

Meeting Paper For West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board

TITLE OF PAPER CONSERVATOR'S REPORT

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SUBJECT: Conservator's Report for the Board for period ending June 2011

DATE: 24 June 2011

SUMMARY:

This report provides information on activities throughout the Conservancy since the 15 April 2011 meeting of the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board.

ACTIVITIES:

Visitor Management

Buller-Kawatiri Area

The Denniston experience development has now been completed and a concessionaire is now running commercial tours. This has allowed staff to refocus on maintenance and inspections at other sites. These included:

All huts on the Heaphy track have been inspected and the Mackay Hut sewage system tanks emptied; planning has begun for the replacement of the Swanburn and Gunner Bridges; assessment of the warden's quarters solar power systems; continuation of the hut wardening during the mountain trial bike trial; inspection of the track to assess maintenance needs for 2011/12.

Since the start of the mountain bike trial on the Heaphy Track (1st May), there has been an estimated 1300 riders staying in one or more of the Heaphy Huts during May/June. Feedback from both cyclist and walkers has been positive, though the time it takes to ride the track and the variation in track conditions and weather encountered has been an issue for some.

The huts and structures on Wangapeka Track were inspected and routine maintenance done.

Irishman's tunnel bridge was upgraded on Charming Creek track.

The 'banana' bridge was removed, re-coated and refitted on Dolomite Point Track.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

There has been a general focus on capital projects toward the end of the financial year.

Alborns Track (near Reefton), re-alignment has taken place using an existing historic road, new steps up the 'Incline' have been built and drainage repairs on the start of track have been completed.

The half round post barrier replacement programme on Point Elizabeth Track is 50% complete. 4 Interpretation panels have been produced for Point Elizabeth Track.

Five bridge replacements (Moonlight and Croesus Track) are under construction. Work has begun on the existing Moonlight Bailey Bridge refurbishment. Wet weather has delayed essential progress to steel treatment so contracted work has now been suspended until September 2011.

We have started a rolling programme of work to reinstate track formation and drainage on Croesus track. The current work is focused on the first 2km. Future work involves track reformation at the 2nd hotel site.

Track maintenance has been completed on Kirwans Track, Christabel Track and St James Track including board walk repairs, avalanche signs, hut maintenance.

Surface improvement work on the Waiuta – Big River Track was completed in time for the Quartzopolis Classic Mountain Bike Race held in April. This included new boardwalk across the pakahi red tussocks. The race was completed successfully with positive feedback from mountain bikers.

Marketing work associated with promoting the Reefton Goldfields Journey continues. This is substantial with web site development and includes assisting Inangahua Tourism Promotions, by developing content (text) and facilitating photography and graphic designs with the consultants. As part of our visitor information we have also created mountain biking information for Reefton.

Hokitika Area

The back country track team have completed storm damage work on the Taramakau flood route, the Lower Kokatahi route and the route from the Mikonui Valley to Mikonui Biv.

New car parks have been upgraded at Canoe Cove Track (Lake Kaniere) and the Styx Road end track.

A major slip on the Goldsborough track has settled down over the last few years. A new retaining wall and section of track was constructed. Track users no longer need to walk through the creek on this day user track.

A new gabion retaining wall and short section of track was constructed on the Kahikatea Walk at Lake Kaniere.

The back country track team have been working well on other tracks.

Franz Josef-Waiiau Area

The Hokitika based builders have completed a new viewing platform at Roberts Point. This has created a distinct destination point to relax at the end of the track.

Routine vegetation trimming and inspections were carried out on numerous local walks.

An initial walk through with the concessionaire at the White Heron Colony has given us some track lengths to try to quantify future replacement costs.

The new hut tie down system has been completed at Castle rocks.

There has been good glacier access over the last few months again although visitor numbers are down.

New long drop toilets have been installed at each of the five huts in the Whataroa catchment.

Maintenance work has been carried out on the Arch creek and the Upper and Lower Scone swing bridges.

South Westland-Weheka Area

The Jackson Bay wastewater treatment system upgrade was completed in mid June. After an extended period of closure, the reopening of the public toilets will be welcomed by the local community and visitors.

A major reroute on the Copland Track from Architect Creek Bridge to Architect Creek Hut has begun. The reroute has moved the track away from the Copland River and now leads it onto and along a river terrace. This reroute will hopefully prevent further track erosion from the River.

The historic Haast-Paringa Cattle Track has had windfalls cleared and work on the Blow Fly hut water tank has been completed.

