department's knowledge of the ecology of indigenous species.
- 6 Increase public awareness of the lesser known threatened species, their conservation requirements and opportunities for community involvement in support and management.
- 7 Increase public awareness of the representative species and ecosystems within the Conservancy.

Implementation*Species Management Programmes*

- 1 Management will be directed towards the protection and conservation of indigenous species as viable self-sustaining populations in the wild.
- 2 Areas of particular importance to indigenous species will be identified and suitable management will be advocated. This will include areas not managed by the Department. [*refer Sections 16, p. 161 and 18, p. 173*]
- 3 The protection of all existing values of offshore islands for indigenous species will be advocated. This protection will be the focus for islands managed by the Department.
- 4 Restoration programmes for Kapiti, Mana and Somes Islands will be planned and implemented. [*refer Section 9.2, p 109; 9.3, p 115, 9.4, p 119 and Section 22, p. 195*]
- 5 Priority will be accorded to the intensive management of threatened species in accordance with species recovery plans or conservancy management strategies. Priorities will be assessed annually, taking into account national priorities and conservancy assessments. Resources will be directed to those species with the most urgent conservation problems or projects which benefit ecosystems and several species. The annual assessment of priorities may change the conservancy rankings of species in Appendix 1.
- 6 Management programmes will be monitored to assess their effectiveness. Guidelines will be developed for survey and monitoring, particularly for the lesser known plants and invertebrates.
- 7 A database for bats, birds and reptiles, particularly threatened species, will be maintained and information collated and analysed to provide a basis for assessing priorities for management or survey.
- 8 A database and strategy will be developed for indigenous plants and invertebrates to provide a basis for assessing priorities for management or survey and directing resources to those species with the most urgent problems.
- 9 A field guide for threatened priority plant species will be developed to aid identification and a more accurate assessment of their status in the Conservancy.
- 10 Liaison with local government, other agencies and community groups will be undertaken to aid their involvement in conservation, particularly of plants and invertebrates. The basis for liaison will be the regional strategies.
- 11 Consultation with iwi will be undertaken to facilitate their involvement in management of those species of importance to them.
- 12 Public awareness activities will be undertaken to inform the public about indigenous species and their habitats, and the ecosystems of which they are part, and the species management programmes (both planned and implemented).

Transfers of Indigenous Species

- 13 Transfers will be carried out in accordance with departmental protocols and species recovery or management strategies.
- 14 Transfers may be made to restore or re-establish communities that have become degraded or lost and will be carried out in accordance with approved restoration plans whenever possible.

- 15 The order of multiple species transfers will be arranged as far as possible to ensure that one transfer does not limit the success of other transfers.
- 16 Transfers of species outside their natural geographic range or not known to have previously inhabited the transfer site may be carried out only after a full assessment of the likely consequences of the introduction, and will usually be avoided unless the species is threatened in status.
- 17 Transfer proposals will take into account and facilitate the appropriate tribal tikanga and mana whenua with respect to the species concerned.

Transfers of Other Species

- 18 Environmental impact assessments prepared by any person or organisation seeking to introduce a new species to the conservancy will be assessed.
- 19 Transfers of gamebirds or sportsfish into areas where they are not currently found will be discouraged.

Captive Breeding

- 20 Captive breeding of indigenous fauna will only be undertaken or co-ordinated in accordance with species recovery programmes or management strategies, or restoration plans.
- 21 Propagation of indigenous flora will only be undertaken or co-ordinated in accordance with species recovery programmes, the regional strategy for indigenous plants, or restoration plans.
- 22 Captive breeding programmes at the National Wildlife Centre will give priority to national recovery and research programmes [*refer Section 5.5, p 40*].

Taking Plants and Animals

[*refer Section 14.4, p 151*]

14.2 FRESHWATER FISHERIES

Explanation

Section 6(ab) of the Conservation Act directs the Department to “preserve as far as is practicable all indigenous freshwater fisheries, and protect recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats”.

Areas managed by the Department are only a fraction of the Conservancy’s total indigenous freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats; therefore to fulfil this function the Department needs to advocate and work with regional, city and district councils. Their functions under the Resource Management Act to achieve the sustainable management of natural and physical resources and the integrated management of land and water have the greatest potential to affect freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats [*refer Section 18, p 173*].

The Conservation Act further reinforces the Department’s role in freshwater fisheries management in Part V B. It includes provisions which makes it an offence to disturb or injure the eggs or larvae of any freshwater fish, to take sports fish without a licence; it enables the Minister of Conservation to place restrictions on waters which are spawning grounds of freshwater fish and requires approval from the Minister for transfer or release of live aquatic life.

Section 39(4) establishes an offence for adversely affecting any freshwater fishery, fish spawning ground or food or freshwater fish in any water body.

