WAIKATO CONSERVATION BOARD TE PAPA ATAWHAI O TE ROHE O TAINUI

Annual Report 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority pursuant to Section 6(0) of the Conservation Act 1987



Cover photograph:

Photographer: Peter Langlands The Australasian bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* One in five of the New Zealand population is found in the Whangamarino Wetland

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Foreword from the Chair

Having had the privilege of chairing the Waikato Conservation Board since 2009, all my previous reports have expressed frustration at the ongoing restructuring of the Department and the impact on the staff, funding cuts and the drawn out process of getting Waikato's Conservation Management Strategy in place.

The funding issues remain and until our politicians realise conservation is an investment in our country's future, the Department will continue to face serious financial issues.

However, a number of positive things allow me to be a lot more positive into the future. The Review of the Conservation Boards and the recommendations that came from that highlight the value that conservation boards can offer if properly utilised. One of the issues that the Waikato board has faced has been that most of the information we were receiving was historic. It's very pleasing to report this has now changed and the proposal to put a structured workplan in place is very welcome.

The Waikato Board appreciated the opportunity to present the Conservation Management Strategy to the NZCA meeting in Hamilton in February 2014. It has been a long journey that began in 2006 and it was gratifying to have both staff and Waikato Conservatin Board members present when the document was handed over. Not only was it a significant occasion for us, it provided an opportunity to interact with Authority members as we are all part of the conservation equation.

The structural reviews of the Conservation Department has been an ongoing area of concern for our Board members. At times we felt that the higher echelons of the Department were ignoring the fact the staff is the Department's greatest asset. Hopefully this is now behind us and staff can now focus on their specific roles instead of wondering whether they still have one. As an outsider looking in it appears the new structure is settling in well but I believe it will be sometime before the general public can come to grips with the Partnerships / Service model and who does what.

With reference to the Conservation Authority specifically, board members value any contact and it would be beneficial to have representation at as many of our meetings as possible. The NZCA's newsletter following each meeting is an excellent contact point as well and allows Board members to follow what NZCA is doing.

As this will be my final report I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the amazing people I have had the privilege of being involved with in Conservation. The dedication and commitment of the staff members is a constant source of inspiration and it is something I always treasure. In conclusion my sincere thanks to my fellow Board members for their support and also to all those volunteers that have contributed so much to Conservation over the past year.

All the's

Arthur Hinds Chairperson August 2014

1. Introduction

The Waikato Conservation Board is an independent advisory body established in October 1990 by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987 (as amended by the Conservation Amendment Act 1990, the National Parks Act 1980, and the Walkways Act 1990).

The Board is responsible, under this Act, for shaping Conservation Management through the development of a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for land administered by the Department of Conservation. The Board provides advice to the Department on policy, acts as a liaison body between the Crown and the public, and advocates for conservation values on land not administered by the Department.

In late 2013, the Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Conservation presented a report on the review of Conservation Boards, being the first review since 1990. This came at a time when the Department of Conservation (the Department) was implementing significant changes to the way it was structured and organised to deliver conservation outcomes. This included significant boundary changes; however Conservation Boards boundaries remained unchanged and continue to reflect their respective CMS's.

The Minister of Conservation appoints members to the Board for terms up to three years having regard to their experience, expertise and links with the local community including tangata whenua. Members can be appointed for subsequent terms. Due to the impending restructure of the Department in 2012/13, the Minister of Conservation cancelled the 2013 Board appointments process and extended the terms for those members of Conservation Boards whose terms ended on 30 June 2013. An appointment round occurred at the end of 2013 with five members being reappointed as from the 1 May 2014, four new members being appointed as from 1 July 2014 and a new Kahui Ariki (King Tuheitia representative) appointed as from 1 May 2014.

This Annual Report is submitted to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA), the national parent body for Conservation Boards, under Section 6 (O) of the Conservation Act 1987.

2. Waikato Conservation Board District

The Department of Conservation introduced new boundaries as part of its restructure in September 2013. Its areas are now described in Regions, with offices, while having responsibilities in their local districts, also working with each other on a regional and interregional basis.