Track inspections have been carried out on the Stafford Bay route, Monro and Chalet Lookout tracks.

Vegetation clearance and maintenance was also carried out on Chalet Lookout, River Walk Track and Galway Beach tracks.

The Karangarua cable way (located near Cassel Flat Hut), which had been closed due to damage from flooding in early 2011, has now been re-constructed and is open to the public.

Visitor Centres

Visitor Centre	Total Number Visitors from 1 July 10 to 30 June 2011	% Increase or decrease for same period last year
Punakaiki	171,586 (to 31/5/11)	-3.27% (decrease)
Reefton	55,457	0.1% (increase)
Franz Josef	104,075 (to 31/5/11)	-11.5% (decrease)
Haast	84,350	-11.5% (decrease)

Community Involvement/Initiatives

Buller-Kawatiri Area

The Buller Conservation Volunteers had five days of volunteer work and completed a variety of conservation initiatives including: planting at Karamea Estuary with the Karamea Estuary Enhancement Project (KEEP); track maintenance along Nile River Track; habitat planting to protect gentians at Charleston; and wader bird counts at Okari and Orowaiti.

Buller High School had a planting day at Omau and the class was also given a talk on the ecological benefits of ecological restoration.

Karamea Area School were given three presentations on Karamea and the work the Department is doing in the area.

Three schools had familiarisation tours on the Denniston Experience:

- Buller High School - as a thank you for their help with writing the Denniston Kiwi Ranger;
- Westport South School - to trial the Kiwi Ranger; and
- Fox Glacier School.

18 familiarisation tours were organised and run at the Denniston Experience and these included national and international wholesale product managers, West Coast I-Sites, Tourism West Coast and Buller Community Development Company.

Presentations were given to Inbound Tour Operators Council of New Zealand Board Members and West Coast Tourism Networking Group on Denniston.

A presentation was given to the Conservation Corp about the Department.

A mountain bike trip along the Heaphy Track was organised for writers from the Lonely Planet, Dominion Post and the New Zealand Herald. A ranger accompanied them on the trip and is continuing to liaise with them about the articles.

The Karamea Estuary Enhancement Project Annual General Meeting was held and the community ranger elected Treasurer.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

Negotiations are underway with Landcorp to gain support and an easement for upgrading public access to the giant rimu tree in the Mawheraiti Scenic Reserve.

Ongoing involvement with Paparoa Wildlife Trust included engaging students in kiwi chick monitoring in the crèche enclosure at Atarau.

Liaison & advice has been provided to Grey District Council from the Department and West Coast Blue Penguin Trust for development of the Coastal Pathway.

A group of 28 Westport school kids, (plus nine parents) were taken on guided tour of the Woods Creek Walkway.

Hokitika Area

The Hokitika and Greymouth-Mawheranui Areas Offices combined resources to present a public forest film evening at the Old Lodge theatre in Hokitika on 7 June and a guided forest ramble around Hokitika on Sunday 12 June. All four events were timed to celebrate Arbor Day and World Environment Day, (5 June) and the International Year of Forests. The theme for World Environment Day was 'Forests: Nature at your Service' and for the International Year of Forests, it is 'Forests for People'. Both themes link closely with the Department's objective of achieving healthy functioning ecosystems. The Department's role in protecting native species and ecosystems for the essential ecosystem services they provide was emphasised at the events and shared more widely via an article in the Messenger.

The Messenger continues to welcome articles from the Department; another recent article featured the work of the Hokitika visitor assets team in the Hokitika backcountry. The publication continues to publish a series of monthly articles about the coast's wetlands, the most recent being about the Totara Lagoon.

Four freshwater testing activities were provided at Goldsbrough through WestREAP for their gifted and talented programme and school holiday programme.

Kokatahi School requested and were given three presentations on flax to link in with a whole of school project. The presentations linked the value of flax to provision of habitat and riparian protection, as well as links to cultural values and historical and modern uses.

Franz Josef-Waiiau Area

The area had a very successful day joining the La Fontaine Stream Enhancement Group and South Westland Area School in a planting day at La Fontaine Stream. 120 plants, ranging from carex to rimu were planted alongside the stream as part of an ongoing process of developing the stream edge into a showcase of what riparian management is all about.

South Westland Area School students have also applied for funding for possum traps through Kids Restore NZ (inspired by a hugely popular visit from the Bug Man, Ruud Klienpaste, and his wetas).

