



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 4 February 2019**

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None this week.

### Submissions

- On 29 January, we submitted in opposition to a publicly notified consent for a proposed 24-turbine wind farm on the eastern side of the Kaimai Ranges at Tirohia, between Te Aroha and Paeroa.
- Our submission opposed the application, based on potential adverse ecological effects, particularly on bats and avifauna, and lack of information about effects on historic and cultural heritage.

### Appeals

- The Otago Regional Council PC5/Lindis Irrigation Company Environment Court case resumed for the week 28 January – 1 February.
- This was the last week of hearings, with DOC presenting evidence to the Environment Court and responding to further questioning in relation to residual flows for waterways with non-migratory galaxid species.

### Designations

- None this week.

### Water Conservation Orders

- None this week.

### Other

#### West Coast South Island

- A council hearing on the West Coast Regional Land and Water Plan has reconvened, with DOC providing supplementary legal and ecological evidence in relation to the reassessed wetlands in the supplementary s42a Reports (December 2018 and January 2019).
- In respect of a number of wetland sites, we have submitted DOC's view as to why we feel the Assessor's conclusions either lack robustness, or are not supported by the evidence available.

#### Hawkes Bay Regional Council

- The Hawkes Bay Regional Council has asked all submitters to Plan Change 6 (Minimum Flows for the Tukituki catchment) to provide comments on the council's proposal not to implement minimum flows.
- We supported the increased minimum flows introduced by Plan Change 6 as it provides for improved habitat protection for native fish in what is a highly degraded system at present. We are concerned about the impacts of not implementing minimum flows.
- The Plan Change enabled increased minimum flows to be staged over a series of years for the Tukituki catchment. The placement of higher minimum flows was controversial due to complex demands on reserves and protection of ecological values. Implementing these provisions in the Plan relied on the Ruataniwha water storage system being in place. It is now impossible for the council to enforce these provisions without significant impact on water-take users.
- The first year for increasing flows began from July 2018. The council is proposing that it does not implement these key provisions for another two years while it comes up with more workable solutions. This results in at least three more seasons of high water takes from this catchment, with what looks to be minimal intervention from the council.

- We have responded to the council, stating that we have concerns about non-implementation of these provisions, and do not believe that the proposed two-year hiatus is realistic. We have asked how the council intends to manage the impacts on the ecological integrity of this catchment in the meantime.
- The council, and other parties are seeking funding from the Provincial Growth Fund to develop options for water storage. Due to its complexity, it is unlikely that this work (should it be successful in its funding requests) will provide implementable outcomes within two years.
- We have discussed our position with MfE and, at this stage, MfE is keeping a watching brief on the situation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

### Waipoua Forest

- We recently received the Remote Sensing Report from Te Roroa and are working through it. We will need to determine how the recommendations align with other research being undertaken on the subject.
- While Te Roroa is looking to create a strategic adaptive management plan for the "whole of Te Roroa rohe" (long-term vision), the focus for this financial year will be on the "whole of Waipoua Forest" scale i.e. a Waipoua Forest Health plan/strategy.

### Track upgrade work

- Work to upgrade several tracks in the Bay of Islands District in response to kauri dieback is set to finish on 22 February.
- We will announce the reopening of these tracks via a media release.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 Myrtle rust

- Biosecurity NZ and DOC have developed an online training tool, both for public use and for those with a more technical interest.
- As anticipated with the warmer weather, there has been an increase in detections over January, and we have provided updated information to staff on how to look out for, and report on, any myrtle rust sightings.
- Work with Biosecurity NZ on development of a non-statutory long-term management strategy is progressing well.
- We have just completed our annual seed collection training course for DOC staff for collecting myrtle species.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

### 2.1 Minister Iain Lees-Galloway visit to DOC to discuss High Performance Engagement (HPE)

- Lou Sanson caught up with Minister Lees-Galloway at a function in 2018 and they talked about DOC's HPE approach with the PSA, which Minister Lees-Galloway was keen to hear more about.
- Last December, the PSA spoke with Minister Lees-Galloway's office to arrange a meeting to give the Minister an overview of HPE, and discuss some of the opportunities DOC and PSA see in working with this approach.
- This meeting is scheduled to take place on 9 May at Conservation House from 10.30 – 11.15.
- Those attending the meeting include:
  - Lou Sanson, DG
  - Mervyn English, Chief of Governance and current lead of the PSA relationship
  - Karen Jones, DDG, People and Engagement and taking up the lead of the PSA relationship (to occur in the next few months)
  - Basil Prestige, PSA Assistant Secretary
  - Allen Blackwell, PSA DOC National Organiser
- You have indicated that you wish to attend the meeting as well.
- We would also like to invite you to attend one of our HPE Leadership Group meetings to meet the team and get a briefing regarding our approach. All meetings are from 10am – 1pm, and we can work with your office on the preferred timing.
- The dates that have been sent to your office for consideration are:
  - 21 February
  - 21 March
  - 17 April
- Should none of these dates suit, we can provide you with a separate briefing prior to the 9 May meeting.

Contact: Mervyn English, Chief of Governance: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Taranaki Maunga Treaty negotiations

- Ministers met with Nga Iwi o Taranaki (NIOT) negotiators on 11 December [REDACTED]
- NIOT negotiators undertook to confirm in a letter to the Chief Crown Negotiator (CCN) their views on the two main issues discussed at that meeting, as outlined above.
- The CCN has sought a commitment from Jamie Tuuta, lead negotiator for NIOT, to receive that letter by 1 February.
- Once the letter has been received, we and OTS (Te Arawhiti) intend to submit a joint memo to Ministers, seeking a decision on the joint briefing submitted to Ministers on 5 December last year, (Taranaki Maunga: Key redress decisions and outstanding negotiation issues) in the context of the views received from NIOT.
- Te Arawhiti has shifted dates out for the joint Cabinet paper to Maori Crown Relations (MCR) committee, to June 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Ngāti Maru ki Taranaki Negotiations

- The Crown signed an Agreement in Principle (AIP) with Ngāti Maru ki Taranaki in December 2017. As part of the Ngāti Maru AIP, the Crown agreed to explore the transfer of 20 public conservation sites (257ha) to Ngāti Maru, subject to Ministers' and Cabinet's decisions on the final redress package.
  - [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- DOC officials will work closely with Te Arawhiti officials to draft a response on behalf of MfTOWN.
  - DOC and Te Arawhiti officials will continue to meet with Ngāti Maru regularly with the aim of achieving the Crown's milestone of initialling a deed of settlement with Ngāti Maru in June 2019.
  - The Office of Treaty Settlements proposes Cabinet approval for Ngāti Maru's redress package be sought in June 2019, following MfTOWN's and your consideration.

**Contact:** 

## 2.4 International Air Service Agreements and Tourism Planning

- In December last year, you requested information on the interactions between officials working on air service agreements and tourism planning.
- The Ministry of Transport (MOT) is the lead government agency for negotiating international air service agreements (ASAs). The framework for negotiating or amending ASAs is set out in the Government's international air transport policy. This was last updated under the previous Government.
- New Zealand's policy is to pursue reciprocal open skies agreements. Generally, this involves no restrictions on routes and capacity. New Zealand has more than 80 air services agreements. Many of these, including with key tourism and trading partners such as Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, and with important air services providers such as Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, are open skies agreements.
- New Zealand does not have an open skies agreement with China. The China-NZ ASA, which limits the total number of flights per week from China to New Zealand, was updated in 2017.
- When negotiating new or amended ASAs, the mandate is approved by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In preparing this mandate, MOT consults with other agencies involved in border services, trade, foreign affairs and tourism planning. Previously, advice in relation to tourism planning has been sought from Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). In providing feedback on the tourism implications, MBIE considers the potential impacts on visitor flows, border services, infrastructure, key visitor sites and attractions, regions, and the quality of the visitor experience.