Regulations under which the Department has a function relating to indigenous freshwater fish are:

- Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 are administered by the Department to ensure the passage of fish. Dams and floodgates can severely restrict movements of migratory fish. The regulations also cover fish licences, fishing, marking fish, control of noxious fish, and indigenous fish management.
- The Whitebait Fishing Regulations 1993 include provisions controlling whitebait fishing equipment and practice. The Department will manage the whitebait fishery on a precautionary basis to protect the intrinsic values of the resource by providing for sustainable harvest.

Fish and Game Councils are established under the Conservation Act to manage, maintain and enhance the sports fish and game resource. The Councils' objectives of maintaining water quality and quantity for fish habitat are often similar to the Department's.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries administers all freshwater commercial fishing under the Fisheries Act, and recreational/traditional harvest of eels under the Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations.

Wellington Conservancy

Twenty four indigenous freshwater fish species are recorded on the MAF Freshwater Fish Data Base as present in the Conservancy. [*refer Appendix 1*] All but two of these are diadromous (that is, they migrate to and from the sea at different stages of their life cycles.)

Nine species penetrate long distances inland, constrained only by physical, chemical or other barriers to migration. The entire river systems, from estuary to the high headwaters of catchments, comprise their habitat.

Other species favour or depend on lowland waterways and rely on more limited reaches of a river system for habitat. The viability of these habitats depends on the quality and quantity of water.

Associated with river and stream systems are wetlands which provide habitat for which other freshwater species have become specialised. Historically these occurred along entire reaches of rivers from estuaries, including their associated salt marshes, to upland swamps.

Priority species for the Conservancy are giant kokopu, short-jawed kokopu and brown mudfish [*refer Appendix 1*].

Management Issues

Habitat

The diadromous habitat of many indigenous freshwater fish underlines the importance of maintaining the life-supporting capacity of entire river systems, including connections with wetlands. The Department will advocate strongly for land and water management practices which preserve and improve indigenous freshwater fish habitats in water bodies in the Conservancy [*refer Section 18, p 173*].

Information

The information base for freshwater fisheries in Wellington is far from comprehensive. Very few records exist in the MAF Freshwater Fish Data Base for areas east of Lake Onoke, and the status of freshwater fisheries of even the relatively well-known rivers of the west coast, such as the Waikanae River, is poorly understood.

The Department will take an active role in improving the information on the freshwater fisheries of the rivers, wetlands and lakes in the Conservancy, and the abundance and distribution of indigenous fish, with a particular focus on those entirely or largely in waters on land administered by the Department.

Exotic Fish

Brown trout and other exotic fish affect indigenous fisheries in rivers and lakes by direct predation and competition for food.

Most major river systems in the Conservancy have brown trout. The Department will liaise with the Wellington Fish and Game Council and local government to ensure the rivers which are trout-free remain so. The NZ Fish and Game Council has a policy of not liberating sports fish in areas where they do not now occur. Applications to introduce exotic fish will be carefully evaluated, as required under the Conservation Act.

Objective

- 1 Preservation, as far as is practicable, of all indigenous freshwater fisheries in the Conservancy.
- 2 Improvement of freshwater and marine habitats of indigenous freshwater fish.
- 3 Improvement of knowledge about the distribution and habitat of indigenous freshwater fish.

Implementation

- 1 Advocate the conservation of indigenous freshwater fisheries under the Resource Management Act. Priority issues for advocacy are: protection of riparian areas, estuaries and whitebait spawning habitat; the need for integrated management of land and waters required for improved water quality and adequate water quantity in waterways; and the need for fish passage.
- 2 Survey waterways in the Conservancy likely to be habitat of indigenous freshwater fish identified as priority species or likely to contain diverse indigenous fish; priority for survey is Wairarapa.
- 3 Survey waterways in the Conservancy to identify artificial barriers to fish passage and seek to improve fish passage for indigenous fish in consultation with regional and district councils, Wellington Fish and Game Council, land owners and others.
- 4 Seek to provide passage for indigenous fish where dams, culverts, roads, bridges, and water diversion works are planned.
- 5 Identify whitebait spawning grounds. The Department will work to protect and enhance these areas and enforce the Whitebait Fishing Regulations.
- 6 In liaison with Wellington Fish and Game Council, nominate river and stream systems which will be kept, as far as practicable, trout-free, recognising the impact predation by trout can have on indigenous freshwater fish species.

- 7 Consider proposals to transfer or release any aquatic life into any location where it does not already exist, and seek an environmental impact assessment.

14.3 MARINE MAMMALS

Explanation

The Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and Regulations direct the Department to protect and manage all marine mammals in New Zealand waters. Whales and dolphins (cetaceans) and seals (pinnipeds) are the major groups protected under the Act. It is illegal to deliberately kill, pursue or harass marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992, all commercial viewing of (and swimming with) marine mammals requires a permit issued by the Department. The collection and distribution of marine mammal bone and teeth is also a responsibility of the Department.