The Waikato Conservation Boards' area of administration now straddles the new Northern North Island Region and the upper most part of the new Central North Island Region (see Figure 2). This area is serviced by Conservation Service teams based in the Te Kuiti Office, Te Rapa Base, Hauraki Office and Whitianga Base. In addition, under the new structure, there are Partnerships teams located in Te Kuiti Office (1 x King Country/Taupo Partnerships ranger), Hamilton Office (Waikato Partnerships team), Hauraki Office and Whitianga Base (Coromandel Partnerships team).

The Board's boundaries extend from a point at the Waikato River mouth, north-east to Miranda, taking in the whole of the Coromandel Peninsula (including the Mercury and Aldermen Island groups and Cuvier Island), south to Waihi Beach, west to Paeroa then generally south following the Waihou River to Tirau. The boundary then follows Highway One south to Atiamuri, the Waikato River west to Whakamaru, Western Bays Highway 32 to Kuratau, Highway 41 west to Ohura via Taumarunui; then north to Panirau before generally following the Mokau River west to the coast, and thence north to the Waikato River mouth.

The Board's area of responsibility is nearly 270,000ha of public Conservation land (12% of the total area 2,250,000 hectares). The land is described in more than 500 separate parcels for various purposes, including forests, wetlands, caves, marine reserves, offshore islands, historic sites, wildlife protection, and recreational areas.

Culturally, the Conservancy falls mainly within the rohe of Tainui waka and the Hauraki, Tainui, Maniapoto and Raukawa Iwi/hapu

