

WELLINGTON

CONSERVATION BOARD

Te Runanga Papa Atawhai O Te Upoko O Te Ika A Maui

**Annual Report to the
New Zealand Conservation Authority
1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008**



Serviced by

Wellington Conservancy, Department of Conservation

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1. Introduction

The Wellington Conservation Board has prepared this Annual Report for the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by Section 6O of the Conservation Act 1987. The Board also intends distributing copies to many other individuals and organisations who may have an interest in the Board's role and activities.

2. Members of the Board

The Minister of Conservation appoints the members of the Wellington Conservation Board after a process that includes public nominations.

Key changes to the Board's membership during 2007/08 were:

- Te Akapikirangi (Aka) Arthur and Ray Ahipene-Mercer completed their terms in August 2007 after nine years and three years respectively
- The Minister appointed three new members in September 2007
 - Margaret Shields for three years
 - John Hancock for three years
 - Liana Poutu for one year to complete the term of Andrew Cutler who resigned in February 2007
- Dennis Roberts resigned in April 2008.

The following table summarises the Board's membership in June 2008.

Name	Residence	Date first appointed	Term ends/ended	Years of service
Bev Abbott, Chair	Wellington	13/10/02	31/08/08	6
Helen Algar, Deputy Chair	Wellington	01/09/04	31/08/10	4
Geoff Doring	Carterton	01/09/04	31/08/10	4
Andrew Foster	Wellington	01/09/04	31/08/10	4
John Hancock	Featherston	01/09/07	31/08/10	1
Rob McColl	Wellington	16/10/06	31/08/09	2
Nicky Nelson	Wellington	16/10/06	31/08/09	2
Liana Poutu	Wellington	01/09/07	31/08/08	1
Margaret Shields	Porirua	01/09/07	31/08/10	1
Margaret Wassilieff	Wellington	01/09/03	31/08/09	5
Haami Te Whaiti	Featherston	01/09/05	31/08/08	3



Photo: Wendy Newton, Board Members

3. Functions and powers

The functions and powers of the Board are set out formally in sections 6M and 6N of the Conservation Act 1987. Key roles include:

- providing advice to the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)
- recommending that the NZCA approve the next Draft Conservation Management Strategy
- advocating for conservation in statutory processes and public forums.

Conservation management strategies are statutory documents which show how general policies will be implemented. They also establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. The current Conservation Management Strategy for Wellington 1996-2005, (the CMS), was approved by the NZCA in April 1996.

4. Area and key places

4.1 The Board’s area

The Board’s area is similar to DOC’s Wellington Conservancy but does not include the Chatham Islands. It lies south of a line from the mouth of the Manawatu River, through the Manawatu Gorge south of Woodville and across to the east coast, south of Cape Turnagain.

4.2 Key places

Some of the key places managed by the DOC in the Board’s area are:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Lake Wairarapa Wetlands | Government Buildings* |
| Carter Scenic Reserve | Turnbull House* |
| Castlepoint Scenic Reserve | Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve |
| National Wildlife Centre (Mount Bruce) | Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve |
| Putangirua Pinnacles Scenic Reserve | Hemi Matenga Scenic Reserve |
| Cape Palliser | Waikanae Estuary |

Rewa Bush Conservation Area
 Rocky Hills Sanctuary Area
 Tora Scenic Reserve
 Colonial Knob
 Makara Coast
 Pauatahanui Inlet, Porirua Harbour
 Pencarrow Head
 Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve*
 Red Rocks Scientific Reserve
 Dominion Observatory
 Taputeranga Marine Reserve

Papaitonga Scenic Reserve
 Snail Reserves, Horowhenua
 Tararua Forest Park
 Aorangi (Haurangi) Forest Park
 Rimutaka Forest Park*
 Kapiti Island Nature Reserve
 Kohunga Lakes*
 Matiu/Somes Island*
 Kapiti Marine Reserve
 Kapiti Island North Reserve
 Mana Island

In December 2007, the Crown and the Port Nicholson Block Claims Team signed an Agreement in Principle which may have implications for the future management of the places on the above list marked with an asterisk.

