



Annual Report of the

New Zealand Conservation Authority

Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa

FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2017 TO 30 JUNE 2018

*Presented to the Minister of Conservation and tabled in the House of
Representatives pursuant to section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987*

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Cover photo: Pukeahurangi / Jumbo, Tararua Forest Park.

Photo: David Barnes

Back cover photo: New Zealand fur seals, Arnett Point, Whakapohai Wildlife Refuge.

Photo: Gerry McSweeney

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25 October 2018

Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

I submit, in terms of section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987, the annual report of the New Zealand Conservation Authority for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The Act requires that the Authority report each year to the Minister on the exercise of its functions and powers.

The Authority has enjoyed a busy and productive 12 months. Our activities fell into three broad areas: advocacy, approval of plans and provision of strategic advice to the Department of Conservation.

Advocacy

In terms of advocacy, we have sought improvements to the management of and raising of fees (including a levy at the border) for visitors to conservation lands; increased resources and Departmental effort to improve knowledge about, and management of, the whitebait fishery; improved monitoring and compliance of concessionaires and users of the Department of Conservation's resources to ensure fees are paid and the terms of engagement are fulfilled; and for forthcoming North Island Treaty Settlements to not contravene the intent and principles of the Conservation Act 1987 and National Parks Act 1980.

Approval of plans

We were delighted to receive the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) at our April meeting. This is the first time a CMS's priorities have been formally aligned with the Department's resourcing budgets; the CMS also provides a model for other CMSs to follow in terms of stakeholder consultation, and document design and content.

We also approved:

- the incorporation of the Mokihinui riverbed within the 64,416-hectare Mokihinui area (approved by the Authority in June 2017) to be added to the Kahurangi National Park
- the addition of three blocks of land acquired by the Nature Heritage Fund to the Fiordland National Park, with specific conditions pertaining to section 4 responsibilities
- a minor adjustment to the boundary of Fiordland National Park to allow improved access to the takahē Specially Protected Area at Murchison
- the partial review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan to allow the construction of three shared (walking and cycling) tracks.

As part of this work, we endorsed the new principles-based guidelines for e-bikes on conservation lands, that gives the Department more flexibility in decision-making with respect to track grade than the previous prescriptive approach. E-bike use is rapidly increasing, enabling more people to enjoy our beautiful conservation areas.

Provision of strategic advice

We again enjoyed the opportunity to provide candid advice to the Director-General and his Senior Leadership Team with in-depth discussions on strategic topics at each of our meetings. These included:

- making input to the Department's visitor strategy
- the proposal to establish a Mackenzie Drylands Park
- the development of a robust methodology for 'fast-tracking' the recategorisation of stewardship land.

We also provided advice to the previous Minister on determining net conservation benefit, and to the Director-General on the limited use to date of the government's biodiversity offset guidelines.

The Authority undertook field trips and met in three conservation board regions during the year: Rotorua, Bay of Plenty Board; Palmerston North, Wellington Board; and Auckland, Auckland Board. These added greatly to our knowledge of local conservation initiatives and challenges, and of the boards' work. We hosted stakeholders at each of our meetings to keep the Authority up to date with developments relevant to conservation, such as Predator Free 2050, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Tourism New Zealand and the Tourism Industry Association, and Local Government New Zealand.

We congratulate and thank you, Minister, for the significant increase in baseline funding secured for the Department through Budget 2018. This will, among other things, allow the Department to significantly increase and sustain landscape-scale predator control, hire new staff, and manage the effects of visitors on public conservation lands.

Conservation, although facing stern challenges, is in a good place with the New Zealand public, and 'our nature' is increasingly intertwined with our national identity and our plans to develop a sustainable, low greenhouse-gas emissions programme. The Authority is pleased to have contributed its independent views on how the pathway for a successful future for New Zealand conservation; and to ensure the things that are fundamental to good conservation outcomes are suitably protected.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'W'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Dr Warren Parker
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority

Contents

1.	OVERVIEW OF 2017/18	9
2.	INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	10
3.	MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY	10
4.	MEETINGS	11
4.1	Strategic advice to the Department	12
4.2	Field trips.....	13
4.3	Members attendance at Authority meetings 2017/18.....	14
5.	BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES	14
6.	FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987	14
6.1	Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987	14
6.2	Functions of the Authority	14
(a)	Advise the Minister on statements of general policy	14
(b)	Approve conservation management strategies	15
(c)	Approve conservation management plans	15
(d)	Review the effectiveness of the Department's administration of general policies..	15
(e)	Investigate or advise on conservation matters of national importance	15
(f)	Change of land status – stewardship land.....	16
(g)	Walkways (repealed)	17
(h)	Education and publicity.....	17
(i)	Priorities for expenditure by the Department of Conservation.....	17
(j)	New Zealand Fish & Game Council liaison	17
(k)	Ministerial delegations	17
6.3	Powers of the Authority	17
(a)	Establishment of committees.....	17
(b)	Advocacy	18
7.	FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980.....	19
7.1	Review of the General Policy for National Parks.....	19
7.2	National Park management plans	19
7.3	Additions to, and deletions from, national parks.....	19
7.4	National Park investigations.....	20
7.5	National Park determinations	20
8.	MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS	20
8.1	JD Stout Trust	20
8.2	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).....	20
8.3	Land and Water Forum	20
9.	CONSERVATION BOARDS	20
9.1	Conservation board boundaries	20
9.2	Conservation board nominations.....	21
9.3	Authority/Conservation board liaison.....	21
9.4	Annual reports.....	21
9.5	Implementation of conservation management strategies	21
10.	MONITORING AND EVALUATION	21
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	22
11.	SCHEDULES.....	23
	First schedule	23
	Second schedule	24
	Third schedule	25
	Fourth schedule.....	26

Mission statement

To ensure for the people of New Zealand that the richness of New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage is valued, restored, maintained, and cared for by all, in order to enhance our environment and quality of life.

New Zealand Conservation Authority members (June 2018)



Left to right: Gerry McSweeney, Mark Christensen, Nicole Anderson, Mark Brough, Robyn Jebson, Kerry Prendergast, Jan Riddell, Warren Parker (Chairperson), Mick Clout, Rauru Kirikiri, David Barnes, Tony Lepper.

Absent: Sandra Cook.

Photo: Rick McGovern-Wilson

1. OVERVIEW OF 2017/18

The New Zealand Conservation Authority (the Authority) met on six occasions during the year – in August, October and December 2017, and in February, April and June 2018. The October meeting was held in Rotorua with the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board and included a field trip through the Waimangu valley volcanic site, Maunga Kākaramēa/ Rainbow Mountain, and Waikite Valley. The February meeting was held in Palmerston North with the Wellington Conservation Board and included a field trip to Woodville Ferry Reserve and the Massey University Wildbase Hospital. The June meeting was held in Auckland with the Auckland Conservation Board and included a visit to Okura Bush Scenic Reserve, the Weiti development site and Shakespear Regional Park on the Whangaparoa Peninsula. All other meetings were held in Wellington.

In October 2017, the Authority welcomed the new Minister of Conservation, Hon. Eugenie Sage. The Minister made herself available to meet with the Authority for its Wellington meetings to discuss conservation issues.

During the year the Authority discussed a range of issues of national long-term importance for public conservation resources. The Authority continued its standing agenda items with the Department of Conservation (the Department) at every meeting for management planning updates, recategorisation of conservation land and the Director-General's report. It was also decided at the June 2018 meeting that the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy refresh would become a standing item on meeting agendas for discussion with the Department in future.

This reporting year, the Authority recommended to the Minister the addition of land (including the Mokihinui riverbed) to the Kahurangi National Park, and the O'Brien, King and Wang (Johnstone)/Morgan land blocks to Fiordland National Park. It also recommended a boundary change in Fiordland National Park, in the Murchison Mountains Specially Protected Area.



Bealey Spur Tarns, Arthur's Pass National Park. *Photo: Gerry McSweeney*

The Authority also:

- approved the amendment to the Tongariro National Park Management Plan, which allows for the establishment of new family-friendly cycle recreation opportunities in the Park.
- received the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for review in April 2018. By June it had almost completed the process of consulting with iwi and seeking the Minister's comments.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Authority is a statutory advisor to the Minister of Conservation and to the Director-General of Conservation on conservation issues of national importance. The Authority was established by section 6A of the Conservation Act 1987.

The functions of the Authority are set out in section 6B of the Conservation Act, and in the National Parks Act 1980, the Wildlife Act 1953, the Marine Reserves Act 1971, the Reserves Act 1977, the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 and the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. The Authority also has specified responsibilities, set out in Treaty claims settlement legislation, about engagement with tangata whenua. These include establishing respectful working relationships, exercising mana recognition and acknowledging kaitiakitanga as an important foundation for Māori conservation outcomes.

The Authority has the important function of approving the 10-year conservation management strategies and National Park management plans that guide the Department's management of public conservation lands, waters and species.

The Authority is committed to the partnership model between New Zealanders and the Department for the management of public conservation resources. This is embodied in the long history of formal engagement of New Zealand citizens in New Zealand conservation management, and the diverse make-up of the Authority and conservation boards. The partnership with conservation boards and the Authority is a long-standing legislative mechanism of the Department's 'conservation through partnerships' ethic.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Minister appoints the 13 Authority members, including the chairperson. The members are selected:

- in consultation with the Minister of Tourism (two appointments), the Minister of Māori Affairs (two appointments), and the Minister of Local Government (one appointment)
- on the nomination of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (one appointment)
- on the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand (one appointment), Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand (one appointment), and Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (one appointment)
- following nominations from the public (four appointments).