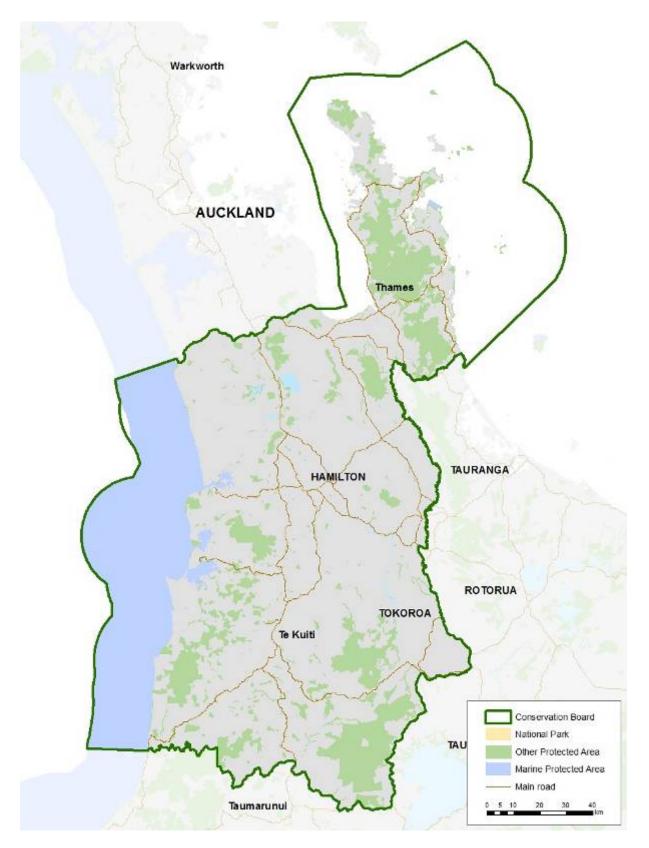


Figure 1: Map of current Waikato Conservation Board area

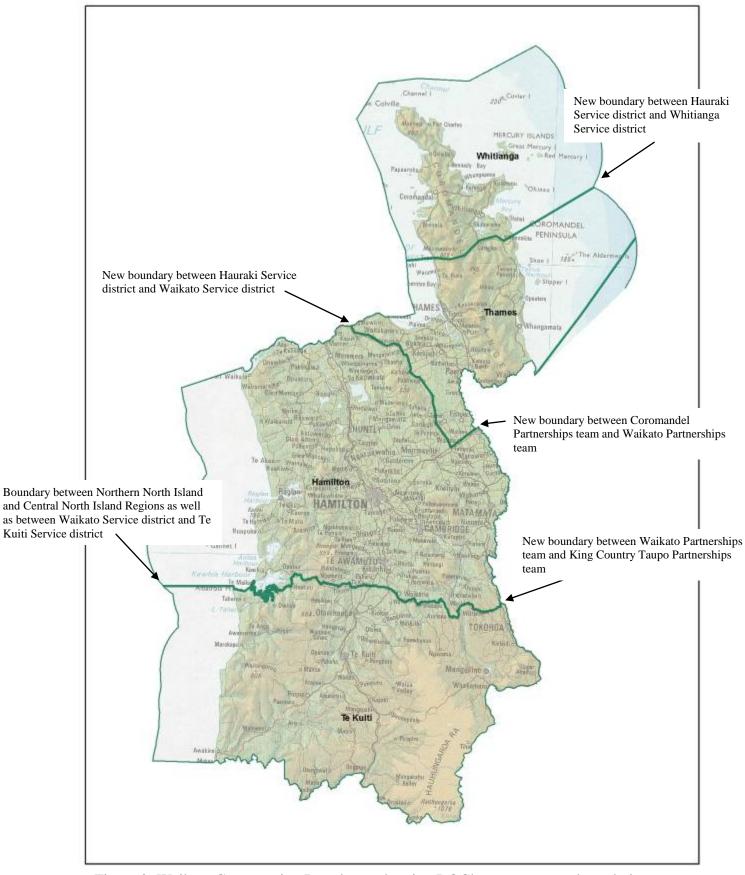


Figure 2: Waikato Conservation Board area showing DOC's new structure boundaries

3. Membership

The Minister of Conservation, by various notices in the New Zealand Gazette, appointed members to the Waikato Conservation Board as follows:

MARK BROUGH appointed January 2011; present term expires 30 June 2016.

Mark was raised on a King Country farm at Aria, and has been farming in his own right for the past 20 years. A keen outdoors person, Mark has a strong interest in Conservation and native bush protection and has been involved in various Conservation projects over the years, including Clean Streams and Green Plan forestry. He is a member of Environment Waikato's Central King Country steering group for pest control, has been a member of the Waitomo Search and Rescue organisation for many years, and enjoys hunting, tramping, and kayaking in his "spare time." Mark was appointed Board Chairman as from 1 May 2014.

ARTHUR HINDS JP, Whitianga, appointed 2004; present term expires 30 June 2015.

Arthur is a farmer at Whitianga, with some 15 years experience as a director on dairy company boards, including the New Zealand Dairy Group 1991-2000. He is a former Environment Waikato councillor and, as chairperson of the Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group, a strong supporter of community conservation initiatives. Arthur is a former president of the Hauraki Justices of the Peace Association and Whitianga Lions Club. His recreational interests include clay target shooting, hunting, and fishing. Arthur was elected Board chairperson in August 2009 and performed this role up until 30 April 2014.

DELL HOOD, Hamilton, appointed 2006; present term expires 30 June 2015.

Dr Hood is a public health medicine specialist. She has long-time interests in tramping and voluntary conservation work, and is a foundation member (and past chairperson) of the Friends of Tiritiri-Matangi. She has been a member of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust for many years and owns a QEII covenant property in the Coromandel. She is involved in restoration work at several local reserves such as Kakepuku and Whewell's Bush and is a member of the Moehau Environment Group. Her outdoor recreation interests are tramping, kayaking and cycling.

KEVIN JAMES ROBINSON, Thames, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2017.

Kevin is a self-employed dairy farmer. He has extensive knowledge of the history and recreational activities in Waikato. He has extensive governance experience in the region as current president of the Hauraki-Coromandel Federated Farmers, vice chair of National Federated Farmers and director of many companies. He is well connected to farming and rural communities. His outdoor recreation interests are fishing, hunting and tramping.

DAVID TAIPARI, Ngatea, appointed 2008; present term expires 30 June 2016.