Wellington Conservancy

Marine mammals were common along the Conservancy coast until harvesting in the 19th century substantially reduced their numbers. As a consequence of protection during recent decades, marine mammals, particularly seals, are becoming a feature of the Conservancy's coastal waters.

NZ fur seals haul out regularly at Kapiti Island, Mana Island, Pipinui Point, Cape Terawhiti, Tongue Point, Sinclair Head, Turakirae Head, Palliser Lighthouse, Stone Wall at Cape Palliser, Te Kaukau Point, Kairingaringa Reef; Honeycomb Light and infrequently at Castlepoint. There are colonies of immature animals at Kapiti Island and Honeycomb Light, Turakirae Head, and recently seals established a breeding colony at Cape Palliser. Seal numbers within the Conservancy fluctuate from a summer low of approximately 350 to a winter high of over 2,500. The numbers of seals are expected to increase in the Conservancy, and their distribution around the coastline will widen.

Other species of seal which visit the Conservancy are the leopard seal, southern elephant seal and NZ sea lion. These occasional visitors are usually wandering, non-reproductive animals.

Cetaceans in the Conservancy include sperm whales, pilot whales, orca (killer whales), the rarer pygmy right whale, humpback whales and the southern right whale. The common dolphin is often seen, and the rare Hector's dolphin has been reported in the Wairarapa.

Despite the protected status of marine mammals in New Zealand, they are still threatened by certain human activities or by their own behaviour near sites of human habitation. Discarded plastic strapping, fishing lines and nets are hazardous to seals because of their habit of playing with such things and becoming entangled. Operative fishing gear is known to accidentally entangle and kill seals, whales and dolphins.

Management Issues

Public Awareness

Seals come ashore of their own volition to rest or breed, and attract public attention when they "haulout" near populated areas. Smaller animals are especially vulnerable to mishandling by the public and harassment by dogs.

At least three of the Conservancy's seal colonies – Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve, Cape Palliser and Sinclair Head Scientific Reserve – are readily accessible to and frequently visited by the public.

Seals are generally tolerant of considerate visitors, but they can be easily alarmed and stampeded. This compromises the safety of animals and the public. Too much human disturbance will change animal behaviour. Evidence suggests seal density at Sinclair Head (Wellington's most accessible colony) is decreasing in favour of more isolated colonies nearby, e.g., Tongue Point and Cape Terawhiti.

The Department will seek to educate the public about its role in the protection and management of marine mammals and the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations and in appropriate public behaviour near seals.

Strandings

Mass strandings of whales are rare in the Conservancy, but strandings of single animals are relatively common. The Department will maintain equipment and staff able to respond to any strandings and to work with volunteers. Illegal looting of carcasses, which results in loss of scientific information and cultural material, is of concern to the Department. Liaison with the public will seek to avoid this.

Whale Bone

The Department acknowledges the traditional uses of this material by tangata whenua and that sperm whale teeth and jaw bones are particularly treasured taonga. It will establish a means of storing and allocating such taonga in an equitable manner in a co-operative way with tangata whenua. Where there is no conflict of interest with tangata whenua, the Department will first offer material to the Museum of New Zealand for research. [*refer Section 14.4, p 151*]

Information

To protect marine mammals, the Department must continue to expand its knowledge of their behaviour, ecology and the effects on them of human activities. The Conservancy will continue to work with other departments and research institutions, and will maintain records of population numbers, sightings and dead specimens.

Entanglement in marine debris and fishing gear is of concern. The extent of this problem needs to be identified and the Conservancy will develop a database to record entanglement details.

Tourism

Interest has been expressed by commercial nature tour operators to view and swim with dolphins and seals. Iwi have an interest in activities which affect marine mammals, and the Department will consult with them. It will assess applications in accordance with the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations and ensure tours do not have an adverse effect on the animals. The Cape Palliser breeding colony is of considerable scientific interest, so the Department wants it to remain undisturbed by commercial operations.

Objectives

- 1 Protect marine mammals.
- 2 Increase the Department's understanding of marine mammals' behaviour, ecology and effects on them of human activities.
- 3 Increase the public's understanding of marine mammals.
- 4 Seek a co-operative working relationship with tangata whenua on the distribution for cultural purposes of whale bone and teeth.