This process ensures that a range of perspectives, life experiences and geographical knowledge contributes to the advice provided and decisions made by the Authority.

Authority members are appointed for 3-year terms and may be re-appointed. A new term began for all Authority members on 1 July 2017; the following appointments and reappointments were made:

- After consultation with the Minister of Māori Affairs:
 - Mita Harris of Kerikeri
 - Rauru Kirikiri of Wellington
- After consultation with the Minister of Tourism:
 - Warren Parker of Rotorua (Chairperson)

- Kerry Prendergast of Wellington (commenced October 2017)
- After consultation with the Minister of Local Government:
 - Jan Riddell of Winton
- On the nomination of Te Rūnanga O Ngāi Tahu:
 - Sandra Cook of Otautau and Christchurch
- On the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand:
 - Mick Clout of Auckland
- On the recommendation of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand:
 - Gerry McSweeney of South Westland
- On the recommendation of the Federated Mountain Clubs:
 - David Barnes of Lower Hutt
- From public nominations:
 - Mark Brough of the King Country
 - Mark Christensen of Christchurch
 - Robyn Jebson of South Westland
 - Tony Lepper of Alexandra.

There were four resignations during the reporting period:

- Mita Harris, as at December 2017
- Sandra Cook, as at May 2018
- Warren Parker (Chairperson), as at June 2018
- Mark Christensen, as at June 2018.

Nicole Anderson, of Kerikeri, was appointed in June 2018 to complete Mita Harris's term. The term of current Authority members ends on 30 June 2020.

4. MEETINGS

The Authority held three 1-and-a-half day meetings, in Wellington. In addition, three 1-day meetings were held in Rotorua, Palmerston North, and Auckland, with 1-day field trips on the days prior to the meetings. Field trips, a vital part of the Authority's way of operating, give members the chance to view concerns and opportunities raised in public submissions in context, and to appreciate the local situations faced by Departmental staff and communities in managing public conservation lands. It is also an opportunity for them to spend time with local conservation board members discussing matters important to their regions.

The Authority hosted the annual Conservation Board Chairpersons' Conference on 8 and 9 August 2017, at Conservation House in Wellington. The conferences are designed to build collaboration between the Authority and conservation boards, and for the boards to develop stronger working relationships with the Department. They provide the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the government's expectations of the boards and the role they play in conservation leadership within their communities, and the opportunity to share ideas and practices.

Main topics on this conference's agenda included:

- Conservation Board Letters of Expectation, work programmes and annual reporting
- the Department's strategic and operational work, and major biodiversity initiatives
- working with iwi and the role that conservation boards play in Treaty negotiations
- whitebait management.

During the reporting year the Authority also co-sponsored the Lincoln University Protected Areas 2050 Symposium, held on 20 and 21 June 2018. The symposium aimed to challenge current thinking and enable improved decision-making on matters that will shape the long-term success of conservation in New Zealand. There were about 150 delegates, including several conservation board members.

The Authority also hosted and heard from numerous outside speakers and organisations at its meetings.

- The Game Animal Council Chairman spoke on its role, goals and obligations, in August 2017.
- Land Information New Zealand and the Overseas Investment Office summarised their respective roles, responsibilities and their interface with the Department, in August 2017.
- Simon Upton, the new Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, spoke about ideas and goals for his term, in December 2017.
- Livia Esterhazy, CEO of WWF New Zealand, spoke with the Authority about WWF's 5-year plan and direct environmental goals, in December 2017.
- Rob Phillips from Environment Southland spoke on the LGNZ Willis Report on biodiversity, in April 2018.
- Scientists Cindy Baker from NIWA and Mike Hickford from the University of Canterbury spoke separately on current whitebait information, in April 2018.
- Tourism Industry Aotearoa delivered its views on tourism growth, tourism management and the role of conservation, in April 2018.
- Tourism New Zealand presented its latest strategy, in June 2018.

4.1 Strategic advice to the Department

In June 2017, the Director-General initiated a sequence of strategic sessions with the Authority. A member of the Department's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) attends each meeting to engage the Authority on a strategic issue important for their business group. The purpose of these discussions is to get strategic advice and guidance from the Authority on issues important to the Department's future success.

