



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 7 October 2019**

---

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

---

## 1.1 Kauri dieback

- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

No updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy

No updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

# 2 Updates

---

## 2.1 Partial reviews of the Conservation General Policy and General Policy for National Parks – progress update

- We are currently undertaking early engagement with iwi/Māori on a process for delivering partial reviews of the general policies and their proposed draft Terms of Reference.
- After you and the Chair of the NZCA jointly announced the partial reviews on 6 August, the Director-General sent letters directly to Treaty partners outlining the significance of the work and inviting them to discuss with officials how they would like to be involved.
- We have received a number of positive responses to this initial communication and have also had conversations with Treaty partners at the seven policy consultation hui that have been held to date (with more still to take place):
  - 27 August - Whangarei
  - 28 August - Kaitiaia
  - 29 August - Kerikeri
  - 17 September - Havelock (Te Tau Ihu)
  - 24 September - Masterton
  - 24 September - Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau
  - 4 October - Palmerston North (Manawatu)
- Conversations have been constructive. Hui attendees have been keen to discuss the drivers behind the partial reviews (e.g. the recent announcement of an all-of-Government response to Wai 262, and the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Supreme Court decision), and many have reflected on the importance of Treaty partners being substantively involved at all stages of the partial review process.

However, opinions differ regarding the shape this involvement might most usefully take exist.

- We expect to complete early engagement with iwi/Māori on the potential process and draft Terms of Reference by the end of November 2019, at which point we will analyse feedback collected at hui and through direct correspondence. This will inform our development of a proposed approach (or potential options) for delivering the partial reviews.
- Officials are available to meet with you should you require further details on this matter. A similar update has been provided to the NZCA for consideration at their next meeting.

Contact:

## 2.2 Tiakina Ngā Manu progress

- On 8 Aug 2019, we reported that the first three aerial 1080 operations of DOC's 2019 mast response campaign had produced unsatisfactory rat control results (refer 19-B-0600).
- Controlling rats in 2019 is proving harder than in any previous mast response campaign. Rats have reached record levels at most of the sites we are monitoring. Following the results of the first three operations, we switched to a more intensive aerial 1080 methodology in response.
- Encouraging results have come back from the first two operations that used the more intensive method. The Clinton Eglinton had 1% post op rat tracking and Abbey Rocks had 2.7%. Both results are acceptable. We will have more confidence in the new method when results from more completed operations become available over the next few weeks.
- The more intensive method takes longer to implement because every area is effectively flown twice, to ensure no gaps occur in bait coverage. For this reason, we have adjusted boundaries in some places to ensure the area can be successfully flown in a suitable weather window.
- We expect to complete approximately 900,000 hectares of predator control rather than the 1,000,000 hectares as originally planned. Approximately 250,000 hectares of predator control has been completed. The 2019 mast response campaign will continue into early 2020.
- The programme is currently one month behind schedule, due to persistent bad weather throughout August. Weather delays are the main limiting factor for the programme. No delays have occurred due to protest action, planning, permissions, or other factors within our control.

Contact:

## 2.3 Noumea Conservation Conference, April 2020

- The 10th Pacific Islands Nature Conservation and Protected Areas Conference will take place in Noumea, New Caledonia, on 20-24 April 2020. This six yearly, large-scale Pacific regional meeting attracts around 1000 participants and will likely include a one-day Ministerial/high level segment. We are not yet aware of which countries will be represented at this level. Working level participants normally include representatives from regional agencies, international and national non-government organisations, donor partners and government officials from the wider region.
- The overall purpose of this meeting is to provide direction and guidance on the Regional Framework/Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected

Areas in the Pacific Islands, and is linked to the review and development of Global Biodiversity Targets.

- The 2020 conference is built around 'Nature Conservation Action for a Resilient Pacific'. DOC has encouraged the inclusion of a specific sub-theme: 'Threats to biodiversity – Invasive Species', which is well aligned with our planned engagement in the Pacific region. This session may see the launch of Predator Free Pacific and presents an opportunity for New Zealand to contribute its Predator Free experience and thinking – potentially through hosting a side event, providing presentations, and showcasing DOC's work more broadly.
- At this early stage we are keen to understand your interest and availability to attend this event. We will keep your office updated as more information is available. DOC has budgeted for the participation of two representatives, including one SLT member. We are also encouraging MFAT to provide support for Pacific island representatives to attend.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.4 Funding for Waiheke Island marine environment**

