

Punanga Manu o Te Anau/Te Anau Bird Sanctuary operational plan for 2025-2026 financial year

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to outline the operational plan for managing the Te Anau Bird Sanctuary at a reduced level of service before a new operator takes over its management, and to check with key staff whether there are any important details we may have missed.

Goal:

The goal for the 2025-2026 financial year is to continue operating the Sanctuary as a community and visitor site at a safe, sustainable level through reduced resourcing and workload. As the Department of Conservation is looking at transitioning out of management long-term, the short-term aim will be to take a phasing down approach (rather than ceasing operations altogether).

Objectives:

The desired objectives with this approach are to ensure that:

- DOC is providing clarity for staff and security for the birds in our care going forward.
- The Bird Sanctuary remains open, albeit at a reduced level, as a symbol of its importance and of the aspirations of Ōraka Aparima and the community for its future.
- That DOC maintain the site to visitor standards.
- We operate a non-weekend operation, that is, DOC ceases to operate a 7-day facility.

Context:

DOC is required to provide a level of service at the Bird Sanctuary seven days a week at present. This has caused significant challenges over recent years, and we don't see this changing in the foreseeable future given a tighter fiscal environment. The following approach is to support DOC to manage the Bird Sanctuary for the immediate future whilst we await decisions on the longer-term future of the sanctuary.

What does this mean for the Bird Sanctuary?

- The Bird Sanctuary will operate at **reduced management** until such time as a new operator picks up management of the site, assuming this may take up to 2-5 years.
- Ideally, move to a **4 or 5-day operation**, with a single Ranger assigned to the site, supported by casual Rangers (as required) to cover leave.
- As low maintenance birds, **takahē would remain** at site until a new operator takes over. With the support of the takahē team, the Te Anau Bird Sanctuary would continue to care for the takahē pairs currently in residence. As the Bird Sanctuary would no longer be a 7-day operation, takahē would be set up to be fed every **2-3 days**, as required.
- Continue with **shorter tours** 4-5 days a week, focused on takahē advocacy.
- Three bird species would be rehomed elsewhere:
 - Whio/kōwhiowhio and pāteke will travel to Peacock Springs.
 - Antipodes Island kākāriki would be rehomed elsewhere in the region. At present, Queens Park has 1 x kākāriki and Kiwi Park Queenstown has 1 x kākāriki.
- Rehoming these species before the next breeding season and visitor season requires a safe solution to be sought by the end of June 2025.

What does this mean for permanent staff?

- A change to the work programmes for both permanent B-band Ranger positions.
- Potentially a change in rostered days of working via a Flexible Work Agreement.
- Supporting different areas of work as required, as the Regional Operations Management of Change proposal proposes that the Te Anau biodiversity team will have a reduction in FTE: [2025 Regional Operations Review](#)

What does this mean for casual staff?

- A change in the work when covering shifts at the Bird Sanctuary; likely more infrastructure maintenance, takahē maintenance, care for grounds (weeds etc).
- More opportunities in the core biodiversity team as they arise and work well for the casual staff member, for example:
 - Quarantine shifts
 - Trapping day trips (for example, in the Eglinton Valley)
 - Weeds work
 - Data entry or trail camera analysis
 - Injured bird transport
- As a 7-day operation will no longer be necessary, cover will not be required in the same way, but it will still be required, especially when annual leave is taken.

Additional context:

- It has been proposed that the biodiversity team will lose some FTE (full-time equivalent roles) in the Management of Change process currently underway. As a result, all work programmes in Te Anau will need to be more adaptable in future to meet the needs of the district.
- Due to the Management of Change process, reporting lines and supervisors/managers are likely to change, role titles and delegations will likely change, and there may be less available bio staff to support Bird Sanctuary operations. Once more is known regarding what personnel changes may be on the horizon, we will let you know.
- Details of personnel changes at present:
 - **s 9(2)(g)(ii)** [REDACTED] has now finished his contract with Te Anau biodiversity and has taken a new role with the Kakapō/Takahē team as a Ranger. As such, he is no longer considered Project Lead for the Bird Sanctuary.
 - It has been proposed that all Principal Rangers, Supervisors and Senior Rangers will have their roles disestablished, and new roles established in their place.
 - On Monday 6 October the new Regional Operations Group structure goes live, and any personnel/role changes will come into effect.