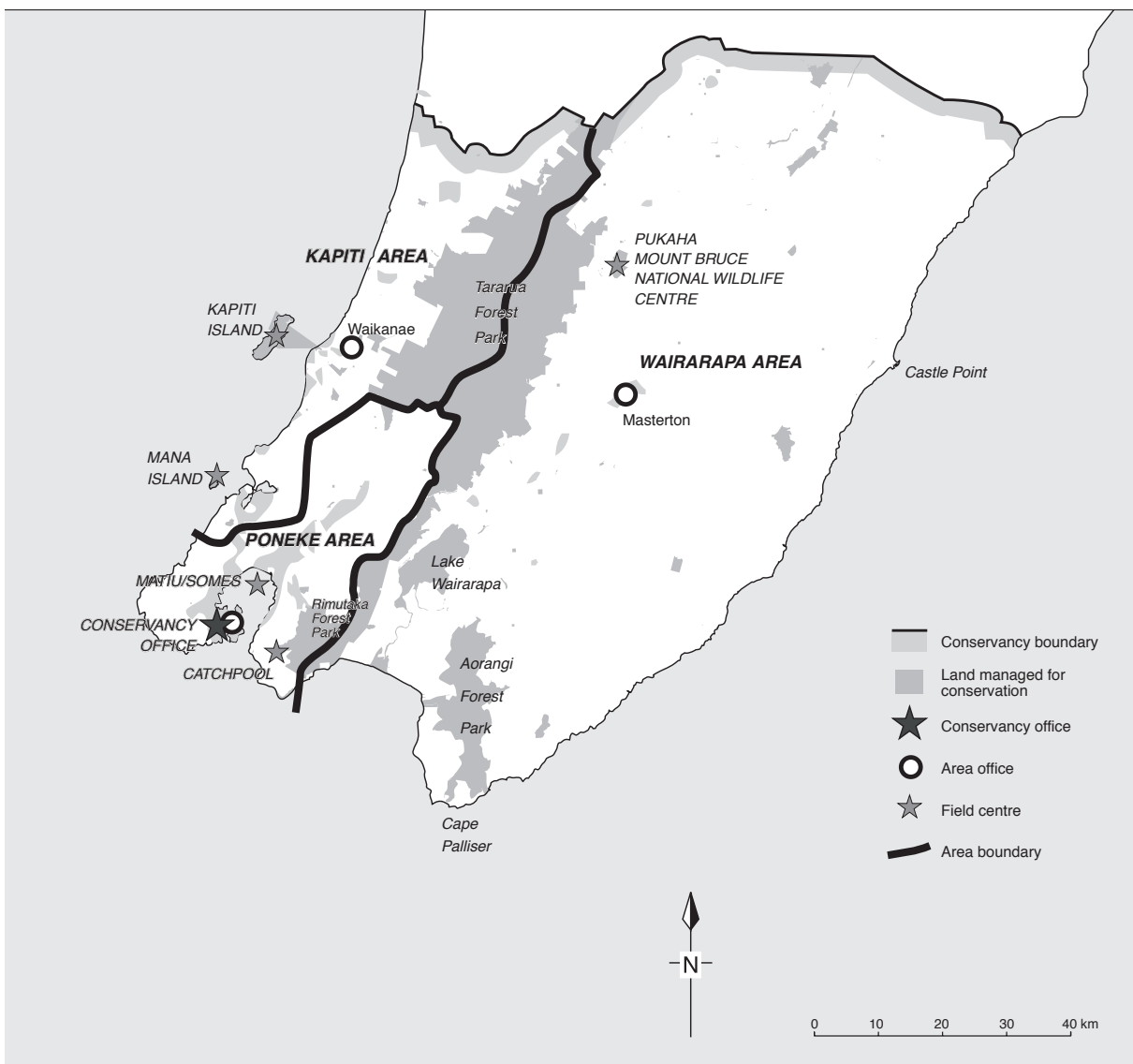


Figure 1: Map of the Wellington Conservation Board's area

5. Meetings, visits and workshops

During the 2007/08 financial year, the Board's formal programme included meetings, visits and workshops.

5.1 Meetings

The Board held six full-day meetings, mostly in Wellington, but also in the Wairarapa:

- 24 August 2007 in Wellington
- 12 October 2007 in Wellington
- 7 December 2007 at Pukaha/Mt Bruce
- 16 February 2008 at the Kohunui Marae, Pirinoa
- 26 April 2008 in Wellington
- 20 June 2008 in Wellington.

5.2 Visits

Visits to specific locations provided opportunities for the Board to:

- become more familiar with the conservation values of key places
- discuss management challenges and approaches with DOC staff and stakeholders
- monitor progress towards the objectives in the current CMS
- identify issues that may need to be addressed during the review of the CMS.

5.21 Visit to Pukaha Mt Bruce

During its time at Pukaha Mt Bruce, the Board heard from locals, experienced the visitor centre facilities and walked a section of a new track in the forest adjacent to the National Wildlife Centre. The Board did not inspect the captive breeding programmes, choosing to focus on the areas of most change since the CMS was written. The following points were noted.

- Since 2006, Pukaha Mount Bruce (PMB) has been managed by a Board in a partnership between the National Wildlife Centre Trust, Rangitaane o Wairarapa and DOC. Greater Wellington Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council and Tararua District Council are also represented on the Board. The PMB Board provides the overall governance and strategic direction for PMB.
- The National Wildlife Centre Trust which was established in 1984 used to own the visitor centre building and the Nocturnal House but transferred ownership to PMB in 2008. Trustees are representatives of Royal Forest and Bird Society, Ornithological Society, World Wildlife Fund, three councils and the Conservation Board.
- Funds generated by visitor centre activities are invested in education programmes and visitor facilities.
- The involvement of Rangitaane o Wairarapa is adding an enhanced Māori dimension to the management of PMB and the visitor experience.
- DOC handles day-to-day management of the visitor centre, the captive breeding programme, pest control and forest restoration work.
- The diversity of forest species and the large numbers of seedlings seen during the walk are indicative of successful and extensive pest control programmes
- The PMB Board has raised \$700,000 towards the target of \$1 million for upgrading the visitor centre experience.
- Bedding down the new governance arrangements and responsibilities will take time.
- As PMB becomes more self-sufficient, the Conservancy expects to be able to redirect resources to other conservation challenges in the Wairarapa.

5.22 Visit to Lake Wairarapa (February 2008)

In the months before this visit, the Board was briefed on the proposed new governance structure for Lake Wairarapa which will involve the Conservancy, Greater Wellington and iwi. The Conservancy also provided Board members with comprehensive background information about the wetland's ecological values, the history of the area from a Maori perspective, and the Lower Valley Scheme.

The visit started on 15 February 2008, when representatives of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa welcomed the Board, several staff from Greater Wellington and DOC, and members of the Lake Wairarapa Coordinating Committee (LWCC) onto Kohunui Marae at Pirinoa in the southern Wairarapa.