- We worked with Ngāti Poa to submit an application to the Gulf Innovation Fund Together (GIFT).
- We have been informed that GIFT has agreed to provide \$25,000 for a dedicated iwi-led work stream for the protection and regeneration of Waiheke Island's marine environment.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.5 Healthy Nature Healthy People**

- We have created two nature film clips featuring common dolphins and Snares crested penguins, with support from Natural History New Zealand (NHNZ), to support wellbeing.
- The clips were first used in a trial with Christchurch schools, facilitated by Canterbury University, to support children suffering post-traumatic stress disorder following the earthquakes.
- Subsequent research indicate that the clips are beneficial in supporting children's wellbeing and behaviour and that effects are lasting. Viewing images of nature is proven to reduce cortisol levels, heart rate and improve outlook, mood and concentration.
- The clips will be uploaded to the DOC website and promoted through DOC social media channels to provide access to all New Zealanders. The clips will be viewable on mobile devices or desktop computers to enable access to nature for those unable to get outdoors.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.6 DOC Community Fund update**

- At the status meeting on 16 September, you asked whether Environment Centres (ECs) could perform the role of community conservation hubs.
- ECs focus their efforts on a range of matters, including management of waste, energy and water, food growing, biodiversity and sustainable transport.

- ECs in the right location, with the right capacity and expertise, could fulfil a community conservation role.
- We will pursue funding an EC to test its suitability to perform this role (subject to a suitable proposal being received and assessed as appropriate to fund).
- We will engage with MfE to ensure that ECs are aware of the community conservation hubs funding opportunity.
- The next DOCCF round will open in February 2020. All documentation will be on the DOC website by the end of November 2019.
- We will provide you with a memo shortly on the next DOCCF funding round. We will also contact your office to organise a meeting with you to obtain your contributions on:
  - Working with community strategy (and where DOCCF fits)
  - DOCCF 2020 round (criteria, process, decision maker, etc)
  - Community hubs.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Director-General Engagements

---

#### October

8 October	NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton
9 October	Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
12–13 Oct.	Copland Valley with Marc England, CE Genesis Energy, Copland Valley
14 October	Joint NIWA/DOC SLT hui, DOC Wgtn
16 October	Meeting with Min Jones, Bellamys
31 October	Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wgtn

#### November

11 November	Joint FENZ/DOC SLT hui, Fire and Emergency, the Terrace Wgtn
19 November	Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wgtn
23–24 Nov.	Cropp River visit with NIWA, Cropp River
28–29 Nov.	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Martinborough
30 Nov–1 Dec	Kea Conference, Te Anau

#### December

3 December	Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
17 December	DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

---

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:

- Rangitira Developments Ltd v Minister of Conservation – Legally privileged

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 14 October 2019**

---

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

---

## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows.

### Submissions

#### Southland District Plan Change 1

- On 7 October we lodged a submission in support of Plan Change 1 to the Southland District Plan.
- Plan Change 1 introduces new provisions placing specific restrictions on lighting of signs and structures on Rakiura/Stewart Island.
- Plan Change 1 seeks to provide protection for the natural dark sky on Rakiura, which is internationally recognised through the recent Dark Sky Sanctuary accreditation that you and DOC have formally supported.

#### Suelen Properties Limited – Notified consent

- On 3 October we lodged a submission opposing coastal permit applications sought from Southland Regional Council for the establishment of three marine farms on the coast of Rakiura/Stewart Island.
- The applications are for the establishment of three oyster farms, occupation of coastal space, and structures. Some oyster farming was granted short term consent at these sites in the past five years, but these replacement applications seek to significantly expand the proposed development at the three sites.
- The sites and adjacent landforms are all outstanding natural landscapes and character, requiring protection under the statutory planning documents. Our opposition is on the basis that there will likely be significant adverse effects of the development on the surrounding landscape and natural character of the coastal environment, and that the applicant has not undertaken a robust assessment of these effects.