David is the General Manager for Ngati Maru Runanga. He is a representative for Ngati Maru on the Hauraki Maori Trust Board, and a trustee of Matai Whetu Marae. He is also a technical officer for the Hauraki Gulf Forum, manager for the Hauraki Collective and chairman of the Independent Maori Statutory Board for the Auckland region. He has an understanding of cultural values associated with the environment and has an understanding of public processes and the relevant legislation. His outdoor recreation interests include fishing, golfing and hunting. He is of Ngati Maru, Ngati Whanaunga, Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Paoa, Rongo U, Te Patuwai, Ngati Awa and Tuhoe iwi.

MEGAN CAMPBELL, Hamilton, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Megan has qualifications in Arts, Policy, and Commerce. She has worked in policy and communications roles for a number of central government organisations, within Parliament, as well as the not-for-profit sector. Megan currently owns a research consultancy as well as an import distribution company. Megan has broad governance experience and serves on a number of communities and national-level boards. She has strong interests in community-focused conservation projects, native and productive garden projects, tramping, fishing, and mountain-biking. Megan's term finished on the 30 June 2014 and did not apply for reappointment

SALLY DAVIS, Pukekohe, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Sally is a widely-experienced senior manager in both central and local government and served as Chief Executive for Franklin District Council from 2007-2010. She has also held senior positions at Hamilton and Christchurch City Councils and was a founding member of the NIWA executive team. As past president of the NZ Limnological Society (now Freshwater Sciences Society) Sally has worked extensively in freshwater fisheries research and was involved in securing water conservation orders for the Rakaia, Rangitata, and Mataura Rivers. Sally is also keen on fishing, hiking, camping, and gardening. Sally did not seek reappointment

ANDRA NEELEY, Otorohanga, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014. Andra has been a farm partner for many years and a regional office holder for New Zealand Federated Farmers, with extensive background in environmental management, policy, planning, and analysis. As a Waikato Regional Councillor from 1998-2012, Andra has been chair of catchment services and was instrumental in the establishment of catchment advisory committees throughout the Waikato Region. Andra is a strong advocate of pest management for both biodiversity and bovine TB gains. She is also a certified Resource Consent Commissioner. While Andra did seek a nomination she was not successful.

GAYLENE ROBERTS, Hamilton, appointed 2007; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Gaylene represents Kahui Ariki (the Maori Sovereign, King Tuheitia) on the Board in terms of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995. Of Ngati Raukawa and Ngati Mahanga affiliations, Gaylene is a strong advocate for Iwi involvement in environmental issues. She is currently a member of Te Kauhanganui o Waikato, Iwi Maori Council of the Waikato District Health Board, a member of the Waipa District Council Regulatory Committee, Waikato District Health Board Kaumatua Kaunihere chairperson, and Maungatautari Ecological Island Trustee. Gaylene is programme coordinator for environmental management studies at Te Wananga o Aotearoa. Gaylene did not seek re-nomination.

KATE CHERRINGTON, Papamoa, appointed 1 May 2014; present term expires 30 June 2016 Ms Cherrington is a nominee of the Head of Kahui Ariki. She is the director of Puata Hou Ltd, an education and community consultancy. Ms Cherrington has skills in strategic planning, conflict resolution, consensus building and management, and has previous board experience. Her outdoor recreation interests are gardening and organics. She is of Ngati Hine, Nga Puhi and Ngati Raukawa iwi.

4. Meetings

Budget, fees and allowances

The Board's budget for 2013/14 was \$13,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. Board members are paid a daily meeting fee of \$140 and the chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$190. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Board business.

Conservation Board Meetings

The Board in the past has generally planned their meeting venues in order to cover as much of the Conservancy as possible. However, during this year, four one-day meetings were held, in the Hamilton Office, Hamilton. The Board now has a policy that two-day meetings involving an inspection on the second day will go ahead only if a quorum of members is available for the inspection.