The presentations and discussions at the forum and visits to several sites later in the day provided a rich source of views on the issues that will need to be addressed in developing the next Conservation Management Strategy. Key points noted included:

- the rapid spread of alders on both public and private land over the last decade and the risk they pose to the wetlands
- the limited opportunities for access to the lake, poor or no signage, and run-down visitor facilities
- the complexity and lack of knowledge about the hydrological-ecological relationships
- increasing concern about the extraction of water in terms of impacts on ecosystems and species
- the historical events that disrupted the relationships between Wairarapa Moana and local iwi
- concerns about poor water quality, particularly in Lake Onoke during periods of drought when the flow of the Ruamahanga is not sufficient to keep the bar open
- progress towards restoration of wetland habitat within the Wairio Block through a five-year agreement between Ducks Unlimited and DOC
- the long delays and costly process before approval was obtained to use a new pesticide to control hornwort
- next year's Waitangi Tribunal Report on the 16 Treaty claims is likely to have implications for the ownership and management of the lakes and wetlands
- the possible impacts of silt on the ecology of Palliser Bay
- Greater Wellington's ongoing monitoring of changes in the lakeside vegetation, including the unique turf communities
- the agreement reached by iwi and the Wellington Fish and Game Council on the management of raupo at Boggy Pond
- recognition of the importance of integrated management and the potential benefits for conservation of the proposed new governance arrangements
- the commitment in Greater Wellington's Long Term Council Community Plan to create a Wairarapa Wetlands Park and the reports produced on recreation and restoration opportunities as part of the planning process.

The Board's overall impression was that the conservation values of the wetlands appear to have declined over the last decade. On a more positive note, Greater Wellington's commitment to a wetlands park, the potential for settlement of Treaty claims, and the emergence of constructive relationships between iwi, DOC and Greater Wellington suggest that more progress may be made during the next decade towards the vision/kaupapa in the Conservancy's Lake Wairarapa Wetlands Action Plan 2000–2010.

5.3 Workshop to develop a strategy for the Board

Board members met for a day in January 2008 to discuss the Board's mandate, operating context, key strategies and priorities for 2008. The workshop was stimulated in part by a recommendation in a DOC research paper that conservation boards develop their own strategies. Other drivers included a desire to increase the effectiveness of the Board, particularly in terms of prioritising its efforts and managing demands for agenda time, and the conviction that new board members could contribute more quickly and effectively with a concise introductory document to the Wellington Board's activities. The result was Strategies and Priorities 2008 which sets out nine strategies and 30 projects and tasks that the Board intends to undertake in pursuit of its strategies. The Board recognised the need to track progress and achievements and consider new opportunities from time to time.

The following examples illustrate the approach.

Key Strategies and Priority Actions for 2008

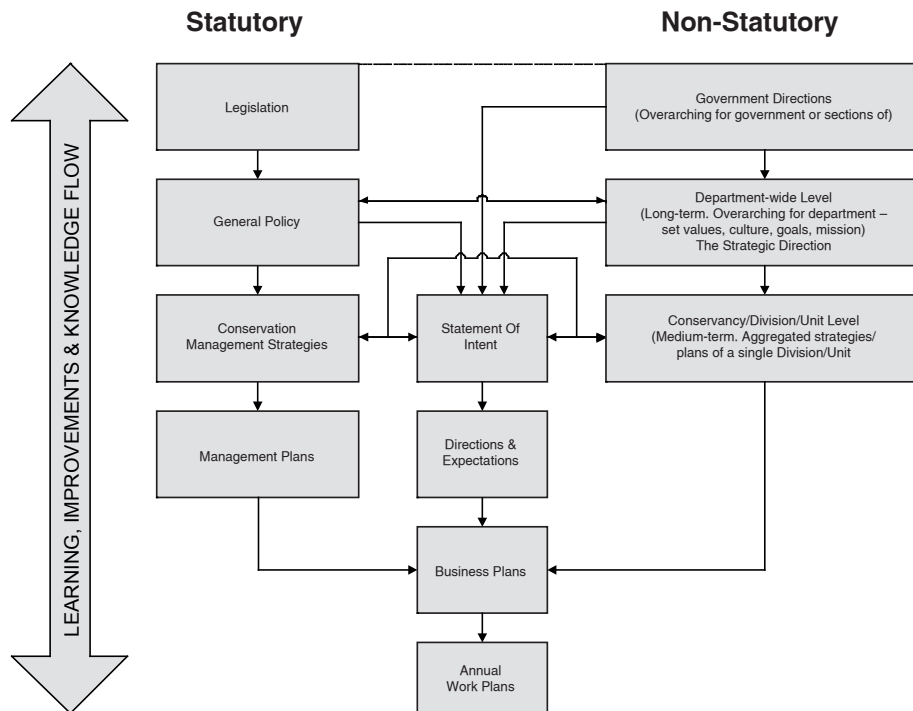
- Strategy 1. Participate in the review of the Wellington CMS to enable the Board to recommend approval of the CMS by the Conservation Authority.
- Project 1.1 Reach agreement with DOC on how DOC and the Board will work together to achieve their respective responsibilities and aspirations for the statutory and non-statutory stages of the review of the CMS.
- Project 1.2 Make a submission on the pilot draft CMS for the Bay of Plenty with a view to influencing the evolution of the national template.

5.4 DOC Workshops on Directions and Priorities

In November 2007, the Conservancy started to develop a prioritisation model for use during its annual business planning process. The Board welcomed this initiative as the current approach to business planning does not provide a coherent statement of the Conservancy's intentions for the year. Deputy Chair, Helen Algar, joined the project team led by the Conservation Analyst, Colin Miskelly to develop the model. The model is designed to assess proposed projects and tasks for their significance, urgency, statutory and strategic alignment, cost, and stakeholder and community expectations. The proposed testing of the model at workshops involving staff and Board members was disrupted by DOC's Strategic Alignment and Budget Review. The workshops will be rescheduled for 2008/09.