#### Plan Change 2 – Horizons One Plan – Existing Intensive Farming Land Uses

- We are intending to submit in opposition of Plan Change 2 to the Horizons One Plan.
- Plan Change 2 seeks to update the nitrogen leaching maximums to reflect recent changes in the OVERSEER nitrogen modelling software. The plan change also seeks to allow exceptions to the nitrogen leaching maximums, by providing a discretionary pathway for intensive land use activities which implement good management practice.
- We consider that the discretionary pathway is too permissive and seeks to subvert the national policy direction for maintaining and improving freshwater quality. The plan change allows for continuous nitrogen leaching that will adversely affect water quality in the region, which is already in a degraded state. We are concerned that the plan change will contribute to the eutrophication of the coastal lakes in the region, which are at risk of degrading beyond a manageable state.
- We have shared our broader concerns with the Ministry for the Environment, including concerns that Horizon is acting contrary to national policy. The Ministry for the Environment is also considering lodging a submission.

Contact:



## 1.2 Kauri dieback

No updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.3 Myrtle rust

No updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

# 2 Updates

## 2.1 Draft EDS Protected Landscapes Report – case study on the Mackenzie Basin

- The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) has been preparing a report on landscape protection in New Zealand, which was commissioned by LINZ and DOC. The report is drawn around three case studies: Mackenzie basin, the Waitakere Ranges and the Hauraki Gulf islands. It is due in February 2020.
- EDS has provided a draft pre-peer review copy of the Mackenzie basin case study to LINZ and DOC for feedback by 22 October.
- We will provide comments to EDS on this draft case study, and will work with EDS on the other case studies and the final report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.2 Mouse incursion – tracking card detection on Motutapu Island

- On 8 October we detected mouse footprints when routinely checking tracking card monitoring stations on Motutapu Island.
- Motutapu Island has been pest-free since 2011, and is home to wildlife species such as takahē, tieke / saddleback, tuturuatu / shore plover, pōpokatea / whiteheads, kākāriki and kiwi.
- Rangers are deploying traps and tracking tunnels in the vicinity of where the mouse was detected and follow-up monitoring with conservation dogs will be conducted.
- Iwi with an interest in Motutapu have been advised.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Fisheries Liaison Programme

- We are in the process of resolving an issue related to non-compliant tori lines being used by the commercial surface longline tuna fleet.
- DOC oversees the protected species liaison officer programme, which provides commercial operators with equipment and advice on seabird mitigation. Due to issues around interpretation by liaison officers of the detailed regulatory specification of short streamers on tori lines, it has been identified that non-compliant tori lines are currently in use by the commercial fleet.
- We are working with Fisheries New Zealand to remedy the situation so that domestic and international seabird mitigation requirements are met and the risk of seabird bycatch is minimised. A set of actions has been developed that focus on bringing tori lines up to the required specifications. We have already made a bulk purchase of tori line material, and at-sea testing of a tori line designed and built in accordance with the required specifications will be undertaken during October. Beginning in November, the liaison programme will commence rollout of new tori lines across the surface longline fleet. As part of the rollout process, updated guidance material will also be provided by liaison officers to fishers.
- Fisheries observers and compliance officers have also been made aware of the situation and have taken steps to improve monitoring so that any future incident such as this is more quickly identified.
- DOC and Fisheries New Zealand intend to inform the Seabird Advisory Group the week commencing 14 October.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 Director-General Engagements

---

### October

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 14 October | Launch PF2050, Zealandia                                  |
| 31 October | Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington |

### November

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 11 November   | Joint FENZ/DOC SLT hui, Fire and Emergency, the Terrace Wellington  |
| 19 November   | Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wellington                               |
| 15–17 Nov.    | Dusky Sounds visit with Partners/CEs, Dusky Sounds                  |
| 21 November   | Ngā Whenua Rāhui Komiti hui, Wellington                             |
| 23–24 Nov.    | Cropp River visit with NIWA, Cropp River                            |
| 28–29 Nov.    | State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Martinborough |
| 30 Nov–1 Dec. | Kea Conference, Te Anau   |

### December

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 3 December | Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club |
| 6–9 Dec.   | Chatham Islands visit with Partners/CEs, Chathams   |
| 17 Dec.    | DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington               |

## 4 Addendum

---

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:

- Whio death Mt Taranaki
- Three Waters regulatory reform

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 21 October 2019**

---

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

---

## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

### Submissions

#### Plan Change 2 – Horizons One Plan – Existing Intensive Farming Land Uses

- We are intending to submit in opposition of Plan Change 2 to the Horizons One Plan. Plan Change 2 seeks to update the nitrogen leaching maximums to reflect recent changes in the OVERSEER nitrogen modelling software. The plan change also seeks to allow exceptions to the nitrogen leaching maximums by providing a policy framework that we believe is too permissive for intensive land use activities that implement good management practice.
- We seek to support the national policy direction for maintaining and improving freshwater quality. The plan change allows for continuous nitrogen leaching which will adversely affect water quality in the region, which is already in a degraded state. We are primarily concerned that the plan change will contribute to eutrophication of coastal lakes in the region, which are at risk of degrading beyond a manageable state and will unlikely be recovered.
- We have shared our broader concerns with the Ministry for the Environment, including concerns that Horizons is acting contrary to national policy. The Ministry for the Environment is also intending to lodge a submission.