- As part of DOC's more active and strategic approach to managing visitor pressure, we will continue to work with MBIE and the MOT to ensure information on the potential impacts at key places managed by DOC are considered.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 Research and Development Programme of Work led by Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) in the Perth River Valley

- In early 2018, ZIP initiated a programme of work in the Perth River valley, South Westland, to research and develop an approach to predator control that will completely remove possums (and potentially rats) and prevent them from re-establishing at a 12,000-hectare site in the valley.
- The work is largely funded with the support of the NEXT Foundation, DOC and Predator Free 2050 Ltd.
- The programme's approach uses a more rigorous method of applying aerial 1080 than standard operations.
- The operation was originally scheduled to be carried out during winter 2018, but was delayed due to unfavourable weather.
- ZIP is currently preparing an application to DOC to begin the operation in March.
- If approved, the operation could be completed in May (weather permitting).
- Over the past few months, ZIP has undertaken some novel research into how to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the operation on kea, with the following results:

### **Testing whether tahr carcasses are a more attractive food source than cereal bait for kea found that:**

- tahr carcasses are a highly attractive food source
- the more often tahr carcasses are refreshed, the more often kea are attracted to them and a carcass is stripped of meat within seven days
- the method does not appear to be attracting birds from outside the valley
- a small amount of bait consumption was observed.

### **Testing whether a bird repellent, anthraquinone, could be used to 'teach' kea to avoid cereal baits found that:**

- kea do learn not to eat baits laced with anthraquinone
- the effects of this learning last for at least several weeks.
- These results are being incorporated into the risk mitigation for kea components of the plan for the proposed operation.
- ZIP is also carrying out trials on how effective the Perth River is as a barrier to rats. So far, no rats appear to have crossed the river over a five-month period of the trial.
- DOC and ZIP are currently engaging with a wide range of stakeholders about the proposed operation and the wider programme of work, including Te Runanga Makaawhio, the West Coast Conservation Board, the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, the Game Animal Council, Federated Mountain Clubs, Forest and Bird, and territorial authorities.
- There is overall support from these parties for the work.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 GNS Science – West Coast Geothermal Resource Assessment

- GNS Science and its Geothermal Resources Group have entered a collaborative relationship with a group of parties across the West Coast, including the four councils, Development West Coast, both runanga, and a number of commercial entities (including Westland Milk Products), to assess the geothermal resource associated with the Alpine Fault. DOC is not part of this collaborative group.
- The purpose of this collaboration is to gather known data from within GNS, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and other sources, and to examine potential uses, potential end-users, economic and engineering considerations, planning requirements and cultural and environmental requirements. This work is termed Stage One of the over-all assessment.
- GNS will report to the collaborative group on its findings in late February, and has agreed to share that report with DOC.
- If, at the end of Stage One, the group deems that it is worth progressing this assessment work further, it would embark on Stage Two. This would be a more focused investigation, and include testing at high-priority sites that would involve drilling.
- The proposed drilling sites are not yet known, but are likely to be on public conservation land.
- The group has funded Stage One directly from its own resources.
- Should the assessment progress to Stage Two, the group intends to apply for funding support from the Provincial Growth Fund.
- We will keep you updated as this matter progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 Cape Kidnappers slip

- On 23 January, a landslide on the beach front between Clifton and Cape Kidnappers swept two Korean tourists into the sea.
- The two tourists were airlifted to Hawkes Bay Hospital, both with fractured legs, one of them critically injured (although stable).
- DOC staff will be visiting the injured tourists to wish them well in their recovery.
- The landslide, while not on public conservation land, is on the way to the Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve, which is beyond the slip site.
- Hastings District Council has closed the section of beach, as it is designated a public road.
- We are working closely with the council to assess the site and to manage the risk to the public.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Little blue penguins taken from nest

- On 25 January, DOC's Hawke's Bay District office received a report from a member of the public that a group of people had taken three little blue penguins/kororā from their burrows.
- One of the penguins died in the invasion of the burrows, and was left behind. The other two were taken away alive. We are investigating the report.

- DOC has issued a media release, noting that we are seeking CCTV footage from the surrounding area. We are hoping, too, that members of the public will come forward with further information.
- We are working with other government agencies, and have interviewed a number of people in the course of our investigation into this incident.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.9 Cattle deaths following Mapara aerial 1080 pest control operation**

- We have briefed you previously on the death of stock following an aerial 1080 pest control operation in Mapara, in the King Country (Status Reports 43, 45 and 50 refer).
- On 13 December last year, EPA formally initiated an inquiry, under s103A of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, into the September 2018 Mapara aerial 1080 operation, and subsequent stock deaths.
- On 21 December last year, we provided the EPA with all information related to the aerial 1080 operation.
- The inquiry will include a review of all information provided by DOC and the Ministry for Primary Industries Inquiry Report into the Mapara operation, as well as interviews with key staff and landowners (Paula and Mark Stone).
- While the timeframe for completion of the Mapara inquiry is unknown at this stage, it has been given priority by the EPA.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.10 Proactive release of Status Report**

- Last year you indicated that you would like to proactively release the weekly Status Report.
- We discussed and agreed processes and timeframes with your office last year, and established systems, including a new addendum containing items that are not intended for proactive release.
- Given the three-month delay before release, the end of February is scheduled for releasing the first suite of reports. We have started reviewing the November 2018 Status Reports and will provide the reports prepared for release to your office for consideration in the week beginning 11 February 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]



### 3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

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- None this week.

### 4 Director-General Engagements

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#### February

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 06 Feb    | Waitangi Day Bledisloe Reception, Government House, Wellington      |
| 13 Feb    | Public Sector CE's Breakfast, State Services Commission, Wellington |
| 14–15 Feb | NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Wellington                       |
| 21 Feb    | Meet with new Walking Access Commission Board, Wellington           |
| 27 Feb    | DOC Stakeholder BBQ, Wellington                                     |
| 28 Feb    | The Localism Symposium, Wellington                                  |

#### March

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 01 March    | Mackenzie CEs field trip, Canterbury   |
| 06–07 March | SLT Retreat, Wairarapa   |
| 08 March    | Tourism Policy School, Otago University                                      |
| 11 March    | DOC Engagement with Air NZ Sustainability Advisory Panel, Auckland           |
| 13 March    | New Frontiers Conference, Trentham   |
| 13 March    | DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch                                   |
| 22 March    | Mana to Mana hui – Fiordland and Mount Aspiring Management Plans, Queenstown |
| 25–29 March | World Protected Areas Leadership Forum, Melbourne                            |

#### April

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 01-02 April | Sustainable Trails Conference, Blenheim     |
| 03 April    | Senior Leaders hui, Wellington              |
| 04-05 April | NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Hokitika |
| 17 April    | Sustainability CE's away day, Wairarapa     |
| 18 April    | Tourism CE's Strategy Day, venue TBC        |

### 5 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Governance update
- Potential land acquisition

Proactively released



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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 11 February 2019**

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri Dieback

### National Pest Management Plan (NPMP)

- The third round of public consultation on the NPMP is planned for 18 February to 18 March. DOC will be supporting the kauri dieback programme over the consultation period.
- Biosecurity NZ is currently drafting an options paper for consultation. You will be provided with a copy by 13 February.
- We are preparing a response to your questions following a briefing you received from MPI about the proposed NPMP and the associated Management Agency (19-B-0033 refers). This will be with you shortly.