We've had an enthusiastic uptake of our Kiwi Ranger booklets, with about 100 students having completed the booklets over the last few months. Paroa School had some great follow up from Hokitika/Greymouth-*Mawheranui* Area Offices once they returned to school – a great team effort among the areas.

The release of a group of rowi into North Okarito Forest means that Whataroa School students can see kiwi habitat from their school for the first time in living memory. To mark this moment, Whataroa School was invited to 'adopt' the rowi, naming them and following their progress over the years. Their first visit to rowi habitat will be next month. Parents will be invited to come along, so it's hoped that the whole community will feel a sense of being kaitiaki (guardians) of these birds.

The Hari Hari Kea Scouts requested a talk from a ranger on threatened New Zealand bird species (including the kea) and impressed the ranger who helped out by their good awareness of New Zealand's bird species. This has earned them another scout badge.

South Westland-Weheka Area

South Westland-*Weheka* Area held its annual 'Heavy Possum Weigh-In' in June, in celebration of Arbor Day and the 2011 International Year of Forests. The event, which was held at the Area Office in Fox Glacier, was well attended by the community and a record 22 dead possums were entered. There was a great turnout of 50 to 60 people. The event continues to be extremely well supported by the local community and seems to be growing in interest and success from year to year. The event helps raise local awareness of the benefits in removing possums to help protect our forests and birdlife. In addition to the possum weigh-in and a possum skinning demonstration, the Department also hosted games and entertainment for the local children, including tree and bird shaped biscuit decorating.

The Area Office supported the local community's 'Fox Glacier Big Day Out' in April by providing traffic control for the many bike and running races. The day was a big success for the community, and the Department was praised for its professional conduct.

Historic

Buller-Kawatiri Area

All the significant tasks related to the upgrade of the Denniston site have now been completed. The extreme environment has required some follow-up work on the toilets and with some of the interpretation panels.

Vegetation clearance around some old stone walls was completed on the Lyall Track.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

Within Waiuta township, the Jos Divis's cottage and the Rimu cottage have been purchased by the Department to simplify management of the historic remnants in the reserve. Friends of Waiuta will be involved in future maintenance and management of these structures.

Three groups of volunteers (total 39 people) are due to work at Waiuta on vegetation and track management over the next eight weeks. Another group of 10 International student volunteers are to assist in opening up a link track in the Murray Creek area over the same period.

South Westland-Weheka Area

The historic Blow Fly hut on the Haast Paringa Cattle track has had repair work on the water tank stand completed and the hut and surrounding area has had a thorough tidy up.

Species Management

Charleston gentian

In the Buller-*Kawatiri* Area 60 individuals of the nationally critical *Gentianella scopulorum* were planted within their natural range at Charleston to boost the existing population. To create more habitat for existing and future gentians, gorse was controlled and Department staff and volunteers planted 160 flaxes.

Bats

Surveys in the Oparara and Ugly Valleys found good numbers of long-tailed bats in the Ugly Valley and lower numbers in the Oparara Valley. There were three possible recordings of short-tailed bats in the Ugly Valley. Further work will be undertaken in 2011-2012 to confirm their presence and undertake more intensive monitoring.

Shortjaw kōkopu

The Buller-*Kawatiri* Area completed annual monitoring of one of the national sites for monitoring shortjaw kōkopu (Fuchsia Creek). Shortjaw kōkopu numbers were well down this year at only six individuals in contrast to the usual 14-19. The middle section of the creek was especially changed from the December and May floods.

Little Blue Penguin

The Buller-*Kawatiri* Area Office received the West Coast Little Blue Penguin Trust report for their 2010-2011 stoat control and breeding success monitoring. In 2010-2011, chicks were successfully raised in:

- 80% of (24/30) occupied burrows at Joyce Bay
- 68% of (12/22) occupied burrows at the Nile River
- 42% of (5/12) occupied burrows at Rahui colony.

No stoat control occurs at the Joyce Bay colony. Penguin colonies were also monitored at Whitehorse, Pahautane, Bullock Creek and Punakaiki River for the first time. None of the three occupied burrows produced chicks at Pahautane while between 57% and 68% of occupied burrows produced chicks at the other colonies.

Fiordland Crested Penguin:

The Department's work on Fiordland Crested Penguins (FCPs) has been under review throughout 2010 and into this year. FCPs have been monitored in Fiordland and South Westland to assess changes in breeding population for about 20 years. However, the precision of the method of estimating trends in numbers of breeding birds came under scrutiny in 2010. Southland and West Coast conservancies have been trialling a new method of gathering population trend data to assess whether we can get reliable data for this species.