### Appeals

#### Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan

- On 9 October 2019, we lodged joining notices from the Minister of Conservation to 15 of the 30 appeals to the proposed Greater Wellington Natural Resource Regional plan.
- The joinings support aspects of the Fish and Game, Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust, Rangitāne o Wairarapa Incorporated Society, and Meridian appeals on provisions supporting freshwater quantity and quality outcomes, wetlands, the protection of outstanding natural features and landscape outcomes, and biodiversity offsetting.
- The joinings oppose aspects of the following appeals: HortNZ, Transpower, Carterton District Council, Porirua City Council, Meridian, Wellington International Airport, Centre Port, Wellington Water, Federated Farmers, NZTA, and Beef and Lamb NZ. These appeals do not support NPS-FM, NZCPS, RMA Part 2 and section 30(1)(c)(ii) and s70 requirements addressing the following matters: freshwater quantity and quality, wetlands, fish passage, significant indigenous biodiversity values, the protection of outstanding waterbodies, natural features and landscapes, public open space, hazard management, wastewater and stormwater, management of coastal matters, weed management rules, earthworks and vegetation clearance.
- Fifteen other appeals were not joined as they were either not a strategic DOC priority, already addressed by the earlier Minister's appeal, or not coastal and marine/ NZCPS related.
- Other parties have an opportunity to support or oppose your appeal. New parties (i.e. who don't already have an appeal) who support the MOC appeal are QEII Trust – particularly in relation to Taupō swamp; and Heritage NZ – in relation to heritage maritime structures, particularly wharves. New parties opposing your appeal are Kāinga Ora – particularly in relation to affordable urban development, especially in Porirua; Masterton and South Wairarapa District Councils; and Kapiti Coast District Council.
- A prehearing conference on the approach to be taken to the appeals and joinings has been scheduled by the Environment Court for early November.

Contact:

## 1.2 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

- MPI is leading joint senior official meetings to continue to ensure a collective understanding of the next steps for identifying kauri dieback funding.
- There are no myrtle rust updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

### 2.1 Acoustic detections of Hector's or Māui dolphins in north Taranaki

- As part of the monitoring programme under the current Threat Management Plan (TMP), we have been trialing the deployment of underwater hydrophones to detect Hector's and Māui dolphins.
- We undertook initial deployments near Manukau Harbour to determine the viability of using CPODs (bioacoustic recorders) to detect the dolphins, and the extent of their offshore distribution.
- Following successful results from Manukau, we deployed CPODs at various locations along the coast of Taranaki and Whanganui, approximately 2 km offshore.
- Detections of Hector's or Māui dolphins were recorded on CPODs deployed at Tongaporutu (just south of Mokau on the north Taranaki coast) and Tapuae (offshore from Port Taranaki) between November 2016 and December 2018. It is not possible to determine which sub-species was detected.
- There were no detections further south, although effort was much lower in this area.
- The final report from this work has been received, and will be circulated amongst iwi prior to being made public. Results from the Taranaki deployments were not used in the risk assessment as the results were received after the risk assessment had been finalised.
- None of the CPOD detections were outside of fisheries closures.
- We will review the need for changes to the monitoring programme in line with decisions taken as part of the review of the TMP.
- For the coming summer, we will deploy the CPODs in the southern extent of Māui dolphin habitat as well as undertake boat-based surveys.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Management – engagement with iwi

- Officials attended a hui in Palmerston North with Ngāti Hauiti and Ngāti Apa to discuss deer management and forest health as part of broader hui to engage on conservation issues. There was agreement that Tino Rangatiratanga was needed to build a plan for management – with knowledge at place needing to be expressed.
- Iwi agreed that deer management was contentious in that it brought in the tourism dollar, was mahinga kai, but deer presence has meant the forest has suffered.
- Maungaharuru Tangitū Hapū will meet on 18 October, and other Hawkes Bay iwi will meet with DOC on 19 October. Deer management is on the agenda at both of these hui.