### Track upgrades

- Track upgrades continue in the Bay of Islands, Kauri Coast and Tauranga/Waikato.
- Several tracks in these areas are temporarily closed while they are mitigated due to kauri dieback. It is unknown whether the disease is present or not, so the tracks are being upgraded based on a worst-case assumption that the disease may be present.

### Behaviour change research

- Behaviour change research will continue at several of the new DOC cleaning stations throughout the summer period, finishing in March.
- The research is trialling a number of behaviour change treatments, aiming towards achieving full and correct compliance.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle Rust

- None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None this week.

### Submissions

#### Appeals

- DOC filed an Appeal against the Dunedin City Plan on 19 December 2018. Our appeal focussed on those provisions relating to consistency with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS). It also appealed the indigenous vegetation clearance rules pertaining to permitted clearance. This is in relation to fencing and clearance within areas of significant indigenous biodiversity, and areas of high and outstanding natural coastal character, or within outstanding natural landscapes or features.
- We also filed 274 notices with the Environment Court to join the following appeals on the Dunedin City Plan on 31 January:

- Forest and Bird – In support: Forest and Bird appealed several provisions in the natural environment chapter relating to indigenous biodiversity, consistency with the NZCPS and vegetation clearance within wetlands.
- Aurora Energy Limited – In opposition: Aurora Energy is seeking a more permissive policy framework within outstanding or high natural coastal character areas, due to the functional needs of network utilities.
- Blackhead Quarries Limited, Tussock Top Farms Limited and Saddle Views Estate Limited – In opposition: The appellants are seeking amendments to make the policy framework more permissive for mineral and aggregate extraction, and to include a new objective, policy and rule framework for mining activities.

#### Designations

- None this week.

#### Water Conservation Orders

- None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

### 2.1 Meeting on a possible Global Pact for the Environment

- The 'Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group Towards a Global Pact for the Environment' has concluded its first meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. Two delegates attended from MFAT. Delegates considered the UN Secretary-General's report on gaps in international environmental law; no consensus was forthcoming.
- France remains the principle advocate for the Pact, [REDACTED]
- The next meeting will continue the discussion on gaps and begin to discuss possible solutions [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO): Annual meeting of the Commission and Compliance Committee

- DOC officials recently attended the sixth meeting of the Compliance and Technical Committee and the seventh Commission meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), held 19-27 January in the Hague, Netherlands.
- We were part of the New Zealand delegation, which comprised 13 members representing DOC, MFAT, MPI, Te Ohu Kai Moana (TOKM) and Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECO).
- Our priority for the meeting was to seek agreement on new conservation management measures (CMMs) to manage bottom fishing in the SPRFMO area, led by New Zealand and Australia. These measures cover two key issues – providing catch limits and allocations for deep sea stocks (including orange roughy) and measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), including spatial management and encounter protocol arrangements.

- Both bottom fishing measures were adopted, with some modifications made by the EU to improve the process for technical review of the VME thresholds, habitat models and wider VME management approach.
- [REDACTED], we are happy with the outcome, as it will bring significant improvements to the protection of VMEs in the SPRFMO Area. The area open to bottom fishing has been substantially reduced and, on average, 80% of the distribution of VME species will be protected – an increase from around 60%. A complete ban on bottom trawling on the high seas was not within New Zealand's mandate. We will continue to work with MPI and MFAT to monitor the SPRFMO bottom fisheries, and to improve the conservation outcomes of the measure.
- Regarding the media coverage of the New Zealand vessel put on the draft SPRFMO IUU list (the list for illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in the SPRFMO Area), New Zealand followed SPRFMO rules and agreed to the vessel being placed on the draft list, pending the results of prosecution.
- New Zealand's approach to media coverage was provided to the offices of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries. Should you wish, we will provide a copy to your office.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention, 3-6 March 2019

- The PDAC, being held in Toronto, Canada, is a large international mining investment conference attracting more than 25,000 delegates from 135 countries.
- MBIE's 'New Zealand Petroleum and Minerals' group will be exhibiting at the convention, as part of a joint venture with GNS Science. This will be the fourth year that such an approach has been taken.
- MBIE advises that the information being distributed will be geological, geophysical and geochemical data, and that they will have available a high-level handout on New Zealand's mineral resources.
- MBIE will be promoting lithium and nickel-cobalt prospectivity in New Zealand and outlining our regulatory regime. The preliminary results of the rare earth elements prospectivity study (which includes lithium and nickel-cobalt) were released at the PDAC conference last year. Sixty and sixty-five percent respectively of this prospectivity is on non-schedule 4 conservation land.

- [REDACTED]

- DOC officials will not be attending the convention.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 PF2050 community involvement update

- Below is a round-up of PF2050 events, covering the Chathams and lower North Island.
- Stakeholder and public meetings are being held on the Chatham Islands, 15 - 19 February. Representatives from PF2050 Ltd (Dr Warren Parker, David MacLeod, & Devon McLean, along with Al Bramley from ZIP and possibly the local MP, Paul Eagle) will attend. Chatham Islanders will be able to engage with the Predator Free story with the aim of establishing a project to eradicate possums.
- DOC's Manawatu office is organising a "Festival" event for April. Groups already undertaking predator control in the Manawatu (including DOC) will showcase their work and encourage community involvement.
- Whakatipu Mahia (Predator Free Mahia) and Poutiri Ao ō Tāne have established a conservation cadetship programme called 'Tauira Mahi'. The programme draws students from hapu/iwi that whakapapa back to the project areas, and will help to build iwi capability in predator control and conservation skills.
- Possum eradication and predator suppression on the Mahia Peninsula will be starting in the next month or so, as part of Whakatipu Mahia, which is one of PF2050 Ltd's funded projects.
- Predator Free Kiriwhakapapa was launched in January with a donation from DOC of 20 DOC 250s. The project is on the southern border of Pukaha/Mount Bruce and is focussed on trapping to prevent ferrets and stoats from invading Pukaha Forest.
- A project team working on a concept called Aorangi to Remutaka (A2R) had its first meeting in January. The aim is to link predator control work in Aorangi Forest Park, Wairarapa Moana and Remutaka Forest Park and the private land in between. Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Aorangi Restoration Trust, Beef and Lamb NZ, the Pukaha to Palliser (P2P) group and DOC, along with iwi and hapu, are all contributing.
- The Ka Hao te Rangatahi youth training programme will launch at the Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) Ruatoria in the week of 11 February, with a focus on predator monitoring and trapping.

Contact:

## 2.5 New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

- Early engagement continues with the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (NZBS). Events held over the past month include stakeholder workshops in Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin; hui in Manawatu, Whanganui, Motueka and Blenheim; meetings of the cross-agency working group; sessions with DOC staff in regional centres; and targeted workshops with DOC staff in Wellington.
- There has been considerable interest in these opportunities, with 30-60 attending stakeholder meetings, and large groups at some hui. Attendees have been strongly supportive of both the need for a strategy, and engaging widely with the community and stakeholders early in the policy development process.
- Early engagement will continue through to mid-March. A further 13 hui have been confirmed for February and March, with further dates still to be set. A workshop is planned in mid-February to gather youth perspectives on biodiversity. Another stakeholder workshop and a staff engagement session will be held in Hamilton on 7 March.
- The three external reference groups (Science Reference Group, Stakeholders Reference Group and Te Ao Māori Group) will meet on 27 and 28 February, to discuss both the NZBS and the NPS-IB.