This breeding season (August) we will continue to assess the reliability of a double count method introduced in 2010. This involves one team of observers systematically searching a colony for nests and a second team repeating the exercise the following day to validate the results. Southland conservancy has also been liaising with Otago University about bringing in a postgraduate student to research the effects of disturbance by nest counters on the FCPs colony.

Great Spotted Kiwi Roroa

Greymouth-*Mawheranui* Area Office's collaboration with the Paparoa Wildlife Trusts Great Spotted Kiwi programme has been successful over the 2009-2010 year. Transmitter changes on all adult BNZ ONE pairs are completed in advance of next breeding season. All sub adults released have been checked and are doing well back in the Eastern Paparoa's.

The breeding season data can now be collated; 17 breeding pairs were followed through the season and 9 eggs harvested. Of those 9 resulting chicks, 2 mortality events occurred. From the past two seasons' chicks, 5 juveniles released back into the wild are all doing well and 6 chicks remain in the crèche at Atarau, putting on weight in preparation for release early next summer.

Earlier issues around post release mortality in chicks returning to the Bois Gentil Creche from Willowbank, and also after final return to the Paparoa's, have been a major focus in the work plan and we are pleased that these appear to be resolved.

Whio/Blue Duck

Despite summer floods and wide scale erosion in the Styx/Arahura whio sanctuary, the resident whio population appears to be holding in numbers, with at least 10 pairs in the 14 km monitored section of the Styx going into autumn. Changes to the river course is preventing access to 20 stoat traps in the Styx, but the remaining 635 traps are still operational. Stoat numbers are slightly lower this year, with 74 stoats and weasels being caught to date, and only one check left to go for the year.

Greymouth-*Mawheranui* Area has released 4 whio in to the Eastern Paparoa Range following a successful season utilising the WHIONE technique. Two females released in the Moonlight withdrew from the main stream in to McCarthy Creek where they stayed for several months and shed their transmitter, but have since returned to Andersons Flat area where they have been sighted with a wild bird several times.

The other pair of WHIONE sub adults were released within the Pike River predator control area. The male was recaptured well downstream from the release site near Kakapo Creek and his transmitter removed. He was found to have improved in body form, while the female has been seen nearby, but was fitted with a tail mount transmitter that has come off, meaning recapture was not necessary.

Next season we hope some of these released birds will successfully mate, offering us the opportunity of harvesting eggs from local birds at reduced effort.

In the Oparara-Ugly whio security site stoat traps were checked in April and June. The whio population is trending upwards despite a poor breeding season in 2010-2011. The last of four walk-through surveys for whio were undertaken in April. There is a minimum of 10 pairs within the managed area of the Ugly and at least 17 pairs protected in the Oparara. Much of the work has been done to protect another kilometre of river in the Ugly catchment. To meet the recovery plan goal of having a fully operational site capable of protecting 50 whio pairs by 2014, costs were estimated for expanding stoat control into other catchments.

Haast tokoeka Kiwi

Transmitter changes have continued for the adult tokoeka in the Haast tokoeka kiwi sanctuary and two new birds were caught in the Arawhata River valley when Chris Rickard and his species dog 'Cloud' spent a week in Haast during May.

General health checks were carried out on the 10 birds transferred to Foveaux Strait predator free island in 2008. All 10 birds were found to be in excellent condition and have adapted well to their change of scenery.

General health checks were also carried out on the six remaining birds transferred to the Orokonui Ecosanctuary in 2010. All birds found to be in very good condition with healthy weight gains of around 470 grams.

A greater amount of beech and other podocarp seed has resulted in an increased amount of rodents in the sanctuary. The percentage of traps that caught a rodent went from 10% in February 2011 to 36% in May.

Rowi

The current rowi population stands at 375 adult birds. This does not include the 36 offspring produced during the 2010/2011 breeding season.

The juvenile rowi on Motuara Island were monitored in the week beginning 7 June 2011. All 36 birds were accounted for and found to be in good health.

The Rowi Team captured three "unproductive" rowi pairs and transferred them to Blumine Island on 14 June 2011. These are birds that have never successfully bred. One of our primary objectives is to get offspring from birds whose genes are poorly represented in the rowi population. The four pairs of unproductive rowi that were transferred to Blumine Island in June 2010 have been monitored regularly. The birds have settled well and we are hopeful that their new habitat provides conditions more amenable to breeding success.