- Bruce Parkes, Deputy Director-General Policy and Visitors, led a discussion on tourism, in August 2017.
- October 2017: Mike Slater, Deputy Director-General Operations, led a discussion on land issues, in October 2017.
- Martin Kessick, Deputy Director-General Biodiversity, led a discussion on biodiversity and Predator Free 2050, in December 2017.
- Ken Hughey, Chief Science Advisor, led a discussion on the Department's Biodiversity Science Strategy, in February 2018.
- Kay Booth, Deputy Director-General Partnerships, led a discussion on the Mackenzie Drylands Park proposal, in April 2018.
- Bruce Parkes, Deputy Director-General Policy and Visitors, led a discussion on the Recreation, Tourism and Heritage system, in June 2018.

4.2 Field trips

The October 2017 meeting with the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board was held in Rotorua. The board and the Authority visited sites of conservation, environmental and cultural significance, including the Waimangu valley volcanic site, Maunga Kākaramea/Rainbow Mountain, Waikite Valley, and the Wingspan National Bird of Prey Centre. Discussions focused on:

- geothermal tourism
- future growth prospects and interface with local government
- distinctive regional biodiversity, such as that on geothermal sites
- land recategorisation and the Board's priority list for stewardship land.



Authority member Mick Clout with a karearea/New Zealand Falcon. *Photo: Rick McGovern-Wilson*

The February 2018 meeting was held in Palmerston north with the Wellington Conservation Board. The Department's Palmerston North office hosted the Authority for a field trip on the Monday with a visit to the Woodville Ferry Reserve where valuable insights were gained on the Manawatu Gorge Project, particularly highlighting predator control, tourism operations, and conservation management initiatives. Following that was a trip to Massey University, visiting the Wildbase Hospital where the Authority was privileged to meet a tawaki/Fiordland crested penguin – a resident since November 2017, who has since been released back to the wild – a tuatara and a young kiwi.



Tawaki/Fiordland crested penguin. *Photo: Gerry McSweeney*

The June 2018 meeting was held in Auckland with the Auckland Conservation Board. The Department's Auckland office hosted us for the field trip, which provided insights into leading issues in the Auckland and lower Northland regions – including kauri dieback, with visits to Okura Bush Scenic Reserve and the Weiti Development Site. The Authority also learnt about the Department's interface with the Auckland Council through a visit to Shakespear

Regional Park on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula.

4.3 Members attendance at Authority meetings 2017/18

Member	Number of meetings attended (total of 6)
Nicole Anderson	1 (started June 2018)
David Barnes	6
Mark Brough	6
Mark Christensen	5
Mick Clout	6
Sandra Cook	4 (resigned May 2018)
Mita Harris	2 (resigned December 2017)
Robyn Jebson	6
Rauru Kirikiri	6
Tony Leper	5
Gerry McSweeney	4
Warren Parker (Chairperson)	6
Kerry Prendergast	4 (started December 2017)
Jan Riddell	5

5. BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The Authority's budget for 2017/18 was \$146,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. The chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$290, and other Authority members receive a daily meeting fee of \$215. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Authority business.

6. FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

6.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 (the Conservation Act) states: 'This Act shall so be interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.' As a body established under the Conservation Act, section 4 applies to the Authority in the discharge of its functions.

The Authority continued to work with the Department and iwi to further its understanding around Treaty settlement matters and to grow the partnership between iwi and conservation, as the model around section 4 and post-Treaty settlement arrangements changes. At the June 2018 meeting, the Authority also finalised the revision of the policy *Giving effect to Section 4 of the Conservation Act*, which can be accessed at the Authority's website – www.conservationauthority.org.nz.

6.2 Functions of the Authority

(a) Advise the Minister on statements of general policy

General policy is the highest level of statutory planning for conservation outcomes. No changes were proposed or made to the Conservation General Policy during the reporting period.

(b) Approve conservation management strategies

A conservation management strategy (CMS) is a 10-year statutory document. Its purpose is to implement general policy and to establish objectives for the discharge of the Department's functions in the area covered by the strategy, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. CMSs are developed by departmental planning staff in partnership with local conservation boards, and there are opportunities for input from the tangata whenua and the public.

The Wellington CMS was presented to the Authority in April 2018

At the April 2018 meeting, the Wellington Conservation Board and the Department presented the draft Wellington CMS to the Authority for its consideration. The Authority's Wellington CMS Committee met and consolidated feedback on the overall document (very good) and areas where clarification and/or improvement were needed. This information was sent to the Wellington Conservation Board and the Department in May. All but one point has since been agreed, with the last item expected to be resolved shortly with the Department planner advising the Board.

Next steps for the Committee are:

- consulting iwi
- forwarding the revised draft to the Minister for her comments.

(c) Approve conservation management plans

Although the Authority may be asked to approve conservation management plans, they are usually approved by conservation boards – in some cases jointly with an iwi authority, as provided in Treaty Settlement legislation. No plans were received by the Authority for consideration during the reporting year.