- We will provide you with a memo prior to meeting with you on 18 February to discuss key themes from engagement, and initial thinking for a discussion document.
- We would particularly like to discuss some challenging issues that have arisen during engagement, which include:
  - the focus on incorporating outcomes relating to people's relationship with nature, as well as ecological outcomes,
  - the overall direction of the strategy and the relative focus on driving a near-term work programme, and setting long-term goals and targets,
  - how the value of introduced biodiversity is considered in the strategy (for example, the values of indigenous and introduced biodiversity) in an integrated way,
  - the role of Māori as kaitiaki, including in relation to governance and cultural harvest/use of resources,
  - the role of a national strategy in directing or facilitating regional and local priorities,
  - your thinking on signaling a significant change to governance / leadership on biodiversity nationally.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Improving whitebait management

### Process update

- The New Zealand Conservation Authority will be updated on progress with this work, at its meeting on 14 – 15 February.
- A draft issues and options paper on whitebait management is under review by the Whitebait Working Group and a Māori Subject-matter Expert (SME) Group. The SME group worked with DOC to co-design the process implemented to progress our Improving Whitebait Management work.
- We are now preparing our advice on next steps for this process, which we will provide you with later this month, along with the issues and options paper.
- The meeting with you, originally planned for 29 January, is being rescheduled.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 Ramp Up Programme

### Budget 2018 – \$181.6m recruitment report as of 6 February 2018

- Roles advertised this week:
  - Senior Insight Advisor (Christchurch)
  - Insight Advisor (Christchurch)
  - Principal Advisor, Visitors (Wellington)
  - Tahr Programme Lead (Christchurch)
  - 3x Senior Visitor Advisor (Whangarei, Auckland, Invercargill)
- Roles provisionally appointed this week:
  - Senior Trainer, National People Programmes (Christchurch)
  - Principal Advisor, Wellbeing (Christchurch)



## Current overall recruitment progress to date against investment areas

| Investment Activity   | Roles for Recruitment to Date | Planned 2018/19 |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Enhancing biodiversity by controlling and eradicating predators (not including roles funded from Contingency for biodiversity initiatives). | 19                            | 40.2            |
| Managing the impacts of increasing numbers of visitors to public conservation land  | 23                            | 22              |
| Enhancing biodiversity protection in the Mackenzie Basin  | 3                             | 4               |
| Strengthening DOC's organisational capacity and capability (policy, asset management, core organisational capability)                       | 17                            | 17.7            |
| Contingency for biodiversity initiatives (freshwater, marine, terrestrial)  | *                             | 21.8            |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>62</b>                     | <b>105.7</b>    |

*\* As outlined in the Biodiversity Contingency Business Case, we anticipated approximately 149 roles to lift capabilities and capacities over four years to deliver the programme outcomes over four years. We are currently reviewing this, where targeted contract resource may provide better outcomes than internal recruitment options.*

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Health and Safety Reviews

- Two separate reports have been completed on reviews undertaken into different aspects of health and safety in the organisation and we are considering the themes of both reports.
- One review was externally commissioned by the all-of-government Health and Safety Workplace Lead (hosted by MPI) and DOC for SSC and has a number of recommendations, mainly focused on enhancing DOC's governance and reporting arrangements.
- The second review was an investigation, implemented by DOC, into the fatal helicopter crash near Wanaka on 18 October 2018, in which two DOC staff and the pilot were killed. This report used the incident causation analysis method (ICAM) to focus on DOC's health and safety systems and processes leading up to and following the incident. The report found that the DOC's H&S systems for helicopters are generally sound and robust, and that no actions or omissions on behalf of DOC staff contributed to the accident.
- The report does outline some recommended improvements relating to helicopter use by DOC, and around supporting staff in high pressure situations. We will act on these recommendations and are also working with the all-of-government group to introduce new policies and standards for agencies that regularly use helicopters in the course of their work.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.9 Potential complaint from the Tamahere Mangaone Restoration Trust**

- Mangaone Stream Tamahere Local Purpose Reserve is administered by the Waikato District Council. It is predominantly covered in 20+ year old pines and willows.
- A local group, the Tamahere Mangaone Restoration Trust, has replaced most of the willows with native plants and wants the pines removed to allow increased opportunities for native planting.
- Long-tailed bats occupy the reserve and have been recorded roosting in the older pines. Long-tailed bats are under significant threat in the Waikato due to the pace of urban development, and DOC has been advocating for the Council to retain the pines, to protect this area of remaining bat habitat.
- In late 2018, the Council commissioned an arborist report, with a view to managing health and safety at the site, while maintaining the integrity of the reserve for bats.
- We believe that the report's recommended approach strikes a reasonable balance between the need for site health and safety (there is a risk of some trees falling over), site restoration, and maintaining the habitat of the long-tailed bats.
- The Trust, however, does not agree with the approach recommended in the report. It considers that DOC is being unreasonable, and it is possible that members of the Trust may contact you to seek your intervention in this issue.
- We support the report's proposed approach, and will work with the Council to implement this plan.
- As this is an operational matter, to be resolved by DOC and the Council, we recommend that, if contacted, your office refers the matter back to DOC.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.10 Support for the Queenstown treefall and Hawkes Bay rockfall incident victims**

- DOC's operations and welfare staff have been working to support the victims of these recent events.
- The family injured on their Queenstown holiday have now returned to Wellington and, in partnership with Ngai Tahu Tourism, we have developed an appropriate support package that includes liaison with other appropriate agencies, including Victim Support and ACC, as well as covering some fair and reasonable costs (ex-gratia, on a good-will basis) associated with the immediate event.
- We have provided similar support to the Korean visitors who were injured on the Cape Kidnappers walk. They are very appreciative of this outreach by DOC staff, having very limited resources or help available to them in New Zealand.

Contact: Karen Jones, Deputy Director-General People and Engagement: [REDACTED]

## **2.11 Three New Zealand sea lions captured in fishing vessels (SQU6T) in the first week of February**

- Fisheries NZ has notified DOC of the by-capture of three male sea lions in three different squid fishing vessels: on 4 February, 6 February and 7 February.

- Four sea lions have been found dead in the SQU6T fishing vessels in 2019.
- All vessels were using a SLED and had a Fisheries NZ observer on board. Two sea lions were found before the SLED, and a young male is thought to have passed through the grid.
- Key staff are assisting with the debrief of the field research teams as they return to the mainland, but we will provide you with a briefing as soon as we can, which will outline all work under way on the NZ sea lion (through the Threat Management Plan). This includes current by-catch work and the preliminary pup-counts.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.12 Royal Albatross webcam (royalcam) season four**

- We are having a bumper albatross season, with 29 chicks hatched so far. The royalcam chick is thriving.
- DOC's Digital and Media teams, working closely with the Threatened Species Ambassador and Operations, are working on a communications and engagement plan for the season, focusing on climate change and its impact on our oceans, the impacts of plastics, and PF2050, at appropriate intervals.
- So far, the royalcam has received international media interest from the Guardian and the BBC, which has led to a spike in donations to the Royal Albatross Centre's give-a-little page (\$1000+). This will be used to upgrade equipment at Taiaroa Head.
- The webcam continues to capture the interest of a wide range of people and organisations, including Ambulance Victoria in Australia, which has incorporated the webcam as part of a wellness strategy at its workplace. This team is donating proceeds from a morning tea fundraiser to royalcam.
- Our Customer Engagement Unit is looking to harness the benefits of this citizen science project and expand it to benefit other threatened species.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.13 Successful year for DOC's Timber Trail Great Ride**