What are next steps and actions?

- Take into account your feedback on any actions we may have missed.
- Meet on Tuesday 3 June and work together on the rehoming plan for kākāriki, whio and pāteke.
- Work together to come up with further ways of reducing workload at the Bird Sanctuary.
- Later in June **s 9(2)(g)(ii)** [REDACTED] to work through changes to tour posters, advertising and signage with Community team to account for changes in tour offerings going forward.

Additional resources:

- Email from [REDACTED] on 24 May 2025, copied below.
- Please remember, as always, that there is local and online support available that we can request if any is required to navigate another change.
 - Local PSA reps: [REDACTED] s 9(2)(a)
 - Call EAP Services anytime on: 0800 327 669

Draft plan for 2025/2026:



Email from [REDACTED] 24 May 2025:

Morena [REDACTED] s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(ii)

Please see below for an update on the Review of Te Punanga Manu/ the Te Anau Bird Sanctuary.

Please note this is an update for DOC staff only - it is important that it is not circulated further. DOC's communication with the community and partners will be done alongside Ōraka Aparima and Fish and Game.

The wider Te Anau team will receive an update early next week.

New context

Since the report was released for Stage two part 1 of this review, we have been working with our Treaty Partner Ōraka Aparima and with Fish and Game to understand their context. This important work has taken some time; thank you all for your patience.

New context has become clear:

- Ōraka Aparima Rūnaka have stated their interest in taking on the management of Te Punanga Manu
- Fish and Game have declared their support for the above
- Great South - Southland Regional Development Agency are supporting Ōraka Aparima with this work.

This builds on DOC's understanding that Ōraka Aparima, Great South and Fish and Game were in discussion about the future of Te Punanga before we began this review.

DOC are supportive of our Treaty Partner's aspirations to take on the management of the site. This narrows DOC's role in looking at future options for the site to:

- supporting our Treaty Partner, Ōraka Aparima
- being the regulator managing permits for holding of wildlife.

There may be additional roles once future options for the site are known.

As a reminder: Stage 2 part 1 recommendations can be viewed here: [DOC-7839058](#)

Review work for DOC

The above context means that DOC's work is now proposed as:

1. Decide how DOC will transition out of Te Punanga. This includes:

- Wellbeing of Manu being central to this work (Terrestrial Biodiversity team and Takahē team are key team members).
- Working within budget and staffing constraints
- Working with Fish and Game as landowners to meet any contractual requirements
- Considering how a transition interacts with Ōraka Aparima's future options and with community sentiment.

2. Determine the best use of resourcing currently allocated to Te Punanga Manu, including how best to support aspirations of existing staff.

- Current organizational change is important context for this work.

3. Support Ōraka Aparima with context on future options for the site, including technical information on requirements of species.

4. Work with Ōraka Aparima and Great South to support community input into future options for Te Punanga.
5. Contribute to timely external communications alongside Ōraka Aparima, Fish and Game and Great South.
6. Communicate with existing funding partners about our transition out of Te Punanga:
 - New Zealand Nature Fund
 - Lakeview Holiday Park
 - Radfords on the Lake.

Timing for a transition out

No date has been set for the Department to fully transition out of its management of Te Punanga. Importantly, recent and ongoing challenges with maintaining the necessary level of staffing require urgent consideration.

Next steps for the future options work

Ōraka Aparima are working with Great South and Fish and Game to design an approach for identifying options for the site:

- When Ōraka Aparima are ready, the community will have opportunity to present ideas and proposals.
- The approach will also seek the views of commercial interests.

s 9(2)(g)(ii) will keep you updated as new information, including more clarity on timelines, becomes available.

Thank you again for your patience and, as always, a big thank you to you for continuing to look after the Manu and our visitors so well.