(d) Review the effectiveness of the Department's administration of general policies

When approving statutory planning documents, the Authority seeks to satisfy itself that appropriate effect is given to the two statements of general policy: the Conservation General Policy, and the General Policy for National Parks.

The Authority did not review the effectiveness of the Department's administration of statements of general policy during the reporting period.

(e) Investigate or advise on conservation matters of national importance

Matters of national importance for conservation that the Authority provided advice on during the year included:

DOC's National Compliance Strategy

The Department has now published a national compliance strategy which sets out a 3-year plan for compliance strands within each of the 45 district offices. Progress will be tracked through business processes, KPIs and reporting. District compliance plans are confidential to DOC, but the national strategy setting out the 'how' and 'why' is open to the public.¹

The Authority strongly supports this work and is very pleased with progress to date. Non-compliance imposes cost burdens on others and reduces the Department's capacity to carry out its role.

New options for predator eradication – gene editing

Research is being undertaken by the Department's social scientists to investigate public perceptions of novel pest control techniques, exploring what New Zealand thinks about these methods and what values they place on the issues surrounding predator control.

¹ See www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-policies-and-plans/national-compliance-strategy.

The work has identified that New Zealanders tend to adopt one or more identified 'perspectives' in relation to novel pest control techniques. The results of this research lay the groundwork for conversations about the role of these technologies in other fields such as biosecurity (by considering the breeding of kauri with tolerance to kauri dieback, or the control of wilding pines through sterility, for example).

The next step for the research is to form focus groups to further understand the complex perspectives that have been identified, and then test the impacts of different framings of these on risk perceptions and acceptability.

Annual thar report 2016–2017

Disappointingly, thar numbers in the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana have grown to an estimated 35,000 – well above the population size proposed in the control plan – and they are now also found outside agreed zone points. This is despite a population control plan that is meant to keep thar numbers under 10,000 and to limit their spread.

Following its June 2018 meeting, the Authority agreed to recommend: a) the Department achieve an immediate reduction in thar numbers; and b) a review of the Thar Management Plan to report on its failings in both number and area control.

NIWA whitebait report

Following the April 2018 meeting, the Authority commissioned a report from Dr Cindy Baker (NIWA) on the current information on the whitebait fishery. This report, *Potential options for regulation changes to the NZ whitebait fishery*, is available on the Authority's website. Whitebait will continue to be a focus for the Authority.

Other topics

On top of the strategic discussions undertaken with SLT, other conservation matters of national importance discussed with the Department during the reporting period included:

- improved monitoring and compliance of concessionaires
- the Department's visitor strategy
- e-bike guidelines for use on public conservation land
- the Department's Threatened Species Strategy
- Myrtle rust
- land disposal strategy
- reclassification of conservation land
- Taranaki Maunga Treaty settlement
- land tenure review.

These discussions were iterative; further discussion will take place as more information is received and understanding and thinking evolves.

Advice was provided to the Minister in relation to:

- stewardship land and assessing net conservation benefit
- the whitebait fishery
- biodiversity management
- the Department's Marine Protected Areas Policy and Implementation Plan 2005
- the preliminary proposal by Federated Mountain Clubs for a Remarkables National Park.

(f) Change of land status – stewardship land

In April 2015 the then Minister of Conservation, Hon. Maggie Barry, requested the Authority's views on the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's

recommendation to the Minister that the Authority provide "guidance on the principles and processes that should be used when making decisions on net conservation benefit", in the context of land exchanges under section 16A of the Conservation Act. In response, the Authority provided the report *Stewardship Land: Net Conservation Benefit Assessments in Land Exchanges* in January 2016; the report was revised in March 2018.

The current Minister wants the Department to work with the Authority to prioritise the recategorisation of stewardship land. A panel system is the most likely tool for this purpose – advice from regional focus groups support the formation of a national panel. This will incorporate all the work that has already been done as part of the 5-year plan, including the lists of stewardship areas that each conservation board has provided. The 5-year plan will be absorbed into the panel process, and the previous contributions from the conservation boards will be key information to inform the panel.

(g) Walkways (repealed)

(h) Education and publicity

Minutes, agendas and other information regarding the Authority's functions and activities (including its meetings, which are open to the public) are available on the Authority's website.

No education or publicity activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

(i) Priorities for expenditure by the Department of Conservation

Due to changes in the way government departments are expected to identify and report on operating intentions, the Authority has changed the way it makes input into priorities for departmental expenditure, including by developing a better understanding of the factors that influence the Department's decisions about where it directs its resources.

The Authority had many discussions with the Department on expenditure during the reporting year. The Authority supported the Department's Budget bid, for an increase in funding for landscape-scale pest control, and the Department's continued focus on revenue recovery via concessions pricing and compliance.