- The Timber Trail, located in Pureora Forest Park, east of Te Kuiti, is one of 22 Great Rides established to stimulate regional economic growth across New Zealand, through central government funding. DOC manages the Trail, which was opened in 2013.
- Local councils, iwi, businesses, and community groups provide key support for the Great Rides' services and infrastructure.
- The New Zealand Cycle Trail (NZCT) Board provides governance and strategic direction for the Great Rides.
- Every two years, NZCT requires each of the Great Rides to undergo a warrant of fitness (WOF) assessment, which considers key aspects such as governance, trail conditions, accommodation, marketing, and operator performance. The purpose of the WOF is to ensure all 22 trails develop, from "Good to Great."
- The Timber Trail received a high-score rating of 4.15 out of 5 for its latest WOF, which classifies it as being "on the way" to becoming a world-class cycle trail.
- The 2018/19 year looks to be the Timber Trail's best year yet, based on its strong WOF assessment result, and continuing positive feedback from cyclists and operators.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

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#### 3.1 National Fieldays 2019

- National Fieldays 2019 will be held at Mystery Creek, on the outskirts of Hamilton, from 12-15 June.
- The Fieldays is the largest agricultural event in the Southern Hemisphere, with over 100,000 people attending, mainly from the rural sector.
- Data collected at DOC's site at Fieldays 2018 confirmed that the site received approximately 10,000 visitors over the week-long event (60% of whom were from the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland).
- We are currently planning DOC's site for 2019. The proposed theme for the site is New Zealand's Biodiversity Crisis.
- This follows on from the key messages used in Conservation Week 2018, describing the issues, calling for actions and showing people how they can help.
- There are numerous opportunities for you to be present at the Fieldays, either at the opening event or during the week, as well as through pre-recorded video messaging that can be played at the site on various platforms.
- At this stage, the run sheet for the Fieldays DOC site is very flexible, meaning smaller events and speaking/media opportunities could be developed to suit your availability to attend.
- We would be pleased to liaise with your office regarding your interest and availability.

Contact: [REDACTED]

#### 3.2 Invitation to attend installation of carving at new Hauraki District office, Thames

- In October last year, DOC celebrated the opening of a new, purpose-built office and workshop for the Hauraki District, in Thames.
- You were unable to attend, due to prior commitments.
- A pare (door lintel) carving was commissioned through Ngati Maru for the office entrance and we expect it to be completed by the end of February.
- The Hauraki office is organising an event to celebrate the installation of the carving in early- to mid-March and would like to extend an invitation to you to attend this celebration.
- A date for the event has not yet been confirmed, meaning there is some flexibility to suit your availability, should you be able to attend.
- This would be an opportunity for you to connect with local DOC staff, Hauraki iwi and the wider community.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 4 Director-General Engagements

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### February

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 13 Feb    | Public Sector CE's Breakfast, State Services Commission, Wellington |
| 14–15 Feb | NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Wellington                       |
| 21 Feb    | Meet with new Walking Access Commission Board, Wellington           |
| 27 Feb    | TRONT/DOC (Aoraki/Westland Management Plans), Christchurch          |
| 28 Feb    | The Localism Symposium, Wellington                                  |

### March

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 01 March    | Mackenzie CEs field trip, Canterbury   |
| 06–07 March | SLT Retreat, Wairarapa   |
| 08 March    | Tourism Policy School, Otago University                                      |
| 11 March    | DOC Engagement with Air NZ Sustainability Advisory Panel, Auckland           |
| 13 March    | New Frontiers Conference, Trentham   |
| 13 March    | DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch                                   |
| 22 March    | Mana to Mana hui – Fiordland and Mount Aspiring Management Plans, Queenstown |
| 25–29 March | World Protected Areas Leadership Forum, Melbourne                            |

### April

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 01–02 April | Sustainable Trails Conference, Blenheim     |
| 03 April    | Senior Leaders hui, Wellington              |
| 04–05 April | NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Hokitika |
| 17 April    | Sustainability CE's away day, Wairarapa     |
| 18 April    | Tourism CE's Strategy Day, venue TBC        |

## 5 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Upland game preserves
- Proposed transfer of funding from MfE's Community Environment Fund to the DOC Community Fund

Proactively released

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 18 February 2019**

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_



# 1 Standing and Priority Items

## 1.1 Ramp Up Programme

### Budget 2018 – \$181.6m recruitment report as of 11 February 2019

- Roles advertised this week:
  - Digital Content Advisor (Wellington)
  - Geospatial Analyst (Palmerston North)
- Roles provisionally appointed this week:
  - Geospatial Information Coordinator (Nelson)
  - Principal Advisor, Leadership Support (Wellington)

### Current overall recruitment progress to date against investment areas

| Investment Activity   | Roles Under Recruitment to Date | Planned 2018/19 |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Enhancing biodiversity by controlling and eradicating predators (not including roles funded from Contingency for biodiversity initiatives). | 18                              | 40.2            |
| Managing the impacts of increasing numbers of visitors to public conservation land  | 23                              | 22              |
| Enhancing biodiversity protection in the Mackenzie Basin  | 3                               | 4               |
| Strengthening DOC's organisational capacity and capability (policy, asset management, core organisational capability)                       | 17                              | 17.7            |
| Contingency for biodiversity initiatives (freshwater, marine, terrestrial)  | *                               | 21.9            |
| <i>Totals</i>   | 61                              | 105.7           |

\* As outlined in the Biodiversity Contingency Business Case, approximately 149 roles to lift capabilities and capacities over four years were anticipated to deliver the programme outcomes. This is currently being reviewed where targeted contract resource may provide better outcomes than internal recruitment options.

Contact:

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

### National Pest Management Plan

- Public consultation on the proposed National Pest Management Plan begins on 18 February. A copy of the consultation paper will be provided to you.
- We are working closely with Biosecurity NZ on the proposed design of the plan and the management agency, and we will provide you with an updated briefing on these discussions shortly.

### Waipoua Forest soil sampling

- Soil sampling work in Waipoua Forest to test for kauri dieback disease was carried out by Landcare Research, in partnership with Te Roroa, last week. The sampling has the support of DOC and MPI and is part of the Tane Mahuta Response Plan.
- Two areas were sampled: the area surrounding Te Matua Ngahere and the sites that tested positive for kauri dieback near Tane Mahuta in November 2018.
- Lab results from the sampling can be expected in the next few weeks.

## Track upgrades

- Work to upgrade several tracks due to kauri dieback in the Bay of Islands District is set to finish on 21 February. Upgrades include new boardwalks and box steps.
- We will announce the reopening of these tracks via a media release.
- Tenders are also being assessed for track upgrade work on Aotea/Great Barrier Island and in Auckland/Whangarei.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.3 Myrtle rust

- There are no updates on myrtle rust this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.4 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None this week

### Submissions

#### Outcome of Evo Land Limited resource consent application

- In October 2018 we lodged a submission in opposition to a notified subdivision resource consent application in Whangarei. Evo Land Limited applied and proposed to create 13 new lots about 0.5 km from the boundary of Pukenui Forest Conservation Area. The forest contains high conservation values as it is habitat for a variety of indigenous species, including the Northland Brown Kiwi.
- We opposed the subdivision application due to the potential adverse effects on conservation values of the forest. The close proximity of the subdivision combined with higher densities of dogs and cats could potentially result in kiwi fatalities.
- Whangarei District Council granted the consents on 5 February, with conditions that were developed following our feedback to control pets in the subdivision. The conditions will provide reasonably stringent controls on the potential adverse effects of pets.
- We are continuing to advocate for pet restrictions with Whangarei District Council for subdivisions near Pukenui Forest Conservation Area.