Meeting Date	Place	Field Inspection
26 August 2013	Hamilton	No
12 November 2013	Hamilton	No
04 March 2014	Hamilton	No
20 May 2014	Hamilton	No

Members' attendance record at meetings 2013-2014

Member attendance at the four meetings held during the year was as follows

Mark Brough (4); Megan Campbell (2); Sally Davis (2); Arthur Hinds (4); Dell Hood (4); Andra Neeley (4); Gaylene Roberts (1); Kevin Robinson (3); David Taipari (3)

Meetings were normally held every three months on dates when the majority of the Board members could attend and when a quorum was established.

Conservation Board Meeting Summary

26 August 2013, Meeting

- An update of the Waikato CMS was provided to members. Members will receive a final draft report shortly and then have six months to consider and review the CMS document before presenting the final draft to the NZCA for approval. The sub-committee of which Mark Brough and Kevin Robinson are a part of were involved in four days at SMS hearings in Hamilton, Whitianga and Thames. The Board was advised the Waikato River Settlement required a joint working party approach to the Waikato CMS. Kevin paid tribute to Rachel and other DOC staff for the work that had gone into the document. Key comments made by Mark were; Waikato Conservancy has a wide range of people living in it, there were a lot of people and community organisations who wanted to offer their time, energy and expertise to DOC and everybody wants a piece of DOC.
- Tutsan Action Group (TAG) Chairman, Graham Wheeler and committee member Geoff Burton spoke to the Board and highlighted yet another pest plant, tutsan presently

spreading throughout the region. The group had been set up in Taumarunui with Wanganui DOC, Horizons, several farmers and Iwi to try and get some boundary control. The group is hoping to get a biological control for the weed. Its root systems are such that it will have a major impact on native bush regeneration. Geoff warned the weed threatens agriculture, forestry, conservation areas and tourism by reducing the productivity of land and the cost of keeping it out of public conservation areas will be substantial – currently estimated at \$30 million per annum and rising.

Greg Martin, Waikato Conservator for the past 18 years advised this was his last Board meeting with his decision not to apply for a position in the new structure. Arthur thanked Greg for his tremendous work over the many years he had been Waikato Conservator and particularly for his involvement over the nine years that he (Arthur) had been a member of the Board. David, Dell, and Andra added their tributes to Greg for the work he had achieved on behalf of conservation over many years

12 November 2013, Meeting

- The November meeting had a presentation from Graeme Fleming, CEO of Lake Taupo Protection Trust engaged in the protection of water quality of Lake Taupo. The project is a successful example of collaboration between the Government, Ngati Tuwharetoa and the local community
- ➢ In regards to the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (CMS), the Board reviewed responses from the Department to points/amendments raised by the Board and after discussion these were approved. The Board was also asked to approve some suggested changes which had been received from Waikato Tainui (as per Partnership Accord agreement) and worked on with the Department. After discussion these were approved. The Waikato CMS was then unanimously approved for presentation to the NZCA.
- The Board was provided with a very informative presentation on the pest eradication project on Great Mercury Island (GMI) by Pete Corson, GMI Project Manager. Pete provided a synopsis of biodiversity and historic values found on GMI and the agreement between DOC and Great Mercury Island Ltd to work together. Its key outcomes are;
 - Reduce the bio security threat GMI presents to other islands in the Mercury Group
 - Want to see seabirds, lizards special to the Mercurys on GMI
 - Reviving other species ones to Mercury islands then consider species not to the detriment of these
 - Need to have a place where we can showcase our efforts
- Mark Brough reported back on the Yellow Eyed Penguin conference he attended in Dunedin on 17-18 October 2013. The Minister, Nick Smith attended and spoke at the conference noting NZ has 80,000 endemic species which includes marine species that require protecting while United Kingdom has one – a bird. The Hon Nick Smith added tourists want to see species in the wild (not zoos) and he is keen to put in more marine reserves.