The Authority had regular discussions with the Director-General during Authority meetings on the Department's Stretch Goals and the recent 2025 project, which aims to create a clear picture of what conservation and recreational outcomes can be achieved at different resourcing levels, and what the Department can sustainably deliver in the future.

(j) New Zealand Fish & Game Council liaison

Section 6B(1)(i) of the Conservation Act provides for the Authority to liaise with the New Zealand Fish & Game Council. The Authority and New Zealand Fish & Game Council provided each other with copies of agendas and meeting papers during the reporting period.

(k) Ministerial delegations

The Minister did not delegate any ministerial powers or functions to the Authority during the reporting period.

6.3 Powers of the Authority

(a) Establishment of committees

The Conservation Act enables the Authority to establish committees to carry out functions or tasks delegated by the Authority.

Committees that were active during the reporting period included:

- Aoraki Mount Cook National Park Management Plan Committee

- Fiordland National Park Management Plan Committee (established February 2017)
- General Policy for National Parks review committee (established August 2017, put on hold February 2018)
- Grass Carp Committee
- Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan Committee (established February 2017)
- Westland *Tai Poutini* National Park Management Plan Committee
- Walking Access Principles Committee (established December 2016 and disestablished April 2018)
- Wellington CMS Committee (established February 2017).

(b) Advocacy

The Authority advocated its interests during the reporting period through several submissions.

- The proposed National Environmental Standard (NES) for Marine Aquaculture – submitted on 8 August 2017.
- Ngaruroro and Clive Rivers Water Conservation Order – the Authority submitted evidence for the Hearing on 27 October 2017.
- Te Waikoropupū springs and associated water bodies (including the aquifers, Takaka River, and tributaries) Water Conservation Order – evidence submitted on 5 April 2018.

The Authority's submissions are available on its website.



Riversdale Flats, Arthur's Pass National Park. *Photo: Gerry McSweeney*

7. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

7.1 Review of the General Policy for National Parks

A review of the General Policy for National Parks began in October 2017. In March 2018 the review was put on hold, so the Authority could focus on providing support and advice on conservation priorities to the new government.

7.2 National Park management plans

Partial review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan

At its October 2017 meeting the Authority received papers for the partial review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan from the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board and the Department's Central North Island office. At its April 2018 meeting, the Authority resolved to approve the amendment to the Tongariro National Park Management Plan. The amendment allows for the establishment of new family friendly cycle recreation opportunities in the park – in particular, the construction of three shared (walking and cycling) tracks – but only where: a) they cannot be more appropriately located outside of the park; and, b) where they are compatible with the protection of the cultural and natural values of the park and enjoyment of it by other users. The Department has a range of redress options if monitoring indicates mountain biking's environmental or social effects (including cumulative effects) are unacceptable.²

7.3 Additions to, and deletions from, national parks

Addition to Kahurangi National Park

The Authority recommended the Mokihinui catchment area be added to Kahurangi National Park in a letter to the Minister of Conservation 28 June 2017. A separate process, including consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, was needed for the Mokihinui riverbed to be added to the expanded park. This included the transition of management from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) to the Department.

At its February 2018 meeting, the Authority approved the addition of the Mokihinui riverbed to the Kahurangi National Park in principle, subject to completion of section 4 consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. The Authority later spoke with Arihia Bennett, CEO of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and Francois Tumahai, Chair of Ngāti Waewae. They agreed to the addition of the Mokihinui riverbed to Kahurangi National Park, and requested priority be given to the preparation of a new Kahurangi National Park Management Plan.³ Accordingly, in May 2018 the Authority recommended that the Minister of Conservation recommend to the Governor General that the Mokihinui riverbed be added to the Kahurangi National Park pursuant to section 7 of the National Parks Act.

Additions to Fiordland National Park

The Nature Heritage Fund purchased the blocks of land O'Brien, King and Wang (Johnstone)/Morgan in 1995, 2000 and 2001 respectively, with the intent to add them to Fiordland National Park. The Department's initial consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu in 2014 revealed Ngāi Tahu's reservations about this land being added to the park, including unreasonably restricting what they could do on their ancestral land.

To progress this long-standing matter and understand local rūnaka concerns, the Authority chairperson met with local rūnaka in Invercargill in April 2018 to hear their views and discuss a way forward; the Authority and local rūnaka were able to come to an agreement. Accordingly, the Authority resolved at its April 2018 meeting to recommend to the Minister of Conservation that she recommend to the Governor General, that the land purchase

² These include ceasing track development, and/or removing concessions.

³ The current plan was adopted in 2001.

blocks be added to Fiordland National Park, pursuant to section 7 of the National Parks Act.