### Appeals

- None this week

### Designations

- None this week

### Water Conservation Orders

- None this week

### Other

- None this week

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Update on Cape Kidnappers landslides

- The beach access remains closed.
- Hastings District Council (HDC) is actively managing the beach and is continuing to investigate the risk to public safety.
- On 2 February, another large landslide occurred next to the first one, narrowly missing two tourists.
- We have installed additional illuminated warning signs.
- One Korean tourist injured in the first landslide has been discharged from hospital, the second remains in hospital.
- We are continuing to work with HDC and engineers to manage public safety.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### 2.2 New report assessing the risk to DOC's locations from coastal flooding

- We have completed a Science for Conservation report entitled 'The risk exposure of Department of Conservation (DOC) coastal locations to flooding from the sea'.
- The report will guide DOC's planning and priorities for current and future management and maintenance of coastal assets such as tracks, campsites, huts, carparks and boardwalks.
- The information is already being used to prioritise more detailed assessments of high-risk locations, such as assets on the Abel Tasman Coastal Track.
- At-risk coastal archaeological sites, and ecosystem and species management units have also been identified and prioritised for more in-depth study.
- We have provided a media release and Q+A document to your office, should you wish to release the report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Further information on the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention, 3-6 March 2019

- In the Status Report for the week beginning 11 February, we provided information on MBIE and GNS exhibiting at the PDAC convention.
- I am advised by their Energy and Resource Markets team that their primary purpose at the convention is to advise attendees on New Zealand's regulatory system, and they will only be actively promoting a newly relinquished permit area in the Coromandel, just south-west of State Highway 25A. This area is on private land and abuts conservation land.
- There are no media releases planned by MBIE relating to their attendance. They will inform industry via email and their LinkedIn page. We will have a chance to view the content for these communications before they are released.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 *Phytophthora* affecting the Chatham Islands

- You have requested advice on how you or DOC can encourage ECAN to develop a Pest Management Plan for *Phytophthora* affecting the Chatham Islands.
- The DOC Threats Unit recommends that no immediate additional action is required and that there is a lack of information linking *Phytophthora* to the decline of the kōpi trees (an earlier memo, 18-B-1380, provides more detail).
- Environment Canterbury will soon be drafting a new Chatham Islands Regional Pest Management Strategy. We will make a submission on a number of pests and pathways and will recommend in that plan that *Phytophthora* be included as a potential risk on the Chatham Islands.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 Hoiho

- DOC and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust (YEPT) are responding to three concurrent events affecting hoiho adults and chicks: a starvation event over the last 3-4 weeks, a condition called 'unexplained mortality' (UM), and avian malaria.
- UM has been detected in preliminary necropsies of four dead birds found over the last two weeks. These matched those found in birds that perished in a mass mortality event in January/February 2013 (67 birds) and at a similar time of year in 2017 (9 birds) and 2018 (four birds). The cause of UM is currently unknown.
- Birds dying of UM and avian malaria show similar external symptoms and necropsy is needed to determine the cause of death.
- On 5 February, DOC and YEPT instigated Level 1 of the Unexplained Mortality Event Response Plan for Hoiho. Our priority actions are searching hoiho breeding sites for other disease cases, uplifting any chicks to rehabilitation where adults have died, and co-ordinating searches by staff and volunteers at selected areas in accordance with the plan.
- There are currently 112 hoiho in rehabilitation facilities. Most are chicks brought in over the last month due to low body weight.
- In addition to supplementary feeding, 64 of these birds are having prophylactic treatment for malaria, and 13 are being treated for clinical signs in accordance with a malaria response plan.
- Blood samples are taken and screened for malaria for all live hoiho entering rehabilitation centres and the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital.
- We will continue field searches for sick and dead birds, and care and malaria treatment for those in rehabilitation, await post mortem results, and maintain communication across the network of people managing hoiho.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 2.6 Update on the Ulva Island incursion

- A second Norway rat was caught in a coastal kill trap on Predator Free Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara (Rakiura) on 7 February.
- A full CIMS response has been initiated, involving daily rechecks of all traps, tracking tunnels, cameras and other surveillance tools.

- A rodent dog completed a check of the island on 11 February and this was repeated on 13 February, with nothing detected. This follows four weeks of weekly rechecks after the first rat was found in a kill trap on 9 January.
- Surveillance work will continue for four weeks initially, with the overall length of the response dependent on how the incursion develops in regard to additional rodent detections.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 Making conservation 'easy to see and do' for business

- DOC's Business Partnership Strategy (2017-2020) sets a goal of every New Zealand business restoring our unique biodiversity by 2050.
- Based on this strategic approach, together with an increasing number of businesses contacting us wanting to contribute to conservation, (both on and off Public Conservation Land) the Commercial Partnerships Team (CPT) is leading work to determine the barriers and opportunities for the tourism sector engaging with DOC.
- The 'Enabling Insights' project interviewed 41 senior leaders from the tourism industry, along with a range of experienced DOC Operations staff from across the country.
- Seven recommended actions were identified that will make conservation opportunities 'easy to see' and 'easy to do' for business.
- Key themes and proposed actions were presented to our Senior Leadership Team in December 2018.
- A regionally-based pilot project will now implement and test these recommended actions. The pilot will take place at the Mahaanui District office (Eastern South Island region), and will be supported by CPT.
- The pilot is currently being designed, with a proposed start date of 1 July 2019. It is anticipated that the pilot will run for 12–18 months from that point.
- Tourism Industry Aotearoa is actively involved and the Sustainable Business Network is enthusiastic to support the outcomes.
- This work supports the Tourism Industry Aotearoa Sustainability Commitment as we jointly seek to have 90 percent of their members contributing to ecological restoration by 2025.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 At-Risk Catchments project – exemplar catchments work stream

- The At-Risk Catchments (ARC) project is an MfE-led project which is part of the Government's Essential Freshwater programme. The project will identify a small group of exemplar catchments where a collaborative approach may be taken to help improve the health of waterways from the bottom-up. It will also identify gaps that could be filled by regulatory or non-regulatory interventions.
- This small group of catchments will be representative of a range of pressures and issues, and will help us to deliver quick action and learn more about what works on the ground.
- DOC has been working with MfE and MPI on the exemplar catchments work stream. An overlap in focus has been identified between our priority rivers work under the Biodiversity Contingency funding and the ARC project.
- So far, three catchments in common have been identified between the two projects – the Hoteo in Auckland, the Waitaki in Canterbury and potentially the Pelorus in Marlborough.

- Once funding is confirmed, we will recruit coordinators to help partners develop plans to achieve river catchment restoration. This recruitment will occur for the first two catchments this financial year and for the third catchment next financial year.
- To make the most of the overlaps between the MfE and DOC programmes, officials propose that the three overlapping catchments be included in the first stage of exemplar catchments, and could be announced in March.
- Additional catchments will be identified through continued discussions with regional councils, partners and stakeholders, with a total of approximately ten exemplar catchments to be identified as part of this work stream.
- Further detail will be provided in a briefing to you in early March.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

#### 3.1 Partnership announcement – Nelmac (Kumanu)

- Nelmac is a Nelson-based business offering environmental and asset management nationally.
- Nelmac is rebranding the environmental arm of their business in March 2019, to be known as 'Kumanu'; they are keen to support DOC's goal of 'every business restoring our nature 2050'.
- Nelmac (Kumanu) is entering into a partnership with DOC and the Kea Conservation Trust to support Kea Recovery.
- They will commit a minimum of \$10,000/pa for three years to the Kea Conservation Trust.
- In addition, they will donate two percent of all new revenue generated from their conservation arm, up to a (yet-to-be-determined) maximum.
- Nelmac (Kumanu) will also contribute approx. \$10,000/pa for three years of in-kind services to DOC to support kea recovery. Initially this will focus on assistance with the lead-removal programme from DOC huts, buildings and structures on public conservation land.
- This information is confidential until public announcement in late March 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

#### 3.2 UN World Wildlife Day 2019 event at Kelly Tarlton's, Saturday 2 March

- UN World Wildlife Day (WWD) is observed on 3 March each year.
- The CITES Secretariat sets a theme, and this year the theme is 'Life below water: for people and planet'.
- NGOs and government agencies arrange events to recognise this day and highlight issues related to the theme.
- This year DOC (as the Management Authority for CITES in New Zealand) is holding an event at Kelly Tarlton's in Auckland on 2 March, to increase awareness about CITES-listed endangered marine species. We understand you will be visiting Kelly Tarlton's that morning.