- Hui are also being arranged for 7 November in Wairoa and 8 November in Gisborne. Deer management discussions are still to be confirmed.
- We will continue to update you on these engagements as they occur.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Nominating DOC staff for Queen's Birthday and New Year Honours (Honours)

- At the status meeting on 7 October, you asked if DOC staff members could be nominated for Honours.
- The focus of the Honours nominations that come through your office are individuals from the community who have contributed significantly to conservation. DOC staff are sometimes nominated because of their voluntary community work. We nominated one such person last round.
- In your role as Minister, you are free to nominate anyone you wish for Honours recognition, including DOC staff you consider have contributed significantly to conservation as part of their roles. However, the standard for public servants is quite high, and tends to favour exceptional senior public servants at the end of their careers.
- DOC can nominate staff for Honours through a separate process. The Director-General can put forward one or two public servant nominees to the State Services Commissioner (SSC) per round, who nominates the most appropriate candidates from across the public sector.
- SSC also runs a range of awards that specifically recognise service by public servants, including the Public Service Awards, Frontline Excellence Awards, and the Spirit of Service awards. The two DOC staff you mentioned might be appropriate recipients for one of these. Nominations for these are put forward by the Director-General.
- We await advice from you if you would like to progress any specific nominations for the Honours, and will continue to prepare a list of potential nominees for your approval for the next Honours round.
- We are working with your office to set an appropriate deadline for providing you the list.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 Update on Waiheke Island marine proposals

- An iwi and community led process is underway to discuss how to protect and regenerate Waiheke Island's marine environment.
- This process includes a dedicated iwi-led work stream, funded (\$25K) by Gulf Innovation Fund Together, to enable Ngāti Paoa to develop their Ahu Moana strategy and take a visible leadership role in the overall marine project.
- Any proposals for marine protection will come after a Future Search planning evening scheduled for 8-10 February 2020.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## 2.5 Mimiwhangata Marine Protected Area Proposal

- We are collaborating with the Ngātiwai Trust Board and the Northland Regional Council to explore enhanced marine protection at Mimiwhangata.
- A Governance Group/Project Management Group has been established and a Terms of Reference and Project Plan developed.
- A visit to Goat Island and Te Tapuwae o Rongokako marine reserves, and to the Deep Water Cove rahui area, is planned for November to learn about these models for marine protection and consider what might be best for Mimiwhangata.
- We are developing an engagement plan to ensure Ngātiwai hapū and other key stakeholders are included in the process and kept fully informed as the project progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 2.6 CITES Import Permits to be issued for Rhinoceros and Leopard from Namibia

- We intend to issue a CITES Import Permit for Rhinoceros, *Ceratotherium simum* (skull, 2 x horns, tail, shoulder mount, 4 x feet, 2 x replica horns, jaw and backskin tanned) and one for Leopard, *Panthera pardus* (skull and full mount) on 24 October under section 14 of the TIES Act. Both items are hunting trophies from Namibia and both species are Appendix I protected by CITES.
- Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is the most strictly controlled but the CITES Convention does allow for trade in legally acquired and sustainably harvested hunting trophies of Appendix I specimens.
- The leopard falls under the Namibian quota; there is no quota set by Namibia for hunting trophies of rhinoceros.
- The New Zealand CITES Scientific Authority has issued an NDF (Non-Detriment Finding), which indicates that this import is not considered to be detrimental to the survival of the wild population of rhinoceros or leopard in Namibia. This is a requirement for Appendix I movement.
- The Namibian population of rhinoceros has grown substantially, from 16 animals in 1975 to 1,037 in 2018. The increase is due in part to the importation of 500 live rhinoceros from South Africa since 2008. South African populations of rhinoceros have shown strong population growth, with protection, rising from 8,440 animals in 1997 to 18,000 in 2018.
- As part of the NDF consideration, and in line with CITES Resolution 17.9, the New Zealand Scientific Authority accepted the finding of the Scientific Authority of the exporting country (Namibia) that the export of the hunting trophy is not detrimental to the survival of the species. There was no scientific or management data to suggest otherwise.
- This importation is valid but may come under political scrutiny. There may be media and public interest in CITES data showing that New Zealand imported a rhinoceros hunting trophy. Key messages are being prepared in the event of any media queries.