Adjustment of boundary to the Murchison Mountains, Specially Protected Area, in Fiordland National Park

The Specially Protected Area was created to protect the takahē population. The boundary adjustment is required to allow public access to a 200-m strip along the lake foreshore. After consideration of public submissions and consultation with the Southland Conservation Board, rūnaka and Takahē Recovery Programme, the Department concluded that this adjustment will have no negative effect on the takahē population. Accordingly, the Authority resolved to approve the boundary change to the Murchison Mountains Specially Protected Area.

7.4 National Park investigations

No National Park investigations were undertaken during the reporting period.

7.5 National Park determinations

Determinations are made to waive the requirements that introduced plants and animals be exterminated in national parks and native plants and animals be preserved. They are generally made as part of a National Park management plan process.

No determinations were made during the reporting period.

8. MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

8.1 JD Stout Trust

The Authority is a trustee of the JD Stout Trust. The Trust makes donations or interest-free loans for conservation and cultural purposes. The Trust met twice during the reporting period. Rauru Kirikiri was the Authority's representative on the Trust.

8.2 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Authority, along with another government agency, is one of eight members of the New Zealand Committee of the IUCN, known as the World Conservation Union. The committee meets quarterly.

Mark Christensen was the Authority's representative on the Committee. At its June 2018 meeting, the Authority reviewed its IUCN representative member as Mark Christensen had resigned from the Authority. The new representative will be confirmed early in the next financial year.

8.3 Land and Water Forum

The Authority is a member of the Land and Water Forum. Details about the activities of the Forum during the reporting period are available at www.landandwater.org.nz. Having completed its former phase of work, the Forum took a formal break from July 2018.

9. CONSERVATION BOARDS

9.1 Conservation board boundaries

There were no changes to conservation board boundaries in the reporting period.

9.2 Conservation board nominations

The Minister is required to consult with the Authority prior to appointing public members to conservation boards. The Authority provided its advice to both the Department and the Minister of Conservation on the appointment process for 2018. A high standard of nominations was received for all boards and it was pleasing to see several younger nominees.

9.3 Authority/Conservation board liaison

One Authority member acts as liaison with each conservation board. This liaison function includes attendance at board meetings and informal liaison with the board chairperson, which is reported back to the Authority at each meeting.

9.4 Annual reports

Conservation boards are each required by section 60 of the Conservation Act to provide the Authority with an annual report. These reports are available from the boards and posted on their individual pages on the Department's website.

9.5 Implementation of conservation management strategies

Most conservation boards have adopted a systematic process for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the CMS for their region, and for advising the Department's operations directors in that respect. Boards report on this monitoring in their annual reports.

The Authority is working with the Department and those conservation boards with operative CMSs to improve a 'dashboard' approach to monitoring the milestones included within the CMSs.

Under the Conservation General Policy, the Department is required to provide each conservation board with a report (at least annually) on the implementation of the CMS for its region (see section 9.4 above).

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Authority reviewed its performance and strategy in June 2017, and continued its programme of reviewing and updating, where necessary, its policies. Those addressed during the year were:

- Giving Effect to section 4 of the Conservation Act
- Committee Structure Policy
- Process for Preparation of Submissions
- South Island High Country Principles
- Walking Access Principles.

The Authority also created a Communications and Engagement Plan, to be reviewed annually.

The Authority's policies and principles can be viewed on its website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Authority and conservation board members for their contributions to positive conservation outcomes in New Zealand. As always, they are generous with their time and willingly apply their knowledge, skills and diverse life experiences to ensure we remain connected to our communities and Treaty partners.

I commend the support of Rick McGovern-Wilson, whose knowledge has been invaluable to our work, and to Ann McCrone and Lisa McLennan for their efficient servicing of the Authority.

A special thank you also to Lou Sanson, the Director-General of Conservation, who has continued to support the Authority over the 2017/18 year. We are also grateful to the staff of the Department who have attended our meetings or serviced, supported and briefed the Authority during the reporting period.

Dr Warren Parker
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority



Tuatara, Zealandia. *Photo: Gerry McSweeney*

11. SCHEDULES

First schedule

Conservation management strategies: approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2018.

Conservation management strategy	Date approved	Situation at 30 June 2018
Te Hiku o Te Ika	New board as of 17 December 2015	Work under way.
Northland	8 September 2014	Operative.
Auckland	9 October 2014	Operative.
Waikato	8 September 2014	Operative.
Bay of Plenty	4 December 1997	Under review.
East Coast/Hawke's Bay	14 October 1998 (East Coast) 19 October 1994 (Hawke's Bay)	Under review.
Tongariro/Taupo	30 May 2002	Due for review.
Whanganui	9 April 1997	Part review (Rangitikei/Manawatu) in first stages of review process as part of Wellington CMS. Review of the rest of the CMS not scheduled within next 5 years.
Wellington	13 March 1996	Recommended Draft CMS with the Authority for review.
Chatham Islands	12 August 1999	Due for review.
Nelson/Marlborough	12 September 1996	Iwi engagement needs resolving.
West Coast	15 April 2010	Operative, partial review required due to Paparoa and possible Westland National Park Management Plan reviews.
Canterbury (Waitaha)	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Otago	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Southland Murihiku	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Stewart Island/Rakiura	9 February 2011	Operative.