At its June 2008 meeting, the Board was introduced to another element of the Conservancy's evolving approach to planning when Rob Stone, the Area Manager Poneke presented a draft of the Poneke Conservation Action Plan 2008-2013. Action plans show how the area offices plan to respond to DOC's "new" strategic direction.

The Board found the following diagram helpful in understanding the various statutory and non-statutory influences on the Conservancy's Business Plan.



5.5 Participation and fees

Individual Board members' participation in Wellington Conservation Board activities during 2007/08 is shown in Appendix 1.

For approved Board activities, Board members are paid \$140 per day and the Board Chair \$190 per day.

6. Public involvement

The Board informs and interacts with the public through forums, correspondence, and its annual report and website. Its formal relationships with specific organisations are described in section 13.

6.1 Public Forum

During 2007/08, the Board welcomed a disappointingly small number of individuals to the Public Forum scheduled for each meeting to enable people to speak to the Board about agenda items or other conservation issues. The Board regards the forum as an important part of its involvement with the community and hopes to see more people take up this opportunity in 2008/09.

Matters raised by speakers who did participate in these forums included:

- the decline in beech mistletoes in the Tararua Forest Park because possum bands on trees are not being maintained
- the need for more assistance with weed problems on many of the 135 QE II covenants in the Wairarapa, most of which protect forest blocks and wetlands on sheep farms
- protecting nesting Caspian terns on Onoke Spit from 4WD vehicles and quad bikes
- the management regime for water levels and the associated decline in wetland values at Lake Wairarapa
- congratulations on the Conservation Award ceremony in August 2007.

6.2 Correspondence

Several community groups and individuals alerted the Board to issues raised with the Conservancy including:

- unanswered letters about Lake Wairarapa issues
- the lack of fencing to keep stock out of the scientific reserve at Cape Turakirae
- rapidly spreading gorse infestations in the lower Tauherenikau.

The Board particularly values receiving information from people who have a long-term association with specific areas as they can describe changes over time.

6.3 Distribution of the Board's Annual Report

Although the New Zealand Conservation Authority is the primary audience for the Board's annual reports, the Board decided to circulate this Annual Report more widely to increase awareness of the Board's role in conservation in the Conservancy. The distribution list now includes public libraries, local MPs, media and more conservation and recreation groups.

6.4 The Board's website

The Board's agendas, approved minutes and annual reports are on www.doc.govt.nz.

7. Advising on implementation of the CMS

(Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987)

7.1 Approach

For many years, the Board worked closely with the Conservancy to monitor implementation of the CMS by presenting written questions to the Conservancy and discussing the written response with relevant staff at a Board meeting.

In early 2007, when the review of the current CMS was thought to be imminent, the Board and new Conservator, Alan McKenzie agreed to start looking forward as well as monitoring progress towards the operational CMS. The Conservator also advised that many of the implementation statements and objectives in the current CMS had been completed and others were no longer relevant as the Conservancy's directions and priorities were being guided increasingly by DOC's Statement of Intent and not the CMS.

The Board also recognised that focusing its monitoring effort at a higher level of the CMS may generate information about the conservation outcomes achieved during the term of the current CMS. The Kaupapa-Vision offered a potential framework as it included 26 statements describing what the Conservancy hoped to achieve. (See CMS Volume 1, pages 5-6). The Board gathered information about the Conservancy's activities and achievements from various sources and attempted to align these activities with the most relevant outcome statements, but it quickly became apparent that:

- the vision statements were aspirational
- most of the available information was about processes or outputs, not outcomes
- a different approach would be needed to identify what had been achieved by the Conservancy during the term of the current CMS.

The Board is pleased that the Conservator has produced a report on the Conservancy's key achievements for 2007/08. Some extracts showing the relationship between the Vision statements in the CMS and the Conservancy's key achievements are included in Appendix 2.

7.2 Baches

The Board and Conservancy staff prepared a report in August 2007 outlining progress towards the CMS objective of phasing out existing private accommodation on land managed by the department. This showed that a total of 100 private baches remain on public conservation land, five formerly private baches have been acquired by DOC for bookable accommodation, two baches have been removed and four more are awaiting removal. 64 baches in the Rimutaka Forest Park are licensed and paying market rentals. There are 35 unlicensed baches in the Ocean Beach Conservation Area.

8. Review of the CMS by the Director-General

(Section 7H (4) of the Conservation Act 1987)

8.1 Looking back

Wellington's current CMS was approved in April 1996. Under the Conservation Act 1987 1987, the Director-General is required to review each conservation management strategy as a whole not later than 10 years after the date of its approval. The Minister first approved an extension to June 2008, and more recently, a further extension to June 2010.

The Board has found this delay very frustrating. Its concern goes to the contract implicit in conservation management strategies—DOC's statutory obligation to work with the public every 10 years to identify conservation objectives at the Conservancy level for the next 10 years, and to give statutory status to those objectives.

8.2 Preparation for the review of the CMS

The Board continued to prepare for the review of the CMS by:

- discussing the concept of 'place' as outlined in guidance documents from the Director-General
- identifying the value to the CMS consultation process if DOC were able to provide stakeholders with a technical support document containing authoritative information about the current state of conservation in the Conservancy
- listing conservation values of the Foxton Plains following a visit in June 2007
- keeping a record of issues that should be addressed in the next CMS
- identifying knowledge gaps, for example, gaps in the geopreservation inventory
- seeking a report on progress towards obtaining legal protection for sites identified in the Conservancy's 2006 paper "Legal Protection Plan for Recommended Areas for Protection in Wellington Conservancy."