- Two CITES Officers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], will be onsite to interact with the public, and from 12pm to 4pm they will man a table near the Rocky Pools exhibit, which is geared at children and their parents.
- There will be a colouring-in competition, a word finder and a picture display, with cotton bags with images of marine-related CITES species to give away. CITES specimens will be on display, and information brochures will be available.
- This WWD event aligns with the strategic work the CITES team is doing in demand reduction in the Pacific, funded by MFAT's Pacific Security Fund.
- Corals and clams are a particular focus because they create the most work at the border, making up more than 70% of CITES items surrendered/seized in 2018.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 4 Director-General Engagements

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### February

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 21 February | Meet with new Walking Access Commission Board, Wellington                   |
| 27 February | Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu/DOC (Aoraki/Westland Management Plans), Christchurch |
| 28 February | The Localism Symposium, Harbourside Function Centre, Wellington             |

### March

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 March     | Mackenzie CEs field trip, Canterbury  |
| 6–7 March   | SLT Retreat, Pounui, Wairarapa  |
| 8 March     | Tourism Policy School, Otago University                                     |
| 11 March    | DOC Engagement with Air NZ Sustainability Advisory Panel, Auckland          |
| 13 March    | New Frontiers Conference, Trentham  |
| 13 March    | DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch                                  |
| 22 March    | Mana to Mana hui (Fiordland and Mount Aspiring Management Plans) Queenstown |
| 25–29 March | World Protected Areas Leadership Forum, Melbourne                           |

### April

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1–2 April | Sustainable Trails Conference, Blenheim         |
| 3 April   | Senior Leaders hui, Wellington                  |
| 4–5 April | NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Hokitika     |
| 17 April  | Sustainability CE's away day, Pounui, Wairarapa |
| 18 April  | Tourism CE's Strategy Day, TBC                  |

## 5 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Oceana Gold
- Engagement on the NZ Biodiversity Strategy
- Update on Citizens Initiated Referendum

Proactively released





Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 25 February 2019**

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri dieback

### National Pest Management Plan and Agency

- The third round of public consultation began on 18 February and will finish on 18 March. Consultation will include targeted, marae and public meetings.
- We have provided the consultation documents to your office.
- We will provide you with a memo by 1 March on our recent discussions with Biosecurity NZ, regarding input into the proposed plan and management agency.

### Waipoua Forest

- Further sampling is currently occurring around the previous positive samples and around the Te Matua Ngahere area.

- [REDACTED]

### Track upgrades

- The Bay of Islands track mitigation is now complete.
- Tenders have been assessed and awarded for Great Barrier Island and Auckland/Whangarei regions, with work expected to start in March.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

- There are two new unconfirmed finds of myrtle rust on public conservation land in the Remutaka and Kaimai Mamaku Forest Parks.
- Due to hot dry weather in January, there have been fewer finds than this time last year, however infection risk is predicted to increase in February.
- A new joint website between DOC and Biosecurity NZ will be released on 4 March and will become a central information hub. This will include the recent training videos to learn how to identify myrtles and myrtle rust.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Ruapekepeka Pā 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration

- In 2021, the Ruapekepeka Pā Trust will be commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the site's role in the New Zealand Land Wars. You have expressed interest in us working with agencies and stakeholders to support this commemoration.
- We are preparing to engage with key government agencies to on a joint approach to commemorating the occasion.
- We will provide you with a letter to send to key colleagues (e.g. Ministers of Māori Affairs, Defence, and Culture and Heritage) to bring this opportunity to their attention.
- We will be assessing the heritage experience provided on site and, if required, will make improvements to ensure the site is managed appropriately for the commemoration.

Contact: Bruce Parkes, DDG Policy and Visitors: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Taranaki Maunga Treaty negotiations



### 2.3 Molesworth – summary of responses to survey

- We are finalising the summary of responses to the survey on the future of Molesworth Station, for publication on the DOC website. We expect to be able to provide you with a copy within the next two weeks.
- You have previously seen an unpublished draft of this summary.
- Before the summary is published on DOC's website, we will be providing copies to Ngāti Kuri, the Molesworth Steering Committee, Nelson Marlborough Conservation Board and Landcorp.

- Media queries have been received asking to see a copy of the summary of responses. We will provide a copy to them when it is published.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 Great Walks Differential Pricing Trial – February progress update

- In May 2018, you approved the trial of differential pricing for four of the nine Great Walks for the 2018/19 season. You also asked us to assess the effectiveness of the trial and report back in the new year.
- In our last Status Report update (December 2018), we provided you a draft outline of the proposed Evaluation Report and briefing paper. We are currently incorporating your feedback.
- The trial data collection is now complete, and we are analysing the data.
- We have agreed a timetable with your office and will provide you a draft Cabinet paper, briefing and supporting documents by 2 April.
- We have allowed time for you to consult your Ministerial colleagues before presenting the paper to the Cabinet Committee on 2 May. We have also allowed time for us to implement system changes before the opening of bookings for the Great Walks 2019/20 season on 12 June.
- We will provide you with an update to the Differential Pricing Trial Dashboard in early March.
- Officials are available to brief you on the upcoming briefing papers and reports before 2 April, if required.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 DOC Community Fund (DOCCF) update

- Applications to the DOCCF open on 25 February and close on 22 March 2019.
- This round is aimed at projects with a biodiversity focus with about \$8 million available for community groups, private landowners and iwi.
- Information about the round has been circulated widely since December 2018 and we expect a large number of applications.
- The usual regional assessment panel approach is retained for this round.

### Timeline

|                              |                |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Round closes                 | 22 March       |
| Regional assessments         | April-May      |
| Moderation                   | June           |
| Final funding decisions (DG) | 1 July         |
| Decisions to applicants      | Mid-July       |
| Projects commence            | From September |

- We will provide you with regular updates, including a summary of applications received and funding decisions. We will also work with your office to coordinate funding announcements.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Minister Davis is planning a visit to Piopiotahi/Milford Sound

- After the briefing led by the Milford Opportunities Project on 13 February 2019, Minister Davis has indicated he would like to further understand the location.
- Minister Davis' office is scheduling for him to visit Piopiotahi/Milford Sound on 7 March. This is yet to be confirmed.
- MBIE has been asked to develop an itinerary that includes DOC, [REDACTED] interactions.
- [REDACTED]
- Officials are available to meet with you should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]



## 2.9 New Zealand Voluntary National Report on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

- As a member of the United Nations, New Zealand has adopted Agenda 2030, which includes a commitment to implement and report against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- New Zealand has committed to providing a Voluntary National Report (VNR) on the SDGs at the July 2019 meeting of the United Nations High Level Political Forum.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is coordinating the VNR and plans to submit a high-level policy report to Cabinet for approval in April.
- We are inputting into the VNR as part of an informal inter-agency group and are leading on text for SDG Goal 15: *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt the reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.*
- We will keep you updated as work progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.10 Pilot Project Moturoa (iwi competency and capacity building programme) commences