Contact: [REDACTED]



### 3 Director-General Engagements

---

#### October

- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
- 31 October Environmental Protection Authority annual update, EPA Offices, Wellington

#### November

- 2 November Perth Valley Visit with Devon McLean and others, Perth Valley Westland
- 5 November Public Service Day Awards, Parliament
- 7 November Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Bellamys
- 19 November Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wellington
- 15–17 Nov. Dusky Sounds visit with Partners/CEs, Dusky Sounds
- 21 November Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti hui, Wellington
- 23–24 Nov. Cropp River visit with NIWA, Cropp River
- 28–29 Nov. State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough
- 30 Nov–1 Dec Kea Conference, Te Anau

#### December

- 2 December FENZ/DOC Leadership Team hui, Fire and Emergency, The Terrace
- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 5 December Environment Select Committee Annual Review, TBC Wellington
- 6–9 December Chatham Islands visit with Partners/CEs Chathams
- 17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

---

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:

- Hauraki Gulf Marine Park 20-year anniversary
- Governor-General to return Pūkaha Scenic Reserve to Rangitāne iwi on 8 February 2020

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# Department of Conservation Status Report

**Week beginning: 28 October 2019**

---

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

---

## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows.

### Other

#### District Plan Review and Plimmerton Farm Plan Change – Porirua City Council

- DOC commented on the draft plan and plan change on 18 October. We are unsure how these two work streams will integrate.
- Key concerns related to the proposed approach to indigenous biodiversity. The plan only focussed on managing the effects on development on Significant Natural Areas rather than maintaining or enhancing indigenous biodiversity. We suggested that they review the Biodiversity Collaborative Groups report to, for example, enable them to create a robust framework for maintaining biodiversity values.
- We supported the approach to enabling the maintenance of tracks. However, we had concerns with the lack of controls around the construction of new tracks or fences highlighting that the effects of these should be assessed.
- We also noted concerns around the proposed implementation of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. Examples included, no provisions relating to managed retreat and provisions enabling the construction of soft structures without any environmental management considerations.
- The proposed provisions also allow ongoing loss of wetlands and natural character. We suggested that they review their proposed approach to managing these values.
- We supported a strong policy approach to achieving hydraulic neutrality in the Plimmerton farm plan change and suggested a further strengthening of it.
- The proposed provisions confuse how offsetting should be applied. We referred them to the local government offset guidance.
- We also sought clarification on several matters including thresholds for water sensitive design, the approach to mapping the coastal environment and areas of high natural character.

Contact: 

## 1.2 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

No report this week.

Contact:   


## 2 Updates

---

### 2.1 Member of hunting party dies in Kaweka Forest Park

- A member of a hunting party died in Kaweka Forest Park on Saturday, 19 October 2019.
- The incident occurred on the northern side of Kaweka Forest Park, near Taihape.
- NZ Police advise that the death is not thought to be suspicious.
- Bad weather prevented rescuers recovering the body on Saturday evening, the body was recovered successfully on Sunday 20 October.
- NZ Police are referring the matter to the coroner.
- DOC is talking with mana whenua for the purposes of Karakia me Whakawātea mō te ngāhere (prayers for clearing the forest).

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Fatality in Tongariro National Park

- DOC was notified by LandSAR of the death of a 51-year old Chinese visitor near the Tongariro Alpine Crossing track on Sunday, 20 October.
- The woman was part of a group hiking the Tongariro Northern Circuit. Three of the group returned to Whakapapa on Friday while the deceased continued to complete the Tongariro Alpine Crossing section of the Tongariro Northern Circuit track. She was reported overdue on Sunday by the group and a LandSAR search recovered her body from Red Crater.
- Police have investigated the incident and the case has been referred to the Coroner.
- A rāhui was placed over Tongariro Alpine Crossing by Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro from Monday 21 October to sunrise Thursday 24 October.
- DOC staff are stationed at the start and end of the track and at Tongariro Northern Circuit huts advising visitors to respect the rāhui and use alternative tracks during this time.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Felling of trees in Arthur's Pass National Park – Update

- A review is underway into the felling of 190+ trees (mostly mountain beech) along tracks and campsite areas in Arthur's Pass National Park.
- The work occurred in August 2019 and was part of follow up actions from a Visitor Risk Management (VRM) process.
- In this case, a high use track (Arthur's Pass Track) with a known history of tree fall was targeted along with campgrounds, shelters and picnic areas.
- There has been a strong focus on visitor risk management in DOC over the last year and it is expected that the current review will identify opportunities for improvement in processes and VRM systems.
- The tracks, campgrounds and other sites where trees were felled were checked by a qualified arborist. The role of the arborist was to identify trees that were of risk. The arborist identifies high-risk trees but leaves the decision of felling the trees with the team lead ranger.