8.3 Looking forward

The Conservancy started the CMS review process in April 2008 and expects to release the draft CMS for public consultation in July 2009. Board members Helen Algar and Rob McColl represent the Board on the five-member Steering Committee. Board members participated in two workshops to help DOC identify a preliminary list of places which require more specific management direction than other places in the Conservancy. The Board hopes that the conservation community will engage fully in the development of the next CMS.

8.4 Submission on the Draft Bay of Plenty CMS

In March 2008, the Bay of Plenty Conservancy released for consultation its Draft CMS 2008–18, the first of the second round of conservation management strategies nationally.

The Board studied the draft closely as it had been promoted as the model for all other conservation management strategies and reflected DOC's national framework for their structure and content. The Board prepared a detailed submission hoping to influence further development of the national framework. The Board's recommendations included:

- improving compliance with requirements in the Conservation General Policy (CGP), by, for example, including management objectives for indigenous species and their habitats and ecosystems
- making more use of outcome statements in preference to open-ended, generalised objectives
- improving the vertical alignment between the CGP, outcomes, management objectives, management policies and milestones
- identifying more milestones to facilitate improved monitoring and reporting.

9. Advocating for conservation within the Conservancy

(Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987)

9.1 Introduction

Regional and local authorities within the Board's area initiate many opportunities for individuals and organisations to influence councils' strategies, statutory plans, policy statements and action plans. The Board takes seriously its responsibility to participate in processes where the final decisions may have positive or negative implications for conservation values on or off public conservation lands and waters.

9.2 Regional councils

During the last two years, the Board has placed a high priority on engaging in the development of Greater Wellington's Regional Policy Statement (RPS) because the final policies and methods approved will be binding on regional, city and district councils for 10 years. The Board has completed three detailed submissions at different stages of the process, and expects to submit again when the draft RPS is notified. Many of the concerns and suggestions raised by the Board in the early stages of the process have now been addressed.

The Board also submitted on Horizon's Draft One Plan because the northern parts of the Wellington Conservancy lie within the Horizon's area. Themes included a more proactive approach towards restoring indigenous biodiversity, providing increased protection for "historic" heritage, and developing a more visionary and integrated approach to the management of the coastal environment.

9.3 City and district councils

The Board submitted on Wellington City Council's Draft Biodiversity Action Plan and appreciated the detailed reply outlining Council's response to each of the Board's suggestions.

The Board also submitted on proposed reserve classifications in Wellington City Council's South Coast Classification Plan to increase the level of protection for areas with biodiversity, recreational and historic values.

The Board engaged in the development of an Integrated Foreshore Management Plan for Castlepoint following an Environment Court appeal decision. Board members attended public meetings and presented a submission advocating for 'softer' solutions, i.e. reshaping and

replanting at-risk areas with indigenous sand-binding vegetation, and upgrading pedestrian access to the reserve.

The Board supported Greater Wellington's application to renew resource consents for stream bed management and the use of diquat for weed control in the Waiwhetu Stream as this would make a contribution to management of the stream as a natural ecosystem as well as improving flood control.

10. Advocating for conservation at the national level

(Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987)

The Board submitted on five central government initiatives.

10.1 The Ministerial Consultative Panel on the management of deer, thar, chamois and pigs

The Board prefaced its response to the questionnaire with a strong statement that where there is a clash in values, the wellbeing of hundreds of species that have lived in these islands for millions of years has to have primacy over the desire for recreational pleasure for today's hunters.

10.2 The Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The Board agreed that the statement addressed the key issues and requirements for effective coastal management and that it provided a balance between use and protection. The revised statement provided better coverage of topics of special concern to the Board such as biodiversity, Maori interests, hazard management, ecosystem protection, inappropriate development and hard coastal structures.

10.3 The Ministry of Fisheries' Review of Sustainability Measures for North Island Eels

The Board welcomed the proposal to reduce Total Allowable Catch for eel stocks throughout the North Island but especially in Hawkes Bay-Wellington. The Board also advised the Ministry of a range of other actions that the Ministry could take to restore healthy eel populations to all traditional catchments.

10.4 The Department of Building and Housing's consultation document on amending the Building Code for back country huts

The Board supported changing the Building Code and publishing a Compliance Document for backcountry huts as offering the best option for establishing appropriate levels of compliance for backcountry huts and preventing inconsistencies between building consent authorities in applying the Code. The Board also:

- questioned whether the same standards should apply for a 6-bunk hut used by experienced hunters and trampers in the Tararuas and 65-bunk huts on the Routeburn Track used by international visitors with limited experience of New Zealand's backcountry
- recommended deleting the phrase sleeps "no more than 65 persons from the definition of backcountry huts", because the size of hut to be built in any particular location should remain an issue for DOC to resolve through consultation and monitoring visitor satisfaction.

10.5 The Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry (MAF Biosecurity) and ships' ballast water

The Board supported the New Zealand Government becoming a signatory to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, believing this would help manage risks to New Zealand's marine environment from ballast water discharges.

11. Advice to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

(Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987)

11.1 Possum control

The Board wrote to the NZCA raising its concerns about the consequences for public conservation land of the pending cessation of bovine TB control and inconsistencies in the quality of DOC's records of possum control operations. The Authority sought a response from the Director-General which, when received, explained that:

- the Animal Health Board will be carrying out wider consultation on their future Tb control strategies later this year (2008)
- the National Heritage Management System (NHMS) will provide a nationally consistent approach to determining priorities for biodiversity protection and where possum control should be continued
- DOC, Biosecurity New Zealand and regional councils have been discussing the potential outcome of changes in funding.

The Board remains very concerned that the benefits of past and current possum control activities within the Conservancy are not lost.