Work began on a 70 m x 30 m rowi predator-proof pre-release enclosure at Franz Josef on 20 June 2011. Chicks will be held in the enclosure on their release from the West Coast Wildlife Centre's husbandry unit, from aged 3 weeks to 2 months, before being transferred to Motuara Island crèche. Holding the chicks in the enclosure close to the Franz Josef *Waiiau* Area Office and West Coast Wildlife Centre makes them accessible for receipt of supplementary feeding and to undergo frequent health checks. This will enable them to prosper and strengthen in a safe environment.

***Powelliphanta* species**

Millerton snail *Powelliphanta lignaria* "Millertoni"

Monitoring of permanent monitoring plots in April indicate that this low density snail population is slowly increasing and less rat predated shells were found. High numbers of rats were caught in the 50 ha trap network through the autumn. However, tracking tunnel surveys show that fortnightly checks are keeping rat abundance low in contrast to a nearby non-trapped area.

P. augusta

The total population of *Powelliphanta augusta* snails kept in the Hokitika captive facility has remained stable. At present there are 1,566 snails and 1,014 eggs. Egg production has slowed with the end of the breeding season. Breeding trials are continuing, while hatchling trials finished in March.

Site rehabilitation has been undertaken at the Mount Rochfort translocation site. Digger work to improve drainage and fencing to protect the snail habitat from trampling was undertaken at Mount Rochfort. 1000 plants were established to increase the available habitat.

Animal Pest Control

Buller-Kawatiri Area

Goat Control efforts 2010-2011 (ground & aerial) to date: Paparoa National Park (293 kills), Whitecliffs (102 kills) and Sth Mokihinui (202 kills), Karamea (53 kills), Fox River (106 kills)

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

Goat Control efforts 2010-2011 (ground & aerial) to date: Maruia West (91 kills), Lewis/Rappahannock (95 kills) and Mt Elliot (64 kills), Rotomanu (5 kills), Ahaura Gorge (nil kills)

Tahr Control – Tahr are still present (as listed on map 5b, in the Thar Plan 1993), in the Risk Area near the Waikiti Downs area, follow-up inspections are planned June-July.

Escaped farmed tahr behave differently to that of feral tahr as they can reside in uncharacteristic habitat, preferring to live in the lowland forest where they can be hard to locate.

Hokitika Area

Goat Control – efforts 2010-2011 (ground & aerial) to date: Vine Creek (50 kills) were encountered in remote alpine area of Doughboy Creek; control efforts now focus in this area. Work programs are drawing to a close

Tahr Control – Judas Tahr inspections have been undertaken, 10 feral tahr killed in NEZ1 (4 males were located with Judas in the Avoca Catchment, additional reports of sightings along Craigieburn Range). Follow-up inspections of the Buffer Areas and additional Judas capture/release are planned for NEZ1 June-July.

Possum Control – The pre-feed for the Otira/Deception Valleys 1080 trickle feed operation was laid on 16 June. The toxic bait is to be laid in the next suitable fine weather window which looks like being near the end of June.

Considerable effort has gone into the processing of consents for Animal Health Board programmes where they involve Public Conservation Land in the Greymouth/Hokitika Areas; these aerial operations commence mid June.

Franz Josef-Waiiau Area

Goat Control - efforts 2010-2011 (ground & aerial) to date: Vine Creek (27 kills)

South Westland-Weheka Area

The prefeed for the Haast True Right aerial possum control was conducted in late April. However, the sowing of the 1080 has not occurred due to the absence of a suitable weather window. Due to the delay, the prefeed will need to be reapplied to the 2,200 ha low sow trial block. The trial is testing how successful cluster sow technology works in a large field trial where bringing possums and rats into a narrow strip of prefeed is an important component.

The Mistletoe possum kill trap line was checked with only one possum and one rat caught. This year's results are trending towards the lowest annual trap catch experienced in the

block since monitoring began. This is a great result considering that the last aerial possum control in this block was carried out near two years ago.

The Fox valley kill trap line was checked with just two possums and one rat caught.

Weed Pest Control

Buller-Kawatiri Area

Weed control has continued at a reduced scale into the autumn around Karamea, Punakaiki and Westport.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

Weed control has been completed for the year with the onset of winter. The Maruia Valley, as a priority biodiversity site and also a control area identified in the WCRC Regional Pest Management Strategy, has received an intensive effort over the weed control season.