Implementation

- 1 Maintain a marine mammal stranding contingency plan, and liaise with and support local authorities and volunteer groups who wish to be involved.
- 2 Train staff and support volunteers to respond effectively to marine mammal stranding and injury.
- 3 Develop and promote a code of appropriate behaviour at seal colonies and haulout sites.
- 4 Monitor seal colonies at regular intervals and record animal numbers.
- 5 Educate the public about marine mammals through public awareness activities, develop published material and summer programmes and advocate for the protection of marine mammals, their habitats and their risk of entanglement.
- 6 Maintain a record of dead marine mammals to assist in increasing scientific knowledge and understanding of the ecology of species, and dispose of remains in accordance with national policy and Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978.
- 7 Establish a system for the distribution of the cultural resources of marine mammals in the Conservancy jointly with tangata whenua.
- 8 Work with research institutes to assist in increasing scientific knowledge of marine mammals.
- 9 Establish a database of marine mammal entanglement, to document the effects of marine debris and certain types of fishing equipment in Conservancy waters.
- 10 Document sightings of marine mammals observed on the coast and pass records to holders of national databases.
- 11 Assess applications to view or swim with marine mammals in accordance with the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992, and consult with the tangata whenua.

14.4 TAKING PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Explanation

The Acts administered by the Department have amongst their objectives the protection and preservation of New Zealand's natural resources. They also provide for the taking of plants and animals, for some purposes, subject to conditions.

The Wildlife Act protects all species not listed in the Schedules to the Act. All native birds, except black-backed gulls are either fully or partially protected, anywhere they occur.

Section 53 of the Wildlife Act provides for the Director-General to authorise the taking of protected species, including catching and killing birds and other creatures. Permits are most often approved for customary uses by tangata whenua, for mounting of species for display in museums and catching or holding dead or live birds for scientific research and educational programmes.

The Conservation Act, section 30, provides for the taking of plants from conservation areas. The Reserves Act provides for the taking of flora or fauna from a reserve for scientific or educational purposes. Outside conservation areas and reserves, a permit from the Department is not needed to collect plant material.

Taking of woody plants for commercial purposes is not permitted. In recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi, provision for Maori customary use, i.e., carving and canoe building, is made. There may also be valid scientific, educational and conservation management reasons for the collection of plants.

The Marine Mammals Act provides for the taking of marine mammals or parts thereof. The Department permits the allocation of bone and teeth for marine mammals. [*refer Section 14.3, p 149*]

**Wellington
Conservancy**

The Department most often processes permits for the taking of plants and animals for Maori customary use, for weaving and carving and medicinal purposes, and to hold and collect plants and animals for scientific or educational purposes.

Management Issues

Maori Customary Use

The Conservancy has not yet developed an understanding of the demand for natural resources for Maori customary use.

At present applications are handled on a case-by-case basis in consultation with tangata whenua of the areas the materials have been requested from. This provides the opportunity for iwi and the conservancy to share information about the resource. Applications are considered on the basis of resource availability and abundance and an assessment of the effects of the take. For native timbers, only dead or windfall material is made available.

The Department will consult and work with tangata whenua to establish the demand for plant material and ensuring that use is sustainable. Indigenous plants for which demand is high also exist on land that is not of high conservation significance, and many are able to be cultivated. Users will be encouraged to take plants from such areas, rather than from land of high conservation significance administered by the Department.

Protocols for the allocation and storage of plant and animal material for customary use are needed to give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi. The Department will be working with iwi to develop mutually agreed protocols. The customary use of materials must be balanced by the Department with the need to protect threatened ecosystems and species and for the level of use to be sustainable. The NZCA is undertaking a national consultation process on Maori customary use and it is expected policy will follow.

Objectives

- 1 Ensure any taking, use and distribution of indigenous fauna and flora is appropriate and in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidelines.
- 2 Develop and implement protocols for the allocation of plant and animal materials in co-operation with tangata whenua.

Implementation

- 1 Process applications for the taking of flora and fauna from land administered by the Department, and for the taking of protected fauna elsewhere, according to the legislation and departmental procedure, taking into account the following factors:
 - Collection is necessary for conservation, scientific purposes or Maori customary use.

- Alternative sites/species with less environmental impact are not available elsewhere.
 - Adverse impacts on species and natural ecosystems are avoided or are minimised.
 - The collection level is sustainable.
- 2 Encourage the public to send dead specimens of indigenous species, particularly frozen dead animals, to the Museum of New Zealand, for inclusion in the national frozen tissue register where appropriate.
 - 3 Discuss the allocation and storage of dead specimens of protected species with museums, and maintain a Conservancy database of institutions holding dead specimens.
 - 4 Assess, in consultation with tangata whenua, the demand for plant and animal material for customary use, and ways to meet that demand, with priority given to sources from areas that are not of high significance for conservation.
 - 5 Develop and implement, in consultation with tangata whenua, protocols for the distribution of plant and animal material for Maori customary use.
 - 6 Maintain stores of resources that are in demand for Maori customary use (e.g., feathers or totara), as they become available, for allocation when needed.
 - 7 Encourage the planting of indigenous plants for customary use on areas not managed by the Department.