11.2 Effectiveness of conservation boards

The Board's response to the NZCA's request for comments on the effectiveness of conservation boards included a critique of aspects of Carla Wilson's research paper. The Board was pleased that the research had been done because it stimulated some important discussions including a debate about "a community voice" role for conservation boards. The Board also considered that the report disseminated an inaccurate impression about the role of conservation boards and presented a surprising number of negative comments and quotes about conservation boards.

The Board recommended a national approach to improving the ways conservation boards and DOC work together including:

- focusing research on boards' statutory mandate and what works well
- paying more attention to the role of DOC and DOC staff as factors influencing boards' effectiveness in their statutory roles.

12. Advice to the Director-General of Conservation and the Regional Conservator, Wellington Conservancy

12.1 Land exchanges in the Conservancy

In 2007/08, the Conservancy sought the Board's views on two proposals to exchange land. The Board supported both proposals.

- The first proposal involved exchanging land within Aorangi Forest Park currently being grazed for an area of indigenous forest on private land.

- The second proposal involved exchanging a small area of land in Rimutaka Forest Park (RFP) near Wainuiomata for a small reserve managed by Hutt City Council (HCC) in the Wainuiomata Valley. The HCC reserve contains a regionally important cluster of about 200 cabbage trees. The land in RFP contains a Memorial Park which is operated by Hutt City Council under a five-year concession from DOC.

The Board's discussion of these proposals highlighted the importance of an assessment of the net conservation benefits of proposals as well as financial information and information about land tenure. The Board has asked the Conservator to ensure that future requests include information such as the cost of formalising the exchange, the relative market value of the areas, and the relative future management costs, including any activities that may have to be foregone to proceed with the exchange.

12.2 Concessions in the Conservancy

The Board received reports at each meeting about concession applications and provided comments or advice on some of these. The majority were categorised as low impact, non-notified permits, but often included opportunities to impose conditions that would result in benefits to conservation.

13. Conservation Week

The Minister of Conservation, the Hon Chris Carter, presented the 2007 Conservation Awards at a lively ceremony in the Beehive, Parliament Buildings on 9 August 2007. The awards are a joint initiative of the Conservancy and the Board, and have been held annually for more than a decade. The recipients in 2007 were:

Habitat Restoration (individual)	Jean Luke
Habitat Restoration (Group)	Friends of the Otaki River
Recreation	Horowhenua Hunting Club
Education and Advocacy	Keep Porirua Beautiful
Young Conservationists	Muritai School, Eastbourne
Historic Heritage	Combined Rotary Clubs of Wellington
Innovation	Volunteer Wellington
Kaitiakitanga	Dennis Keall
Business in Conservation	Martinborough Winery Ata Rangi Ltd

Certificates of Merit were also awarded to:

Kaitiakitanga	Island Bay Coastcare group
Young Conservationist	Raumati South School

14. Liaison

14.1 Wellington Fish and Game Council

The Board has a statutory responsibility to liaise with the Wellington Fish and Game Council under Section 6M (1)(f). The Board and Council exchange agenda papers and minutes. In early 2008, John Hancock became the Board's liaison person and initial activities have included establishing contact with the Council's new staff, clarifying the Council's intentions for Simmons Lagoon and helping the Council understand the conservation importance of its role in managing water levels in the JK Donald Block.

14.2 Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee

In March, 2008, the Minister of Conservation announced the appointment of the Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee (KMRC) including Board member, Dr Nicola Nelson. The KMRC is an Advisory Committee under Section 56 (Reserves Act 1977) and is also a sub-committee of the Wellington Conservation Board. The Board has delegated specific functions to the KMRC, including responsibility for approving the (statutory) Management Plan.

The new committee met for the first time on 16 April 2008 and provided its Annual Report for 2007/08 soon after. This shows that the Committee has identified education as a key role. No Annual Report for the previous year was received as the KMRC did not meet in 2006/07.

14.3 Lake Wairarapa Coordinating Committee (LWCC)

The LWCC provides an important forum for organisations and individuals to develop a better understanding of issues and options for the future management of the lakes and their associated wetlands. Geoff Doring represents the Board on LWCC. Two other Board members, Haami Te Whaiti and John Hancock, also participate in LWCC meetings. DOC's Wairarapa Area Office services the committee.

The Board was pleased that many members of LWCC accepted the Board's invitation to attend the meeting at the marae in Pirinoa in February.

14.4 National Wildlife Centre Trust

The Board appoints one of its members to the National Wildlife Centre Trust which used to own the visitor centre building at Pukaha Mount Bruce. Associated earnings were invested in education programmes and facilities. Geoff Doring represents the Board on the Trust.

15. Chairperson's comment

The comments expressed by the Board Chair do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board or other Board members.

It's been a year of pressure and uncertainty for the Conservancy with unfilled positions and two restructurings, one internal and the second affecting DOC throughout the country. I want to acknowledge the staff who have supported the Board during this period, particularly Conservation Support Manager Jeff Flavell who added servicing the Board to his other responsibilities for several months and briefed the Board when Conservator Alan McKenzie was unable to attend Board meetings. Bronwyn Bell's cheerfulness and hard work has also been an asset to the Board since she was seconded into the role of Board Secretary.

Conservator Alan McKenzie also deserves a special mention, particularly for his willingness to provide the Board with updates on operational activities and help us understand the Department's new strategic directions. His annual report on the Conservancy's key achievements is a useful intermediate step towards meeting the General Policy requirement that the Conservancy report annually to the Board on the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy.