Mahoenui giant weta, photographer: Gregory Sherley. Previously considered extinct, rediscovered in an area of King Country gorse and features in the Waikato CMS

4 March 2014, Meeting

- Arthur provided a summary of the recent 2 day event/visit by NZCA and described the handover of the Waikato CMS to the NZCA, a very auspicious occasion. Individual Board members commented on the value of getting to know people and places referring to the field trip to Rangiriri and Whangamarino Wetland and special mention was made of Waana Davis and the way she bridged the gap between Maori and Pakeha and her interest in local issues.
- Explanation was provided by a Partnerships ranger, Erana Stevens to the Board re the office previously known as the Maniapoto Area Office and where it sat in the new structure. This office which is within the Board's area of administration was now called the Te Kuiti office and reported to the King Country/Taupo Office located in Taupo in the new Central North Island Region.
- Brigitte Meier, Conservation Partnership Manager, Waikato advised the Board there was an MOU between DOC and the Department of Corrections being signed with the potential for a significant partnership
- The Board was also briefed on the Waikato Regional Council's review of their RMA consent to discharge through the Pungarehu canal into the Whangamarino Wetlands. The Department has serious concerns with this in terms of the impact on the Wetland and has science to back up these concerns. This is likely to be an ongoing issue for sometime as despite a series of meetings DOC and WRC are a long way apart in finding solutions.
- Gemma White, Conservation Partnerships Manager talked about a number of key activities happening on the Coromandel Peninsula. The first was the initiation of a Cathedral Cove Integrated Management Plan which Arthur Hinds was involved in. This is the first step towards meeting the provision within the Waikato CMS that enables a review of the Hahei Coast and Marine Reserve Place section, within the first three years of the CMS becoming operative. Other points discussed were the Thames-Coromandel District Council lead initiative of a Coromandel Coastal Walkway from Hot Water Beach

to Whitianga and an upcoming multi agency meeting with the Waikawau Bay Community to discuss proposed works in the area



Cathedral Cove, Coromandel, photographer: B.Ahern

20 May 2014, Meeting

- Arthur Hinds provided a full report of the Board Chairs meeting with the Conservation Board review panel in Wellington on 11 Nov 2013 (a brief summary had been provided at the March meeting). This meeting was an opportunity for Chairs from around the country to provide comment to the panel which was being chaired by the Hon.Nicky Wagner. A number of recommendations have come out of the Review which Arthur supported and urged members to become familiar with these. There was interesting discussion about the conflicting values DOC now has to balance, i.e. recreation focus versus conservation values being lost.
- In the her Report, Conservation Partnerships Director, Northern North Island, Nicki Douglas provided an update of Waikato Treaty Settlements. These included Ngati Raukawa whose settlement has come into legislation, Ngati Haua and Ngati Koroki Kahukura whose deeds have had a first reading in the House with settlements set to come into legislation shortly and the Hauraki Collective has come into a Deed. In regards to the latter, individual negotiations were taking place with the twelve members of the Collective. A Board member added Ngati Maniapoto was currently going through the hearing stage. Information from the respective areas around Maniapoto were being compiled into a report before moving onto next stages.

5. Advocacy and Liaison

With the Public

The Board had no formal opportunities for liaison with the public during the year. All four meetings were of one-day duration held in Waikato Conservancy, Hamilton.

Farm Environments Awards (Andra Neeley)

The Board continues to take an interest in these Awards, an initiative that was introduced by the Waikato Conservation Board in conjunction with the Waikato Regional Council in 1993. A good field of competitors was reported for the 2013/14 year.

National Wetland Trust (Andra Neeley)

Andra Neeley provided updates at each meeting to keep the Board informed on developments with this Trust. A predator proof fence has been completed around Lake Serpentine and with public access and specific advocacy days, the Trust will continue to highlight the value of these wetland areas.

Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (Arthur Hinds)

Arthur served as a trustee representing the Waikato Conservation Board, on the Maungatautari Environment Island Trust and provided regular updates on this internally significant project. His term finished on 30 June 2014. While there is no provision on the trust board for a Conservation Board representative, Kate Cherrington, Waikato Conservation Board Kahui Ariki, has put in an application to become a Community representative trustee which will continue the link.

Again this year there has been ongoing issues with adjoining landowners who no longer support having part of the 47 kilometres of predator–proof fence on their properties.

Despite that, significant Conservation progress continues, with the Trust having the long term aim of it becoming a mainland home for kakapo.