- During field inspections, the arborist identified more trees that were risky than those that were selected for felling by the rangers, i.e. not all hazardous trees were felled.
- The rangers on the ground made safety judgment calls based on the instructions from the Manager, Senior Ranger, and Supervisor as well as the arborist's guidance and their own experience.
- The Director Operations Eastern South Island has asked the Heritage and Visitor Unit to undertake an urgent review of the tree felling work in Arthur's Pass National Park. In particular, the decision-making processes that were applied and if changes are required.
- An initial report is anticipated by the end of the week.
- As part of the review two pieces of work have been commissioned and are under way to assess:
  - how the National Park Plan was considered in the decision-making process and future recommendations, and
  - what ecological assessment was applied and future recommendations
- A full and final report, including the above advice, will be available at the conclusion of the review.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.4 Mouse incursion – tracking card detection on Motutapu**

- On 8 October, DOC staff detected mouse footprints when routinely checking tracking card monitoring stations on Motutapu Island (Status Report 94 refers).
- Motutapu Island has been pest-free since 2011, and is home to wildlife species such as takahē, tīeke / saddleback, tuturuatu / shore plover, pōpokatea / whiteheads, kākāriki and kiwi.
- Rangers from the Auckland Inner Islands District commenced deploying traps and tracking tunnels in the vicinity of where the mouse was detected.
- The mouse was trapped on 23 October and has been sent for sexing and DNA sampling.
- Follow-up monitoring with conservation dogs will be conducted.
- Iwi with an interest in Motutapu have been advised.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.5 Changes in Seismic Activity at Mount Ngāuruhoe**

- GNS Science are looking into changes in seismic activity at Mount Ngāuruhoe in Tongariro National Park in recent days.
- While it is normal to have some seismic activity around the mountains within Tongariro National Park, the depth and frequency of earthquakes has alerted GNS to monitor the activity more closely.
- If seismic activity increases, GNS may release a Volcanic Alert Bulletin in the coming week and Ngāuruhoe's Volcanic Alert Level may be shifted from zero to one, which is likely to lead to an increase in media attention given the Great Walk season has recently opened.
- We are monitoring the situation and will continue to work closely with GNS. We will provide an update early next week; however, your office will be notified of any change as appropriate.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.6 Grant of concession for Rangituhi / Colonial Knob Scenic Reserve, part of Porirua Adventure Park**

- A lease concession has been granted (pursuant to delegation) by the Director, Operations - Lower North Island to place two gondola base towers, overhead gondola line and zipline, and to construct new walking tracks at Rangituhi / Colonial Knob Scenic Reserve.
- The developments granted on public conservation land are part of a larger 'Porirua Adventure Park' development authorised on land administered by Porirua City Council.
- Most of the activity (gondola with base and top stations, café, zipline, and mountain bike tracks) are outside land administered by DOC.
- Special conditions have been included to mitigate visual effects.
- Resource consents for 'Porirua Adventure Park' were granted on 3 May 2019.
- The permission application was advertised for public comment on 24 September 2019. 159 submissions were received; 153 were in support, 5 were against and 1 was neutral.
- The application initially sought a concession to construct mountain bike tracks in the Scenic Reserve. This aspect of the application was withdrawn by the applicant when it became apparent that new mountain bike tracks were not provided for in the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy for Rangituhi / Colonial Knob.
- Officials are available to meet with you should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## **2.7 South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO): 7th meeting of the Scientific Committee**