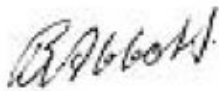
Alan also deserves praise for initiating the development of a priority-setting model for use in the Conservancy's business planning process. Various streams of projects, including those resulting from the new Conservation Action Plans, will feed into this model alongside work emerging from the new Conservation Management Strategy and any directives from the Minister or the Director-General. With a more transparent prioritising process in place, the

Conservancy may be able to publish an annual Business Plan that shows what it intends to do and what each project or programme will cost (including staff time). Details of tagged funding versus baseline expenditure would also be informative.

I also want to acknowledge the New Zealand Conservation Authority for their work on behalf of conservation and all conservation boards. Newsletters from Kerry Marshall who chaired the NZCA for many years, helped fill the information gap until approved Authority minutes could be circulated. The two-day meeting of board chairs in early 2008 revealed a wealth of unrecorded knowledge, ideas and experience about different ways of working effectively with board members, conservancies and communities. This meeting has also laid the foundation for greater collaboration between board chairs. I believe the benefits of holding these meetings annually would generate a sound return on the investment, particularly if more conservators were able to participate.

For the Wellington Board, the year ended on an optimistic note with work on the review of the CMS finally underway. It's going to be interesting to see how today's public respond to the invitation to participate in the process. Back in early 1994, there were 135 submissions on the draft CMS, and 70 submitters spoke at the hearings in June 1994. Fifteen years later, how many people will see the CMS process as an opportunity to show that they value conservation and that they want to help set the direction for the next 10 years?

Finally as my time on the Board comes to an end, I want to thank current and former Board colleagues, conservators Allan Ross and Alan McKenzie, and all the staff for their friendship, support and commitment to conservation.



Bev Abbott

Chair

This Annual Report was adopted by the Wellington Conservation Board on 22 August 2008.

Appendix 1: Board members' participation in Board activities

Individual Board members attendance at Wellington Conservation Board activities during 2007/08 is displayed in the table below:

- ✓ full attendance
- ✗ non attendance
- ± partial attendance

Meeting/ Inspection Date 07/08	Abbott	Algar	Foster	Doring	Hancock	Nelson	McColl	Poutu	Roberts	Shields	Te Whaiti	Wassilieff
24 Aug meeting	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓		✗		✓	✓
12 Oct Meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
7 Dec Meeting	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Dec Inspection	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25 Jan Board Workshop	✓	✓	±	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15 Feb Forum and Inspection	✓	✓	±	✓	✓	±	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16 Feb Meeting	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18 April Meeting	✓	✓	±	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✗	✗
9 May (CMS) Workshop	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗		✓	✗	✓
20 June Meeting	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗		✓	✓	✓
Total Meetings (6)	6	5	2	5	6	6	6	3	4	4	5	5
Total Inspections (2)	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total Workshops (2)	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2

Appendix 2: Key Conservancy achievements in 2007/08

THE VISION IN WELLINGTON'S CMS

Protected and restored, the natural and historic resources of Wellington are contributing to the wider community's spiritual, mental and physical well-being.

Wellington Conservancy is a place where:	Activities in 2007/08 which advance the vision
<p>In the marine areas, a network of marine reserves is established, protecting a range of marine habitats where the marine flora and fauna are flourishing</p>	<p>The Conservancy made major progress towards gazetting Wellington's second marine reserve, Taputeranga, on Wellington's south coast. Gazetting and a formal opening are planned for September 2008.</p>
<p>More people are learning about the indigenous species of NZ due to their visits to significant wildlife habitats (Kapiti Island, Mana Island, the National Wildlife Centre and Lake Wairarapa wetlands) as well as from awareness of the greater number of indigenous species now present throughout the Conservancy.</p>	<p>The Pukaha Mount Bruce Board has raised over \$1.2 million towards the redevelopment of the visitor centre at the National Wildlife Centre. New displays will tell stories of the Pukaha Mount Bruce forest from pre-human times through to the restoration and captive breeding work being done there today.</p>
<p>The department has effective working relationships and liaison with local government, other managers of natural and historic resources, conservation and recreation groups, and the wider community to achieve the conservation of natural and historic resources.</p>	<p>Under new departmental strategic directions, the Conservancy is placing more importance on working with others to achieve conservation goals. A small number of examples follow to show the variety of the working relationships and projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conservancy, Greater Wellington (GW) and iwi are at an early stage of developing a new governance group and setting strategy and objectives for the development of a new conservation park for Lake Wairarapa. • Large numbers of people attended Weedswap events hosted by the Conservancy and local councils with support from GW. These events increase awareness of weed species and encourage people to grow native plants. Many participants also bought copies of the Conservancy's publication <i>Plant me instead</i>. • The Conservancy worked with the National Rural Fire Authority, Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade, Wainui Bush Force and others to alert rural property owners and the public to the dangers of fire in Wainuiomata through a fire awareness day in Catchpool. • Department of Corrections community service workers helped with a number of renovation programmes in the Wairarapa including Cross Creek. • The Conservancy worked with energy companies to ensure environmental protection while contributing to New Zealand's economic development. • The Conservancy also engaged with others in a variety of Resource Management Act processes to protect ecosystems beyond public conservation lands and waters.

Indigenous flora and fauna are flourishing and are distributed throughout the Conservancy in their appropriate habitats.

Efforts to create self-sustaining populations of indigenous flora and fauna are focused on the off-shore islands and some small areas on the mainland where volunteers make a critical contribution.

The Conservancy and volunteers have made progress towards re-establishing nesting colonies of seabirds on Mana Island:

- diving petrels and fairy prions are now breeding on the island
- the final of three transfers of fluttering shearwater chicks from Long Island in the Marlborough Sounds took place in January 2008
- 40 juvenile shore plovers, reared at Pukaha Mount Bruce were released on Mana Island in early 2007 and have settled in well, with one pair breeding less than a year later.