- On 11 February 2019, 10 learners on the pilot Project Moturoa programme were warmly welcomed onto the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) Campus.
- The programme seeks to lift Māori skills and opportunities and support wellbeing, with a focus on under 24-year olds.
- The 10-month NCEA Level 4 programme will see iwi-supported learners complete modular conservation-based content, with an emphasis on mātauranga Māori. NMIT will deliver the technical skills and the mātauranga will largely be taught by local iwi through noho.
- The field-based learning will be on and around Moturoa/Rabbit Island, within the Waimea Inlet restoration project. Moturoa offers a great learning space, with predator control and restoration projects already underway. The area also includes a marine mammal burial site, wetlands, a tōtara remnant and a production forest.
- A review of the pilot is scheduled for late 2019 to inform whether the programme should be continued and replicated into other regions.
- The programme is bringing together many partners including funding through DOC, Ministry of Social Development, NMIT, Tasman District Council, Te Puni Kōkiri and Whenua Kura.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.11 Additional funding [REDACTED] utilising MFE's Community Environment Funding

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- We will work with MfE to explore options, as part of our joint Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, around how this funding can be best used to have greatest impact.
- We will contribute to the briefing that MfE will be providing to you outlining options for this funding.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.12 Project Maukahuka Pest-Free Auckland Island

- The Maukahuka team is in the last phase of a three-month field trial programme on Auckland Island to inform DOC's feasibility study into the eradication of pigs, cats and mice.
- The research work to date has gone to plan and budget involving 38 field staff and complicated logistics. Five of six expedition voyages are now complete.
- Two teams remain present at Auckland Island. A team is finishing operations at Smith Harbour, where two field huts were installed, and eradication methods for pigs were tested on Falla Peninsula (950 ha), in early January. Aerial hunting, aided by a high-resolution thermal camera and follow-up ground hunting with dogs, was able to temporarily remove pigs from the trial site, providing important lessons to inform how the methods might be scaled to an attempt across 46,000 ha. Helicopter and boat support are critical, as is finding and selecting a large enough team of the right people and dogs, to prove absence of a target species in challenging conditions.
- The mouse team followed on from the pig work on Falla Peninsula, using the site without pigs present to conduct a bait uptake trial for mice. The aim was to test if all mice could be targeted using a low sowing rate and summer timing for bait application. The trial involved aerial application of a non-toxic cereal pellet containing the biotracer Pyranine. Monitoring caught mice in the study area over 4500 trap nights across 13 grids, which were tested for presence of bait. Measurements of tussock seeding were also made to inform predictability of mast seeding events (a large tussock mast occurred this summer) and optimise timing of a future mouse eradication attempt.
- Concurrently, at the northern end of the island, the cat monitoring team at Deas Head is running a grid of 60 trail cameras across approximately 800 ha to compare the detectability of cats with leg hold trapping and searches with dogs trained to detect cats. Cats caught and collared with GPS trackers, and DNA sampling, are also contributing to this comparison and will help to inform our understanding of home range and habitat use, as well as how many cats the suite of methods is not detecting.
- The field work is due to finish mid-March and data analysis will be used to inform our feasibility assessment later in the year.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.13 Thirty years of innovation sees Spartina closer to eradication in Southland

- Last week DOC celebrated thirty years of the Spartina eradication programme in Southland.
- Spartina was introduced into the New River Estuary at Invercargill in the late 1930s to aid land reclamation, and this planting continued until 1954. Spartina was also planted in other estuaries in the South and North Islands.

- In Southland, it was soon apparent that these plants were able to spread by seed or vegetatively, and concern was raised in the 1970s regarding the spread and the affect on the estuary and wading bird habitat. By this time, approximately 800 ha had been affected by spartina within New River Estuary and five other estuaries in Southland were also affected by varying amounts.
- In 1988, an inter-agency partnership was formed between DOC, Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and Fish and Game to tackle the spartina issue. Because of weed control expertise within DOC, we took the lead on developing control techniques.
- Through development of innovative techniques, by 2004 all the large areas of spartina had been controlled, but the search for smaller isolated plants continued.
- In 2012, a South Island wide eradication programme was proposed and adopted. To achieve this goal, a lot of time is spent searching for plants and because there is so little spartina left, new techniques and technology are always being looked at to improve search methods.
- In 2017, a spartina search dog was trained by a local dog handler and trialled in the estuary, soon proving its ability to find very small isolated plants. This has been so successful that this dog is now the first certified spartina search dog in New Zealand and has become another important tool for the eradication of spartina.
- This programme has been a 30-year commitment by dedicated and experienced DOC staff, developing techniques and undertaking control work.
- It is expected that 'zero density' (unable to find spartina) will occur within five years, with at least another five years of being unable to find plants required before eradication can be considered achieved.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.14 Upcoming publications

Three publications are summarised below for your interest.

### **How do we prevent the obstacles to good island biosecurity from limiting our eradication ambitions?**

E.S. Kennedy and K.G. Broome

IUCN Proceedings of the Island Invasives Conference 2017, Dundee Scotland.

- Biosecurity is commonly neglected in planning for island eradications. Post-operation biosecurity performs poorly and, as a result, eradications fail. Biosecurity does not promise the rewards of eradication, and is thus under-invested and not respected as a highly specialised discipline. We make poor investments in learning how to invoke good biosecurity behaviour in island visitors and our own DOC staff. The paper concludes by discussing solutions DOC is contemplating to correct these shortfalls.

### **See how they run: increased ranging behaviour counters potential Allee effects in experimentally introduced house mice on an island**

J. W. B. MacKay . J. C. Russell . M. N. Clout . E. C. Murphy .M. E. Hauber

Biological Invasions, January 2019.

- Single male and female mice were released at opposite ends of a rodent-free 6 ha island. Both male and female mice dramatically increased their ranging behaviour compared to mainland mice and their ranges overlapped within days. This likely explains why mice are so successful at establishing on islands.



**Information on measures and related costs in relation to species included on the Union list: *Gunnera tinctoria*.**

Gioria, M. and Osborne, B. 2017. Reviewed by DOC's P Raal

Technical note prepared by IUCN for the European Commission.

- This technical note provides information on the effectiveness of measures, alongside the required effort and resources, used to prevent the introduction and to undertake early detection, rapid eradication, and management for the invasive alien species *Gunnera tinctoria*.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

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None this week.

### 4 Director-General Engagements

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#### February

28 February The Localism Symposium, Harbourside Function Centre, Wellington

#### March

1 March Mackenzie CEs field trip, Canterbury

5–6 March SLT Retreat, Pounui, Wairarapa

7–8 March SSC Leadership team Retreat, Peppers, Martinborough

8 March Tourism Policy School, Otago University

8 March Catalyst Trust, Rees Hotel, Queenstown

11 March DOC Engagement with Air NZ Sustainability Advisory Panel, Auckland

13 March New Frontiers Conference, Trentham

13 March DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch

22 March Mana to Mana hui – Fiordland and Mount Aspiring Management Plans, Queenstown

25–29 March World Protected Areas Leadership Forum, Melbourne

#### April

1–2 April Sustainable Trails Conference, Blenheim

3 April Senior Leaders hui, Wellington

4 April Te Hono – Volume to Value Forum, Hamilton

4–5 April NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Hokitika

11 April DOC/LINZ Quarterly meeting, Wellington

11 April Local Government 2019 Gala Dinner, The Pullman, Auckland

12 April Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington

17 April Sustainability CE's away day, Pounui, Wairarapa

18 April Tourism CE's Strategy Day, location TBC

## 5 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Definition of 'river bed' – possible Court of Appeal proceedings
- Update on Citizens Initiated Referendum

Proactively released