- DOC recently attended the seventh meeting of the Scientific Committee of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), held 5–12 October in Havana, Cuba.
- We attended as part of the New Zealand delegation, which comprised four members representing MPI, DOC and Te Ohu Kaimoana.
- Our priorities for the meeting were to:
  - seek agreement on observer coverage in the jumbo flying squid fishery, which overlaps with the distribution of vulnerable seabirds; and
  - participate in the scientific review of information underpinning the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), including spatial management and encounter protocol arrangements developed collaboratively by New Zealand and Australia, and adopted in the bottom fishing conservation management measure (CMM) in January 2019.
- Following strong interventions from New Zealand on the need to assess seabird bycatch in the jumbo flying squid fishery, which currently has no observer coverage, we were pleased to see agreement of a recommendation to the SPRFMO Commission (taking place in February 2020) to adopt 5-15% observer coverage in the fishery.
- The 2019 bottom fishing CMM was predicated on an interpretation of the UN General Assembly Resolutions that Significant Adverse Impacts (SAIs) on VMEs can be managed at regional scales. However, this interpretation is now being questioned by Australia, conflicting with the New Zealand position, resulting in a referral to the SPRFMO Commission for clarification.

- We will continue to work with MPI, MFAT and SPRFMO members to further scientific and policy advice in the lead up to the February meeting, and to seek the best possible conservation outcomes.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 National Partner, Kiwibank, renews Partnership Agreement 2020

- Kiwibank has been the National Partner for the Conservation Dogs Programme since 2016. DOC and Kiwibank have recently completed a renewals process which extends Kiwibank's support of the Programme out to 2022.
- [REDACTED]
- Their financial commitment has boosted the programme's ability to perform enhanced levels of biosecurity, including quarantine, surveillance and incursion response on our pest-free islands and inland sanctuaries.
- The increased funding also provides for increased utilisation of species detection dog handler teams across key recovery programmes, including kākāpō, kiwi, whio and takahē.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.9 Success with Chinese community during Conservation Week

- DOC Auckland reached out to the residential Chinese community as part of Conservation Week. The outreach included a Chinese-language guided whale and dolphin experience in the Hauraki Gulf with key strategic partners Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safaris.
- Organised by [REDACTED] – DOC's Chinese Sector Market Specialist – these mid-week safaris engaged a new audience of 600 people with Auckland's marine environment, raising some \$40k to support with their marine mammal research.
- Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safari is a long-term partner of DOC and over the past few years we have found ways to help them grow their business. All marine mammal research on the Hauraki Gulf is done from their vessels at their cost. Their role in marine area education is vital and working in partnership and helping them reach new audiences is a key goal.
- This activity is one of many in a marketing plan specifically designed to reach Chinese residents to support them to engage safely and meaningfully in nature.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.10 Confirming dates for Conservation Week 2020

- The dates for Conservation Week 2020 have been set as 5-13 September 2020. This is two weeks prior to the school holidays, which start on 26 September.
- Te Wiki o te Reo Māori is based around Te Reo Māori Day on 14 September, which commemorates the presentation of the 1972 Māori language petition to Parliament, and it will be 14–20 September 2020.



- The 2020 General Election could take place at any time up to 21 November. If the election date is a clash, we would propose to move Conservation Week to after the election.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## **2.11 Social licence campaign**

- The first phase of DOC's social licence marketing campaign, 'In it for good', has finished after being in market from 27 August – 18 October 2019. This campaign featured DOC staff and showcased the passion and dedication they show in their work.
- The campaign achieved a cumulative 5.6 million impressions and 1.6 million complete video views, on a modest advertising media spend.
- The reception both online and internally has been very positive.
- The second phase of this campaign is under development and will address predator control directly. The project team are currently scoping some more research to guide what this might look like.
- The second phase will be delivered to market in collaboration with some of our partner organisations, including Forest and Bird, Federated Farmers, and Predator Free NZ.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Director-General Engagements

---

#### October

- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
- 31 October Environmental Protection Authority annual update, EPA Office Wellington

#### November

- 2 November Perth Valley Visit with Devon McLean and others, Perth Valley Westland
- 5 November Public Service Day Awards, Parliament
- 7 November Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Bellamys
- 19 November Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wellington
- 15–17 Nov. Dusky Sounds visit with Partners/CEs, Dusky Sounds
- 21 November Ngā Whenua Rāhui Komiti hui, Wellington
- 23–24 Nov. Cropp River visit with NIWA –Cropp River
- 28–29 Nov. State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough
- 30 Nov–1 Dec. Kea Conference, Te Anau

#### December

- 2 December FENZ/DOC Leadership Team hui, Fire and Emergency, The Terrace
- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 5 December Environment Select Committee Annual Review, Wellington
- 6–9 December Chatham Islands visit with Partners/CEs, Chathams
- 17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

---

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:

- CITES Appendix II Protected Clam shell import from Tokelau

Proactively released