Malcolm Anderson continued to be the General Manager during the reported year, but resigned recently. John Simmons is Acting General Manager in the interim.

Te Whanganui a Hei Marine Reserve (Arthur Hinds)

The Waikato Conservation Board's rohe includes Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) marine reserve. A sub-committee of the Board made up of four Ngati Hei representatives, four community representatives and a conservation board representative meet three times per year to discuss issues relative to the reserve.

With Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council

A report on Fish & Game Council meetings is given by Board liaison member Mark Brough at Board meetings. The Waikato Conservation Board's agenda and minutes are sent to the executive officer, who similarly provides the Board with agendas and minutes. The Harrier Hawk has been taken off the protected list.

With other Boards/Organisations

The Board maintains contact with neighbouring Conservation Boards through the exchange of meeting agendas and minutes. A report on each neighbouring board's minutes is given at each Board meeting and also once the minutes are finalised are uploaded on the DOC website.

With the New Zealand Conservation Authority

Minutes from the New Zealand Conservation Authority meetings are circulated to members with the Board's own meeting agenda papers and are commented on by the Board/NZCA liaison member at the meeting. Professor Mick Clout, the Waikato liaison member; receives copies of Board agendas and meeting minutes. Professor Mick Clout attended the Board's March meeting.

With Iwi Authorities, Maori Trust Boards, and Tangata Whenua

Meeting minutes and agendas are circulated to the Maori Trust Boards. Kahui Ariki (The Maori King) is represented on the Waikato Conservation Board (presently by Gaylene Roberts) as a condition of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995.

Board minutes are also available to the wider public via the Department of Conservation website.

Liaison members during the year under review were East Coast Bay of Plenty Board – Dell Hood; Tongariro / Taupo Board -Mark Brough; Taranaki / Whanganui Board - Mark Brough; Auckland Board – Sally Davis.

6. Board Functions Section 7M Conservation Act 1987

Section 6M(1)(a) Approval of Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) The Board welcomed a resumption of the CMS review process and the CMS sub-committee met with Department planning staff several times during the year.

Section 6M(1)(b) Conservation management plan approval, review, and amendments: No amendments or reviews were undertaken during the year.

Section 6M(1)(c) Advice on the implementation of CMS and CMP: No action.

Section 6M(1)(d)(ii) Advice to the New Zealand Conservation Authority or the Director-General on any other Conservation matters: The Board's concerns about the nature and extend of DOC's restructuring was made known to the NZCA.

Statutory Land Management: The Board was not asked to provide the Department with advice on any land exchange proposals during the year.

Resource Management Issues: The Board received regular updates from the Department on its involvement with Resource Management Issues.

Concessions: The Board received regular updates from the Department on its involvement with the Concessions issues.

Section 6M(1)(f) Liaise with Fish and Game Council on Board-related matters: No formal discussion with Council took place during the year.

6.1 Powers of Board Section 6N Conservation Act 1987

6N(2)(a)Advocate interest at public forums and statutory planning processes The Board made no formal submissions during the year.

6N(2)(b) Appoint committees and delegate them functions and responsibilities:

The Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve Committee was established in 1993 and functions as a sub-committee of the Waikato Conservation Board under section 6Nb of the Conservation Act 1987.

Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve Committee consists of nine members, four from Ngati Hei, one from the Mercury Bay Community Board, three from the local area and one from the Waikato Conservation Board. This committee can only operate within the mandate of the Conservation Board and any recommendations need to be formally approved by the Board.

The committee meets in March, July, and November to discuss issues relating to the Reserve. An operations report is given at each meeting including monitoring results and any instances of fishing within the Reserve.

A report is also received from the Friends of Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve Trust.

6.2 Other Board Responsibilities

Section 6Q (1) Conservation Act 1987: Co-opting Members: The Board does not presently include any co-opted members.

Section 17G Conservation Act 1987: Procedure for preparation and approval of Conservation Management Plans: The Board did not consider any Conservation management plans this year.

All the's.

Arthur Hinds Chairman <u>WAIKATO CONSERVATION BOARD</u> 30 June 2014