Nine years after 54 tuatara were transferred from Brothers Island to Matiu/Somes, two tuatara hatchlings were found. The hatchlings were reared in captivity at Victoria University before being returned to the island.

Two long term international volunteers and one local volunteer have been doing weed control, weta monitoring and interpretation on Matiu/Somes.

Pest fish were successfully removed from Whitby Lower Lake.

Attempts to establish a population of native short-tailed bats on Kapiti Island were postponed indefinitely after the bats developed a disease that caused large ear lesions which damaged their echo-location abilities. The bats have been transferred to Auckland Zoo. The Conservation Board remains concerned about possible risks to the health of the original bat population in the Tararuas because the mother bats were returned to the wild after giving birth at the National Wildlife Centre.

The Conservancy, GW and the Biological Restoration Society held another successful restoration day to increase the knowledge and skills of people involved in restoration projects.

Individuals and organisations are, with Department support, initiating and implementing their own projects to conservation natural and historic resources.

Friends of Waikanae Estuary are working with the Conservancy to implement a restoration plan developed by ecologist Geoff Park, GW and the Kapiti Coast District Council.

All natural areas are managed to protect and enhance their natural and historic values.

To reduce possum numbers, the Conservancy treated 10,000 hectares of forest in the Atiwhakatu, Waingawa and Ruamahanga catchments of Tararua Forest Park (TFP) with 1080. Regular possum control is essential to protect palatable canopy species such as northern rata and fuchsia. The total area of the Tararua Forest Park is 116,500 hectares.

<p>Natural areas are linked by corridors of natural vegetation, and buffer zones protect these areas.</p>	<p>DOC has accepted responsibility for managing Whareroa Farm. The farm will provide ecological and recreational links between Queen Elizabeth II Park and the Akatararas. The Whareroa Guardians are actively involved with restoration planting and research into the farm's history. DOC has allocated over \$200,000 towards infrastructure (tracks, signs, bridge repair work etc).</p>
<p>More people are able to enjoy the back country experiences in Forest Parks, due to the upgraded walking tracks and huts in more accessible locations, while further into the back country, others are enjoying a more remote experience.</p>	<p>The Conservancy invested over \$1.1 million in capital works to upgrade recreational facilities and repair other facilities damaged by floods. Locations are shown on the map at the end of this appendix. Projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacing the Waiotauru Suspension Bridge at Otaki Forks which was destroyed by floods in 2005 • installing new toilets at several huts in Tararua Forest park • upgrading the Waiohine Gorge Suspension bridge • improving the track marking on Walls Whare to Totara Flats track • developing a new 3-hour walking track at Pukaha Mt Bruce • building a new hut in upper Ohau Valley • replacing two bridges on the Ngā Taonga track in Catchpool Valley • resurfacing the Orongorongo Track • building new bridges on Mangaone Walkway and Hemi Matenga Memorial Scenic Reserve.
<p>The historical and cultural resources of the Conservancy are identified and protected from inappropriate management and development, and, where appropriate, these resources are accessible and interpreted for the public</p>	<p>A specialist clock restorer improved the condition of the 131 year-old clock in the old Government Buildings. It is New Zealand's oldest public clock in its original condition and location.</p> <p>The Conservancy held a garden party and open day to celebrate the centenary of the Dominion Observatory, one of three significant government buildings in Wellington managed by the Department.</p> <p>A historic workshop was held at Otaki Forks based on restoration work associated with the Sheridan Creek logging hauler and tramway. The hauler is one of the most complete haulers left on its original site.</p>
<p>Treaty of Waitangi claims have been resolved.</p>	<p>The Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations announced in December 2007 that Approval in Principle has been agreed by the Crown and the Port Nicholson Bock Claims Team. Conservancy staff provided policy advice to the Minister as part of the settlement process.</p>
<p>More people, both from urban areas and from elsewhere in the Conservancy and elsewhere in NZ as well as overseas, are enjoying the education, fun, excitement relaxation and inspiration provided by visits to areas managed by the Department.</p>	<p>Over 100 people visited Matiu/Somes Island on Saturday 24 November to celebrate the return of the baby tuatara, the start of the camping trial, and the work being done by volunteers,</p>

People are visiting and appreciating land administered by the Department close to urban areas and on the coast.

The Conservancy trialled overnight camping for up to 12 people per night is on Matiu/Somes for 12 months. The island is a 20 minute ferry trip from the heart of Wellington City and visitors enjoy seeing Wellington city and harbour from a different angle.

The Department is able, through research and monitoring, to evaluate and refine its management actions and is constantly increasing its knowledge of the natural and historic resources it manages in partnership with the community.

The Marine Bioblitz conducted during October 2007 increased the scientific knowledge of the marine biota of Wellington's south coast. A total of 551 species were identified, including at least 4 new species.

The Conservancy published *Wild orchids of the lower North Island* to increase awareness of the 72 species of orchids growing in the lower North Island.

Wellington Conservancy

Sites of Major Recreation Work Completed In 2007 - 2008

Legend

- Recreation Work Sites:
-  Boardwalk (new)
-  Camping (new)
-  Foot Bridge (new)
-  Hut (new)
-  Hut (upgraded)
-  Lookout Barrier (new)
-  Shelter (new)
-  Toilets (new)
-  Track (new)
-  Track (maintained/upgraded)
-  Track Constructed
-  Track Maintained/upgraded
-  State Highway
-  Area Office Boundaries
-  Areas Managed by DOC
-  Wellington Conservancy

Note: The areas shown represent locations where major construction, up-grade or maintenance work was carried out on recreation assets in 2007/08.