The Director-General of Conservation put review of the CMSs on hold while a CMS national framework and natural heritage and destination management prioritisation tools were developed. These were approved in 2011 and the review of CMSs began. The statutory expectation is that each CMS will be reviewed at 10-year intervals.

Second schedule

National Park management plans: approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2018.

National Park management plan	Date approved	Situation at 30 June 2018
Abel Tasman	9 October 2008	
Aoraki/Mount Cook	12 August 2004	Full review under way.
Arthur's Pass	13 December 2007	
Egmont	14 February 2002	Due for review, on hold until CMS review completed.
Fiordland	21 June 2007	Initial investigation into review commenced.
Kahurangi	13 June 2001	Partial review approved April 2017, full review due.
Mount Aspiring	23 June 2011	Initial investigation into review commenced.
Nelson Lakes	10 October 2002	Due for review, on hold until CMS review completed.
Paparoa	1 February 2017	
Rakiura	9 February 2011	
Tongariro	12 October 2006	Partial review approved May 2018.
Westland Tai Poutini	21 December 2001	Full review under way.
Whanganui	9 August 2012	

Third schedule

Address list for conservation boards.

Conservation board	Board address (c/- Department of Conservation)
Te Hiku o Te Ika	PO Box 842 Whangarei 0140
Northland	PO Box 842 Whangarei 0140
Auckland	Private Bag 68908 Wellesley St Auckland 1141
Waikato	Private Bag 3072 Hamilton 3240
Bay of Plenty	PO Box 528 Taupo 3351
East Coast/Hawke's Bay	Private Bag 11010 Palmerston North 4442
Tongariro/Taupo	PO Box 528 Taupo 3351
Taranaki/Whanganui	Private Bag 3072 Hamilton 3240
Wellington	Private Bag 11010 Palmerston North 4442
Chatham Islands	PO Box 114 Waitangi Chathams 8942
Nelson/Marlborough	Private Bag 5 Nelson 7042
West Coast Tai Poutini	Private Bag 701 Hokitika 7842
Canterbury Aoraki	Private Bag 4715 Christchurch Mail Centre Christchurch 8140
Otago	PO Box 811 Queenstown 9348
Southland	PO Box 743 Invercargill 9840

Fourth schedule

Statutory functions and powers of the Authority

Act	Addressed in past 3 years?	Statutory function
Statutory functions (Conservation Act 1987)		
6B(a)	N	Advise on statements of general policy
6B(b)	Y	Approve CMSs and any amendments
6B(c)	N	Review and report on effectiveness of general policies
6B(d)	Y	Investigate matters of national importance
6B(e)	Y	Consider and make proposals for change of land status of national and international importance
6B(g)	Y	Encourage and participate in educational & publicity activities
6B(h)	Y	Advise annually on priorities for expenditure
6B(i)	Y	Liaise with New Zealand Fish & Game Council
6B(j)	N	Exercise any other powers and functions delegated by Minister
Statutory functions (National Parks Act 1980)		
18(a)	N	Prepare and approve statements of general policy for National Parks (NP)
18(b)	Y	Approve NP management plans and any amendments
18(c)	N	Advise on priorities for expenditure for NPs
18(d)	N	Review effectiveness of general policies for NPs
18(e)	Y	Consider and make proposals for addition of lands to NPs and establishment of new NPs
18(g)	Y	Give advice on any other matter relating to any NP
4(2)(b)	Y	Determinations re: native plants and animals preserved – introduced plants and animals exterminated
5A(2)(a)	N	Minister shall consult the Authority on introduction of any biological control organism
12(1)	Y	Minister shall consult the Authority on Specially Protected Areas
14(1)	N	Recommend establishment or revocation of Wilderness Areas
15(1)	N	Recommend establishment or revocation of Amenities Areas
18A	N	Minister shall consult the Authority on access arrangements to a National Park re: s59 of Crown Minerals Act 1991
44(1)	N	Adopt or amend statements of General Policy
Statutory powers (Conservation Act 1987)		
6C(2)(a)	Y	Establish committees
6C(2)(b)	Y	Release for public info any recommendation, report or advice
6C(2)(c)	Y	Advocate at any public forum or in any statutory planning process



NEW ZEALAND

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA

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