A young plantation of Alder on the Orangipuku shore of Lake Brunner was found to be throwing suckering twigs right around the Lake and has been aerially sprayed to kill the source stock in addition to the willow control programme which used both aerial, boat and ground techniques to retreat regenerating willow and consolidate our efforts before next years aggressive planned control to remove willow from the Orangipuku-Lake Poerua-Crooked areas.

Trial of a new chemical, Aquathol, has been undertaken in lagarosiphon ponds in the Maruia with pleasing initial results showing mass die back of dense lagarosiphon beds after a single application. Longer term monitoring and repeated treatment will be carried out next summer before we are fully confident of this new chemical.

Hokitika Area

Weed density and height has been coming down over the last 4 or 5 years, even at sites where there is a large seedbank and prolific weed regeneration. Substantial progress has been made at some sites, such as the Taramakau flats and Shearer Swamp and with localised species such as knotweed, ginger, Darwins barberry and waterlily. Work is now winding up for the year.

Franz Josef-Waiiau Area

During autumn and early winter an extensive area of buddleia, pine and willow has been controlled at Docherty Creek.

South Westland-Weheka Area

Regular weed control has continued around the Cook River flats and Ohinetamatea and additional control was undertaken at Lake Gault, Cascade River mouth and Smoothwater Bay.

Habitat protection

Buller-Kawatiri Area

The proposed aerial possum control operation on 3500ha between the Fox and Punakaiki Rivers has been postponed until July due to delays in the bait supply. The ground control work associated with this operation is underway and progressing well.

Monitoring of seed fall in the Oparara and Ugly Valleys and rodents in the Oparara indicate there has been no significant increase in predators this year associated with a partial mast seeding event. This means that large scale predator control (via aerial 1080) will not be required in 2011-12.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

Te Maruia Waka Huia which translates in English to “The Maruia Treasure Box” is an integrated species protection programme. The 20,000ha area has a high diversity of both common and threatened beech forest species with relatively intact beech forest ecosystems. An intensive species protection programme is currently being implemented within a core area of the upper Maruia Valley. This is to protect existing populations of South Island kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*) and long tailed bats (*Chalinolobus tuberculata*) along with a host of other indigenous forest bird species. A 30 km trap line using DOC 200's is currently being installed to control stoats and rats and will be completed during June and July 2011.

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area has kept a close eye on beech forest seedfalls, after predictions of a mast event had been indicated across the South Island late 2010. No heavy flowering was noted in the valley and seedfall data has corroborated this with only 190 seeds per m being averaged across red beech when a full mast will exceed 4000. Silver beech was noted as a partial mast but this is not considered a major driver of the Maruia predator system.

Rodent indexing has been carried out every 3 months and has continued to show the benefits of the 2009 aerial pesticide drop which successfully controlled rats for more than twelve months after application while adjacent control blocks showed elevated rat populations.

Rat numbers are climbing now within both control and treatment blocks, with control block rat indexing rising from 8% tracking in February to 28% in May, but have not shown elevated mast growth rates that we expect from mast events and a cold onset of winter is expected to reduce them. Staff have prepared for the possibility that rodent monitoring shows sustained elevated rat numbers, in order to be prepared should an aerial 1080 treatment be required.

Franz Josef-Waiiau area

Air New Zealand Environment Trust sponsored Glaciers to Wetlands Restoration Project – Seed and seedling collections have been ongoing throughout the past period. Recent “potting-up” will ensure a good supply of plant stock for restoration at Okarito and Lake Wahapo. The recently completed stock-proof fence at Lake Wahapo ensures protection for natural regeneration and future planting of locally-sourced plant stock in and around the kahikatea stand remnant.

South Westland-Weheka Area

Staff received a report from a hunter who had seen a family of ferrets in the Jackson River catchment. Given that ferrets are not found in the Haast area their reported presence in such close proximity to the Haast tokoeka kiwi is of some concern and ferrets could potentially cause a significant threat to the tokoeka breeding population.

As a precautionary measure 16 kill traps were deployed in the area where the sighting was made. These were left in place and checked weekly for several weeks. Four stoats were caught in the traps. It can reasonably be assumed that the sited animals were misidentified and were, in fact, stoats.

Fire

Greymouth-Mawheranui Area

We recently had a visit from the Fire Service Commission having a look at the integration of urban and rural fire service delivery on the West Coast.

Hokitika Area

Routine fire equipment maintenance has been undertaken since the last report. Funding has been obtained to provide further fire training early in the new financial year.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board notes the information in this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Slater". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "S".

Mike Slater
Conservator